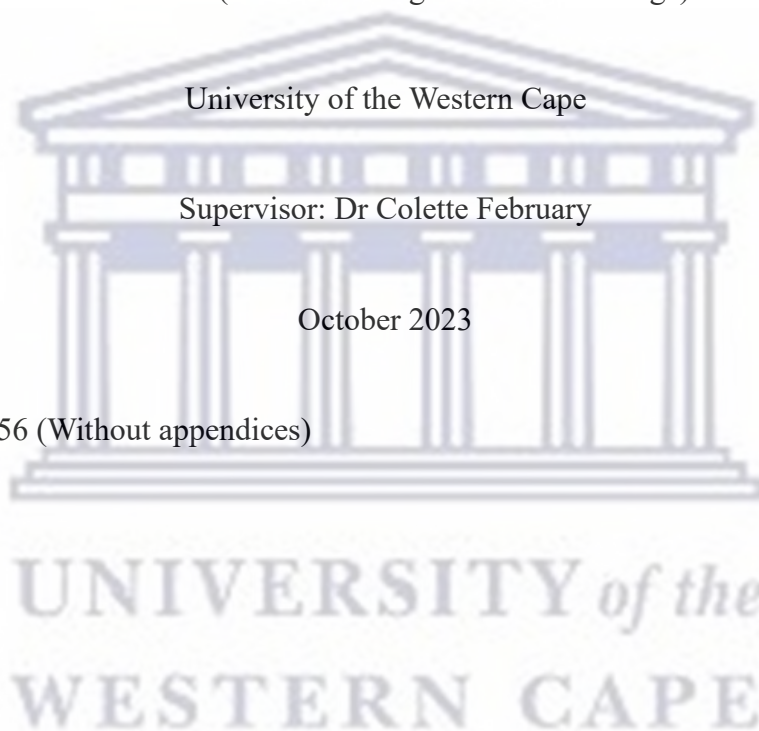


Reducing high school dropout: towards new narratives of educational success in a rural  
South African educational community.

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A research paper submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master's Degree in  
Education (Adult Learning and Global Change)



Word count: 30156 (Without appendices)

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this research paper is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Adult Learning and Global Change at the Institute for Post-School Studies, Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any university. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references.

Thereza Raman



Signed

Date 30 October 2023



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**QUOTE**

*“Commit yourself to lifelong learning. The most valuable asset you’ll ever have is your mind  
and what you put into it.”*

Albert Einstein, 1879-1955, Theoretical Physicist and Nobel Laureate



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## **ABSTRACT**

This study sought to investigate the professional experiences of educators at a rural school in South Africa, and in particular pertaining to their perceptions on learner dropout or voluntary withdrawal. Within an interpretive framework as a qualitative case study, educators were invited to offer their narrative accounts particularly about the kinds of professional development they perceived as educationally most useful for learners to succeed at school. Secondly, the study investigated the extent to which an ethos of lifelong learning could play a role in promoting successful outcomes for educators and learners, specifically in a rural educational community. The study also probed the extent to which community-school partnerships might assist in actualizing sustainable supportive environments for teaching and learning to flourish particularly in rural school contexts. Findings revealed important insights regarding the extent to which educators may understand the importance of their own professional identity and development in relation to new forms of lifelong learning as dispositions towards reducing dropout in the rural educational contexts they know. Findings also shed light on the extent to which lifelong learning within community-school partnerships and extended educational communities may play a role in reducing dropout in the rural educational contexts described in this study. The most significant finding of the study is that lifelong learning might take root in certain rural South African schools only if a body teachers is sufficiently curious about new ways of teaching and learning that directly addresses reducing dropout in the educational contexts they know.

**Key words:** dropout / voluntary withdrawal, educators, learners, rural secondary schools, community-school partnerships/ educational community/, lifelong learning

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First, I would like to thank the Almighty God, who gave me strength and has protected me throughout this study.

This study has been completed with significant support from different individuals.

I am extremely grateful to the entire Raman family, especially my sons Trystan and Joshua Raman, along with my grandchild Tatum Raman, who some nights wanted to study with me. My friends encouraged me to study and complete this research. Special thanks go to my husband, Mr. Abraham Raman, who has been very understanding and supportive and carried out all family responsibilities mostly alone while I conducted this research and when I had to work day and night. My late Dad, David Jacobs, passed away during my second year of pursuing this research. I am extremely grateful for my dad and paternal grandparents' continuous support throughout the years and for believing in me.

I would like to thank Dr Colette February for being a supportive supervisor who encouraged me throughout my studies.

I want to thank my fellow students in Cohort 19 of the Master's in Adult Learning and Global Change Program for the encouragement, motivation, and assistance that we rendered to each other throughout our study period.

I gratefully acknowledge the support of Archie Bock, an ex-learner, my special word of thanks goes out to my old school friend, Mrs Helen Cloete for capturing the ideal educational community on paper and Corine Carolus an educational assistant at our school who compiled the final touches.

I am deeply obligated to the research participants who participated voluntarily and generously in my study.



## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
CAT	Computer Applications Technology
CEMIS	Centralised Educational Management Information System
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EMS	Economic and Management Sciences
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
HOD	Head of Department
LL	Lifelong Learning
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
OECD	The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SGB	School Governing Body
SA	South Africa
SA-SAMS	South African School Administration Management System
SACE	South African Council for Educators
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Much research has been dedicated to addressing matters pertaining to school dropout in South Africa, and there is also appreciable research pertaining to school dropout in rural South African communities, both at the level of high schools and primary schools.

There is, however, disproportionately little research exploring teachers' perceptions of high school dropout, their role in dropout reduction, and their community role in the educational success of their students in rural secondary schools. The important influence of educators in this regard is noted by Boody (2013, p. 61):

"The voices of teachers are for the most part absent, and this is problematic. Teachers have the potential to positively influence students not only to graduate but to thrive in the school environment."

This study therefore took the form of an in-depth qualitative study focusing on the narrative accounts of educator experience. Through their lived experience as educators, this study explored the phenomenon of learners dropping out of rural school communities and the ways in which certain kinds of professional development among educators could possibly assist in reducing dropout in the rural educational context selected as the case for this study.

#### **1.2 Background and Context**

My own interest as a teacher in and personal experience with school dropout in the Namakwa region of the Northern Cape in South Africa served as the impetus for this study on educators' perceptions of students' voluntary separation from a rural secondary school.

As a researcher and educator, I am interested in learning more about the types of instruction and professional development that educators believe they may need to fulfil their continuous obligation to reduce dropout rates in the rural educational environments I am familiar with. In

my career as a teacher, I have seen many educational triumphs, but I have also seen a great deal of persistent voluntary withdrawal in the high school where I work.

I agree with academic research highlighting the critical need to address school dropout, particularly within rural South African educational communities, given my own educator experience of dropout in rural secondary schools. The kinds of questions that influence my research undertaking include how students are taught, how they are graded, and what may be suggested by educators themselves to reduce school dropout. Investigating secondary school dropout from the standpoint of an educator has also prompted me to critically consider the extent to which an ethos of lifelong learning might feature in educators' professional as well as personal experiences as members of a larger educational community. This study's other key component, then, is the amount to which educators might perceive lifelong learning to have a role in reducing dropout, and whether a special kind of authenticated lifelong may be possible to reduce dropout specifically in the rural educational context known to the educators who agreed to participate in this study.

I became more interested in understanding why students drop out of school and what educators could do to prevent it because of meeting dropouts in my own professional setting. The local mining industry, which requires a staff that is suitably educated upon admission, may also find value in insights arising from this study. Even though the local mining industry has some initiatives in place to promote lifelong learning in the rural communities where I live and work, they are currently forced to hire people from outside the province and our region because even the best students from these schools are considered ineligible for the entry-level requirements for the jobs on offer.

The structured curricula of the nearby mining sector are typically taught in English, which presents a significant language barrier for the secondary school students I have had the pleasure of instructing. Therefore, many students in my rural area choose to opt out and work in the vineyards, where no formal education is required, and where English does not present itself as a major barrier as it does in the educational settings these students know.

The mine nearby is potentially a key stakeholder in assisting the local rural students to succeed in the mining business and elsewhere since they should be aware that their career options are severely limited even if they stay in school. The local mining sector in this area also funds

master teachers in disciplines such as mathematics and physical science, which are necessary to enrol in a mining program at any institution. Master educators are professors who have a particular area of expertise and who majored in it in college.

Unfortunately, because there are no educators in the area who teach these disciplines as main subjects, people from outside the jurisdiction are more likely to be employed as shown statistically from 2000 through 2023. It is evident that students do not excel in math and science, particularly in the Namakwa region, according to the South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS) Van Der Westhuizen (2023) website maintained by the Department of Education. Every year, all schools in South Africa submit their grade statistics to the Department of Education. To guarantee their implementation, subject improvement plans, and intervention plans are constantly requested. The goal is to encourage progress and raise the bar for various subjects through this. These statistics are used to determine how well or poorly a school is performing.

It was revealed that just two ex-students every year from the educational community where I teach were able to get exceptional scores in these areas in the years 2013, 2017, and 2020, which is why I chose this school as my case study. They had the opportunity to go to college and earn a bachelor's degree in education, but they opted not to go back to Namakwa. Instead, they stayed in other parts of South Africa, where they had great success as math and science teachers.

Given existing and unrelenting educational inequality in most if not all rural South African landscapes, it is a misconception to believe that everyone can get a good education in South African currently. In accordance with an OECD report from (2012, 5), "School failure penalizes a child for life." According to the report, students who have enriching school experiences are also more likely to continue their education and successfully transition into the workforce. This is because students who struggle in the beginning but receive adequate, timely support and guidance are more likely to finish, regardless of any challenges posed by their family or social environment.

### **1.3 Rationale**

My current research undertaking interests me since I teach in a remote location where high school students lack the desire to continue their education and drop out for different kinds of reasons. These students are mostly dissatisfied with their precarious financial situations and the lack of employment options in the neighbourhood. Many students, in my observation, drop out of school before completing Grades 8 through 12. I have therefore formed an opinion as an educator that pupils struggle with resilience at school given the ongoing societal challenges they encounter daily.

I chose this school in a rural area as the site of my case study because of my interest in its learners who drop out of school, and more so the educators who have layers of accumulative experience of voluntary withdrawal within such an educational community. In my attempt to depict these post-apartheid students whom I teach, I highlight that these students have been beaten down further by unrelentingly high unemployment levels, and they might be forgiven for thinking that a successful school record might not easily translate into gainful employment.

My regular interactions with numerous students from the neighbourhood during this research project gave me many first-hand insights into the possible causes of the high rates of rural secondary school dropout. Regular conversations with teachers as my peers have anecdotally revealed that there is a high rate of substance misuse, and that parental truancy may also be a destabilizing factor for students who drop out of school. I therefore felt impelled to start an exploratory study on educators' perceptions of high school dropouts in the context of a rural community because of the educators sharing their experiences in the school, class, and community with me.

To help reduce dropout rates in the rural educational environments I am familiar with, it is in my interest as a researcher and an educator to gain a greater understanding of the types of professional development and training that educators may need in this regard. As a result of this, I also include a brief description of the educators, suggesting that I would be primarily interested in their professional perspectives on voluntary withdrawal as part of my investigation.

Pooled knowledge of rural educators and the rural educational environment in which they teach could potentially assist in casting light on ways in which voluntary withdrawal might be reduced. As the participant group for this study, my sense is that these educators also have responsibilities in family and community settings as such their insights may suggest more than one way in which voluntary withdrawal could possibly be reduced in the educational contexts they know.

Since I am also an educator in this context of education, I would prefer not to include my educator experience and perspective in this research project.

#### **1.4 Research Problem**

While secondary school dropout has been extensively researched on a global scale, rural secondary school dropout has received less attention by comparison. In addition, there is also growing scholarly attention specifically pertaining to educator perception on voluntary withdrawal.

As is my interest, I therefore align myself to this aspect of the literature on voluntary withdrawal, and the purpose of this study is to examine how educators experience voluntary withdrawal as educators and, more particularly, how they perceive their role in reducing rural secondary school dropout rates through their interactions with other educators and possibly a broader educational community.

The research project may benefit from the views of educators on how all students, but especially those who are academically at risk, could benefit from enhanced support both inside and outside of the traditional teaching and learning environment of the school.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how educators, both inside and outside the classroom, perceive rural secondary school dropouts.

#### **1.5 Research Aim**

The aim of this study is to explore the potential contribution of educators towards reducing high school dropout rates in a rural South African educational community. Another aim is to

investigate how educators, both inside and outside the classroom, view new narratives of academic achievement for students in rural secondary schools, notably in the Namakwa region. One specific objective is to understand how the role of lifelong learning could potentially connect an educational community around the concern of high rural secondary school dropout rates towards more successful educational outcomes.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

### **1.6.1 Main Research Question**

What can educators contribute to reducing high school dropout in a rural South African community?

### **1.6.2 Sub-questions**

In order to build a larger educational community and lower high school dropout rates in a rural South African community, what ethical considerations may educators offer?

What role could lifelong learning play in reducing high school dropout in a rural South African community?

## **1.7 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I explained the purpose of my research undertaking. I also discussed as the research question, its sub-questions, and my research aims and objectives. The remainder of this research paper is structured as follows:

A review of the literature is discussed in Chapter 2.

The study's methodology and design are described in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 4, data obtained from the study are presented and analysed.

The conclusion and recommendations are included in Chapter 5.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

With a focus on the capability approach, which has emerged as an innovative theoretical framework about wellbeing, freedom to achieve wellbeing, and all the public values in which either of these can play a role, like development and social justice, I take into account the capability approach of Robeyns (2017) in this case study. Robeyns asserts that the capacities approach provides a conceptual framework for a range of evaluative actions, chief among which are the following:

1. The evaluation of a person's achieved levels of well-being and independence from illness.
2. The examination and appraisal of social arrangements or organizations.
3. The creation of policies and other methods of bringing about social change in society.

My research exploration is expected to be directed toward the voices of educators in ways that would invite forward-looking and integrated lifelong learning strategies about educational well-being and professional development by drawing on fundamental ideas inspired by a capability approach of Robeyns (2017, pp. 23-24).

I note the historical development of the capabilities approach (University, Stanford, 2020) and some of the ways the approach has already been explored in terms of the well-being of children (Hart & Brando, 2018) as well as gendered education within the context of South African complexity (Unterhalter, 2003), and finally manifestations of 'capabilities poverty' in South African informal settlement schools (Maarman, 2009).

Pertinent to my research undertaking, Walker's insights will also most usefully guide my research undertaking:

Without action and practice talk about education is arid; without theories, talk about educational practice is impoverished. Capabilities offers a theory with practical outcomes to set us on a road, but it is an unfinished story. Our own reflective equilibrium of theory and action, supported by adjudicating theories of social justice in education, is needed for us to continue in pragmatically building a 'good enough' society, Walker (2003, p. 185).

My research is directed toward the voices of educators in ways that would invite forward-looking and integrated lifelong learning strategies about educational well-being and professional development by drawing on fundamental ideas inspired by Robeyns' capability approach.

To what extent educators are positioned for effective teaching at a school in a rural educational community is the focus of the study project I have proposed. When students' capacity and human development are appropriately handled, appropriate professional development could help to reduce the number of students quitting school in rural educational settings. In this regard, my research leads me to investigate the types of lifelong learning that are most likely to support the human growth and capability needed in the educational contexts already portrayed as the basis for this study.

My area of interest in this study is how teachers perceive their contribution to lowering dropout rates in a particular rural secondary school in South Africa.

## **2.2 Definitions**

The definitions of the specified constructs that are relevant to my investigation are provided below for clarity rather than for mutual understanding:

- Dropouts
- Lifelong Learning

### **2.2.1 Dropout**

I have discovered varying viewpoints in articles pertaining to dropout and voluntary withdraw. However, a broad search for definitions and concepts leads me to the same definition as that given in Hartnack (2017, 1), who notes that school dropouts are also known as early "withdrawal" or "attrition," which refers to leaving education without obtaining a minimal qualification.

I came up with varying viewpoints in articles on dropout, even if general definitions and idea searches turned up meanings that were essentially the same. School dropout is sometimes referred to as early "withdrawal" or "attrition," which refers to leaving education before

completing a foundational degree, according to Hartnack (2017, p. 1). Álvares et al. (2014, p. 5) give an example of the nature of dropouts by identifying it as early school departure, in contrast to Softic (2020, p. 73), who further explains dropouts as the student's failure to enroll for a certain number of subsequent semesters.

The definition of dropout has been extensively studied, but I would like to understand it in one way by examining the definition given by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Snyders (2013, 23), which was defined as the proportion of students who leave a given grade in a given school year. Also clarified in Snyders' study is the fact that a student is considered a dropout as soon as they are removed from the Centralized Educational Management Information System (CEMIS), which is the system used by schools to manage student enrollment.

Furthermore, Álvares et al. (2014, 5, 7) define dropout as a multi-stage process that occurs inside the classroom. Additionally, the definition is divided into formal and functional categories, respectively. The formal, is based on the idea of legally mandated education, and functional, which is a connection between obtaining a particular level of education and successfully integrating into both the social and professional worlds.

An analytical report by Dalton (2009, 84) claims that a time-specific status description of a dropout is another way to define a dropout. In *Table 1* the several forms of dropouts are described here.

*Table 1 Types of Dropouts*

	Type of dropout	Definitions
1.	Event rates	Describe the proportion of students who leave high school each year without completing a high school program.
2.	Status rates	Supply cumulative data on dropouts among all young adults within a specified age range.
3.	Cohort rates	Measure what happens to a cohort of students over a period.

## 2.2.2 Lifelong learning

Lifelong education is defined by the international organization UNESCO (2020, 10) as a more complete and forward-thinking idea that incorporates formal, non-formal, and informal learning extended throughout a person's lifespan to achieve the greatest possible advancements. Reflecting on lifelong learning within the context of my research undertaking, I created a cloud graphic (2023) with the most relevant terms as can be discerned in *Figure 1*, which presents a reading culture as an element of lifelong learning.

Figure 1 Lifelong Learning as a Component of Reading Culture



Table 2 below clearly illustrates the kind of lifelong learning that must be fostered within the educational community. There are many kinds of lifelong learning, as well as a wide variety of justifications for having them. Some people are not interested in participating in these, which come under a variety of informal to formal learning options that the education community uses. The numerous types of lifelong learning are clearly laid out by Mocker et al. (1982), with the participants' opinions intended to clarify the type of lifetime learning performed.

Table 2 Kinds of Lifelong Learning

### Kinds of Lifelong learning

<b>Mocker et al. (1982)</b>			
<b>Kind of lifelong learning</b>	<b>Core role</b>	<b>Main responsible person</b>	<b>Examples from interviews</b>
<b>Formal learning</b>	Learners have no control over the aims or means of their learning.	Institution	CAPS documents take too much of our time and does not allow this type of learning to be done only on demand and usually follows a set schedule with a cohort of learners (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).
<b>Non-formal learning</b>	Learners control the aims but not the means.	Institution and Learner	Through conversations, unexpected lessons learned, relationships, or travel, the world around you may expose you to new ideas and learning than you had even planned for (Leizel, Interview, September 29, 2022).
<b>Informal learning</b>	Learners control the means but not the aims.	Institution and learner	Learners may choose to learn through reading, watching YouTube videos, learn from a peer, or by trial and error (Sanie, Interview, September 28, 2022).
<b>Self-directed learning</b>	Learners control both the aims and the means	Learner	Learners nor Educators seem to be interested in online courses that can be taken on demand when the schedule permits. (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

Therefore, educators and students in rural educational settings could do well to support self-directed and mostly non-formal lifelong learning as a means of helping to reduce dropout rates. For understanding the suggested form of lifelong learning, I have included a definition and an example in the table above which may assist the rural educational contexts I know.

Additionally, Leung (2003, 26) provides an explanation of what lifelong learning is. It is stated that it is a lifelong process that is learner-driven, builds confidence, fosters coherence, and encompasses formal, non-formal, and informal learning, precisely as Mocker et al. (1982). Leung agrees with Mocker et al. in this regard.

The White Paper (2004), a South African source, makes reference to the idea of lifelong learning but does not define it; as a result, it claims that general education, further education, and higher education should be viewed as parts of lifelong learning.

According to Power et al. (2013, 1), the term lifelong learning has undergone several definitions over the years and has recently been superseded by "lifelong education" and "recurrent education" by international organizations such as UNESCO (2020, 10), the OECD (2012, 5) and others. It is now almost commonly recognized as the preferred term. Consequently, the emphasis is shifted from education to learning. In addition to giving a brief overview of the development of lifetime learning in South Africa, Aitchison (2004, 517 - 518) investigates how lifelong learning is implemented in the country. Another scholarly reading contends that an education is based on a formal, structured program of learning, for a predetermined amount of time, emphasizing learning before acting. This is possible with lifelong learning, which enables you to learn when and where you want to learn as well as what you want to learn. It demonstrates how to use your skills to your advantage financially for the rest of your life. Learning is fundamentally about transformation, whereas education denotes completion and learning is an ongoing process, according to Leung (2003, 33).

