

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter entails a short summary of all the previous chapters. Moreover, the research findings and recommendations will be discussed.

The general aim of this study was to investigate how effectively mediation was applied to advance learners' fundamental rights in the classroom and to gain a deeper understanding of learners' perceptions regarding the use of a mediational approach during teaching.

The layout of this chapter is as follows:

- An overview of the study
- Findings from the literature
- Findings from the empirical investigation
- Findings regarding the aims and objectives of the study
- Recommendations for future research
- Limitations of the study
- Suggestions for further study

7.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

7.2.1 Chapter One

In Chapter One, the researcher introduced the research problem (*cf.* 1.1) to establish if mediation is applied in English classrooms and whether learners' fundamental rights are advanced in the process. The researcher made the aims of the study clear by stating the objectives (*cf.* 1.4). In compiling the

research questions (*cf.* 1.3), the primary question (*cf.* 1.3.1) summarized the main focus of this study, by asking how effective mediation is applied in English literature classrooms to advance learners' fundamental rights, while the secondary questions (*cf.* 1.3.2) were compiled in support thereof.

The conceptual framework (*cf.* 1.5) focused on supplying concepts central to the literature review. These concepts were based on the theory of Feuerstein's mediational approach and a comparative law perspective (*cf.* 1.5). Linked to the pragmatic research paradigm, a mixed-methods research design was employed (*cf.* 1.6.2). Two sets of questionnaires were circulated as quantitative component of this study: one to educators and the other to Grade 11 learners at four schools in the Fezile Dabi District of the Free State Department of Education (*cf.* 1.6.3). In addition, a phenomenological approach was chosen for the qualitative component and three focus group interviews, and a total of six observations at two schools were conducted (*cf.* 1.6.2.1). The questionnaires were administered (*cf.* 1.6.2.3) by circulating them to Grade 11 English First Additional Language learners and their English educators, the focus groups with only the Grade 11 English educators who completed the questionnaires were held (*cf.* 1.6.2.3) and the observations took place in two of these English educators' classrooms (*cf.* 1.6.2.3).

A visual representation was made of the research design (*cf.* Figure 1.1) in which the researcher demonstrated how the triangulation would be done (*cf.* 1.6.2.4). Thereafter, the data collection process was explained (*cf.* 1.6.2.5). The reader was made aware of the role of the researcher in this study (*cf.* 1.6.2.6). Then the data analysis and interpretation were indicated (*cf.* 1.6.2.7), stipulating that a professional statistician of the North-West University of the Vaal Triangle Campus would assist in the analysis of the quantitative data while using descriptive statistics (*cf.* 1.6.2.7). Furthermore it was explained that the researcher would use deductive and inductive content analysis to analyse data captured from interviews and observations (*cf.* 1.6.2.7). Before the teaching and learning programme was indicated (*cf.* 1.7), the researcher informed the reader about ethical aspects that would be considered during the data analysis (*cf.* 1.6.3). Lastly, the contribution of the

study to the focus area and subject field (*cf.* 1.7), as well as possible challenges that could be faced during the study, were pointed out.

7.2.2 Chapter Two

In this chapter, mediation was introduced to the reader (*cf.* 2.1; 2.2) and what is expected of a mediator of learning was discussed (*cf.* 2.2.1). Thereafter, the reader was shown what the task of a mediator entails, so that it could be clear how different the task is from that of a traditional perspective where it was assumed that an educator's role is limited to the mere transference of subject content (*cf.* 2.2).

