

**EXPLORING THE PROBLEMS OF TEACHERS AND THEIR  
TEACHING IN FARM SCHOOLS**

by

**ZIPPORAH XOLILE NGOBESE**

**MINI-DISSERTATION**

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

**MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS**

in

**CURRICULUM STUDIES**

**OF  
JOHANNESBURG**

in the

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG**

**SUPERVISOR: DR MC VAN LOGGERENBERG**

**CO-SUPERVISOR: DR LN CONLEY**

**DECEMBER 2006**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that

### **EXPLORING THE PROBLEMS OF TEACHERS AND THEIR TEACHING IN FARM SCHOOLS**

is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

This mini-dissertation has not been previously submitted for a degree at another university.



NGOBESE ZX \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## DEDICATION

This mini dissertation is dedicated to

- My loving husband, Blessed Halalisani Ngobese;
- Our son, Thabani Ndumiso and our daughter, Slindile Princess;
- My father, Elphas Buthelezi and my late mother, Mirriam Buthelezi;
- My sisters, Victoria Nene and her family, Petty Buthelezi and her children and the late Elsie Buthelezi;
- My brothers, Mthokozisi Buthelezi and his children, and the late Scelo Buthelezi and his son;
- My aunt, Mirriam Gumede and her family;
- My parents-in-law, Altar and the late Augustine Ngobese;
- My aunt-in-law, Elizabeth Ngobese and her family;
- My brother-in-law, Sifiso Ngobese and his family;
- My sisters-in-law and their children;
- It is also dedicated to all those who seek to understand the problems facing teaching and learning in farm schools in pursuit of taking the study further.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to all who helped in the preparation of this mini-dissertation:

- God Almighty, Who gave me the strength to complete this mini-dissertation, saved us during our long distance drives to and from RAU during our contact sessions.
- My supervisor, Doctor MC van Loggerenberg and my co-supervisor, Doctor Lloyd Conley for their stimulating guidance, patience, constructive criticism and suggestions.
- All the librarians of the Rand Afrikaans University for their timely search for the necessary sources, which enabled me to complete my literature review in no long time.
- I thank all the education officials in the Bhekuzulu Circuit, particularly Mr Zitha, Mr Dlamini and Mr Khumalo, who arranged for me to meet with some principals and allowed me to visit schools.
- I thank the District Official, Mr PM Dlamini in the EMGD section, Vryheid District - who was always available for support, guidance and motivation, even with all his commitments.
- I thank the principals, TLOs and the learners of all the schools that participated in this study.
- I acknowledge the moral support from all my friends and colleagues.



## ABSTRACT

This study dealt with the question whether farm school teachers cope with their teaching and learning on a daily basis. The fact that farm schools are situated in remote areas has a problematic nature of its own, which includes obstacles and challenges such as transport problems, bad roads, dilapidated buildings and facilities, no accommodation for teachers from different places, poverty and under-development of learners, lack of involvement of the parents and no interest whatsoever from the community or the farm owner.

On top of these challenges the task in the classroom is no easier. Through data gathered in interviews it became clear that teachers struggle to teach in small, dark, unattractive, and ruined rooms, which are at their best too overcrowded and insufficient for any effective teaching and learning to take place. Because the best teachers prefer to move away and teach in towns and cities, the ones staying behind are mostly under-qualified, in need of guidance and assistance, ignorant of how to implement the new curriculum, and too shy to apply transformational changes in such a faraway place where people are under any circumstances not too keen on anything new and strange.

The data further revealed that the overarching problem that challenges teaching and learning of any kind, irrespective of the caliber of the teachers or the learners, or whatever their level of education or motivation, is poverty. Poor, unemployed and uneducated parents can not be an inspiration to their children; and hungry, tired and cold learners can for whatever it is worth, not concentrate to learn at school.

These are the findings of this study – findings that most definitely should be taken notice of by the highest authorities in the Provinces and on National level of the Departments of Education. Urgent and abundant assistance is needed to make these institutions function effectively and save another generation of learners from the vicious circle of ignorance and poverty.