The models of family school and community school partnership were clearly mentioned as various authors have attempted to come up with the most appropriate notions regarding the importance and explore of family to school partnership and the community to school partnership Epstein (1987).

Leung (2003) asserts that learning should become as natural as breathing, be universal and lifelong, and be focused on securing our future. The fact that lifelong learning is an improvement-oriented process is its most important feature.

*Table 3* demonstrates that I have discovered what Gewirtz (2008, pp. 415-416) refers to as four different discourses to be pertinent to my research in terms of how lifelong learning supports growth through personal fulfillment, citizenship, social inclusion or social justice, and work-related learning.

Table 3 Discourses of Lifelong Learning

<b>1</b>	<p>Discourse One</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal fulfilment</li> <li>• This argument places a strong emphasis on how lifelong learning promotes personal growth, development, and, possibly, fulfillment. noting how important the process is to "becoming human."</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p>Discourse Two</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizenship</li> <li>• Since the emphasis in this article is on learning for social good, educators are encouraged to express their worries about dropout rates and how they affect community development.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p>Discourse Three</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social inclusion or social justice</li> <li>• All learners must be included in the educational process to improve intercultural understanding and communication and to ensure that everyone has access to the skills deemed required for full participation in a "knowledge-based" society. Here, the focus is on encouraging the kind of education that may strengthen minority and working-class groups. However, aggressively confront the social and political inequalities that influence their</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p>Discourse Four</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work-related learning</li> <li>• Given that neo-liberal views on the connection between learning and work predominate in this discourse, it emphasizes the value of work-related learning. However, these</li> </ul>

According to the examination of the white papers, SA has attempted to incorporate lifelong learning into national-scale educational changes since the early 1980s. A comprehensive summary of government policy is contained in the White Paper (2004). Developing a learning culture that keeps up with these changes and gives people the knowledge, skills, concepts, and values necessary for lifelong learning is the issue facing our education and training system. However, in response to the demand for a mobile workforce and competent workers in a knowledge economy, lifelong learning was primarily utilized to broaden and gloss over the competency-based approach. Leung (2003, p. 31) further demonstrates the significance of lifelong learning by demonstrating that:

- provides cohesion and connectedness.
- provides inclusiveness.
- stimulates new partnerships.
- changes focus from institutions to learners and learning.
- boosts competitiveness.
- improves the quality of life.
- reduces unemployment.
- promotes cultural development.
- reduces barriers.
- reduces inequality.

Furthermore, Walters & Watters (2000) reason that whilst the idea of lifelong learning is wonderful, certain scholars suggest it does not seem impossible to implement in South Africa up until this point. Education has changed from historically focusing on greater theory and knowledge to focusing on skills and employability pushed under the knowledge economy powered by fast-changing digital technology. Regardless of wealth or poverty, lifelong learning has been a topic in other nations like South Africa. Contrarily, the idea of lifelong learning is promoted as a slogan to encourage people to sign up for competency-based training and education to maintain their competitiveness in the labor market. Through this, it ensures that SA will grow through personal fulfilment, citizenship, social inclusion or social justice, and work-related learning. Further, it would seem the ideal of lifelong learning has not yet been fully fulfilled in any nation across the globe. However, as an educator who has been influenced by the ethos of lifelong learning, for her entire professional life thus far, I believe that an authentic form of lifelong learning could be educationally useful in the contexts that I know.

The primary concepts grouped here under the literature review are clarified and discussed considering their applicability to my research.

#### Clustered Theme 1: Dropouts

1. Dropouts pre- and post-Apartheid
2. Dropout Interventions

#### Clustered Theme 2: Cohesive and resilient communities/schooling/teaching

1. Rural versus urban schooling
2. Teaching in a rural South African educational community

#### Clustered Theme 3: Educators' empowering influence

1. Teaching and learning
2. Quality Teaching

#### Clustered Theme 4: Lifelong Learning

1. Lifelong learning
2. Community-school partnership
3. Educational Communities



## **2.3 Concerns in the Literature Relevant to My Research Undertaking**

The subject of my study of the literature is educator perception of dropout in rural South African educational contexts. The perspective on the role of rural secondary school educators in helping to reduce voluntary withdrawal is a key component of scholar material that has been reviewed. The role of educational communities in helping to reduce voluntary withdrawal in rural secondary schools constitutes another important component of my research undertaking.

Guzman et al's (2021) systematic review of dropout in rural higher education provides an important foundation from which to understand dropout from various vantage points in my own study. Most notably, the following overview is significant:

“In the last three decades, the study of student dropout in higher education has become one of the lines of research of greatest interest to the academic community, state and social actors due to the high rates of this event, its multi-causality and the effects or consequences it has for the individual, the family, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), society in general and the state,” (Guzman, Barragan, & Vitery, 2021, 1).

The following discussion provides a succinct summary of the main arguments and developments in each of the three fields:

### **2.3.1 Dropout in Rural South African Educational Contexts**

According to Runhare et al (2021, 592) learner dropout has been a problem for years, especially in low-income and rural South African communities. In addition, variables including how many children and teens struggle with personal concerns, family hardship, and troubles with socialization and peer group culture are frequently mentioned as motivating factors for leaving out. According to Okukawa (2009, 191), implementing a new national intervention plan enacted by the government through Community Learning Centre (CLC) can increase the interaction and interconnectedness of students in programs by empowering students and fostering community development.

### **2.3.2 Educator Influence on Reducing Dropout**

The investigation by Boody (2013), which described the kind of influence instructors believed they had on students' decisions to continue in school or drop out, highlights the important role that educators play. This adds to a key point I made in my discussion on this subject about how, particularly in rural South African schools, the process of teaching and learning presents numerous difficulties for both instructors and students. Additionally, according to Boody (2013, 64), teachers have the power to positively impact students' ability to succeed in the classroom as well as their ability to graduate. Raising teachers' understanding of the part they play and the beneficial impact they can have on students who are at risk of dropping out is therefore essential. In the present study, relevant factors to my research were shared which include: (a) relationship-building, (b) communicating caring, (c) motivation and encouragement, and (d) pointing to the future. In rural South African schools, these factors can contribute to a more inclusive educational community.

### **2.3.3 Lifelong Learning and Educational Community**

The International Commission Based on Education for the Twenty-first Century, in a report generally referred to as the "Delors Report" to UNESCO (1996, 86), outlines four pillars of education throughout life, namely: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. This implies a comprehensive and all-encompassing conception of education built around the idea of lifelong learning. These pillars will enable students to profit from educational opportunities throughout their lives, whether through formal or informal learning.

"Partners recognize their shared interests in and responsibilities for children, and they work together to create better opportunities and programs for students." (2002, 20) Joyce Epstein and colleagues. Therefore, diversity in education, including parental involvement and community role models, is crucial to thus build on the community-school partnership in this educational community.

I have come across a variety of ideas for collaboration in schools as can be discerned in *Figure 2*, but I agree with Epstein when she claims that a family-like school accepts each child's uniqueness and gives them a sense of value and inclusion.

Figure 2 Inclusivity in Education



The relevance to my research undertaking is outlined in the following way:

## 2.4 Dropout

### 2.4.1 Theme Cluster 1: Dropout in Rural South African Educational Contexts

In this main theme, I found Dropout pre- and post-Apartheid, and Dropout Interventions to be the most appropriate subthemes clustered under dropouts as it is one of the core aspects for my research. Herein, I explore how the interaction and interconnectedness between learners and their circumstances living in a post-Apartheid rural South African educational communities can obstruct their means of enrolling and becoming lifelong learners and directly effects the dropout rates. By revealing the narratives of teachers on dropouts I experience different dimensions on what coerces learners to become dropouts and how to counterattack this phenomenon.

#### 2.4.1.1 Dropout pre- and post-Apartheid

In this theme, another aspect of the impact on education is spoken of as it is believed that Apartheid contributed to learners dropping out from school. Furthermore, in *Table 4* the influential factors will be mentioned to substantiate this reasoning.

Dropouts have been categorized as not attending school due to not being academically strong. However, research has proven valuable statistics on more prominent reasons for dropping out from school of which are elaborated on when I define dropouts.

That being said, my intention is to uncover the reasons that compel the withdrawal of learners from a rural schooling system. In addition, I investigate the contribution that rural educational communities may have on dropout rates and the narratives of educators on dropouts thus creating new perspectives and narratives.

Since the apartheid regime, low quality of education was offered to less privileged people who according to Spaul (2015, p. 3) include poor children in South Africa, who make up the majority, who are starting behind and staying behind the South African schooling system which is enlarged as this system will not be able to impart the knowledge, skills and values that students need to become full members of society. Furthermore, the concept of students is declared as being the ones who are taught according to Self-directed learning surely is where a school responds to the students' needs and demands and motivates students to look to know. Lifelong learning does not always exist in concrete, readily identifiable forms, such as classrooms, buildings, or curriculum, nor on recognizable sites according to Bryce et.al. (2000). However, according to Dunlap (1997, 3) "To be successful, students must develop the self-directed learning skills needed."

Influential factors mentioned below by Strassburg (2010) are complemented by the Amnesty International report (2020) recording that too many schools suffer from poor infrastructure compromising the quality of education available. Side effects of racially segregated education are mentioned by Mokhaba (2004), inferior education and unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

Table 4 Influential Factors

Strassburg (2010, p. 35)	Amnesty International report (2020, pp. 2-4)
<b>Household poverty is the overarching context in which most children and youths are made vulnerable to leaving school.</b>	South African education system, characterized by crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and relatively poor educational outcomes, is perpetuating inequality and as a result failing too many of its children
<b>A lack of money for access costs or fees</b>	Lack of an adequate and/or reliable water supply often requiring use of a borehole; poor hygiene with associated health problems among learners; leaking septic tanks; broken sanitation infrastructure that could not be repaired owing to lack of funds and an

	inability to remedy vandalism or theft in sanitation facilities.
General financial pressures at home (leading to a decision to leave school to find work.	Children in the lowest income groups are also more likely to walk to school than those in the highest income group.
Family responsibilities in the context of low incomes (such as having to look after siblings, for example) also push youths in low-income households into leaving school.	Relatively poor educational outcomes, is perpetuating inequality and as a result failing too many of its children, with the poor hardest hit according to a new report published.
The vulnerability of poor households to financial and other shocks, such as when family members die or become ill.	Given the recent deaths, it is unacceptable that the government cannot guarantee that more children won't die this year or any coming years for that matter.

There are inequalities as Carelse (2018) mentions were inherited from an apartheid past that persists even many years later. These inequalities still have a profound effect on the rural educational communities. This can be seen in the lack of resources; poor infrastructure and the quality of education still gave. Responsibility of the state in this regard of educational inequality has to change urgently as it was reported by the Amnesty International report (2020) that the South African education system, characterized by crumbling infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms and relatively poor educational outcomes, is perpetuating inequality and as a result failing too many of its children. This directly effects the rate at which learner's dropout.

The report by the Amnesty International (2020, 2) states that the education system in South Africa continues the unambiguous inequalities and long-lasting underperformance that have deep roots in the legacy of apartheid, but which are also not being effectively tackled by the current government. These are critical factors to be considered towards dropping out from school; a major fact is that previously disadvantaged areas are still disadvantaged in many ways including quality education and equipped educators are an immeasurable problem ensuring these rural areas deliver motivated and dedication from its students.

#### 2.4.1.2 Dropout Interventions

Reducing high school dropout may seem farfetched as there are not many things one can do to bring learners back to school. In this theme however, there are interventions mentioned that can be implemented to prevent learners from dropping out. These interventions may include partnering and engaging with parents, cultivating relationships by establishing advisories and paying attention to the warning signs. These interventions do, however, not guarantee that learners will remain in school, but they might just help. Various strategies have been spoken about reducing high school dropout but this profound strategy mentioned by Furger (2008) by working to personalize learning by creating small schools or reorganizing large schools into small learning communities, as part of a strategy for reducing the dropout rate is one phenomenal strategy but not realistic in overcrowded schools in rural areas. Overcrowded classes in rural educational communities makes it challenging to pay individual attention to students and/or creating a small environment for students to cultivate relationships. Reducing dropouts in rural communities through interventions are thus implausible idea.

Latif et al. (2015) mentions more aspects of dropouts, mentioning financially weak students have high possibility to dropout, poor attendance was major reason of students' dropout without completion. Herein the researcher too found that those students also dropout whose parents are not interested in their study, depression due to poverty and by their poor academic performance. The list for dropouts is endless and so should reducing dropouts too be. Reducing dropouts in a rural South African community and imparting a particular lifelong learning remains an issue with pertaining to the demographical marginalized communities in a rural post – Apartheid South Africa.

“The voices of teachers are absent, and this is problematic. Teachers have the potential to positively influence students not only to graduate, but to thrive in the school environment. Yet it is unclear from the current literature whether teachers themselves are aware of the noteworthy influence they have potentially limiting the effectiveness of their participation in dropout interventions,” Boody (2013, p. 61).

## **2.4.2 Theme Cluster 2: Educator Influence on Reducing Dropout**

The main themes clustered here is relevant to my research as it will be clarified and discussed under the subheadings – Urban versus rural schooling, and Teaching in a rural South African educational community.

### **2.4.2.1 Urban versus Rural schooling**

In this theme, it is shown that teaching in a rural settlement does impede the process of learning and teaching as it presents many challenges for both teachers and learners. This brought me to the question of the educators' role in helping high school students in rural areas to remain lifelong learners. Schools in rural areas are embedded and presented with many obstacles. This makes it rather difficult to cultivate a norm of lifelong learning amongst learners. These schools are prone to be affected by poverty which inhibits the growth of learners and disallows them to become lifelong learners. In rural schools the dropout out rates are rather high. There are factors such as previous events relocation of families which might contribute, as school dropout is much more complex and has been considered a gradual process according to Weibright (2017).

According to Carelse (2018), presumptions were made that the system's disparities were uniform and present to the same degree in all spheres of society. It also mentions that, when compared to their urban counterparts, rural populations were more severely impacted by the injustices of the previous government, according to various studies that were started in the first years of the twenty-first century.

Restoring of communities' self-worth, recalled that as UNESCO (2020, 10) report shares thoughtful ideas that employability and entrepreneurship improves through skills development and creativity, this thus to enhances public health and well-being, and builds more cohesive and resilient communities. Schools where lifelong learning is the norm are eye catching and interesting to learn about as it takes the learner on a journey of curiosity and continuous growth. Promote thinking because collaborative activities engage students in an interactive approach to learning because collaboration and using peers as resources elevates thinking, learning, and problem-solving as well as reviewing and reflecting. According to Carlsen (2013, 81) "Relevant academic and vocational programs have been designed to suit the learner's needs, interests and capabilities." This therefore is fitting especially to those in urban areas however it is in rural

areas where students are not presented with the conducive environment to become lifelong learner.

Dropping out of school results in poorer psychological, physical, social, and economic health as the rural communities in my area are staggered with an enormous poverty rate due to dropouts explore on the economy and them being unqualified. As Buckler (2011) in the dissertation of Hardy (2019, 16) mentions that there is a negative connotation associated with rural teaching placements including the presumption that rural teaching is linked with fewer resources, poorer facilities, less remuneration, and fewer opportunities for advancement, but little attention is paid to potentially positive aspects of rural teaching or potential positive experiences of rural teachers. I relate to this statement as all the previously mentioned are prevalent in rural schools. These factors however make it difficult to look at the potential positive experiences as the bad overshadows the good in rural educational communities.

Therefore, the capability of students to be lifelong learners and the educators to instil such an important gesture within the students are crucial yet, not accessible as educators are mostly not from the rural area and thus does not share in the same passion. Furthermore, Naik (1977) reasons that people are encouraged to learn throughout their lives – to learn what they like, when they like, and from whomever they like – and to impart their knowledge to those who wish to learn from them. This is what is lacking in these rural areas as previously suppressed views forced people to reason that they do not need anyone else but prefer to live a cultural or traditional lifestyle, even though one need to be open for change. The absence of passion and lack of imploring for change clouds the perspectives of people, thus resulting in them becoming stagnant.

#### **2.4.2.2 Teaching in a rural South African educational community**

In this theme, it is spoken of that teaching in a rural educational community provides minimal space to become a lifelong learner. It is said that it proves to be difficult as the circumstance are not as conducive as in urban schools or areas. Relations in schools between teacher and learner plays an essential role in the cultivation of becoming a lifelong learner. Teachers can ignite a passion in a learner. Furthermore, a relevant question remains, how will educators with the needed conceptual, reflective, and practical knowledge to influence practices and behaviours be supported in and around the classroom?



Through motivation and to learn from past mistakes these communities in rural areas can prevent from stagnating and believing they are able to succeed no matter past expressions. Therefore, Ngwakwe (2014) continues in believing that it is evident that children inherit the social standing of their parents or caregivers, irrespective of their own abilities or effort and I applaud this believe. Poverty, the core of why learner's dropout from schools, complements another very important stance that schools in rural areas will take a lifetime to restore.

Discussed and clarified under this main theme clustered here are Teaching and learning, and Quality Education as it is relevant to my research. Barriers which learners are confronted with along with profoundly unequal educational communities are mentioned and thoroughly discussed.

#### **2.4.2.3 Teaching and learning**

In this theme, teaching and learning is shown to have its own barriers which are mentioned by Reinsch (2007) of which dispositional barriers speak of attitudes and beliefs of oneself as a learner. This however may hold the key in explaining why some older adults are reluctant to engage in educational activities, conforming to the stereotype "you can't teach old dogs' new tricks". It furthermore has a profound influence on the younger generation as their abilities and capabilities to learn may also be negatively affected. Abovementioned stance is clear when one looks at having a vision to grow or how one was motivated as a toddler.

Teaching and learning in rural educational community's present vast array of obstacles thus it cannot be related to teaching and learning that takes place in urban educational communities. Both teachers and learners are faced with circumstances which impede the process of learning and teaching. According to Hardy (2019, 15) the need for quality teachers and the infrastructure to support them is acute, as is the need for a more holistic understanding of their experiences and practices to better inform teacher training, methods, and overall quality. I incur that for quality teaching learning to take place the school-classroom environment needs to be conducive and eased. This directly affects the effectiveness of teaching and the abilities displayed by the teacher.

Unemployment in South Africa is high and while certain learning opportunities are available, dropout also remains high as the average learner in South Africa often faces multiple barriers

to access and complete education. Arguably in rural communities more so than in urban communities, there is a great need to address teaching and learning challenges that might be contributing to voluntary withdrawal, or dropout, at the secondary school level.

#### **2.4.2.4 Quality Education**

In this theme, the quality of education in rural educational communities are said that it is profoundly affected because of ignorance of the Department of Basic Education. In an interview in the reading of Sakata (2021), one sees quality education as enabling you to live your own life and to help others to live their lives. Furthermore, it helps improving the quality of teacher training to promote a more learner-centred approaches with an expected result that 'teacher trainers acquire and transmit pedagogical skills for learner-centred teaching'. In doing so Reinsch (2007) states that building both emotional intelligence and lifelong learning skills can improve the quality of life, explore mental health, and increase productivity in younger people. Furthermore, some crucial aspect for quality education is too mentioned including, the readiness of departments, having the focus on ensuring inclusive and quality education to reach lifelong learning to thus empower nations and enabling students to have access to quality educational. Teachers are not equipped or trained by the education department on how to approach the needs of rural educational communities.

The needs of rural schools are overlooked and not attended too. There is a lack in proper facilities, lack of infrastructure and minimal access to other workable and crucial resources. Stroud (2018) argues that students must own their education – taking their learning into their hands says. As much as I agree with this statement, one cannot ignore the limitations these students live under which directly impedes their access to quality education. Lack of quality instruction due to shortages of Educators is a tough one because it is problematic as students in rural schools do not get the education what they need. Lack of quality education due to absence of creative ways of teaching is another aspect to investigate because the most important treasure that adults could bring from past life to today and into their future is experiential learning skills. Education should be continued throughout one's life with a holistic approach stating the philosophy 'education from cradle to grave' according to Tachie-Donkor (2019) .

Society in South Africa is profoundly unequal according to Carlsen (2013). Furthermore, it is mentioned that the formal education system is struggling particularly to supply quality

education and training to all citizens as this is due to previously marginalized societal actions. Additionally, the most important general challenges are mentioned which are the quality of teaching, school retention and the connection between education and the labour market.

### **2.4.3 Theme Cluster 3: Lifelong Learning and Educational Community**

The main themes clustered here are Inclusivity in Lifelong learning, Community-school partnership, and Educational Communities which are clarified and discussed as relevant to my research. Herein the importance of including all aspects of communities into learning are portrayed as the core of a successful educational community. This may bring about growth which may lead to lifelong learning practices.