The researcher decided to give a historical perspective on the development of mediation (*cf.* 2.3) by referring to the Piagetian (*cf.* 2.3.1), Vygotskian (*cf.* 2.3.2), Nyborg (*cf.* 2.3.3) and Neo Piagetian approach (*cf.* 2.3.4); Feuerstein (*cf.* 2.3.5) and current perspectives (*cf.* 2.3.6) on mediation to explain to the reader all the different perspectives on the concept *mediation* and to indicate how the twelve mediation criteria were established. The criteria of mediation were stipulated and each of the criteria was discussed to give the reader a clear understanding of what each criterion entailed (*cf.* 2.5). The implication and impact of mediation in the classroom were focused on and numerous advantages of the application of mediation were pointed out to the reader (*cf.* 2.6). Reference was made with relation to mediation of learners with barriers to learning, which proved that mediation was not only limited to learners without learning difficulties (*cf.* 2.6.1). The role of learners in a mediated learning approach (*cf.* 2.6.2) pointed out that learners could become active participants in a classroom where mediation takes place.

Thereafter, the researcher clarified the concept *competences* to create an understanding of the requirements of educators in order to be mediators of learning (*cf.* 2.6.3). The researcher also took a look at the role of language in mediated learning (*cf.* 2.7), where it was explained to the reader that efficiency in language is needed not only to pass the subject, but also to have a better understanding of other subject content. Lastly, the reader was lead to understand how to follow a mediational approach in studying literature (*cf.*

2.8). It was explained how reading could be enhanced with the application of mediation (*cf.* 2.8.1) and that educators should think of creative ways to implement mediation while teaching components such as poetry and drama (*cf.* 2.8.3; 2.8.4).

7.2.3 Chapter Three

This chapter aimed at developing a juridical connection between the constitutionally-based expectations concerning learners' fundamental rights and mediation as a requirement for efficient teaching under the new democratic education dispensation (*cf.* 3.1). The reader was given a perspective on a legal framework involved in mediation and learners' fundamental rights (*cf.* 3.2) and one was reminded what a *fundamental right* entails (*cf.* 3.2.1). Thereafter it was pointed out why learners' fundamental rights were considered as important and worthy of being protected (*cf.* 3.2.2).

When referring to learners' fundamental rights, the researcher started off with the most important legal document in South Africa: the Constitution, which forms the backbone to all other legislation (*cf.* 3.3). Here, the reader was made aware of all the applicable sections in the Bill of Rights, such as Sections 28 and 29, that relate to the learner specifically (*cf.* 3.3). The researcher then looked at subordinate legislation having an impact on the learner (*cf.* 3.4). Sections in the School's Act (84 of 1996) that apply to the advancement of learners' fundamental rights were referred to (*cf.* 3.4.1), as well as the National Policy Act (27 of 1996; *cf.* 3.4.2) that includes the Norms and Standards (*cf.* 3.4.2.1), which point out that being a learning mediator is one of the seven roles that educators should comply with. The reader was informed about how an educator's registration with SACE (31 of 2000; *cf.* 3.4.3) and keeping to the criteria set in the Code of Professional Ethics (*cf.* 3.4.3.2) could lead to the advancement of learners' fundamental rights. The Employment Act (76 of 1999; *cf.* 3.4.4) was briefly referred to, focusing especially on PAM.

Lastly, the researcher focused on the relevance of common law pertaining to mediation: the *in loco parentis*-principle (*cf.* 3.5.1) that determines that the

educator should always act on behalf of the well-being of his/her learners, and the *diligens paterfamiliae* principle (cf. 3.5.2) that points out that educators should perform their duty as caregivers as well as possible.

7.2.4 Chapter Four

This chapter focused on the empirical research design that was followed in this study. The researcher discussed the chosen pragmatic research paradigm and indicated what such a paradigm entails (cf. 4.2). In discussing the research design that was followed, it was pointed out what the quantitative and qualitative components each involved. The reader was reminded that mixed-methods research would be used in this study (cf. 4.2). The researcher then specified that a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design was suitable for this study and discussed this type of method (cf. 4.3.1). Attention was paid to the methods of data collection (cf. 4.4) to be followed in the quantitative research (questionnaires) (cf. 4.4.1) and qualitative research (focus group interviews and observations) (cf. 4.4.2).