## ACRONYMS USED IN THIS STUDY

<b>SGB</b>	School Governing Body
<b>SMT</b>	School Management Team
<b>TLO</b>	Teacher Liaison Officer
<b>SRC</b>	Students' Representative Council
<b>RCL</b>	Representative Council of Learners
<b>SASA</b>	South African Schools' Act
<b>KZN DEC</b>	Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education and Culture



## LIST OF TABLES

	<b>PAGE</b>
TABLE 3.1 ERRORS IN ANALYSING AND INTERPRETING DATA	49
TABLE 4.1: OVERVIEW OF INTERVIEWS: PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS AND THEIR TEACHING IN FARM SCHOOLS	66
TABLE 4.2: SYNTHESIS OF ORIGINAL INTERVIEW DATA IN CATEGORIES AND CLUSTERS	69
TABLE 4.3 COMPARISON OF CATEGORIES FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW, INTERVIEW DATA AND OBSERVATIONS	76



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>PAGE</b>
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ACRONYMS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	vii
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION</b>	
1.1 BACKGROUND	1
1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	4
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	5
1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH	7
1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	8
1.5.1 Data collection	8
1.5.2 Data analysis	9
1.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	9
1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	10
1.8 DELINEATION OF THE STUDY	10
1.9 CONCLUSION	11
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE OVERVIEW</b>	
2.1 INTRODUCTION	12
2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	13
2.3 THE IDEAL TEACHING AND LEARNING SITUATION	16
2.3.1 The school	16
2.3.2 The teacher	20
2.3.3 The classroom environment	21
2.3.4 The curriculum	22
2.3.5 Professional development	25
2.3.6 The learner	31
2.3.7 Resources and financial management	33



2.3.8	Support structures	35
2.3.8.1	Involvement of parents	35
2.3.8.2	Involvement of the Department of Education	37
2.4	CONCLUSION	38

### **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3.1	INTRODUCTION	41
3.2	ETHNOGRAPHIC DESIGN	41
3.3	PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH	41
3.4	INTERVIEWS	42
3.4.1	Purpose	42
3.4.2	The sample	45
3.4.3	Importance of draft questions	46
3.5	THE INTERVIEW PROCESS	46
3.6	ANALYSING DATA	47
3.7	VALIDITY	50
3.8	RELIABILITY	50
3.9	LEGAL AND ETHICAL ASPECTS	51
3.10	CONCLUSION	51

### **CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

4.1	INTRODUCTION	52
4.2	THE INTERVIEW DATA	52
4.2.1	Interview 1 (Primary School P1)	53
4.2.2	Interview 2 (Combined School DP2)	57
4.2.3	Interview 3 (Primary School P3)	59
4.2.4	Interview 4 (Primary School P4)	61
4.2.5	Interview 5 (Secondary School S1)	63
4.3	SUMMARY	65
4.4	FINAL DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS	68
4.5	OBSERVATION REMARKS OF THE RESEARCHER	74
4.5.1	Schools	74
4.5.2	Teachers	74
4.5.3	Learners	75

4.5.4	Curriculum	75
4.5.5	Support structures	76
4.6	CONCLUSION	77

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1	INTRODUCTION	79
5.2	CONCLUSIONS	79
5.2.1	Conclusions on the problems experienced by the farm schools	80
5.2.2	Conclusions on the problems experienced by teachers	80
5.2.3	Conclusions on the problems experienced by learners	81
5.2.4	Conclusions on the problems experienced with the curriculum	82
5.2.5	Conclusions on the problems experienced with the support structures	82
5.3	RECOMMENDATIONS	84
5.3.1	Recommendations on the problems experienced by the farm schools	84
5.3.2	Recommendations on the problems experienced by teachers	85
5.3.3	Recommendations on the problems experienced by learners	85
5.3.4	Recommendations on the problems experienced with the curriculum	86
5.3.5	Recommendations on the problems experienced with the support structures	86
5.3.6	Recommendations for the future	88
5.4	STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY	88
5.5	FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES	89
5.6	FINAL CONCLUSION	89

	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	90
--	---------------------	----

<b>ADDENDUM:</b>	Letter of permission	
------------------	----------------------	--