#### **2.4.3.1 Authentic Lifelong Learning**

A review of the literature points to several contestations currently regarding the beneficial of role lifelong learning in building meaningful learning communities across the world. For example, there is the scholarly view that lifelong learning is “first and foremost about the development of human capital so as to secure its competitiveness and economic growth,” (Biesta, 2022, 662). There is also another similarly held scholarly view of lifelong pertinent to my research undertaking:

Although lifelong learning is implicitly of importance to the human development approach, ..., it has not featured strongly in the evolution of an account of education's role in human development (Biesta, 2022, 642).

In embracing all forms of learning from ‘cradle to grave’, lifelong learning (LL) is sometimes referred to as being ‘life-long and life-wide’. According to the European Commission (2000) in Power et al (2013, 30) lifelong learning is defined as: all purposeful learning activity undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and/or employment related perspective. Lifelong learning is a multi-layered term and often boxed into a narrow viewpoint rather than looking at its wider dimensions. I consider lifelong learning as an occurrence that happens daily and not to be cropped into only a school related occurrence thus adopting the view and opening myself up to the civic, social, political, and economic dimensions that it poses. Viewing it in this way, will

allow me to understand dropouts and what kind of lifelong learning is best suited for a growing educational community in a South African rural area.

Furthermore, Tachie-Donkor et.al. (2019, 1), continues saying that poverty has an immense impact on communities in rural areas especially on educators and the school as children become parents and these parents are not qualified in any way to be able to motivate their own children. The effects of poverty on dropouts are immeasurable but evidently observed within rural school communities. It has major impact on educators as teaching are not just to educate the learner with the expected curricular but must educate the learner norms and values which were supposed to be taught at home. Teachers thus are burdened with this extra task thus making it difficult to instil lifelong learning within learners.

A review of the lifelong learning scholarship has informed a multi-paradigmatic approach to lifelong learning in my own research undertaking as I see certain strong qualities in more than one model. The lifelong learning models as shown below in *Table 5*, put forward by Schuetze et al. (2006, pp. 282-283) has relevance in terms of my research undertaking as explained.

*Table 5 Models of Lifelong Learning*

Relevance in terms of my research undertaking:		
<b>Model One</b>	An emancipatory or social justice model	“Lifelong learning for all” speaks of equality of opportunity and life chances through education in a democratic society.
<b>Model Two</b>	A cultural model	Learning diversity in rural educational communities is an important exploration.
<b>Model Three</b>	An ‘open society’ model	An “open society” model invites participation about the kind of lifelong learning that might be most proper for the educational context as the case of this study.
<b>Model Four</b>	A human capital model	An exploration of this model invites connections between the school curriculum and the requirements of the world of work.

### 2.4.3.2 Community-school Partnership

Under this theme, community-school partnerships are shown to be essential for the growth of the school and the learner. It encompasses the relationships shared between the school and the

parents and between the learner and the school. Earlier experiences have shown that getting the parents involved improves the child showing immense growth and promising to be a lifelong learner. In trying to make sense of this substantial number of partnership factors, various authors have attempted to come up with the most appropriate notions regarding the importance and impact of family to school partnership and the community to school partnership.

Furthermore, Jeynes (2005), (2007), (2010) mentions that two meta-analyses also found that more subtle aspects of family engagement— expectations, family communication, and parenting style—had the strongest influences on student outcome. Family– school partnerships are beneficial for schools, too, in that strong, positive teacher–family relationships play a key role in teacher retention, (Allensworth et al., 2009).

Therefore, inclusion is the core of bringing role models in a community together as this will have a positive influence on schools and motivation to be lifelong students as it is mentioned by Sapon-Shervin (2003) and quoted verbatim in Alston et.al. (2011, 3) “Inclusion is a philosophy that brings students, families, educators, and community members together to create schools and other social institutions based on acceptance, belonging, and community.” Collaboration with the community should involve groups of professional educators, parents, students, families, and community agencies who should have one vision and that should according to Salend (2008) be working together to build effective learning environments.

According to Hartnack (2017) community-school partnerships in rural educational communities are prone to either not exist or be faced with many hurdles. The importance of acknowledging the mark of poverty on rural areas which stems from the Apartheid regime is key in understanding the lack of parental involvement in rural educational communities. Home circumstances need to be considered when dissecting family-school partnerships in rural educational communities. Parents are either living pay check to pay check which requires them to work constantly, or they are taking care of infant siblings, this makes no time to exert attention on family-school partnerships. In return this results in a deprivation of a dire needed support system and motivation. Due to this deficiency learners drop out from school.

Restoring communities are an extremely crucial factor which should not be forgotten as the African philosophy of “Ubuntu” – a concept in which my sense of self is shaped by my relationships with others. This philosophy brings about the notion that we are nothing without

the other. This can be seen in Hartnack (2017), as the following are crucial factors to an excellent partnership: community and family factors along with individual and school factors, whilst improving literacy and numeracy levels at the primary school level is mentioned as a key intervention and to improve participation because the overall involvement of parents are vital. However, learning skills are to improve, address learning needs, set learning objectives, apply learning strategies, utilize resources, and assess the overall process of their learning will all be in the hands of the learner according to Dunlap (1997). Another reason that emphasizing capabilities and capacities in all social contexts, a learning society involves all social groups, irrespective of gender, age, social class, ethnicity, and not just the learner, (Carlsen, 2013).

In this theme, an important factor is mentioned which include communal influences. A community based on growth and curiosity to know more is what community's lack. Therefore, an awareness of each one in the communities' roles should be clear as complemented by Saepudin et al. (2019, 68) and it, furthermore, mentions that the aim of public education is to provide opportunities for the community to broaden their knowledge and skills and build their competencies to be able to promote personal development, democracy, equality and economic and employment improvement as well as equitable welfare distribution. This thus is a clear way forward for communal growth.

Through building the community by creating stronger bonds across social groups, to teach important life skills, and to establish a forum for academic advisement and college and career coaching is what Furger (2008) find relevant. According to Preston et al. (2015, 729) there are some calls in government to build community resilience but the role of learning for preparedness mainly concerns the individual, or family, rather than the community.

### 2.4.3.3 Educational Communities

In this theme, and with reference to my own research undertaking, my focus is to note what educators can contribute to pursue the interests of students, loosening the institutional shackles of formal education and aiming towards a fairer and more socially inclusive society, as put forward by Saepudin et.al. (2019), to pursue a significant exploration on dropouts returning to school and not dropping out indefinitely. The narratives of educators in rural educational communities are imperative to this research. They speak from a perspective that implies solutions to the rural educational communities' problems with regards to dropout. These narratives propose ways to improve the educational communities in rural areas. Furthermore, some crucial aspect to consider for quality education and the upward mobility of educational communities are, the readiness of departments, having the focus on ensuring inclusive and quality education to reach lifelong learning to thus empower nations and enabling students to have access to quality educational materials as can be discerned in *Figure 3*.

*Figure 3 Partnership in Education*



Drawing on Hartnack's (2017) observation that the most successful educational contexts are learner oriented, Runhare et al. (2021) make a plea for meaningful educational collaboration within extended educational communities:

“The findings from our study emphasize the need for communities, families, and education management systems to build bridges and not walls around themselves. ...While many people assume that children who leave school prematurely are stubborn, lazy or have anti-school cultural norms, the result of this study indicate that the root of the problem may lie not with the children themselves, but with a lack of involvement on the part of the teachers and parents and/or weak relationships between home and school. Greater collaboration between parents and teachers could help increase learner motivation and thus reduce drop out,” (Runhare, 2021, 607).

## 2.5 Chapter Summary

Restoring communities, and arguably educational communities especially, remains an extremely crucial undertaking in South African contexts currently, and one which should be perennially underpinned by the African philosophy of “Ubuntu” – a concept in which my sense of self is shaped because of my relationships with others. This philosophy brings about the notion that we are nothing without the other. This ethos of building strong educational community can be seen in the work of Hartnack (2017), as the following are crucial factors for an excellent partnership: community and family factors along with individual and school factors, whilst improving literacy and numeracy levels at the primary school level. However, another observation is that learning skills are mainly all in the hands of the learner according to Dunlap (1997), and this may underscore the view that capabilities and capacities in all social contexts should ideally become learner centred.

The need for policy makers to understand how the context of rural teachers in particular affects teachers' training, skills, effectiveness, and agency are recalled by Dladla (2013). The literature suggests there is also support for an approach to educational development that leverages the context and experiences of teachers to inform more meaningful educational reform efforts. In this regard, (Gil et al., 2019, 764-766) averred that it is the secondary school educators who may have direct knowledge of school dropout, which is why their perspective on the topic may help us understand the problem and identify possible intervention strategies among other undertakings.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

My research sought to determine how teachers in a rural South African educational setting believed they could help reduce high school dropout rates. In this sense, I planned to investigate the professional realm of educators as well as their opinions on how to construct narratives of educational success within a larger educational community.

In this section, I first give a description of the research strategy, then I give a description of the research location. The choice of participants, the research methodology, and the methods of data collecting are all discussed in this section. I also list the methods for data analysis, including coding and theme analysis. I mention some ethically charged topics to wrap up this part.

#### **3.2 Research Approach**

Since it is suited for my research, which explores the viewpoints of educators at a high school in a rural educational community, I used a qualitative research approach. Hammersley (2013) describes qualitative research as a type of social inquiry that uses largely unstructured data in (Cohen et al., 2018, 287).

According to Cohen et al. (2018, 288), the constructivist/constructionist premise and the ontology of qualitative research both view people as anticipatory, meaning-making beings who actively construct their own interpretations of situations in order to make sense of their world and act in it. This idea is also pertinent to my research, which aimed to explore how educators anticipate students' needs through narrative while actively creating their own experiences at a high school in a rural educational setting.

To conduct my research, I chose a qualitative research approach where participants spoke on their own terms and acted in a "natural" manner, as described by Cohen et al. (2018, 289). In addition, Geertz (1973) suggests that a case study aiming for "thick descriptions" might be valuable in providing details on "what it is like" to be in a specific circumstance. To gather rich

material through educators' personal experiences, thoughts, feelings, and current circumstances, I adopted a methodology. As Gonzales et al. (2008, 3) explain, by doing this, participant voices were purposefully encouraged, and I was able to delve into a number of issues that lie beneath the surface of presenting behaviours and acts.

Additionally, Gonzales et al. (2008, 3), in Cohen et al. (2018, 289) state that naturalistic inquiry is well suited to qualitative research because it offers an in-depth, intricate, and detailed understanding of meanings, actions, non-observable as well as observable phenomena, attitudes, intentions, and behaviours. According to Cohen et al. (2018, 287) and Hammersley (2013), another approach is to see qualitative research as a type of social inquiry that uses largely unstructured data.

### **3.3 Case Study and Research Site**

In this case study, participants were selected from a rural community in the Northern Cape Province of South Africa. According to Cohen et al. (2018, 376), adopting a case study approach may make concepts easier to comprehend than if only abstract theories or principles were presented to those interested in my research undertaking.

My study strategy invited educators specifically to share their experiences of dropout through narrative accounts. The solicited perceptions of educators about dropout and voluntary withdrawal in typical educational environments were suitably accommodated within an interpretive framework.

By focussing on the narrative accounts of educators as key participants in this case study, I have usefully collected robust data since this narrative approach ably facilitated a relatively free reflective account of dropout from each educator involved in this study.

As the research site, my research was conducted in a high school in South Africa's Northern Cape Province, where there are 472 students and 20 teachers, 15 of whom reside outside this area and who teach at a school 170 kilometres away.

English is taught as the first additional language while Afrikaans is used as the medium of instruction. Two schools make up this educational community: a high school which is an Ex-

Model C school and a primary school. Former Ex-Model C schools historically receive a large state subsidy, which could include staff wages paid on the State Scales, and parents would be charged fees on top of the amount the State receives. Despite the obstacles, most teachers continue their careers in education, particularly when dealing with the challenges of dropout.

### **3.4 Sampling Technique and Research Participants**

Of the many sampling techniques available, I selected purposive sampling for my qualitative study because this technique appropriately allows for the selection of a non-random sample group of a relatively small size with specific attributes. Case sampling has been conducted because I as the researcher wanted to understand how the particular phenomenon of secondary school dropout affected the participants in the sample.

I chose 10 volunteers who work as educators at a school in a small town. Five experienced educators (those with at least five years of classroom experience) and five less experienced ones made up my sample of 10 interviewees. To ensure diversity, the interviewees were both male and female educators from various racial backgrounds. The study comprised senior and junior educators who have worked for the Department of Basic Education (DBE) or the SGB for more than a year and are registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE). They had jobs, families, and dependants at the time of the study, and some of them took part in community activities (sports, social, cultural, or political events). These were the participants who, in my opinion, had encountered dropout and adversity in their known educational contexts.

### **3.5 Data Collection Process**

Most participants cooperated during this study, allowing the intended in-person communication, and only a few participants could not uphold scheduled interview arrangements, thereby making a rescheduling necessary in some cases.

I read over the first round of transcripts before I began coding the interviews to get a feel for the information. I did that even before the period for collecting data had ended. I compiled a list of keywords that the interviewees repeatedly used during coding. The main themes in this

area were developed from the conceptual framework and linked literature, while those keywords became a component of the subthemes in this section.

Hammersley et. al's (1983, 212-217) recommendation that reflexivity be used to address validity and reliability while analysing and summarizing qualitative data served as my guide. Furthermore, a constructed interpretation's organization, ordering, chronology of choice, selection of topics, and narrative style are all subject to reflexivity, which implies that the qualitative data analysis itself turns into a text.

A fascinating narrative of educators' opinions on students dropping out of school and their roles as educators were produced after the analysis of the comprehensive and extensive data that had been gathered. "What can educators contribute to reduce high school dropout in a rural South African community?" with the following sub-questions: "What role could educators play in contributing towards an extended educational community that could reduce high school dropout in a rural South African community?", and "What role could lifelong learning play in reducing high school dropout in a rural South African community?"

### **3.5.1 Coding**

Themes were found in this study through repetitions, transitions, similarities, contrasts, theory-related topics, and missing data. In addition, my research topics as well as the pre-existing theories and models of student persistence served as a reference for the selection criteria. The main connection between thematic analysis and coding is that codes and notes made during the coding phase can be distilled into themes and subthemes at the analysis level. The coding supported the determination of the themes and subthemes.

After transcribing my interviews, I read over the initial set of transcripts to get acquainted with the data before I thought about writing notes. According to Cohen et al. (2018, 525) citing Kerlinger (1970), coding is the process of categorizing survey replies and respondent data for analysis. The data could then be thoroughly analysed and related to pre-existing theories thanks to theme analysis, which came after coding.

Hycner (1985) outlines the steps I took to conduct phenomenological analysis on interview data, which are as follows: transcribe the interview, suspending as much as possible the

researcher's personal meaning and interpretations, documenting not only the literal remarks but also non-verbal and paralinguistic communication; read the transcription numerous times and listen to the complete tape several times to establish a background for the emergence of particular meaning units and themes later; using the interviewee's own words as much as feasible, carefully examine units of meaning in general to those that are pertinent to the study issue after noting them; Identify any relevant meaning units that appear to share a similar theme or essence that connects a number of distinct relevant meaning units; analysed every meaning cluster to see whether there is one (or more) central theme that captures the essence of each cluster; reread the interview transcript and drafted a summary that included the themes drawn from the data; whether the core of the initial interview has been accurately and completely recorded; compared all of the material as a whole and updated or adjusted it using the fresh information from the second interview; searched for the themes shared by the majority or all of the interviews as well as the unique variations: (a) noting the presence of any themes shared by the majority or all of the interviews; (b) noting the presence of any themes specific to a single interview or a small number of interviews; returned these topics to the broad contexts or scopes from which they originally evolved; prepared a comprehensive summary of all the interviews, taking into account individual differences wherever pertinent and precisely capturing the essence of the phenomenon under investigation as experienced by the participants.

Additionally, Miles et al. (1984) and Simpson et.al. (2003, 83-85) also mentioned several data analysis procedures for field notes and qualitative data that included coding: examining, analysing, and coding early rather than accumulating a lot of data before analysis. I used a theme and coding method to analyze the data. I used coding to evaluate the data and search for themes and trends. The information gave me a clear understanding of the participants' interests in releasing the institutional restraints of formal education and exploring their theories on how to create new narratives of educational success and a more socially inclusive society. Participants were educators at a rural high school.

Cohen et al. (2018, 695) state that when structuring the analysing, creating a narrative may take the shape of a chronology, a logical analysis, a thematic analysis, and a story or series of "stories" from the study findings. A growing body of research cited by Cohen et al. (2018, 695) suggests that narrative analysis can make use of thematic analysis (detection of categories and themes), structural analysis (how the narrative is organized and what the language does at the textual and cultural levels), performance analysis (how narratives are co-

constructed/done/performed and the challenges encountered in such structuring), and visual analysis (of narratives created using visual media), Riessman (2008). It is common knowledge that the researcher should consider how to organize and present the data when doing a thematic analysis of qualitative data.

### **3.6 Research Methods and Instruments**

I will go into the techniques I employed to gather data, the procedure, and the research tools in this part on the research methodology. Semi-structured interviews and narrative accounts of the educator's experiences served as the main research methods for my study, which was an in-depth qualitative investigation.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with educators during which I invited them to tell their stories using narrative accounts. A letter asking them to take part in the research through interviews was used to accomplish this. Interviewing them or hearing about their experiences to gather data.

The study includes asking state high school teachers at a school in a rural South African educational community for information via questionnaires. Ten instructors responded to the questionnaires that were provided with permission and an information letter. The respondents made up a sizable sample of instructors working in isolated educational settings. The respondents, who were both male and female, ranged in age from twenty-five to older than sixty-five and had a wide range of teaching experience, ranging from five to forty-five years.

In addition, I used face-to-face semi-structured interviews as a study technique to collect information from participants at a time that worked for each of them.

Voice recordings from the interviews and the narrative were used to compile an overview of the data that was collected. When educators shared their professional opinions, it was appropriate to place them within an interpretive framework regarding dropout and voluntary withdrawal. When consent was obtained, an audio recording of the conversation was made.

I collected data using my chosen research techniques through conversations, interviews, and storytelling. As a result, I used semi-structured interviews as a study tool to ask educators to describe their personal and professional experiences with dropout. Participants in this study were invited to interviews where they were asked questions about their professional experiences with dropout or voluntary withdrawal in the educational settings, they are familiar with.

Because Cohen et al. (2018) suggest that it might help me make smart word choices and arrange questions logically, I employed an interview guide, **APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE INTERVIEW**. An interview guide is one of the most common research tools used in qualitative studies. According to some researchers, in an interview guide technique, the interviewer chooses the order and structure of the questions while the interviewee specifies the themes in advance and in outline form Patton (1980, 206).

According to Patton (1980), having an interview guide has certain benefits for the participants since they can choose the order and wording of the questions during the interview as well as predict and fill in any logical gaps in the data. As a result, interviews continue to be casual and contextual.

According to Cohen et al. (2018, 202) sampling is an essential component of research. As a result, I chose 10 educators who were educated at the period using purposive sampling. According to Teddie et.al. (2007), the purposive sampling approach recommended by Cohen et al. (2018, 218) will give the study more depth to achieve representativeness, allow for comparisons, concentrate on, unique issues or cases, and generate theory through the gradual accumulation of data from various sources. The sample was small, and using purposive sampling, instructors were chosen in accordance with the specific goals of the study.

### **3.7 Reliability and Validity**

According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993, 323-4), and cited in Cohen et al. (2018, 253), there are several elements ascribed to internal validity which include eight of the following listed below:

- confidence in the data.

- the authenticity of the data (the ability of the research to report a situation through the eyes of the participants).
- the cogency of the data.
- the soundness of the research design.
- the credibility of the data.
- the auditability of the data.
- the dependability of the data.
- the confirmability of the data.

In my research, I appropriately used the elements listed to ensure that the data I collected would be considered reliable and valid against these reference points. I also tried as far as possible to ensure that the data I collected came from reliable sources, and thanks to my participants' honesty, the data collected are robust and credible.

Additionally, I utilized the interviewing techniques recommended by Cohen et al. (2018, 276) to collect trustworthy and valid data, which includes the following elements:

- know his/her subject matter to conduct an informed conversation.
- structure the interview well, so that each stage of the interview is clear to the participant.
- be clear in the terminology and coverage of the material.
- allow participants to take their time and answer in their own way.
- be sensitive and empathic, using active listening and being sensitive to how something is said, and the non-verbal communication involved.
- be alert to those aspects of the interview which may hold significance for the participant.
- keep to the point and the matter in hand, steering the interview where necessary to address this.
- check the reliability, validity, and consistency of responses by well-placed questioning.
- be able to recall and refer to earlier statements made by the participant.
- be ready to clarify, confirm and modify the participant's comments with the participant.