The researcher then referred to the data analysis and interpretation (cf. 4.6). Firstly, the quantitative data analysis procedures were discussed, where it was pointed out that the researcher would use a professional statistician of the North-West University Vaal Triangle Campus, to assist the researcher in the analysis of the descriptive statistics (cf. 4.6.2). Thereafter, the qualitative data analysis procedures were discussed, where it was indicated that the researcher would analyse data obtained from interviews and observations (cf. 4.6.4). Finally, attention was paid to ethical aspects, such as ethical issues in the collection and analysis of the data (cf. 4.7). Lastly, feedback was given on research challenges that the researcher had foreseen in this study in order to prevent unnecessary obstacles, such as getting back most of the questionnaires (cf. 4.8).

7.2.5 Chapter Five

In Chapter Five, attention was paid to the data analysis and interpretation. In the introduction to the chapter (cf. 5.1), the researcher specified the sequence of this chapter. The biographical information of the participants was

discussed first (*cf.* 5.2); then the data analysis and interpretation of learner and educator quantitative responses to Section B (which focused on mediation and the application thereof) and Section C (which focused on the advancement of learners' fundamental rights) followed respectively (*cf.* 5.3). Thereafter the data analysis and interpretation of the focus group interviews followed (*cf.* 5.4). The researcher first referred to the demographical details of the participants and then referred to each question, compiling several themes from each, such as *teaching* and *supporting learners* from the first question that tried to determine what educators thought the main purpose of an educator was (*cf.* 5.4). The researcher referred to the data analysis and interpretation of the observations by firstly referring to each of the three observation contexts and then to the criteria (*cf.* 5.5).

7.2.6 Chapter Six

In Chapter Six, the researcher introduced her teaching and learning programme to the reader. This chapter started by giving the reader an overview of the study and reminding the reader of the qualitative and quantitative research that was conducted (*cf.* 6.1). Then, the researcher represented the theoretical framework that formed the basis for the teaching and learning programme which was based on Constructivism (*cf.* 6.2). The reader was given an idea of what Constructivist learning entails (*cf.* Figure 6.2) and what is expected of a learner who follows a Constructivist approach in learning (*cf.* Figure 6.3). It was then revealed that the researcher would base the programme on a backwards design approach (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005:18; *cf.* Figure 6.4). Next, the researcher introduced the teaching and learning programme which is aimed at presenting a mediational way of presenting poetry to Grade 11 English First Additional Language learners while advancing their fundamental rights (*cf.* 6.3).

The reader was informed that CAPS (2011) will be an essential guide to follow when developing the programme, since it is compulsory to base Grade 11 work on this guideline from January 2013. Learning outcomes and assessment standards would thus prove to be irrelevant (*cf.* 6.3). The

researcher compiled graphical keys to simplify the inclusion and reference to the mediation principles referred to in the programme (*cf.* Figure 6.5).

Lastly, the researcher presented the programme to promote mediation and advance learners' fundamental rights. The programme was based on five poems that are suitable for Grade 11 English First Additional Language learners. The selection of poems was done from poetry commonly done by Grade 11 English First Additional Language educators. Three periods would be needed for each poem (*cf.* 6.3). This time needed to complete each poem serves as a guideline only, as it is commonly accepted that a minimum of three periods are needed to give an introduction to the poem to prepare learners for the content, read, analyse and discuss the poem with the learners and to evaluate their responses to the worksheet.

7.3 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE

The literature review presented in Chapters Two and Three enabled the researcher to obtain a better understanding of mediation and fundamental rights.