I have used most of these techniques, which helped me gather useful data. Whether conducting interviews or observing, it was crucial to specify how particular responses were counted, make sure that questions were phrased consistently, and remember to stay on topic and not ruminate on other ideas while doing so, instead retrieving it to any comments made after the interview. By using clear terminology and allowing participants to take their time when answering



questions or sharing their tales, I made sure that everyone who participated received the same information and underwent testing under the same circumstances.

### 3.8 Research ethics considerations

The range of ethical concerns extends to practically every facet of the research. Cohen et al. (2018, 111-540) emphasize that ethical research focuses on what researchers should and shouldn't do in their research and research conduct. Interviews concern interpersonal contact and reveal facts about the human state, which Cohen et al. (2018) commend as having an ethical component. De Laine (2000, 107) emphasizes Cohen's assertion that researchers and participants have an equal relationship and that outsider, objective, distant, and positivist research relationships are off-limits. Researchers are inextricably linked to the lives of those they study, according to Cohen. To disrupt traditional patriarchy, the focus is on collaborations between researchers and participants.

The District Director, the Principal of the school, and the SGB all received a letter from me requesting permission to conduct the research study with the attached document **APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**, as it was my responsibility to consider the impact of the research on my research site and participants. According to the institutional ethical standards, all supporting materials, including a research proposal, an ethical clearance, and an interview schedule, were submitted with my application. In correspondence with the principal and the SGB, the District Director authorized me to interview educators and designated the school as the research location.

In social research, it's crucial to protect participants' confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity. As a result, participants received a letter of information **APPENDIX C: INFORMATION SHEET** outlining the purpose of the study and inviting their voluntary participation. A consent form was also given to them, which they filled out before the interviews. My research report includes the consent form as **Error! Reference source not found.** I ensured the participants' anonymity in this study by keeping their names private and using pseudonyms in all publications pertaining to this study. However, Ohm (2009) argues that having a pseudonym might not provide anonymity, especially if some people use them to identify themselves. In qualitative research, it can be challenging to totally protect participants' identities. Participants were encouraged to take part in the study in a letter that was provided to

them. In this document, I have clarified for everyone who is interested what I am doing and my objectives. Participants were informed that they could opt out of the interview process and that the responses they provided would remain private and anonymous.

The participants' information was handled with the strictest discretion. Cohen et al. (2018, 130) state that the researcher has a larger responsibility to ensure that confidentiality promises are kept in both letter and spirit the more sensitive, intimate, or possibly damaging the material is. Even though I gathered demographic data, participants were given the assurance that some details, including names and places of employment, would not be made public and that the data would only be used to develop participant profiles.

The research data will be stored on a personal password-protected computer for five years in a secure location with a trustworthy password. I will back up the identical information on a hard disk that will be secured in a safe. The data will be removed from the storage site at the conclusion of the five years, and any hard copies that were gathered against my will be destroyed by burning.

Even though I am seen as an insider in this inquiry, I have always held myself to the highest standards of honesty and integrity, and I handled this investigation in accordance with well-recognized ethical principles. To create a group of insiders in the same culture, where empathy, reciprocity, and equality are recognized as hallmarks, Cohen et al. (2018, 62), De Laine (2000, 108), and others promote equal opportunities. I stayed away from any form of research dishonesty. I also clearly stated my background and the goals of my study, which are detailed in **APPENDIX C: INFORMATION SHEET**, as well as how the data would be used. The research participants were further reassured by me that this study complied with ethical standards and that my role as a staff member of the school would not interfere in any way.

Participants' fundamental rights, including the right to privacy, the right to be protected from danger, and their inherent worth were all considered. Personal information was gathered and handled in accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act's (Act 4 of 2013) standards. I conducted interviews both inside and outside the chosen classrooms, in places that were convenient for the participants. I did not sway the participants' decision regarding the interview's setting; they were free to make that decision. I have not utilized my position for

personal advantage, and I have carried out my responsibilities impartially and without undue influence.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4. Case Description

##### 4.1. Participants' Profiles

Data is provided in this section in accordance with themes derived from participant views. Only three participants were asked to use pseudonyms names to safeguard their identities, while the majority of them chose to use their birth names. I shall maintain and respect the participants' privacy in accordance with my methods. Therefore, I decide to use pseudonyms to preserve everyone's privacy out of respect for all the participants. As a result, everyone who participated is anonymous because their tales were recorded with their consent after receiving an information letter that made clear they were under no need to take part. Tables and figures are used to present the participants' biographical data throughout this section.

Since English is a foreign language to them, most participants requested to participate in Afrikaans. A lack of ambition is seen in their pessimistic view, which indicates their qualifications are subpar. No one wants to study with them or give them training in any other subject or field because this makes them stagnant in their teaching endeavours, which is concerning because it inspires vision lessness in teaching and results in having no passion for what he or she does, as is what is regularly observed and experienced at this concerned school.

Five men and five women who participated in and contributed to this study are shown with their biographical information in *Table 6* in an even split between their genders. Regarding their credentials, participants expressed that they have little desire in continuing their education beyond what they have already accomplished through university education. The qualifications of the participants are listed in the table below, and this section reveals where they stopped wanting to continue learning throughout their lives. Additionally, given that they are new to the area and only use hostel residents for a brief period span, their residence status is too important of a statistic to demonstrate that they are not involved in the community on weekends.

Table 6 Biographical Information

	<b>Participants name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Residential status</b>
<b>1</b>	Devon	M	Bachelor of Education (No post graduate studies)	Homeowner in local municipal area
<b>2</b>	Anna	F	National Diploma in Education (No post graduate studies)	Reside in hostel. (New to town)
<b>3</b>	Leizel	F	National Diploma in Education (No post graduate studies)	Reside in hostel. (New to town)
<b>4</b>	Sarah	F	National Diploma in Law Studies (Post Graduate Certificate in Education)	Reside in hostel. (New to town)
<b>5</b>	Vincent	M	Bachelor of Education (No post graduate studies)	Renting private home in local municipal area
<b>6</b>	Wouksie	M	Bachelor of Education (No post graduate studies)	Reside in hostel. (New to town)
<b>7</b>	Ashley	M	Bachelor of Education (No post graduate studies)	Reside in hostel. (New to town)
<b>8</b>	David	M	Bachelor of Education (No post graduate studies)	Reside in hostel. (New to town)
<b>9</b>	Sannie	F	Bachelor of Education (No post graduate studies)	Reside in hostel. (New to town)
<b>10</b>	Annemarie	F	National Diploma in Education (No post graduate studies)	Reside in hostel. (New to town)

I interviewed educators on a set schedule to collect information for this study, as can be seen in *Table 7* below. In line with this, Afrikaans is the contestants' native tongue. Even though English is their first foreign language, several participants preferred to conduct the interviews in English, and they performed remarkably well. Since most learners' first language is Afrikaans, this language is used in the classroom. Due to their limited proficiency in English, most participants asked to converse in Afrikaans. So that the participants would feel at ease and be able to talk about their experiences as educators with great joy, some interviews were conducted in Afrikaans.

The schedules for the interviews are listed below with their dates and lengths. A few people were unable to meet on the appointed date because of language barriers, but I assured them that their data would not be lost because of the described difficulty and so I rescheduled my appointment in their preferred language.

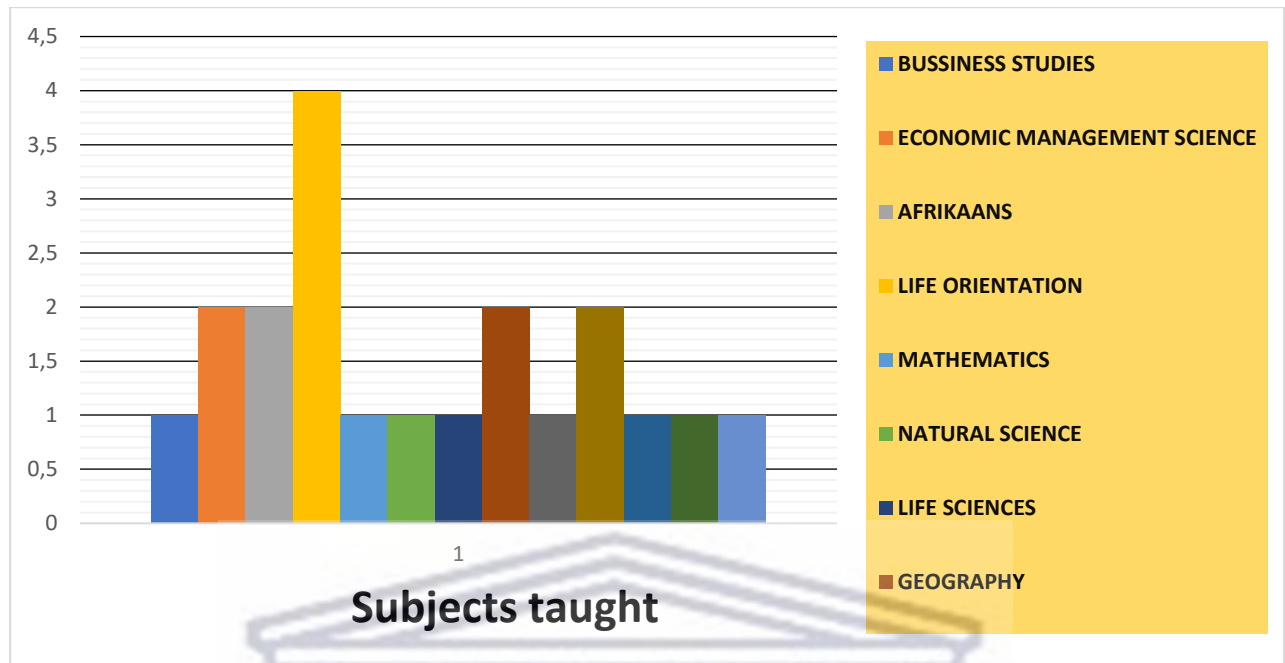
Table 7 Interview Information

	Participants	Language of interview	Date of Interview	Length of Interview	Delayed or on scheduled time
1	Devon	Afrikaans (translated to English)	28.09.2022	00:31:11	Scheduled time
2	Anna	Afrikaans (translated to English)	28.09.2022	00:44:21	Requested earlier schedule
3	Leizel	Afrikaans (translated to English)	29.09.2022	00:48:18	Scheduled time
4	Sarah	Afrikaans (translated to English)	28.09.2022	00:45:29	Requested earlier schedule
5	Vincent	English	08.10.2022	01:08:14	Delayed – rescheduled time
6	Wouksie	Afrikaans (translated to English)	10.11.2022	00:45:18	Delayed – rescheduled time
7	Ashley	Afrikaans (translated to English)	29.09.2022	00:55:32	Scheduled time
8	David	English	10.11.2022	00:56:20	Delayed – rescheduled time
9	Sannie	Afrikaans (translated to English)	28.09.2022	00:31:36	Scheduled time
10	Annemarie	Afrikaans (translated to English)	28.09.2022	00:32:20	Scheduled time

It is essential to comprehend the participants' academic backgrounds for this case study, as indicated in *Table 8*, to properly see the connection between their lack of persistence in being lifelong learners and their desire to be taught what it implies. Here are how the participants fit into this educational milieu: Employed on a temporary basis by the school governing body and permanently as the head of the department.

The participants' courses cover overly general topics. This makes it obvious that we don't have the fundamental knowledge that the local mining sector needs learners to acquire to be motivated to enroll in mining courses. The subjects that stood out as being taught by most of the participants include geography, economic management science, life orientation, and Afrikaans home language. Unfortunately, the math and physical science teachers were not available for an interview. As can be discerned in *Table 7* and *Figure 4*, I had to cancel my appointment with the instructor who teaches biological sciences and another who teaches mathematics to students in grades 8 and 9.

Figure 4 Subjects Taught by Participants

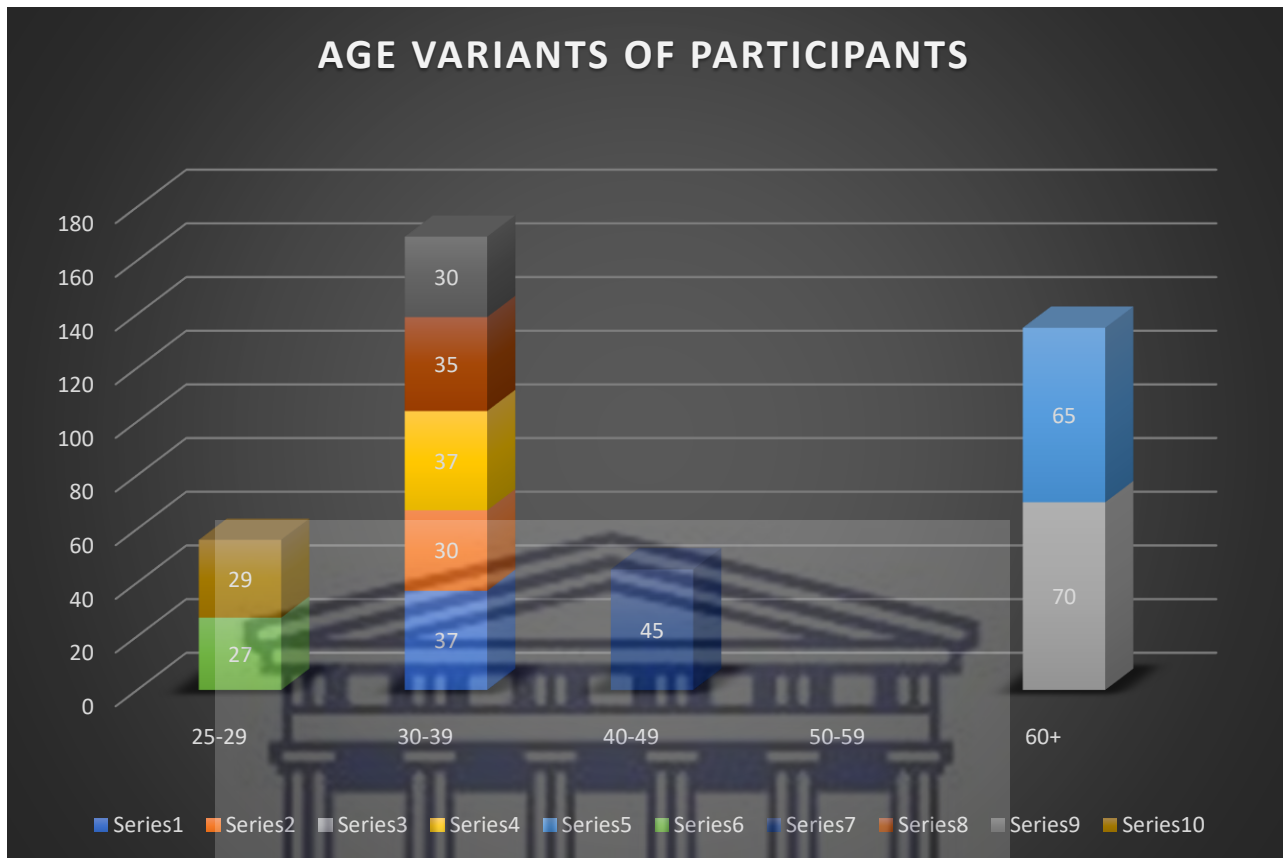


The participants' ages ranged from 27 to older than 60, with eight of the 10 being under the age of 50. The number of years that the educators have been teaching, as can be discerned in *Table 8* and *Figure 5*, is significant since it shows that most of them have held teaching jobs at institutions other than the one, they currently occupy. Several of them are fresh graduates who are new teachers. The bulk, however, are well-known in the teaching community.

Table 8 Academic Background

	Participants name	Years of Teaching	Subjects Teaching	Position
1	Devon	More than 5 years	Business studies + Economic Management Science	Permanent – Head of Department
2	Anna	More than 5 years	Afrikaans + Life Orientation	Employed by School Governing Body
3	Leizel	45+ years	Mathematics + Natural Sciences + Life Sciences	Employed by School Governing Body
4	Sarah	Less than 5 years	Afrikaans + Life Orientation	Temporary employed
5	Vincent	44+ years	Geography + History	Permanent – Head of Department
6	Wouksie	Less than 5 years	Geography + Life Orientation	Temporary employed
7	Ashley	More than 5 years	Mathematics + Life Orientation	Permanently employed
8	David	More than 5 years	English	Permanently employed
9	Sannie	Less than 5 years	English + Social Science	Employed by School Governing Body
10	Annemarie	Less than 5 years	EMS + Mathematical Literacy + Computer Applications Technology	Permanently employed

Figure 5 Age Variants of Participants



## 4.2 Data Presentation

My research undertaking has reliably uncovered many layers of what my participants perceive to be the truth in each case.

In this section I present the data collected for this study.

The data is discussed and analysed under the following broad themes:

- Theme 1 – Professional Development
- Theme 2 – Reducing high school dropout
- Theme 3 – Family- and community-school partnerships
- Theme 4 – Lifelong learning in rural communities

To make the data more cohesive, I created subthemes under each broad topic in *Table 10*; similarly, I created theme clusters in *Table 9* and proposed concerns from the literature in *Table 10* to guarantee consistency between Chapters Two and Four..



Table 9 Theme Clusters

Chapter Two: Literature Review		Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Analysis	
2.1	Introduction		
2.2	Concerns in the Literature Relevant to My Research Undertaking	4.2 Data Presentation	4.3 Analysis
2.2.1	Dropout in Rural South African Educational Contexts	<b>Theme Cluster 1</b> Dropout in Rural South African Educational Contexts	<b>Theme Cluster 1</b> Dropout in Rural South African Educational Contexts
2.2.2	Educator Influence on Reducing Dropout	<b>Theme Cluster 2</b> Educator Influence on Reducing Dropout	<b>Theme Cluster 2</b> Educator Influence on Reducing Dropout
2.2.3	Lifelong Learning and Educational Community	<b>Theme Cluster 3</b> Lifelong Learning and Educational Community	<b>Theme Cluster 3</b> Lifelong Learning and Educational Community

Table 10 Themes and Subthemes

Themes and Subthemes			
<b>Theme 1</b>	Professional Development	Subtheme 1.1	Professional Competence
		Subtheme 1.2	Practical / Technical Subjects
		Subtheme 1.3	Extracurricular Activities
		Subtheme 1.4	Learning Opportunities
		Subtheme 1.5	Educational Growth
<b>Theme 2</b>	Reducing high school dropout	Subtheme 2.1	Post-Apartheid rural South African communities
		Subtheme 2.2	Educational Barriers
<b>Theme 3</b>	Family- and Community-School partnerships	Subtheme 3.1	Persuasive Educators
		Subtheme 3.2	Demoralization due to Social Inequalities
<b>Theme 4</b>	Lifelong Learning in rural communities	Subtheme 4.1	Absence of role models

	Subtheme 4.2	Lack of professional dialogue
	Subtheme 4.3	Reducing learner retention / Promoting Lifelong Learning
	Subtheme 4.4	Authentic Forms

## **Theme 1: Professional Development**

### **Subtheme 1.1 Professional Competence**

When asked to discuss their professional success stories, interviewees usually opened up who were older and had more educational experience than 40 years. The participants discussed their worries regarding both their own and the learners' professional achievement as this theme gave rise to other subthemes.

What I deem a personal success is when one can see that a learner uses their imagination especially in their essays. An essay may just be something one can write, but it is a piece where a learner can truly be expressive of themselves, they can live out their true selves and fantasies through an essay. I create this fantasy world so they may feel comfortable to just divulge into this world and to just dream of their own. And this what I deem a personal success as a teacher when reading essays and you see that the learner made use of their imagination and that they made use of the very emotive and expressive language and words which serves to describe and deliver what they had felt in that moment. (Anna, Interview, September 28, 2022).

For me personally the success of the learners always overwhelms the bad. So, if there is at least one within the class or in the community that is succeeding, it really does take the light away from those that did not take the means to succeed. Some of us felt like we could retire but then you remember that one learner in your class that really tries to give their best or that one learner's success that you were part of – and that gives you the hope and motivation of trying again every day. (Devon, Interview, September 28, 2022).

You can feel that your contribution was not in vain. There are pupils that listened and there are still that are studying now. I come from the same background as these children, and I decided that they must make something of life and that is why I say

always try to instil that motivation so that they can realize that success lies within themselves. I can only nurture that success. If you are willing to listen and take in, then you are going to be successful in life and that is how I see it. (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

I have experience success in grade 9A learners because this year I made sure that grade 9s are learners that was developed by me in grade 8. I believe that previous skills and experience learnt by the same teacher is best developed for the next grade. (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

From my years of experience, I gathered that most learners drop out due to some subjects like mathematics. Some learners do not love the subject, some enjoy it, and some don't. Some don't wish to study to be successful in their own language. (Leizel, Interview, September 29, 2022).

### **Subtheme 1.2: Practical / Technical Subjects**

The participants found that intervention and intrinsic motivation should be heavily emphasized in a school's curriculum and with learners. Concerned about the absence of an environment that is conducive to learning, Devon and others voiced their worries:

Most schools do not allow practical subjects anymore like woodwork, consumer studies, and needlework. I think those subjects' needs to be brought back to schools because not everyone is theoretically inclined. I believe they should bring in more practical aspects in every subject. This will enable the learners to visually see and not just hear about what is being taught. As educators we do not have the time to make every subject practical, because we are bombarded with admin work (Devon, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Sanie and Annemarie talk about the various strategies they use to make their classes more participatory and useful. They enable learners to comprehend how knowledge can be used in the actual world.

With Mathematical Literacy I usually have my marks evaluation and set new goals with the learners for them to obtain the next quarter You have extra classes, your individual sessions to help the learner to reach success. It is always great to see when a learner understands. The same comparison can be made for EMS where Accounting

is so abstract, and the learner don't understand how they will use Accounting in their everyday lives. So, it's great to when a child understands and when we do informal class tests, and you see that learners understand the work much better (Annemarie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Usually when we speak about languages it is very difficult to make visual illustrations or presentations for the learners. You can use one or two images. I usually make use of my blackboard. When I make use of textbooks, I usually will be the one reading the books or I will give the learners the opportunity to read, to ensure that everyone one of them have read. Sometimes I would ask them to just look at the title of the certain reading piece and ask questions about the extract so that they can just scan through and see whether they can find the answers. If a child gets emotional assistance from a teacher, it makes the child happier. I think a child learns a lot if they do it practically because not everyone is academically inclined (Sanie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

I have several learners that are mildly different from one another. If I talk about farming of grapes and how the soil is prepared then certain learners are interested, if I sing certain learners commence with. These are practical learners. And if I could be practical with them and show them and help them with practical stuff, they will also be successful. We as teacher will need to start investing in the interest of children. We need to identify their interest and work on that (Sarah, Interview, September 28, 2022).

I use my history to empower myself which allows me to learn from my surroundings. Reading. I told my learners the other day that I can with boxes of magazines and that was my education. It taught me how to bake or do whatever I needed to do (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

I will say if one uses your pedagogical methods in class, because you will be faced with many problems. If you use these methods and change your teaching strategies then you can help development along (Wouksie, Interview, November 10, 2022).

### **Subtheme 1.3: Extracurricular Activities**

The interviewees in this article believe that offering extracurricular activities and a variety of sports to learners will keep them from dropping out.

As we have learned through experience that when we have a learner that is slow, the one thing that I have learned and found out is that if you can involve them in extracurricular activities like netball, soccer, rugby, or any other sport they will be disciplined. Sport does teach you discipline and to adhere to rules and if you as the coach or the educator can instil within them that discipline then they will realize that they are worth something. This will make them believe they are worth nothing because they are too slow. As soon as they start taking part in extracurricular activities there is someone that is interested in them then they start to realize their self-worth and that is of utmost importance. If you as a teacher can instil that self-worth in your pupils, then half of the work is done because children start to open (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

I am also involved in sport and chess as extracurricular activities. I love being involved in sport because you get another view of the child other than how you experience them in class (Devon, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Ashley and David talk about how they inculcate discipline in learners through extracurricular activities like volleyball and how that links to their academic performance and the bond between the school and the student.

There are certain things that I always teach my volleyball kids and that is to always be prepared. First, I was a dropout. The only thing I believe that helps is encouragement and empowerment – giving the kids something else to do like sport, arts, and culture. Those are the things that makes a kid proud of the school, proud to be part of something. The best thing to do is to get them into sport, to get them into arts and culture then they can see that they belong somewhere. The moment they belong somewhere, they will stay in school and try harder. Just because they are at school does not mean they belong to the school; they want to feel like they belong and is part of it. Children need sport so that they belong, it will keep them away from dropping out or making bad choices (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

I must make sure that learners are actively involved through extracurricular activities such as sport and debate. I coach athletics, rugby and I make sure that I am always actively busy whether it is in class or outside. I am expected to educate and ensure that education does take place. How I help them not to drop out is by involving them by extracurricular activities apart from education because it is sometimes normally the learners that are slow which needs extra help. So, I involve them by taking the learner

up in my rugby team. If it is a girl, they can be part of my debate team. I recently started the school brigade that prevented a lot of learners from dropping out. If I see a learner is not focussed on education but they still wish to be at school then involve the learner other than just educating them (David, Interview, November 10, 2022).

#### **Subtheme 1.4: Learning Opportunities**

The participants talk about learning resources and the many opportunities for learning that are available to people but that they do not take advantage of. Both learners and educators in their line of work can benefit from this subtheme.

Everyone in the community has something to teach a learner, according to the interviewees. Anybody, ranging from the street seller selling goods to the beggar soliciting alms to the educators and priests.

There are people in the community that these learners can learn from. They will see the people that has nice things in life and will search to have them as well. Even if it is material things, I believe the feathers make the bird. Learners can learn from anyone not just educators. However, we must take the lead as educators (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

A learner can learn from the guy that sits on the corners and asks for money. This can make them realize that it is not the life that they want. A learner can learn from a Police officer that has anger issues, by saying to themselves that if they were to choose to go into that profession that they would do things differently or handle situations differently. They can learn from religious leaders and social workers. I feel like everyone in society has something to contribute towards the education of a learner (Anna, Interview, September 28, 2022).

They can learn from everyone and anything. They are like sponges – they can absorb water wherever it is. They can learn both bad and good things. It depends on the people that surround them like their friends and elders. They learn from their parents at home and many times the circumstances are not as conducive as one would hope it to be. (Sarah, Interview, September 28, 2022).

They can learn something from everyone that they cross paths with. You can learn from your peers, you can learn from adults, you can learn from other educators. Sometimes you can learn from your own experience. You can learn from your mistakes and now what to do and what not to do (Leizel, Interview, September 29, 2022).

Learners can learn from their mistakes. They can learn from other people's mistakes. They can learn from the world's mistakes and their surroundings. They must learn from themselves to be influenced wrong or right by many factors. They can learn from the Bible, Quran, and the Torah. (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

They can learn from home – their role models. They can learn from church. Important figures in the community and then any elder person at the school and then they learn from their surroundings (Wouksie, Interview, November 10, 2022).

The interviewees claim that although learners are given many opportunities, because of the effects rural areas have on learners, they have a negative attitude about the opportunities and possibilities that are given to them.

Rural will always stay rural because there are certain norms and standards that people are used too. That why learners are reluctant and do not worry even if the opportunity is there. They can take part; they can play soccer and many more. It is really a paradigm shift, a mind-set shift that must come. I must say the community also has its fair share of blame in this matter because if they were to be involved in the school, then half of our problems would be solved. I maintain that the school must be an institution of learning. And learning, I am talking about the school must be open 24/7. We must teach at night too, so that we can get the parents and teach them even if it is just how to manage their house, how to help their children (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

Children should make use of the opportunities given to them. (Leizel, Interview, September 29, 2022).

Sarah contends that although there are many possibilities for learners to participate, many don't.

This school does give a lot of opportunities. There are many bursaries that are provided but learners do not get involved in their own success. Educators give them the information, but they do not act on it (Sarah, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Opportunities are not as plentiful in rural locations as they are in urban or larger cities, according to Sanie and Devon. According to Ashley, the nearby mines are not properly exercising their civic duty.

In rural communities' opportunities are scarcer than in big cities. I think that most of our communities are having an unjust be to them. Our communities aren't very well off. In terms of the mines, most of the time people from the surrounding areas will have to beg for opportunities. It is quite a sad situation that learners are robbed of opportunities because most companies and mines only invest in only areas and towns that are rather more developed. (Sanie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Opportunities are very scarce. I often tell my class of a child that was once in my class. I tell them to look at the very same child that lived next to them, how they rose above their circumstances and realize that they can also achieve the very same success (Devon, Interview, September 28, 2022).

The mines, wind farm and solar farms do a lot for the school, but they do not do justice because they are just using this for tax evasion. They use their communal responsibility wrongly (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

The involvement of the parents is crucial to a child's education and development. The responses from the participants show how severely learner education is impacted when parental participation is lacking.

Parents, community members and all the role-players can offer learning opportunities through their dedication to succeed. (Sanie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Parents are either not involved or they are not able to be involved due to their circumstances or lifestyle. Parents that are no more. Children get addicted to drugs and alcohol and parents can't get them back to school. Children deciding not to attend school anymore. (Sarah, Interview, September 28, 2022).

We need to involve parents because I feel if parents are involved that can only take a child to new heights. (Leizel, Interview, September 29, 2022).

Yes, because there are a lot of influences from outside and if parents don't have a stern hand over their children, they will be divulged by the bad things. Here is not a lot of relaxing facilities. The only places they think are enjoyment, is the taverns and clubs.



They get consumed by alcohol and drugs. This has a direct effect on learning and totally impedes learning. (Devon, Interview, September 28, 2022).

### **Subtheme 1.5: Educational Growth**

This part covers the strategies that should be modified and put into practice to guarantee educational advancement through high-quality instruction.

Vincent argued that innovative new approaches must be used to completely overhaul the educational system.

Education is the weapon, but you must just change the methods of how you are going to carry it over to them, for them to keep coming back. Certain educators have not moved on from their old methods. They need to find new and fresh ideas; we will have to have a whole new makeover of this education system of ours. (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

Marking homework is one of the most replied changes that was very evident in the participants' suggestions.

We must mark homework so that the learners can see that it does matter. (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

You need to as a teacher be marking books and look at their books. Kids will be more engaged if they see that they are progressing. (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

Getting the child to do homework, I deem that as a success if you get a child to do what they need to do. (Wouksie, Interview, November 10, 2022).

Practical approaches to subjects might just be the change that is needed rather than just a theoretical approach. Leizel, Annemarie, and Sarah feel strongly about this.

Get the child to do more practical work so that they can see what they are learning about. (Leizel, Interview, September 29, 2022).

In Mathematical Literacy I usually approach what is required. It depends on what part of the content it is, if it is Measurement then I believe a visual representation on the board, the learner must see that ma'am is doing it practically on the board and they must also do it in their books. When we mark, I usually invite my learners, let's do a flip classroom approach where the child does the sum on the board and then you as teacher

sees new method that they learnt in the previous years and their basic mathematics principles. When it comes to CAT, I usually do a formal presentation where I make use of PowerPoint in the theory aspects, when it comes to the question-and-answer aspect then we approach it differently when we mark or controls. (Annemarie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

We can start a program that learners can partake in where they can control over the objects and how they receive the knowledge. As a teacher I used to praise my learners when they do well and give them small educational prizes. (Leizel, Interview, September 29, 2022).

When it comes to the accounting part in EMS then I make use of the whiteboard or the projector because it is sometimes difficult to print the format sometimes since we do not always have copying machines or printers. Hence, I use the projector to show the format of the journals on the board then they do it in their books. This may be very time-consuming, but it is what works best for me. (Annemarie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

To make it more practical for them I show them a lot of things on the tablet where they can watch YouTube videos so they can see what it looks like. I also involve them by asking them for scenarios or examples to ensure they understand what they have been taught. (Sarah, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Devon, David, Wouksie, Anna, Annemarie, and Sarah think that changing approaches can be accomplished by using various techniques to pique and hold learners' interest. These various techniques could include humour, storytelling, connecting the subject matter to their personal experiences, or providing them inspirational quotes.

We make use of projectors. I make explaining topics by making use of certain stories and scenarios. I make use of examples to relate them to the topic. I also make jokes in between so that the atmosphere isn't tight and so that everyone is comfortable (Devon, Interview, September 28, 2022).

I usually start with a joke. I motivate and encourage and not just start with the lesson, make it interesting for them so that they can want to come back to your class (David, Interview, November 10, 2022).

Use different methods and ways to convey the lesson to the child. For example, you start your lesson with a statement or by telling a joke. When you have their attention,

then you switch to your lesson. In Geography classes I use my whiteboard, green board and then what I see learners find interesting is when I present a PowerPoint presentation. I also make use of short video clips in my PowerPoint presentation. (Wouksie, Interview, November 10, 2022).

As a further strategy to ensure they receive quality education is, I don't know with what mood the child came to school, I write a few motivational quotes on the board. (David, Interview, November 10, 2022).

Arranging these learners into different groups might just motivate those who do not work that hard, to even work a little bit harder. Awarding learners that do well in class is also another way of motivation for learners to strive for better. (Anna, Interview, September 28, 2022).

We need to be able to relate a child's local situation with the provincial so that the learner can build their general knowledge and apply it to be able to answer questions in exams. (Annemarie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

I would usually as I teach the content tell my learners stories and make use of the environment in which they live. (Sarah, Interview, September 28, 2022).

What I usually do is, the fact that you as educator do not know the circumstances of every learner, to motivate them by telling stories about people that I know very well that went through different situations and rose above them. I tell them about people that despite poor circumstances became successful. I can see the change in fact that learners react positively to these stories. (Wouksie, Interview, November 10, 2022).

Annemarie averred that educators cannot always relate the content with a child's experiences.

We know that learners come from different backgrounds with different experiences so we cannot always relate abstract things in a lesson with their experiences. To make sure that the scenarios in certain subjects can be applied unto their daily lives. (Annemarie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

I would choose that class needs to be made smaller. When a group is smaller, you as the teacher works better because that ensures that you can do proper revision and that you can build a better relationship with smaller groups. It also ensures that you can notice and be aware of the struggles of children. (Sanie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Sarah states that educators need to be on par with the latest trends to be more engaging and get the learner's attention.

As teacher it's your primary task to educate and inform yourself about the new trends and changes in our community. What I have noticed on TikTok and YouTube, the trend is that when you make learning more exciting and engage and involve them, they learn better. (Sarah, Interview, September 28, 2022).

## **Theme 2: Reducing High School Dropout**

### **Subtheme 2.1: Post-Apartheid Rural South Africa Communities**

Vincent demonstrated apprehension about leaving school because of the post-Apartheid rule. Some interviewees believed that post-Apartheid was the cause of student dropouts, particularly in rural areas. This was demonstrated by the following reply:

The government cannot blame Apartheid because they inherited a strong economy that has now gone down the drain. Now we must rectify that culture of non-involvement and culture of not wanting to learn. (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

Participants discussed their own experiences as well as that of one participant's parents during the Apartheid government, which contributed to their dropout. This illuminates how Apartheid's effects on schooling across several generations were felt.

A lot was taken away from us during Apartheid. The opportunities weren't given or granted to them. That disallowed us from having proper education during the Apartheid regime because our parents could not go to university to obtain a degree and ensure that their children get quality education. So, I believe that South Africa was really in a state where most of us are not where we could have been. (David, Interview, November 10, 2022).

The fact that we live in a rural area, income is scarce. There is no motivation to stay in school. Parents should encourage their children and they do not. Learners are forced to become the parents of younger siblings due to their mothers being at work. (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

We are part of the global economy, but we still do not get treated equally because we were marginalized. We are now striving towards equality. (Leizel, Interview, September 29, 2022).

If there are problems you will need to look at how you will resolve those problems because you are not only going to stay in a school environment, as a pupil you will leave the school and with what are you leaving school. Will your pupils be leaving with just book knowledge, no experience, and no implication of what they have learnt? That is why we lose children along the way, because they don't realize that power. (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

I believe academic exclusion is one of the reasons why we have so many school dropouts (Anna, Interview, September 28, 2022).

## **Subtheme 2.2: Educational Barriers**

Most of the participants reverted to apartheid as a major cause of dropout in terms of what they knew. It is also a well-known fact that South Africans had to adjust to the injustices of the past after apartheid.

The next things are that they come to school and there is no motivation to be here because a teacher is unprepared. That is why I say here the parents should play a role. Boys are just lazy, and their friends influence them to start bunking school. The cycle continues and then they drop out. Girls are more into learning and boys not so interested. Teenage pregnancy because there is no parent at home, so the child is home alone and then friends get invited over and then one thing leads to another thing. I think that is where we lack sometimes, and we don't really detect certain children that needs the extra help. It is these learners that we lose along the way. So, you must have the skill and you must have the knowledge so that pupils can start believing in you. If they detect that you are not on par, they will tear you apart. I had a learner that used to challenge me during History periods, so it was very important for me to have stayed sharp and informed (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

Lack of resources. We have access to Wi-Fi but doesn't wide enough for learners to use it. If it were to span wide enough educators could use it in the computer room. Most of our learners only try to go to the mines because that is the only means of work

that they know of. Even the library is a very small one where learners do not get the necessary information. I have encountered many educators that are very intelligent, but they do not know how to impart the knowledge unto their learners. My child is a primary school, and they have a project that requires research. Some parents within the community do not have the means at their disposal like Wi-Fi to do that research. Poverty does play a big role in the successes of many learners – it impedes it. (Devon, Interview, September 28, 2022).

The lack of quality resources. We have projectors but not in every classroom. The learners have the subject CAT but very few has their own laptops or computers at home to practice on. I know of schools that are solely dependent on a textbook and a green chalk board. The subject that I teach is Afrikaans Home language and I must admit, it is a bit tough for learners to speak Afrikaans. Even though their mother tongue is Afrikaans, and they speak it daily, it is noticeable that they still speak it wrong, and their sentence construction is very poor. (Anna, Interview, September 28, 2022).

I would say that late coming to class is a problem because you only start your lesson 15 minutes after the learners has arrived. Overcrowded classrooms, this is the biggest problem on this school especially in grade 8 where the classes are only two classes so there might just be 48 learners in one classroom which can only accommodate about 35 learners (Annemarie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Bullying. Parental involvement. Children not being able to read very well. They do not have a love for certain subject. I would say that learners in general have a whole different culture of learning hence you encounter the tendency where you get some learners are eager to learn and compete to reach the highest possible achievement and then you get other learners that shows no interest at all. This could be due to some defect in their foundation phase or parents that are not involved (Leizel, Interview, September 29, 2022).

The barriers are their circumstance at home is the number one problem (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

There are learners that must walk for kilometres only to get to the school. There are learners that comes from homes where there isn't any electricity. There is no running water. There are no real toilet facilities. Their parents are mostly jobless, and these things make them turn to alcohol and drugs. Lack of infrastructure. Absenteeism of educators. Educators not being a role model. Learners being teacher's pets. Learners

that come from poor background gets the cruellest treatment (David, Interview, November 10, 2022).

I am of opinion that unqualified educators, jealousy amongst staff and negative relationships amongst children all are barriers to learning (Wouksie, Interview, November 10, 2022).

I think that is where we are lacking because we are very much textbook orientated. It is clear the learners only study for test, examinations and afterwards they walk away without realizing that those are the things they can apply in life. (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

For me personally as a teacher you know the child and the class – where their weaknesses are and where you need to direct extra attention (Wouksie, Interview, November 10, 2022).

The first and most important is poverty. This leads them to drop out of school to go look for work to help sustain the household. Drugs are a big role player in dropout rates. Children being illiterate causes them to leave school because they feel low about themselves. I feel like if the child likes the subjects that they are doing, they will remain at school (Devon, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Parent involvement is a huge problem because especially in small towns such as this, both parents work to provide the minimum for their household. If there are meetings that require their attendance, it is a matter of they cannot attend because they are either still at work or smaller siblings that require their attention. So, the lack of parent involvement makes it harder for the parent to know what is happening in their children's lives. If school is worse and teacher contribute towards that, children unfortunately will feel no need to go to school anymore and rather drop out. Making them feel like failures already motivates a spirit of dropping out of school (Anna, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Drug abuse is very big issue that contributes to the dropout rate. I would also say that it might be the case where learners have learning disorders and they are ridiculed and no accommodation in the curriculum that would cause them to dropout I feel like the curriculum in general is overloaded, we as educators struggle to keep our heads above water with the content. Sometimes we rush through the content then there is no time for revision because then it is exam time. Great preparations usually help at the time.

But how do our children cope with the overcrowded curriculum. (Annemarie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

I think what is stopping educators from creating more successful stories is that fact that classes are overcrowded. It makes it very difficult for a teacher to reach each learner individually. When we look at social factors the biggest worry for me is the fact that learners use drugs and come to school under the influence of drugs or alcohol. I feel like the absence of the parental involvement in a child's life makes that the child may get lost. (Sanie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Some of the kids make wrong decisions. I don't fully agree. Poverty is not the reason for a dropout. The reason for dropouts is drugs and alcohol. When kids are into drugs, they feel like they do not need school, they don't want to be at school, or they are not happy being at school. Drugs and alcohol are the two things that make learners to drop out and stay at home. (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

Alcohol and drugs. Unemployment. If a learner repeatedly fails a grade, then that learner will just give up and drop out of school. Teenage pregnancy amongst the girls. Home circumstances. Sometimes it's also because of educators – how they handle learners. Bullying. All I can say is, poverty has a home in every part of community. (David, Interview, November 10, 2022).