7.3.1 Literature: Mediation

Chapter Two

This study was based on Feuerstein's twelve criteria of mediation identified by Feuerstein *et al.* (1994:15) and was supported by other sources:

- Intentionality and reciprocity: Feuerstein *et al.* (1985:48); Blagg (1991:19); Falik (2001b); Tzuriel (2001:25-27); Feuerstein *et al.* (2002:75); Deutsch (2003:34-37); and Feuerstein *et al.* (2010:41) (*cf.* 2.5.1.1).
- Transcendence: Blagg (1991:51); Falik (2001b); Tzuriel (2001:25-27); Deutsch (2003:34-37); and Fraser (2006:10) (*cf.* 2.5.1.2).
- Meaning: Feuerstein *et al.* (1985:49); Blagg (1991:19, 51); Feuerstein *et al.* (1991:15, 28-29); Falik (2001b); Tzuriel (2001:25-27); Deutsch (2003:34-37); and Feuerstein *et al.* (2010:46) (*cf.* 2.5.1.3).

- Competence: Feuerstein *et al.* (1985:49); Blagg (1991:51); Tzuriel (2001:25-27); Feuerstein *et al.* (2002:77); Deutsch (2003:34-37); Fraser (2006:11); and Feuerstein *et al.* (2010:50, 51) (*cf.* 2.5.2.1).
- Self-regulation: Feuerstein *et al.* (1985:49); Blagg (1991:451); Falik (2001b); Tzuriel (2001:25-27); Feuerstein *et al.* (2002:78); Deutsch (2003:34-37); Fraser (2006:11); and Feuerstein *et al.* (2010:51) (*cf.* 2.5.2.2).
- Sharing of behaviour: Feuerstein *et al.* (1985:49); Blagg (1991:40); Tzuriel (2001:25-27); Feuerstein *et al.* (2002:78); Deutsch (2003:34-37); and Feuerstein *et al.* (2010:52) (*cf.* 2.5.2.3).
- Individuation and psychological differentiation: Blagg (1991:51); Falik (2001b); Tzuriel (2001:25-27); Deutsch (2003:34-37); and Feuerstein *et al.* (2010:54) (*cf.* 2.5.2.4).
- Goal-seeking, setting and achieving: Blagg (1991:51); Tzuriel (2001:25-27); Deutsch (2003:34-37); Fraser (2006:11); and Feuerstein *et al.* (2010:56) (*cf.* 2.5.2.6).
- Challenge: Feuerstein *et al.* (1985:50); Tzuriel (2001:25-27); Deutsch (2003:34-37); Fraser (2006:1); and Feuerstein *et al.* (2010:56) (*cf.* 2.4.2.5).
- The human being as a changing entity: Tzuriel (2001:25-27); Deutsch (2003:34-37); Fraser (2006:12); and Feuerstein *et al.* (2010:57, 58) (*cf.* 2.5.3.1).
- Search for optimistic alternatives: Falik (2001b); Tzuriel (2001:25-27); Deutsch (2003:34-37); Fraser (2006:12); and Feuerstein *et al.* (2010:58, 59) (*cf.* 2.5.3.2).
- Feeling of belonging: Falik (2001b); Tzuriel (2001:25-27); Deutsch (2003:34-37); Fraser (2006:12); Feuerstein (2007:5); and Feuerstein *et al.* (2010:59) (*cf.* 2.5.3.3).

7.3.2 Literature: Learners' fundamental rights

Chapter Three

The researcher consulted the following legal documents and authoritative standards to investigate learners' fundamental rights in the classroom:

- **The Constitution** (1996; *cf.* 3.3)

The Bill of Rights with its impact on education, especially with the implication that learners need to be treated with respect and worthiness.

➤ **The Preamble** (*cf.* 3.3.1)

Starting a new society based on, among others, fundamental rights

➤ **Directive constitutional provisions** (*cf.* 3.3.1.2)

Section 1 – Aspirations of the Republic of South Africa

Section 2 – Supreme authority of the Constitution

Section 3 – Obligations and duties concerning citizenship

➤ **Fundamental rights of specific relevance to learners** (*cf.* 3.3.1.3)

Section 7 – Entrenchment of fundamental rights

Section 9 – Equality clause

Section 10 – Innate dignity

Section 12 – Guarantee concerning freedom and security

Section 14 – The right to privacy

Section 15 – Discretion concerning religion and opinion

Section 16 – Freedom of expression

Section 28 – Specialized children's rights

Section 29 – Guarantees concerning education

- **The Schools Act** (84 of 1996; *cf.* 3.4.1)