Furthermore, Sarah disagreed on the matter that learners experience educational barriers due to apartheid to thus be the reason to dropout.

From a teacher's perspective there are no barriers. The child itself allows barriers to exist. They allow this by not attending extra classes. They do not partake in conversations in class. They seclude themselves. The teacher is ready to educate but the problem lays with the child (Sarah, Interview, September 28, 2022).

### **Theme 3: Family- And Community-School Partnerships**

#### **Subtheme 3.1: Persuasive Educators**

Vincent, Devon, Anna, Sarah, Leizel, and Ashley discuss the potential effects of a particular type of lifelong learning on developing the rural community's educational infrastructure to guarantee that learners do not drop out of school and that quality education is provided. Their



contributions also touch on the potential role of family- and community-school partnerships. They all have the same objective and contend that home visits are essential for success and that educators must regularly inspire their learners.

I agree we have a lot of poverty but that does not mean that you should stay in that poverty. We should instil within ourselves that we teach at this High school. If we have that pride, then it will project unto our pupils. If we use a different approach that might change the mentality of the pupils. If you are a register teacher of certain grades like grade 12 then you must do home visitation. Reach out to the parents so that they can feel they are part of the puzzle. Have one event every quarter to involve the parents. (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

As educators we have a heavy load. You must play the doctor, you must play a social worker, and you must be the parental figure. If you really want to save a child, you must go the extra mile by getting to know the parents, their background, and their home circumstances. Going the extra mile is what we need to do. We did that at the start of our professions where we went to different houses and did visitations. We had to report back to the principal the following day. This was to ensure that we keep learners on par, and they do not dropout. When I still taught in Elsie River, I got a phone call one night and this child told me, "Sir I am now the department head of a Technicon." He comes from low circumstances. I said to myself, he is one of my success stories. He was a very bright boy – very good in mathematics and science. He just needed that extra inspiration and that is why I can say he was part of my success (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

Yes, there are a lot of learners that I have taught, that became doctors and educators. Recently there was a previous pupil of mine that graduate with a degree in Marketing. The cars they drive is even far better than mine. To see this really warms one's heart that they are succeeding in life. For me personally the success of the learners always overwhelms the bad. So, if there is at least one within the class or in the community that is succeeding, it really does take the light away from those that did not take the means to succeed. Lead with passion. Make children feel good when they did well in class. Acknowledge them for their hard work. This serves as a motivation for their peers to realize they can also be successful. Express your love for the subject so that learners can also become passionate about it. (Devon, Interview, September 28, 2022).

It comes back to how educators motivate learners. If we as teacher make them feel safe and make them feel that they belong, then they will come back. Even if school may be bad, they might come back because of a certain teacher that made them feel special and like they belong. As a teacher we also need to impart our wisdom onto the learners, and we will never be able to do that if we are too scared to call a spade a spade and address the wrongs of a learner. If you see that a learner is getting distracted, you as a teacher should be able firmly tell that learner. Poverty does exist and we do live in it, but the department does make provision for a feeding scheme, bursaries, and sanitary packets. Poverty should serve as motivation for the child to do better and strive for better and the not reason why the child only stagnates in one place or want to become a dropout. At school there should not be a reason for poverty to be blamed they receive free education and do not have to pay for education. There so many opportunities and possibilities it just depends on the learner to do their best and give it their all. Poverty will always be a social phenomenon and it won't be eradicated anytime soon (Anna, Interview, September 28, 2022).

In the community at large I would like to be able to breakthrough to a parent and make them realize that the school needs them. Get parents to be involved in school because they believe their children and come to fight with the educators at school. Parents also need to be educated. This interview made realize once again that to become a teacher you are something special. To be able to speak to and with a child and to form and guide them in a way really is worth it – even if you fail all the time but you do succeed those one or two times. Just to be able to help a child see the light that it is possible to really does make a difference. The children that may not be academically strong can also succeed with just a word of courage and guidance. A teacher must be able to identify the different types of learners in their class. Making specific reference to learning differences or how they learn to attract and engage the child. You must be able to identify their weak points and strengths to know how you can benefit them. They need to get to know their children (Sarah, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Some children have the potential, but it is because of parents not being involved that they do not prosper. Parental involvement is the key to a child's success. When you can stimulate the child in such a creative way that they start loving the subject even if they did not like it. Not everyone can sharpen their general knowledge and skills. Children here are more privileged to be able to have that. Children need to sharpen their skills because if you do mathematics then they have endless possibilities of

careers to choose from. They need to be able to read and sharpen their comprehensions skills to understand what they are reading and what is required of them to be able to do the sum (Leizel, Interview, September 29, 2022).

One thing that I have noticed is that successful learners believe in more than just one teacher or follow. They believe in almost all their educators and that they follow. They are not easily influenced. However, those that are not so successful they have just one teacher and that teacher can be influencing them in a wrong way. The reason why I say this is because educators at school are the learner's role models (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

### **Subtheme 3.2: Demoralisation and Social Inequality**

Many exposed learners are excluded from this artificially created parallel educational system, and the educators' inadequate preparation is also highlighted. Massive racial injustice and social inequality persist in South Africa today because of the Apartheid regime's racial discrimination. As their comments show under this subtheme, it is probable that participants in this study had unpleasant educational experiences given the apartheid education system.

Learning shouldn't be seen as something so far away. It should be viewed as a game, and you learn by playing certain educational skills. Not all educators have these skills, and that's why we should consider reskilling our educators to fill the void that is there. We know very well that children these days are very different than when we were young. We knew exactly what we wanted out of life, but these children have mixed ideas and mixed values. So as a teacher how are you going to rectify that? (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

The fact that successful learners continue to be successful is most probably because their parents are involved. Their parents see that they do their homework, they make sure these learners' study when it is examination. These parents support their children through everything. I feel like the not so successful learners can be provided with emotional support in terms of drugs and alcohol. I don't agree with that statement although poverty is in our communities. Everyone knows what their circumstances are. Does the learner put in that extra effort to rise above their circumstances, or will they stay stagnate in their circumstances? I would say most just accept the circumstances and just go with the flow. I feel like learners have a choice, there is

always a choice. Do you want that mark of poverty, or do you want to rise above? (Sanie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

David describes his early life and connects it to how disheartened the government is today and its consequences.

I grew up in a pandok and I am proud of myself for where I ended up. So, for me it wasn't easy. I didn't have the same opportunities that learners from rich or well-sustained houses had. For me it was the opposite. I had to work extra harder for me to become a teacher because it was my Afrikaans teacher that inspired me to become a teacher. So, I can gladly share my home circumstances which was very poor. In the end it is not about where you come from but where end up. South Africa is a developing country. If you compare South Africa and Australia and Canada, you see that in those countries education is most important. This results in a higher quality of living. The global economy does not actually address the historic generated prolific social inequalities because people were not treated equal. There are a lot of racial aspects. If you take the white people then they are the ones that have the bigger houses with swimming pools. If you look at the coloured communities, you will see that they are stuck in the past because they are used these norms. If you look at black South Africans, you see that they have progressed more. I believe I can say it because it's my opinion. The government is to be blamed because people are sitting in profiles where they should not have been placed. (David, Interview, November 10, 2022).

#### **Theme 4: Authenticating Lifelong Learning**

##### **Subtheme 4.1: Absence of Role Models**

When role models aren't growing and don't show a desire to be lifelong learners, lifelong learning may not have much of an impact on improving the educational quality of rural communities. The comments that follow make it evident that learners from rural areas frequently stagnate and internalize the idea that because they are poor, they should continue to be poor. Vincent keeps making comparisons between learners from provinces other than the Northern Cape based on his personal experiences. Anna is worried about being stigmatized, particularly in rural places.

The saddest of it all is that we have that stigma that if you are from a small rural town, they you won't succeed. We believe that because my mother is at home and my father works on the streets, I won't succeed in life and won't go anywhere. (Anna, Interview, September 28, 2022).

We subject ourselves to the fact that there is little to zero development within small towns and their people. (Anna, Interview, September 28, 2022).

If I should make a comparison between the Western Cape and the Northern Cape in the vent of what pupils come to learn, I have realized that pupils in the Western Cape are more conscience and orientated. They want to go to university and better their lives. Unfortunately, what happens here in the Northern Cape is that there are no real role models. I think that is where we fail sometimes and what I try to always is to ask myself, what did that pupil learn from me? (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

Learners need to look in their communities and find positive role models there should they not have any at home.

Rooifontein, this small place there is a doctor that went to Cuba and practicing medicine in Kimberley, my brother is a Municipal manager, and there is a young boy that is a deputy principal at a special need school in the Western Cape. He has won awards and has appeared on many television programs. This is indicative that if you have a positive role model in your own small town that as a learner one strives for success and to be like the. (Anna, Interview, September 28, 2022).

For learners to be successful is to work hard and to continue to work hard. Learners doing well in school motivate each other and those not so successful to strive for better and work harder. It is important to delegate learners into groups to fill each other's voids (Wouksie, Interview, November 10, 2022).

Be a role model. Set the standard. Be the example. Complain less. Be more involved in the community (David, Interview, November 10, 2022).

Wouksie and David feels that parents have neglected that roles as the first role models and they seem to have given up. Their needs are always put before their child's.

In rural areas it looks to me like parents has given up. If you look at parent gatherings, no one attends it anymore. Unfortunately, nowadays parents do not put their children first anymore. Children unfortunately believe that they need to follow the footsteps of

their parents even though it sometimes is wrong. It will take a long time before change can be brought about because today's children get distracted very easily (Wouksie, Interview, November 10, 2022).

Normally it is the parents that collapses. It's a shame that parents can quickly come to school where there is an issue involving their children. When it's time to attend meetings, they are nowhere to be seen (David, Interview, November 10, 2022).

David and Wouksie is of opinion that educators should start telling their stories and start setting the standard for learners to become influential role models.

If many more people start to tell their success stories, a lot of the children will learn from them and then they will start seeing educators as role models. (Wouksie, Interview, November 10, 2022).

Be a role model. Set the standard. Be the example. Complain less. Be more involved in the community. (David, Interview, November 10, 2022).

Ashley and Anna are of opinion that educators are the role models at school and should be influencing learners in a positive way.

But this yet again another way education and educators can be brought in because as teacher you need to be able to make the learners believe that they can achieve anything they want to in life. (Anna, Interview, September 28, 2022).

However, those that are not so successful they have just one teacher and that teacher can be influencing them in a wrong way. The reason why I say this is because educators at school are the learner's role models. (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

Vincent concludes that learner that are more privileged are those who are more successful because they have role models to look up to at home.

The more privileged is going to be more successful because they have role models and the less privileged does not have those role models. What should happen is that the less privileged should see in their communities there are role models and strive to be like them if they do not have them in their household. (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

#### **Subtheme 4.2: Lack of Professional Dialogue**

This subtheme demonstrates that the participants are aware of the absence of professional conversation among their peers. When they said that they were no longer as committed, especially the older ones, this raised serious concerns.

We are speaking now of lifelong learning and dropouts, why are there so many dropouts? If we have more of those conversations about lifelong learning then we will be able to help each other and say, "Okay, where are you struggling?" (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

We are not that much dedicated anymore to education although we know it is a lifelong learning process. We know this is a noble profession and we must realize that we as educators are also learning as we teach our pupils. It's a phenomenon that is always changing. Education cannot be static if it was then we would have been dinosaurs. Yes, there is a lack of getting into the conversation of how we attain that lifelong learning and try to implant and indoctrinate it into our pupils (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

As I converse with my colleagues I talk about where I originate from, my background and the circumstances in which I grew up in. I tell my story to motivate and inspire the younger generation that they can rise above their circumstances and reach for better (Devon, Interview, September 28, 2022).

As teacher we often have the discussion about how I can better myself in a classroom, especially when you get new subjects that were not part of your majors in university. (Annemarie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

In my opinion the discussions that happen amongst educators these days are mostly about how educators want to break away from the profession of teaching based on what is happening in the education system. (Sanie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

It is very relevant amongst us as educators because I learn something new every day. The conversations we have amongst ourselves serves to better us as educators so that we can reach out better to our learners, to attract the child's attention (Sarah, Interview, September 28, 2022).

There are conversations that we have amongst ourselves as educators about lifelong learning. Which is based on the successes of our learners which includes whether they pass and the rate at which they pass. (David, Interview, November 10, 2022).

People does remain a lifelong learner. We are to motivate lifelong learning amongst our learners at school however, we don't converse about this profound topic (Leizel, Interview, September 29, 2022).

### **Subtheme 4.3: Promoting Lifelong Learning**

Vincent and Wouksie gave some incredibly fascinating information on how educators may be putting themselves in various positions to play a part in encouraging lifelong learning and lowering student retention.

If we go back in history, we know that we had the most unequal society because of apartheid and how apartheid dehumanized non-whites. Now that you are in power what do you do to address those inequalities of the past so that we can become empowered and be able to compete with the global economy. Education is a lifelong journey and we as educators should take the lead and try to eradicate the mind-set of blaming apartheid. When good men don't do anything, evil thrives. There is movement that we can compete with the global economy because look at Trevor Noah, he was given the chance to be on a television program and now participates in the global community. We have people that can compete that is why our doctors and nurses are so sought for in foreign countries. That is the type of lifelong learning we need to instil in the pupils, and it can't stay with us as we have already lived our lives. We must impart it into the next generation that must take over (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

Even till today we suffer as coloureds and black South Africans. Unfortunately, the youth of today does not make use of the opportunities that they are given. The people in developed countries are willing to help developing countries like South Africa. It is very sad to teach in a rural area because you as an educator is just a person. You need to face these children that comes from these circumstances. You think yourself into that child's circumstances and what you would have done. What angers me a lot about the Department of Education in South Africa, is that they think that all the school's



circumstances are the same and that all schools need to treat equally. They do not realize the explore the community has on the kids (Wouksie, Interview, November 10, 2022).

#### **Subtheme 4.4: Authentic Forms**

Regarding the impact of individual motivation and what specifically inspires a student to strive for success, I show and debate authentic new forms and the perspectives of the interviewees in this subtheme. Most participants voiced concerns about parental participation, a genuine form that is essential for effectively impacting a child.

Parent's involvement must not be underestimated. They play the perfect role in the upbringing of the children. That's why I maintain a child does not just grow up, they must be brought up. (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

I believe exemplary parents has children who also turns out to be examples at school because education had already started at home. That is one of the things that ensure that successful learners are continuing to be successful because they are already taught how to behave at school. Exercise discipline constantly. (David, Interview, November 10, 2022).

For me it is very vital for parents to be involved because communication can solve a lot of problems. The moment you communicate, and parents are aware of what their kids are doing, there will be improvement. (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

A child will do something as far as you allow them to do it. If you draw the line and say, you don't cross this line then they will know they there are boundaries. You must tell your child to get up and not if they want to go to school. (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

I come from the same background as these children, and I decided that they must make something of life and that is why I say always try to instil that motivation so that they can realize that success lies within themselves. (Vincent, Interview, October 08, 2022).

Speaking from a personal perspective, because my mother was our driving force, she emphasized that we cannot live the life that she lived. That pushed us to strive for success. You as a learner need a support system in place to get success – even if it is

yourself. Your support system is very important and if you do not have a support system, then you won't be successful (Devon, Interview, September 28, 2022).

For learners to succeed, Anna and Annemarie argued that educators must go above and beyond to assist them. One of the best ways a teacher can influence and assist a learner is by their humility. Sara and Ashley argued that to encourage their pupils to open up, they needed to be more approachable.

The extra mile comes from the teacher, and that is what ensures that you are one of those educators that a learner can look up to. It is the extra mile that ensures that learners remember you as a teacher not the fact that you stood in front of a class and taught your work because that is what every teacher does. As a teacher you need to have humility and compassion because that is what will make learners realize that you care and is also a person with feelings. If it requires you to stop in the middle of a lesson just to ask if something is wrong, then you as a teacher should do that. I had two learners assigned to me and they referred to me as teacher-mom. I invested everything into them. If they needed some pocket money or a bread, I would always give them. If they wanted me to help them with homework I would help where I can. They did not just deem me and a teacher but also as a second mother figure in their lives. Do not exclude the less hard-working learners from those that work hard. These learners might just need the motivation of their fellow peers. (Anna, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Emotional support because a teacher cannot do that alone. There are people in the community like our religious leaders, social workers that be of assistance in that regard (Annemarie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

You can support those who are not so successful through extra programs, extra classes, to have discussions with those learner's parents that need the extra help so that they can be assisted. (Annemarie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

I can start being less stern to allow a space where a child can be open with comfort. (Sarah, Interview, September 28, 2022).

I think I need to greet them more with a smile because if kids are afraid of you, you won't reach your learners and they won't be reaching out to you. (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

Some of us felt like we could retire but then you remember that one learner in your class that really tries to give their best or that one learner's success that you were part of – and that gives you the hope and motivation of trying again every day. As the saying goes, knowledge is power. They can strip away everything from you, but they cannot take away your knowledge. To sharpen yourself and teach yourself further will make that you succeed in life. The fact is your life will improve and become better. The people that look up to you, their life will become better. (Devon, Interview, September 28, 2022).

A spirit of openness to learn can be fostered by engaging in constructive competition. Positive competition can be effectively induced by holding awards ceremonies and commemorating learners' accomplishments. This may encourage learners to want to excel and learn for the rest of their lives.

Recognition ceremonies and when we give the diplomas, or where educators acknowledge the best in classes to motivate and ignite positive competition. In grade 8 one can usually see that some learners challenge each other. This is how they motivate each other. What we can do, is to keep that positive competition ablaze. (Annemarie, Interview, September 28, 2022).

Ashley thinks that to see real change, religion needs to be allowed back into classrooms.

I just feel like we must bring religion back into schools because schools started with religion – Muslim schools, Christian schools. Schools exist because of religion but now religion is out of schools. If we bring religion back, it might change a lot. I noticed that with my brother and his friends they changed a lot because of religion. They were drug addicts and gangsters, but religions changed them. (Ashley, Interview, September 29, 2022).

#### **4.3 Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative data are analysed in four main categories and under the following broad themes:

- Professional Development
- Reducing high school dropout
- Family- and community-school partnerships
- Lifelong learning in rural communities

### 4.3.1 Professional Development

Data was analysed in this category in terms of the following subthemes shown in *Table 11*:

*Table 11 Themes for Professional Development*

<b>Professional Competence</b>
<b>Practical / Technical Subjects</b>
<b>Extracurricular Activities</b>
<b>Learning Opportunities</b>
<b>Educational Growth</b>

Schools that make lifelong learning the norm are eye-catching and exciting to hear about as they take learners on a path of curiosity and constant improvement. These schools are likely to engage learners in collaborative, interactive learning activities that draw on their peers as resources to foster thinking, learning, problem-solving, reviewing, and reflecting. Relevant academic and occupational programs have been created to fit the learner's needs, interests, and capacities, claims Carlsen (2013, 81).

Intervention programs, as mentioned by Strassburg (2010), are a crucial area to focus on, particularly due to a sense of limited futures, home environments not conducive to learning, a lack of stimulation at school as well as poor learning outcomes, to ensure learners remain lifelong learners and remain in school. Some of the most significant factors that can stop learners from dropping out are extracurricular activities, school leadership and management, peer connections, a sense of belonging, and safety. According to Bridgeland (2006), curriculum and instruction need to be modified to make school more engaging and pertinent for learners who want to leave early.

Latif et al. (2015) emphasize the importance of quality education because it can significantly affect a country's output as well as its social and economic growth. Furthermore, it is asserted that offering education to people from all socioeconomic strata occurs in undeveloped nations with less focus on improving educational standards. Latif et al. also discusses how dropping out denies children in underdeveloped countries their right to an education in a UNESCO report from 2000.

According to a study on the subject, rather than creating barriers between themselves, communities, families, and school administration systems must work together.

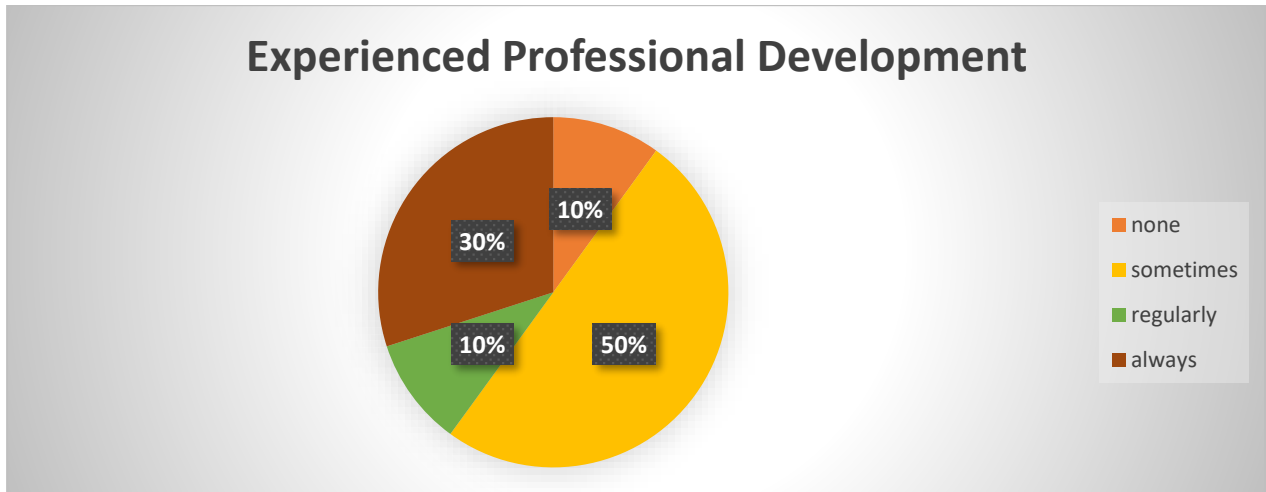
Furthermore, according to Bryce et al. (2000), a curriculum centered on enhancing one's own values and abilities will boost resource availability and promote tolerance. Rumberger (1987) discovered that some regular school initiatives, as well as dropout avoidance and recovery programs, as well as dropout avoidance and recovery programs, are effective at keeping kids in school. The need for and the content of learning are primarily determined by the learners themselves, learning is related to how one thinks rather than what one ought to think, and educators serve as mentors and role models for lifelong learning rather than information providers. There are other significant ideas about lifelong learning as well. Alternative educational techniques enable learners to build their ability for lifelong learning by using problem-based learning, conscious learning, mutual teaching, and cognitive apprenticeship. Traditional educational methods place an emphasis on academic accomplishment and restrict parts of a person's intrinsic skills.

According to an interview with Sakata (2020), a good education gives you the ability to live your own life and help others live theirs. It also makes it simpler to encourage learner-centered practices and raise the bar for teacher education, with the intention of assisting "teacher educators acquire and transmit pedagogical skills for learner-centered teaching." According to Reinsch (2007), doing so enables people to improve their quality of life, assess their mental health, and increase their productivity.

According to Carlsen (2013), there exist considerable inequities in South African society. Furthermore, it is asserted that historically marginalized societal activities make it difficult for the formal education system to provide all citizens with high-quality education and training. The three biggest general challenges are also identified as the best professors, student retention, and the connection between education and the job market.

Additionally, 50% of the subjects reported experiencing frequent professional development and academic success at school as can be discerned in *Figure 6*, while the remaining 50% were equally split between experiencing them rarely, always, and never. Thus, the educational community is motivated to investigate additional academic achievements and career advancement.

Figure 6 Participants who Experienced Professional Development



### 4.3.2 Reducing High School Dropouts

In this category, data was analysed in terms of the following subthemes:

Table 12 Themes for Reducing High School Dropouts

<b>Post-Apartheid rural South African communities</b>	
<b>Educational Barriers</b>	

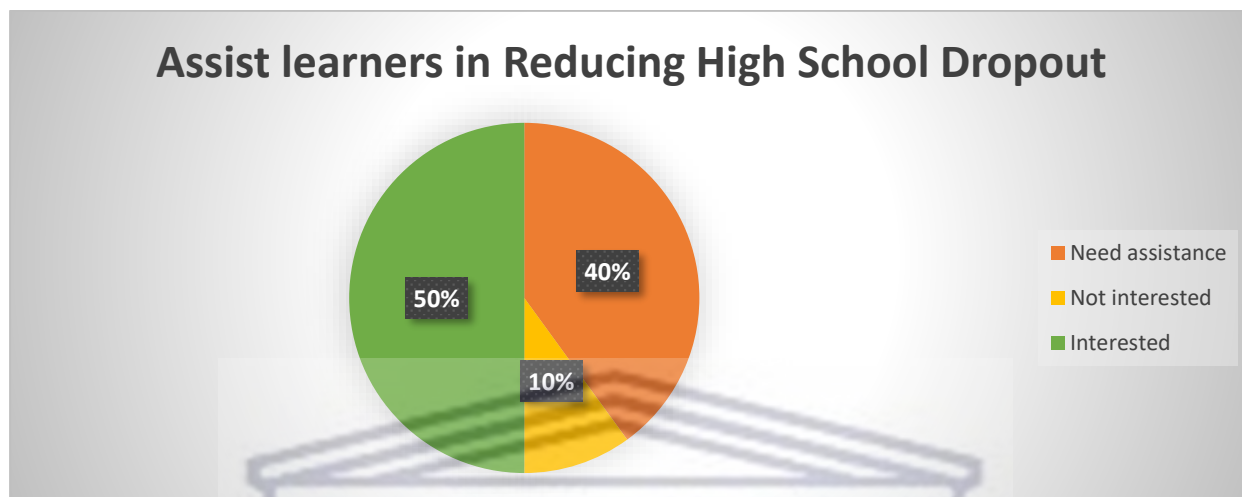
The Amnesty International report (2020), which notes that too many schools suffer from substandard infrastructure, adds to the influencing factors listed by Strassburg (2010). This report also notes that the quality of education offered in too many schools is compromised. Mokhaba (2004) mentions the negative implications of racially segregated education, including subpar education and unskilled and semi-skilled labor.

These rural communities can avoid stagnation and think they are capable of success regardless of previous manifestations by being motivated and learning from past missteps. Since children are likely to inherit their parents' or caregivers' social status regardless of their own abilities or efforts, Ngwakwe (2014) maintains that it is obvious. One very key position that schools in rural regions will take a lifetime to repair is that poverty is the primary cause of student dropout.

Because of this, the study aims to inspire educators to work with learners to lower high school dropout rates and eliminate the apartheid-era shackles that appear to have gripped both learners and educators in rural educational settings. As can be discerned in *Figure 7* the differences of participants who assist learners in reducing high school dropout are shown as 40% of

participants asked for help so they could improve and help others, while 50% of participants said they were interested in helping learners reduce high school dropout and 10% said they had no interest.

Figure 7 Participants who Assist Learners in Reducing High School Dropout



### 4.3.3 Family- and Community-School Partnerships

In this category, data was analysed in terms of the following subthemes:

Table 13 Subthemes for Family- and Community-school Partnerships

<b>Persuasive Educators</b>	
<b>Demoralization due to Social Inequalities</b>	

The importance of the unadorned dedication of educators and community members to education is where the attention should lie, therefore it is important to include individuals who drop out of school altogether rather than just those who do so at a specific point. According to the claim made by Tachie-Donkor et al. (2019), "learning from cradle to grave" involves gaining the confidence to create chances for ongoing learning and preparing learners to be lifelong learners. To succeed in continuing to learn throughout life, learners and educators will be more focused on the wider picture. As children become parents and these parents are unqualified, Tachie-Donkor argues, poverty has a significant impact on rural communities, particularly on educators and the school.

The results of prior studies that showed the inequities of the educational system and poor family background also contribute to student dropout, Latif et al. (2015), make it clear that social inequalities might be a factor in dropouts. The most significant and long-lasting repercussions

of these disparities may be seen in the sphere of education, including a legacy of extremely inadequate organization and amenities for the poor, a lack of proper facilities.

As can be discerned in *Figure 8*, the result of what participants were asked if they were involved in family- and community-school partnerships; 50% said they needed guidance, 30% said they were uninterested, and 20% said it was challenging because they had to travel home on the weekends and most community events took place on the weekends.

*Figure 8 Participants who are Involved in Family- and Community-school Partnership*



#### 4.3.4 Lifelong Learning in Rural Communities

In this category, data was analysed in terms of the following subthemes:

*Table 14 Subthemes for Lifelong Learning in Rural Communities*

<b>Absence of role models</b>
<b>Lack of professional dialogue</b>
<b>Reducing learner retention / Promoting Lifelong Learning</b>
<b>Authentic Forms</b>

As stated by Sapon-Shervin (2003) and drawn upon again by in Alston et al. (2011, 3), "Inclusion is a philosophy that brings learners, families, educators, and community members together to create institutions like schools and other social gathering places that are based on acceptance, belonging, and community." Therefore, educators, parents, learners, families, and community organizations should work together to create effective learning environments, because children learn when they are together, encapsulated in the same experiences, interacting together according to Salend (2008). These groups should share a common vision.

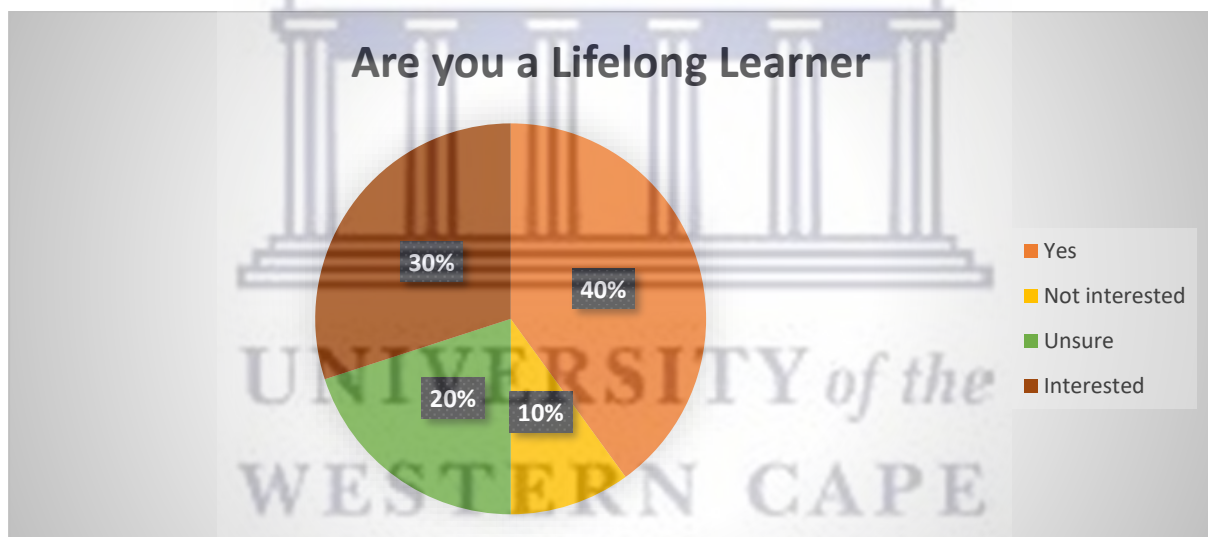


This supports Richey's (2019) assertion that a shared understanding of the vision and aims of a learning community is constructed through continuous conversations by its members.

Aitchison (2004, 517-518) investigates how lifelong learning is being implemented in South Africa. He offers a succinct overview of how lifelong learning has not taken off in South Africa. The non-formal education that incorporates more technical and career education into formal schooling was spurred by the country of South Africa (often referred to as SA)'s rising skills shortage. This was meant to be the beginning of the country's transition from the previous apartheid system to a successfully implemented nation-wide lifelong learning education strategy.

Participants were asked if they consider themselves lifelong learners with this perspective in mind. Of those asked, 40% answered they do, 20% were doubtful, 10% indicated they are not interested, but 30% said they are as can be discerned in *Figure 9*.

*Figure 9* Participants deeming themselves as Lifelong Learners



#### 4.4 Connection with Literature

Many researchers who studied educational impediments were found in my literature search. All the researchers I could find focused on why learners leave school. For instance, the difficulties faced by educators in sub-Saharan Africa's most remote regions, such as greater class numbers, subpar facilities, lower pay, and limited access to utilities, pose obstacles to the improvement of learning outcomes in these places. According to Preston et al. (2015, 729), communities are accountable for creating their own learning and resilience arrangements as opposed to following orders from the federal government. Additionally, these learning modalities

encourage socially cohesive societies because they are interdependent rather than independent. Here, the social environment is disturbed, leading to the emergence of a new community learning paradigm.

According to Yamauchi et al.'s (2017, 20) interpretation of Epstein's (1987) theory, educators should be prepared to share responsibility for learners' learning with families and the community, and schools should be more accessible to participation from a variety of stakeholders Auerbach (2011).

Additionally, according to Epstein (2011), Miller et al. (2013), and other researchers, family-school collaborations are the new name for parental participation. To illustrate the five levels of relationships and contexts that can be seen as concentric circles extending outward from the individual, Bronfenbrenner (1974, 1979, 1986, 1994, 2001) suggests that interactions between the home, family, and peers are to be critical to children's development.

## **4.5 Interpretation of Findings in Terms of the Literature**

### **4.5.1 Professional Development**

The lack of a supportive learning environment and learners' lack of interest in a subject's theoretical parts as opposed to their propensity for excelling in practical areas were the research's most important takeaways. One participant made it clear that he believed that the reason teaching is challenging is because educators are overburdened with administrative tasks, which prevents them from visualizing the material for the benefit of their learners.

Other participants made the argument that they should adapt their teaching methods to make their lessons more participatory and useful. The participation in extracurricular activities and other sports, according to some, deters learners from dropping out and encourages discipline.

During the interviews, participants acknowledged that they had never thought about how their perspective during their professional careers could alter the thinking of their learners or how school failure and dropout affected them personally.

#### **4.5.2 Reducing High School Dropouts**

The analysis's key finding was that dropout factors are crucial to comprehending dropouts in South Africa after apartheid. The impact Apartheid had on rural educational communities dominated the participants' broader understanding of dropout issues. In the interviews, a range of perceptions were shared, including those of their own circumstances and academic exclusion, which is one of the causes of the rise in dropout rates.

Additionally, it's thought that school dropout in South African educational contexts was a result of events under the apartheid regime. Most participants attributed educational obstacles leading to school dropout to apartheid. The effect of apartheid on education over several generations is made clear by this.

Unexpectedly, some participants refuted the notion that apartheid-related educational impediments are the cause of dropout rates among learners.

Additionally, a connection was drawn between the absence of developing skills in SA and how non-formal education has begun to incorporate more technical and vocational education into formal schooling to begin the shift from the previous apartheid system to a lifetime learning approach to education. So perhaps this is the reason why educators don't engage in scholarly debates to inspire their learners.

#### **4.5.3 Family- and Community-School Partnership**

Participants mainly mentioned educators' busy schedules as obstacles to success, poverty as a barrier to achievement, and how educators may inspire learners to do well. They emphasized the necessity for collaboration between parents and other education stakeholders most of all.

Some participants expressed concern that the reason their children drop out of school is because their parents are not actively involved in their education and extracurricular activities at school. The main issue preventing consistent attendance at school is the learners' family situations. Since their parents are typically unemployed and substance abusers, learners from disadvantaged backgrounds experience the worst punishment, which drives them to turn to alcohol and drugs.

The use of home visits was suggested to revive the educational spirit that prevailed when the majority of these educators were in school. This will spur parents to get involved and play a vital role in ensuring the success of their kids, it was noted.

Participants talk about how proud they are of the graduates and recall the successes of past learners. They also expect that the alumni will be able to teach the current learners.

Some participants informed me that they would like to reach out to parents and convince them that the school needs them because parents are frequently absent from school-related events and, more specifically, from their children's life. The goal of this is to engage parents in their children's education because they often argue with educators at school because they think their children never misbehave. It was also noted that parents need to have training to communicate to children, shape them, and guide them in a positive direction – even though they don't always succeed, but some do on occasion.

Additionally, parental control over a child's education extends beyond that of the teacher. However, a teacher must be able to identify the various learner types in his or her class by addressing learning differences particularly or how the child learns to engage in and address them. An educator must be able to recognize the strengths and limitations of learners to know how to support them, according to one participant.

Another significant finding was the lack of motivation among learners to attend class because of the teacher's lack of preparation, absence, and lack of role modelling. As a result, because they are not engaged in what they are studying and their interest is not sustained, learners become lost along the way. For learners to believe in their potential, it is crucial that educators possess the essential skills and expertise. If learners discover that the teacher is not capable, they will lose interest, as was already said.

#### **4.5.4 Lifelong Learning in Rural Communities**

It has been discovered that everyone in and around a school or community can teach learners something new. Even though Reinsch (2007) found that both the development of emotional intelligence and lifelong learning abilities can enhance life attributes, have an impact on mental

health, and stimulate productivity in younger people, these educational communities do not exhibit such growth. Participants felt that despite having a wealth of learning resources available to them, learners rarely make use of them. Participants also assert that there are plenty of prospects for improvement ahead, so they hope that learners can learn from their failures by failing to graduate and dropping out. Their lack of interest is attributed to their parent's lack of involvement since participants reasoned that parents are crucial to a child's education. These findings resonate with the participants' professional expertise and lifelong experiences.

According to Sakata (2021), encouraging a more learner-centered approach complements what participants perceive to be a more practical approach. Therefore, a hands-on approach to subjects is key since, as indicated by participants, this is how educators may inspire learners to progress and ensure that they attend class on a regular basis. Once more, the participants' skills can make a significant difference in and around the work environment and in the classroom to hold learners' attention.

Most participants did concur that educators need to stay current, particularly with regard to issues affecting their learners. Only if educators visit their learners' homes to show interest in their circumstances and broaden their knowledge can this take place.

#### **4.6 The Larger Relevance and Value of this Study**

The question of what happened to a student who never returned to class after a break, or a disappointing end-of-term report will be one that educators have experienced before. I believe that educators may help learners who lack self-confidence by looking at the bigger picture and identifying where they are lacking. Bruner (2004) contends that a narrative analysis here reports personal experiences or observations and offers novel perspectives on events that are frequently familiar. The narrative text also has an "omniscient, authorial voice." Smeyers et.al. (2001) claim that because the meanings are produced by language and observations, it is heavily interpretative and not an objective fact. Additionally, in rural educational settings, learners must have the freedom to share their own viewpoints.

#### **4.6.1 Lifelong Learning Culture**

- o Permit or develop forums where educators in rural educational settings can discuss best practices and their viewpoints on predetermined topics to inspire professional dialogue. While sharing their professional success stories and growth-oriented ideas, this will lean toward a culture of lifelong learning among educators and learners. This project will be useful to educators.

#### **4.6.2 Inclusivity**

- o To promote community engagement and family involvement, inclusiveness in schools should be the norm. This might encourage role models to participate in school activities so that they can utilize their expertise to prepare learners and inspire educators to create a more inclusive environment.

#### **4.6.3 Stagnant to Growing Educational Communities**

- o Most educators do not consider themselves to be perpetual learners, which can cause learners to become stagnant and leave school. Therefore, consistency in education can help educators and the general public foster a culture of lifelong learning by referencing the idea that we are all lifelong learners.

#### **4.6.4 Policy Changes**

- o Adjusting the educational policies at a school will enable educators to inform their learners of the most recent information and keep themselves updated with pertinent information. Educators will also be able to keep up with global educational growth by enrolling in daily online courses. As a result, this will help educators get better results with phenomena for their learners. Educators will subsequently add those online courses to their curriculum vitae and earn CPTD points from the South African Council for Educators, or SACE (2012), which are awarded to educators because this will also offer ongoing support to educators and from which educators may benefit.

#### **4.6.5 Curriculum aimed at Curbing Dropout**

- o Perhaps another educator with a similar educational background can bring value to the creation of a curriculum for less academically accomplished learners who frequently leave school due to obstacles in the classroom. As a result, such dropouts will gain from courses that are more practical and ability friendly.

#### **4.7 Further Scholarship, Gaps and Uncertainties**

##### **4.7.1 Further Scholarship**

Firstly, throughout my research, I have come across very little previous studies on lifelong learning in rural settings and the benefits of including helpful practical or technical disciplines for learners who may not be academically brilliant but who are creative with their practical talents.

Secondly, few research works on school dropout are devoted to the viewpoints of educators, as Allensworth et al. (2009, 257) discovered.

Thirdly, authors such as Runhare et al. (2021, 591) promote solid school-community collaboration where the school and the community share responsibility for children's educational access and opportunity.

##### **4.7.2 Gaps and Uncertainties**

Even though the current study only included a small number of participants, the findings are appreciable and substantive, and the results indicate that additional research may be required to fully understand and address the viewpoints of learners and dropouts to build on the achievements of educational communities.

Because dropouts and registered learners were not included in my study at the institution where the data was gathered, their viewpoints were not taken into consideration. There was a gap in identifying the opinions of learners in remote educational communities since only educators from the school of interest participated in this survey due to the time commitment required to complete this research paper.

In addition, while I tried to provide a detailed and thorough explanation of the study, this is not a complete thesis and is more constrained in the possible results that I sought to give.

The results of this study cannot be applied to all high schools in Southern Africa because the data are restricted to one high school in a rural settlement that was included in the study. However, there are schools close by that are referred to be feeder schools (i.e., schools that accept learners from nearby locations). Therefore, it would also be necessary to conduct further research on the viewpoints of the learners, especially those who live in nearby rural areas.

The study has limitations because it excluded educators from other schools in the area. Only educators at the current school participated in this study due to the time needed to complete this research paper and a lack of funding for travel.