The redress of past injustices and regarded as the instrument that drives school governance,

➤ **Learners' rights within the Schools Act** (*cf.* 3.4.1.1)

Section 3 – compulsory school attendance: learner' right to education

Section 5 – admission to public schools: learners' right to equality

Section 7 – freedom of religion at schools: learners' right to freedom of religion

Section 8(5) – Code of Conduct: learners' right to administrative action

Section 10 – corporal punishment: learners' right to dignity

- **The National Policy Act** (27 of 1996; *cf.* 3.4.2)

The aim is to commit the education system to enable learners' full development of their potential.

➤ **The Norms and Standards** (SA, 2000; *cf.* 3.4.2.1)

The first of seven roles of the educator: the educator as learning mediator

- **The SACE Act** (31 of 2000; *cf.* 3.4.3)

The official registration of educators who develop themselves in specialized ways and put standards in place that set out professional and ethical processes

➤ **The SACE constitution** (*cf.* 3.4.3.1)

The capacity to enforce criteria laid down in Norms and Standards and Code of Ethics

➤ **The Code of Professional Ethics: SACE** (*cf.* 3.4.3.2)

Educators striving to encourage learners to cultivate values that are similar to those upheld in the Constitution (1996)

- **The Employment Act** (76 of 1998; *cf.* 3.4.4)

Chapter Two has a specific directive that regulates educators to fulfil their duties according to the timetable and concerning all school activities.

➤ **PAM** (SA, 2003; *cf.* 3.4.4.1)

Educators need to be aware that learning is active and should be prepared to include a variety of teaching strategies, while encouraging constructive learning.

7.4 FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

7.4.1 Intentionality and reciprocity

Data from the questionnaire revealed positive responses from both the majority of learners and of educators that lessons' intentions were made clear. In the focus group interview, only two participants responded positively and indicated that learners needed to be told what to do during the lesson and why educators should set outcomes and challenges (*cf.* 1:24; 3:16). The observation data also revealed that not once did the participants communicate the intention of lessons to their learners. Based on all three sets of data, the researcher concluded that the questionnaire data did not reveal the true reality in terms of intentionality and reciprocity being applied in the classroom, as both the focus group data and the observation data indicated limitations in this regard. The impact that these findings have on the advancement of fundamental rights is detrimental, because learners have a right to know which information will be shared with them.

7.4.2 Transcendence

Through the questionnaires, more than a quarter of the learners indicated that transcendence did not occur in their English classrooms. Although the majority of participants who completed the questionnaire indicated that transcendence occurred in their classrooms, this seemed to be a troublesome revelation. Transcendence is the feature of the interaction between a human and the world and if more than a quarter of the learners disagreed that it took place, it evokes a matter of concern. During the focus group interviews, one respondent revealed *that learners must see what is done in class is relevant to their future and life (cf. 1:19)*. However, realizing that learners should see and helping them to link what is done in class with the future differ greatly. It seemed thus that participants who took part in the focus group interviews did not apply transcendence in their classrooms. During the observation data, it was evident that learners were not even motivated to show interest in their work, let alone link the content to the world. It was evident that transcendence lacked in the observed classrooms. When considering all the data collected, the researcher came to the conclusion that what was revealed in the quantitative data, did not correspond with the qualitative responses. To the researcher, it seemed doubtful whether transcendence occurred. Knowing that transcendence focuses on the humanizing feature of the interaction between a human being and the world (Feuerstein *et al.*, 2010:45; *cf.* 7.5.1.2), it is vital to mention that the advancement of learners' fundamental rights is prevented if an educator's reluctance to apply transcendence during the lesson occurs.

7.4.3 Mediation of meaning

Looking at the quantitative data, it was evident that most participants felt that meaning was communicated during teaching. It is essential that learners are given reasons for doing things. However, only two participants agreed during the focus group interviews that learners had to be informed about what they should do and why they should do it, as well as what the intended outcomes and challenges would be (*cf.* 1:24; 3:16). Not once during the observations did the researcher note that this principle was met. The researcher concluded

that the qualitative data contradicted what was indicated in the quantitative data and found the application of this mediation principle in classrooms highly doubtful. In the opinion of Feuerstein *et al.* (2010:46), mediation of meaning creates the motivational and emotional forces that drive learners' activities and behaviour (*cf.* 2.5.1.3). It is therefore evident that the advancement of a learner's fundamental rights cannot occur if an educator avoids motivational and emotional forces to steer learners' activities and behaviour, because of the educator's negligence in applying mediation of meaning.

7.4.4 Mediation of feeling of competence

Although all the educators who took part in completing the questionnaires indicated that they generated a feeling of competence in the learner, some of the learners disagreed that their educators supplied opportunities for them to interact with tasks which they could master to eventually experience success. During the focus group interviews, not one educator mentioned that it was essential that their learners felt competent. In the observations, the researcher saw that learners were never given the opportunity to experience interaction with their tasks in their own ways. Learners' opinions and answers were never appreciated and learners were mostly corrected or given the impression that their point of view was not good enough. When considering the responses from all the gathered data, it proved to the researcher that a feeling of competence was seemingly not promoted in these classrooms. Tzuriel (2000:220) warns that a mediating educator should arrange the learning environment in his/her classroom to guarantee each child's success. However, if an educator does not transfer a feeling of competence to his class, he/she does not advance a learner's fundamental rights to their best interests being recognized.

7.4.5 Mediation of regulation and control of behaviour

According to this principle, the mediator should regulate the learner's responses. The learners should be assisted by their educators to monitor their own behaviour and to develop a metacognitive, self-reflective mode of functioning and a desire for controlled and planned behaviour. Once again,

some learners who completed their questionnaires disagreed that their educators applied this principle in their classes. Most of the educators who completed the questionnaires indicated that they regulated and controlled their learners' behaviour. Unfortunately, both the focus group interviews and the observations indicated otherwise. During all the observations, the only active person in class seemed to have been the educators. Not once did any of the educators try to control or regulate learners' behaviour even by trying to motivate them to participate in the lesson. The researcher thus, once again, concluded that the quantitative data contradicted the qualitative data in this study. In the opinion of Tzuriel (*cf.* 2000:220), an educator who mediates for control and regulation of behaviour, should regulate the child's responses, depending on the task demands as well as on the child's behavioural approach (*cf.* 2.5.2.2). However, when looking at some negative responses from the focus group interviews (*cf.* 1:53; 2:41; 2:64) proves that not all educators feel that it is their duty to apply this mediation principle. It is thus proven that the advancement of learners' fundamental rights cannot occur if educators are reluctant to control learners' behaviour.

7.4.6 Mediation of sharing behaviour

Sharing behaviour is essential in mediating classrooms. Learners need to share their experiences and understanding with others. While all educator participants indicated in their questionnaires that this principle was met in their classrooms, more than a quarter of the learners disagreed. This is disconcerting on realizing that Feuerstein (2007:14) states that the educator must encourage group work and cooperation between learners (*cf.* 2.5.2.3). Looking at the data obtained from the focus group interviews, it is clear that the participants referred to the learner and the learning content (*cf.* 2:15), but not one participant mentioned that learners should share behaviour with another. According to the data obtained from the observations, it was also evident that no group work was ever requested or encouraged. To the researcher this gave the impression that mediation of sharing behaviour seemed not to occur in the classrooms. Even though Feuerstein (2007:14) mentions that educators should encourage group work and cooperation

between learners, it is proved by the qualitative data that group work did not occur in the participating classes. It is therefore evident that educators who do not promote group work have a detrimental effect on a child's learning process and, in the event, prevent learners' fundamental rights from being enhanced in classrooms.