Last but not least, despite doing pre-information meetings with the participants during which I thoroughly explained the interview sessions to them, I had to halt the real interviews since the participants could not understand the majority of questions posed in English and several became quite emotional. Some of the interviewees admitted they had been dropouts in the past but were inspired by me as an educator to better themselves. As I had to interpret the questions for clarity, this consumed a significant amount of both my time and the time of the participants. However, these findings from this research may be useful for underprivileged groups in rural locations with characteristics comparable to those of the sample community.

#### **4.7.2 Further Research**

My research undertaking has alerted me to the following matters for further research. Some of these matters may not have been included in the scope of my current research to begin with, and others may have warranted more attention in my own study:

In the rural educational environment studied:

- Learners have access to a wide range of learning opportunities, but they do not make use of them to become lifelong learners.
- Professional conversation among educators seems to be absent as a normal part of professional duty.



- Encourage educators to remain committed to their careers by ensuring they provide high-quality instruction, which will lead to student achievement and professional growth.
- Lowering high school dropout rates in rural schools through increased diversity and the value of extracurricular engagement as a subject in the classroom.
- The belief of educators may attest to the value of school guidance and counseling in fostering a culture of lifelong learning and a sense of belonging.
- The viewpoints of learners from the outlying areas who attend a feeder school and who live more than 30 kilometers distant from the neighborhood school: reasons why they left school and the value of going to a school that is out of their financial grasp. These learners may have valid reasons for leaving out, and hopefully further research will uncover this.
- The educator's responsibility for fostering a community among learners and educators in the classroom to encourage an informal kind of lifelong learning.
- The importance of partnerships between families, communities, and schools, and how they can be used to improve rural communities' educational capacity and prevent school dropout while delivering high-quality instruction.

#### 4.8 Chapter Summary

According to the results of my research, educator perception suggests that there are many causes of dropout in South African educational settings, and arguably no less in a post-apartheid era. Participants were largely aware that the phenomenon of dropout is multi-causal and wide-ranging, and all participants were able to offer insightful ideas and perspectives pertinent to the investigation. As a constant reminder that educator viewpoints are important because of their deeply rooted professional narratives, the research question was repeatedly addressed in many ways; woven through discussion, interviews, and storytelling.

The collage of educator perception could be depicted in the following way:

The data depicted on overall image that learners who chose to voluntarily withdraw from school are not self-motivated and that they had polarised intents that compelled them to either persevere despite the difficulties they encountered or to drop out of school. The assistance of families and communities could make a major difference in the academic progress for learners

who choose to drop out, and more generally for all learners. Many people are willing to take steps to encourage greater parental, family, and community involvement to support learners. The respondents agreed that there was a significant rate of substance misuse, and that perceived parental apathy was a destabilizing factor for learners who dropped out of school.

In Chapter Four, I have provided to the best of my ability a thorough analysis of the major ideas raised by the accounts of educators who encountered dropout within their educational contexts. Arguably, there is always more that could be done to fully integrate the literature review into the many themes emanating from the analysis, and not being exhaustive in this regard is a possible limitation of this study.

Due attention has also been given to ensure that theme clusters in the literature review chapter are distinct in function from theme clusters in the data presentation and analysis chapters, and that the results are addressed in the appropriate chapters, Four and Five.

This chapter has also addressed the numerous obstacles that educators face, including those that may be considered to be situational, psychological, or institutional in nature. An unintended consequence of the data may suggest a deficit disposition of the participant pool, and I would agree that this perspective could be probed in further research: it would be useful to know what the perspectives of educators and learners are about remaining lifelong learners in a rural South African community, and what authenticating lifelong learning might look like in such a setting.

Finally, the information I gathered from participant interviews also show appreciable alignment to the basic tenets of Epstein insofar as a robust educational family-school community partnership may be able to work towards educational success of learners and reduce dropout in this way.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The study aimed to investigate the perceptions of educators, most notably what they could contribute to reduce high school dropout in a rural South African educational community. In doing so, and through educator perception, I explored ways of building new narratives of educational success for learners in rural areas especially in the Namakwa region of South Africa. This study contributes towards understanding what an authenticated culture of lifelong could be in an extended rural secondary school environment. Educator perception in this study shows that learners may grow through the different learning opportunities and extracurricular activities performed by professionally competent educators, who are themselves yearning to be lifelong learners instead of stagnating professionally.

This chapter also provides a summary as well as the most significant findings of the research presented in previous chapters, and related recommendations for future research are stated.

#### **5.2 Recommendations in Terms of This Study and Further Studies**

##### **5.2.1 Broad Applicability to Studies of a Similar Nature**

There are three recommendations in terms of this study are also in principle applicable to further studies of a similar nature.

##### **5.2.1.1 Professional Growth**

The first recommendation is a call for more innovative ideas to motivate professional dialogue within a specific educational community of practice. This could be successfully done via Teams meetings, blogs, YouTube channels or any other social media platforms which will be conducive for educators, learners, parents, and community members in rural areas.

### **5.2.1.2 Educational Community**

The second recommendation is a call to create a positive lifelong learning environment for learners both within their specific school surrounds as well as within their extended educational communities.

In this regard, a family- and community-school partnership could emerge as the primary influence on educators, learners, and the school community at large towards the educational success of all learners.

### **5.2.1.3 Lifelong Learning Communities**

The third recommendation is a call for school communities to engage parents to assist when needed during school activities. Empathetic educator-parental - learner involvement in joint educational projects may go a long way towards building trust, understanding and commitment in the educational endeavours of learners currently.

## **5.3 Conclusions**

Finally in this section, I present a summary and the results, along with recommendations and the conclusion of my research.

This study focused on the main question, 'What can educators do to reduce school dropout in a rural South African community?'

The following sub-questions were included:

1. What role might educators play in creating an expanded educational community that could reduce school dropout in a rural South African community?
2. What role could lifelong learning play in reducing school dropout in a rural South African community?

My study has revealed educators shared generously and insightfully pertaining to ways in which high school dropout could possibly be reduced in a rural South African educational community.

Another related aim was met when educator perception revealed it may be possible to build new narratives of educational success for students, both within and beyond the classroom, in rural secondary schools, especially in the Namakwa region.

While certain scholarly readings may suggest that lifelong learning as an educational ethos and approach may be flourishing in certain educational landscapes, this was not the case as in this rural secondary school as the part of this case study.

The most significant finding seems to be that lifelong learning might not easily take root within certain rural South African schools as it seems teachers are not sufficiently curious to find new ways of teaching. This perception was evident throughout the interviews and analysis; mainly that the rural educational community as the case study would need appreciable exposure to the ethos of lifelong learning as a community of practice, and what the benefits of a lifelong learning framework could be for a specific rural educational community.

Therefore, lifelong learning needs to be reinvigorated in certain, if not all, South African rural schools. This study does suggest that such a reinvigoration of lifelong learning could start with teachers within rural schools in South Africa as a way of assisting a reduction in the dropout rates.

Subsequent chapters address the main research question in various ways, as outlined below:

Chapter **ONE** provided the background to the research problem including stating the problem, specifying the research aims, and outlining the research approach.

Chapter **TWO** presents a review of the literature clearly related to my study, and a discussion of the scholarship that frames my study theoretically. This chapter reveals that secondary school dropout in rural educational contexts may be as complex and as multi-causal as any other under-resourced educational landscape. The literature also shows that educator opinion on dropout appears to be a growing area of scholarly interest.

Chapter **THREE** clarifies the research methodology and design for this research paper. Accordingly, this chapter highlights the selection of participants, research method and data

collection techniques and discusses the data analysis strategies employed, namely the coding and thematic analysis.

Chapter **FOUR** provides the data presentation and analysis inclusive of interpretation of the gaps and uncertainties requiring further scholarship.

This chapter, Chapter **FIVE**, provides a summary of the findings, and recommendations for future research.

#### **5.4 Personal Reflection as an Educator**

Having intentionally bracketed my educator experience in this study, at this point I would like to explain my thinking as an educator on the lifelong learning models which I believe are personally and professionally meaningful in terms of my own teaching and learning arrangements in the classroom.

I selected specific components of Mocker's lifelong learning model, such as the reduction of dropout in a rural South African educational community; formal, informal, self-directed, and non-formal lifelong learning; and educators' narratives about dropouts. I believe these are relevant and relate to the aims and research questions of this study. The interaction of these components and their possible influence on reducing dropout in a rural South African educational community is personally significant to me in the teaching context I know.

Therefore, to assist reducing school dropout rates, educators and learners in rural educational institutions are invited to practise self-directed and mostly non-formal lifelong learning, and the provided definition and example given may assist in understanding the proposed type of lifelong learning that may best engender educational success in rural educational communities.



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**APPENDICES**

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## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE INTERVIEW

### Baseline Information: Interviewee details:

1. Name and surname:
2. Position (choose from dropdown list):
- Post level 1 Educator
  - Post level 2 HOD
  - Post level 3 Principal
  - Post level 3 Deputy Principal
3. Years of experience as an educator:
- 5 years and less
  - 5 years and more
4. Age: 21 – 30  31 – 40  41 – 50  51 – 60  61 – 65
5. Gender:
- Male
  - Female
  - Other
6. Language/s spoken at school:
- Afrikaans medium
  - English medium
  - Other
7. Contact details:
- Email address - .....
  - Telephone number - .....
  - Other - .....

### Part 1

#### Narratives of educational success

- What kind of conversations do you have among yourselves as educators about lifelong learning?
- Describe what your work involves and what you are expected to do?
- Have you experienced success within your class and if so, discuss what they are?
- What knowledge and skills are required for you to ensure that learners receive quality education?
- How are students taught? (Probe further about learning while involved in extra-curricular activities and assessment strategies?)

## **Part 2**

### **Reducing high school dropout**

13. How do you help learners to not dropout from school?
14. What is valued by educators regarding successful stories and those not so successful stories?
15. Listen to the following **statement**, then reflect and motivate whether you agree or disagreement with the statement. "South Africa's need for lifelong learning is highlighted as an imperative to participation in the global economy and to address the historically generated prolific social inequalities."
16. What kind of lifelong learning could best support the capability and human development required in the educational settings? (Probe for information about curriculum, teaching, and learning).
17. Who else can your learners learn from?

## **Part 3**

### **Teaching in a rural South African educational community**

18. How do you feel about learning opportunities provided to the learners in a rural educational community?
19. Is the overall involvement of parents in this educational community vital?
20. What are the factors that enable learners to dropout from school?
21. What are the barriers affecting successful education at school?
22. How is it that the successful learners are continuing to be successful and how could others be assisted?

## **Part 4**

### **Education in rural communities**

23. Listen to the following **statement** and say whether you agree or disagree with relevance to your circumstances at your school. "It is important to acknowledge that poverty has left a mark on South African rural communities, most notably on students dropping out from school, educators, parents, and the community at large."
24. What recommendations would you make about educating learners successfully?
25. What do you think is the things you are to do differently in your educational community?
26. Any other comments?

**Thank you for your participation!**



**2. APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**



**UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE**

Robert Sobukwe Rd  
Bellville, Cape Town  
7535

Dear Mrs D Curnow

**REF: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT A SCHOOL IN  
NAMAKWA REGION**

I am hereby, requesting your good office to kindly grant me permission to conduct my research at a school in the Namakwa Region during the third and fourth quarters of 2022 for a period of 5 weeks. The approximate time frame is 15 September to 20 October 2022 if granted the permission.

My name is Thereza Gwendoline Raman.

**Title of Research Project:** Reducing high school dropout: towards new narratives of educational success in a rural South African educational community.

**The study: Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change.** Educators at your institution are kindly requested through a letter of consent to participate in a research study which I am undertaking as part of the requirements for completion of a Masters' degree (Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change) at the University of the Western Cape. They will be requested to participate in an interview which will cover the questions in the interview guide (attached).

**The type of research that will be conducted:**

My interest both as an educator and a researcher is to better understand the kind of teaching and professional development educators may need as a contribution towards reducing dropout in the educational contexts we know. The research aim is to investigate what educators can contribute to reduce high school dropout in a rural South African educational community. A related aim is to explore educator perception about ways of building new narratives of educational success for students in rural areas especially in the Namakwa region.

The objective of the research is to find out what kind of lifelong learning can best assist in building a rural community in a multiplicity of ways, inclusive of educators ensuring that learners do not dropout from school. Therefore, taking a narrative enquiry approach conducting interviews through storytelling and focusing on answering the research question. Adopting a qualitative research approach as it is appropriate for my research which intends to explore the perspectives of educators at a high school in a rural educational community.

**Educators will be interviewed (no learners):**

The participation of learners will not be allowed as the focus is not how they solve dropping out. However, the focus here is on the communal purposes of learning, this thus includes educators to be able sharing their concerns regarding dropouts and how it affects growth within the community.

**No interference with normal teaching duties:**

The research will not have any interference with the daily running of the school and curriculum activities. The ideal time will be after school.

My data collection will be strictly for academic purposes and will not be disclosed and will be treated strictly as classified and confidential. Electronic data is encrypted, and password protected and will be stored for 5 years. Participation in this study is not compulsory and educators may withdraw at any time without reasons, penalty, or obligation. The participation of learners will not be allowed as the focus is not how they solve dropping out. However, the focus here is on the communal purposes of learning, this thus includes educators to be able sharing their concerns regarding dropouts and how it affects growth within the community.

Should you have any queries regarding this study, you may contact my supervisor who is:

Dr. Colette February

Telephone +27(0) 2195 9798

Email: [cfebruary@uwc.ac.za](mailto:cfebruary@uwc.ac.za)

Researcher: Thereza G. Raman



Signature:

Cell: 0784415642

Email: [3991282@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3991282@myuwc.ac.za)

Date: 15.09.2022



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### **3. APPENDIX C: INFORMATION SHEET**

#### **Title of Research Project:**

Reducing high school dropout: towards new narratives of educational success in a rural South African educational community.

#### **Dear participant**

You are kindly requested to participate in a research study which I am undertaking as part of the requirements for completion of a Masters' degree (Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change) at the University of the Western Cape. You are requested to participate in an interview which will cover the questions in the interview guide (attached).

I am conducting this research in part fulfilment of the requirements in Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change (MALGC). I will receive no financial benefit for conducting this research and there is no financial reward for participating interviews. You have the right to ask questions and raise your concerns regarding the study or to withdraw from the study at any time.

#### **What is this study about?**

My interest both as an educator and a researcher is to better understand the kind of teaching and professional development educators may need as a contribution towards reducing dropout in the educational contexts we know. The research aim is to investigate what educators can contribute to reduce high school dropout in a rural South African educational community. A related aim is to explore educator perception about ways of building new narratives of educational success for students in rural areas especially in the Namakwa region.

The objective of the research is to find out what kind of lifelong learning can best assist in building a rural community in a multiplicity of ways, inclusive of educators ensuring that learners do not dropout from school. Therefore, taking a narrative enquiry approach conducting interviews through storytelling and focusing on answering the research question. Adopting a qualitative research approach as it is appropriate for my research which intends to explore the perspectives of educators at a high school in a rural educational community.

#### **What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?**

The participation of learners will not be allowed as the focus is not how they solve dropping out. However, the focus here is on the communal purposes of learning, this thus includes educators to be able sharing their concerns regarding dropouts and how it affects growth within the community. The research will not have any interference with the daily running of the school and curriculum activities. The ideal time will be after school.

**Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?**

You are not obliged to take part in any research. Your comments will be treated confidentially, and your identity will be protected by using pseudonyms in my research paper. I undertake to respect the dignity and integrity of all participants in the research and to take steps to ensure that no risks or harm will be done to any participants in the research. Your details will be kept confidential. The researcher endeavors to adhere to the research ethics procedures as outlined in the universities ethics policy and undertake to observe strict confidentiality.

**INFORMATION SHEET/PRIVACY NOTICE**

In terms of the requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013), personal information will be collected and processed as per below.

**What type of personal information that will be collected?** Some baseline and demographic questions will be collected such as your age, gender etc. however due to the nature of this study your stories, experiences, and narratives will also be collected.

**Who at UWC is responsible for collecting and storing your personal information?** The researcher and any members of the research team the researcher gives permission to however, they will only have access to anonymized responses.

**Who will have access to my personal information outside of the University of Western Cape?** The researcher and any members of the research team and to who the researcher gives permission to however, they will also only have access to anonymized responses.

**How long will my personal information be stored?** As the researcher, I will store the data on my personal computer with a secretive password which is a trusted platform and only accessible with a secure password adding to the extra safekeeping and handling of data. The information will be kept safe as the data processing of the information will be stored with a reliable password. After the five years the information will be deleted from the place of storage, if any hard copies of information were collected which I do not intend to do, it will be burnt to ashes.

**What are the risks involved in this participation?**

To avoid risks to the interviewee and the selected school, I will take steps to maintain confidentiality of information and protect your identity before and after the interview. The dignity and fundamental rights of the participants will be taken into consideration as well as the protection from harm, informed consent, right of privacy, and honesty. In terms of the requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013), personal information will be collected and processed. Participants will be allowed to choose participation through giving consent or to decline participation for personal information to be collected, stored, processed, and shared as described in this information sheet. Participation in this research is completely voluntary.

**What are the benefits of participating in this research?**

The benefits of participating in this research will be the valuable information shared to enhance my research and bring about untold stories.

**Do I have to participate in the study? May I withdraw at any time?**

All interviewers will be able to see a transcript of the interview so that you can ensure that the comments have been recorded accurately. My research data, including data gathered during this interview will be secured and protected. Hardcopies of my findings will be stored electronically at home, it will be kept on my personal computer, and will be secured/protected with a password. No one else is allowed to use my personal computer. Back up electronic copies will be kept on a hard drive or external hard drive which will be secured with a password to which only I have access. A formal permission letter is available if necessary. Telephone numbers of the researcher and her university supervisor are provided. Please feel free to call any of these numbers.

**Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?**

If you agree to participate the following will be done semi/unstructured and open-ended interviews, inviting educators to tell their stories in the form of narrative enquiry. Interviewing or telling stories of your encounters to collect data for my research.

This information sheet is for you to keep so that you can be aware of the purpose of the study. With your signature on the attached consent form, you indicate that you understand the purpose of the exercise.

**What if I have questions?**

You may ask me as many questions as your like about this study and will try to answer them for you. If you have questions you think of later, you can call me at 0784415642 or email me

at [3991282@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3991282@myuwc.ac.za)

Should you have any questions concerning this research, feel free to contact the following at any time:

**The MEd candidate:**

Ms TG Raman



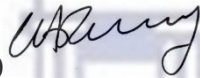
**Tel.:** 0784415642

**Email address:**

[3991282@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3991282@myuwc.ac.za)

**The supervisor:** Dr Colette February in the Department of Education (IPSS), University of the Western Cape (UWC)

**Tel.:** 021 959 2800



**Email address** [cfebruary@uwc.ac.za](mailto:cfebruary@uwc.ac.za)

If you have any questions related to the study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to this study, please contact UWC Research Ethics Office.

- Tel.: +27 21 959 4111

- **Email address:** [research-ethics@uwc.ac.za](mailto:research-ethics@uwc.ac.za)

#### 4. APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

Dear Educator

You are kindly requested to participate in a research study which I am undertaking as part of the requirements for completion of a Masters' degree (Masters in Adult Learning and Global Change) at the University of the Western Cape. As indicated in the Information Sheet you are requested to participate in an interview which will cover the questions in the interview guide (attached). Please note that participation is freely and voluntary.

**Title of Research Project:** Reducing high school dropout: towards new narratives of educational success in a rural South African educational community.

a) Please complete and tick the following choices to tell me what you want to do, to show your agreement and understanding of what is expected for this study.

1. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my responses without revealing any part of my identity.
2. I understand my responses and personal data will be kept strictly confidential.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. (In addition, should I wish to withdraw, I may contact the lead researcher at any time to do so).

b) Circle the appropriate answer.

4. I hereby agree to be audio recorded.  Yes  No
5. I agree for the anonymized data collected to be used in future research.  Yes  No
6. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and that I will not be recognized or recognizable in the reports or publications that result for the research.
7. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

**In terms of the requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013), personal information will be collected and processed:**

I hereby give consent for my personal information to be collected, stored, processed, and shared as described in the information sheet.



I do not give consent for my personal information to be collected, stored, processed, and shared as described in the information sheet.

Participant name \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of

Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature:



Date: 15.09.2022

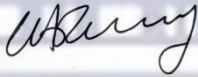
Cell: 0784415642

Email: [3991282@myuwc.ac.za](mailto:3991282@myuwc.ac.za)

Should you have any queries in this regard, you may contact my supervisor whose details are below:

Name: Dr. C. February

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Telephone: +27(0) 2195 9798

Email: [cfebruary@uwc.ac.za](mailto:cfebruary@uwc.ac.za)

Date: 15.09.2022