7.4.7 Mediation of individuation and psychological differentiation

Mediators should value and recognize individual differences and a variety of responses from their learners (*cf.* 2.5.2.4). All the educator participants indicated that they valued individuation in their classrooms. However, as many as more than a third of the learners who answered the questionnaires did not feel that their educators did! During the focus group interviews, no participant mentioned that individuation was important to them. After the observations, the researcher concluded that individuation was not promoted or appreciated at all. Learning occurred rigidly and individuation was not motivated. The researcher concluded from the collected data that individuation was probably not a priority to educators. In the opinion of Feuerstein (2007:14), an educator as mediator should value and recognize individual differences and responses. If educators do not mediate individuation, they prevent the advancement of learners' fundamental rights.

7.4.8 Mediation of goal-seeking, goal-setting and goal-achieving behaviour

Most learner and educator participants who completed the questionnaires indicated that goal-seeking, setting and achieving occurred in their classrooms. The qualitative data indicated the contrary. No educator mentioned that they considered this as important during the focus group interviews. Although some of the learning content that was done during the observed periods could easily have been linked to this parameter, no educator ever attempted to include goal-seeking, setting or achieving behaviour in their lessons. These data sets led the researcher to believe that this parameter was apparently not advanced in these classrooms. When educators do not mediate goal-seeking, setting and achieving in their learners, they do not meet

all their obligations. Therefore, they prevent learners from experiencing optimal learning and thus have a negative impact on the advancement of learners' rights.

7.4.9 Mediation of challenge

All the educators and the majority of the learners who participated in the completion of the questionnaires agreed that learners were motivated to adapt to new and challenging situations and events in their classrooms. Unfortunately, the opposite seemed to be true when observing the qualitative data. During the focus group interviews, the interviewee discovered that the participants were mostly concerned about the learning content and feared creating more challenging situations for their learners. The observations seemed to consist of passive learners who did not look eager to deal with their lesson, let alone be engaged in some critical thinking or challenging situations. The responses proved to the researcher that mediation of challenge apparently did not occur as it should in these classrooms. According to Feuerstein (2007:15), educators should prepare learners to face and master difficult tasks and obtain success (*cf.* 2.5.2.5). To advance a learner's fundamental rights, educators should adapt to new and challenging situations and events. Should this not occur, it seems impossible to advance the rights of learners in classrooms.

7.4.10 Mediation of an awareness of the human as a changing entity

Feuerstein *et al.* (1994:46) mention that the human being is prone to tremendous and drastic changes. All the educator participants and most of the learner participants who completed the questionnaires, indicated that change was encouraged in learner behaviour. Analysing the data obtained from the focus group interviews proved that participants did not mention that change in their learners was considered as a priority in their classrooms. The observations supported the analysis obtained from the focus group interviews. No change was ever motivated from any learner during the observed periods. The researcher was prone to doubt whether change in learners' behaviour was motivated in any of these classrooms. When observing Feuerstein's

opinion (2007:15), that educators as mediators should believe in human modifiability and have an active modification approach, it is clear that educators should understand that learners should be motivated to change. In the event that change in learners is not encouraged, educators do not contribute to the advancement of learners' rights in the classroom.

7.4.11 Mediation of the search for an optimistic alternative

Mediators should encourage their learners to look for ways to resolve a problem (*cf.* 2.5.3.2). Although the majority of all the questionnaire participants agreed that learners were motivated to search for an alternative, the qualitative data proved the quantitative data to be doubtful. During the focus group interview, two participants agreed that learners should be motivated to search on their own for alternatives (*cf.* 2.6; 2.7). Unfortunately, the learners in the observed classes were not encouraged to resolve any problems on their own. Their educators fulfilled that role and even answered their own questions on behalf of the learners. It was thus evident to the researcher that this mediation principle was apparently not met. According to Feuerstein (2007:15), an optimistic view anticipates positive results and motivates the learner to look for ways to resolve problems (*cf.* 2.5.3.2). It is therefore clear that an educator who does not motivate his learners to seek for alternatives does not advance his learners' fundamental rights.

7.4.12 Mediation of the feeling of belonging

Feuerstein (2007:15) emphasizes the necessity of this mediation principle by stating that there is a need to enlarge a learner's view beyond his/her immediate experience. Learners have a desire to feel as if they belong somewhere. Looking at the quantitative data, most of the participants indicated that a feeling of belonging was created in their classrooms. At the focus group interviews, no participant found it necessary to mention that they considered it important that their learners have a feeling of belonging in their classrooms. The observations proved a similar conclusion. In most of the observed classes, it seemed as if the educator was the only one who experienced a feeling of belonging in the classroom. When an educator does

not ensure that a learner obtains a sense of belonging in the classroom, he/she prevents the learner's fundamental rights from being advanced.

7.5 FINDINGS REGARDING THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

7.5.1 Objective 1: To investigate what mediation comprised of

This objective was achieved by analysing the data from the literature. Chapter Two clarified the concept, mediation, and supplied the criteria of mediation.

Furthermore, through the literature review, the researcher determined that skills which learners are taught are just as important as the learning contents (Du Plessis *et al.*, 2007:15; *cf.* 2.1). It is crucial that learners should be assisted in understanding how to think efficiently and educators should show learners how they can best utilize their brains (Cowley, 2004:1; *cf.* 2.2). Furthermore, Fraser (2006:1) highlights that educators should be sensitive to the needs of learners and adapt their teaching strategies to the needs and shortcomings of their learners by using the medium of teaching efficiently and creating a learner-friendly milieu and classroom climate (*cf.* 2.2). In order to do this efficiently, it is essential that educators realize that they should be mediators of learning (*cf.* 2.2.1).

Vakalisa (2004:24) points out that the role of a mediator implies that educators should guide learners through the learning material in a way that maximizes learning (*cf.* 2.2.1). It is important that educators have a Constructivist approach in mind when mediating knowledge. Such an approach will lead to learners being led to construct knowledge that is meaningful and useful in their own lives (Jacobs, 2004:46) (*cf.* 2.3.5). It is clear from the literature in Chapter Two that mediating learning is about learning by doing, as well as learning by thinking: about the capability to be productive in the world, as well as knowing that world and about action as well as cognition (Kalantzis & Cope, 2008:9; *cf.* 2.3.6). It was thus necessary to base the study on Feuerstein's twelve criteria of mediation (*cf.* 2.4) where the researcher

realized that learning is about learning by doing, as well as learning by thinking and being productive in the world.

7.5.2 Objective 2: To gauge what constituted learners' fundamental rights in terms of South African legislation

From the literature review in Chapter Three, it became evident that learners' fundamental rights would be advanced if mediation were applied in the classroom. The source of legislation that formed the backbone of Chapter Three was the Constitution (1996; *cf.* 3.3) in which it is specified that all citizens – including learners – share certain rights. Moreover, the Constitution includes specialized children's rights (1996:sec.28; *cf.* 3.3.1.3) and guarantees rights concerning education (1996:sec.29; *cf.* 3.3.1.3). Other rights relevant to learners' fundamental rights are equality (1996:sec.9; *cf.* 3.3.1.3), human dignity (1996:sec.10; *cf.* 3.3.1.3), freedom and security (1996:sec.12(1)(c) & (e); *cf.* 3.3.1.3), the right to privacy (1996:sec.14(a) & (b); *cf.* 3.3.1.3), freedom of religion and opinion (1996:sec.15(1); *cf.* 3.3.1.3) and freedom of expression (1996:sec.16(1); *cf.* 3.3.1.3).

It is also evident that learners' fundamental rights are supported by other legislation and authoritative standards, such as the Schools Act (84 of 1996) that was implemented for the main reason to support democratic change in the community by integrating various and diverse school models into one model that should be acceptable to all citizens and allow equal opportunities (Loock *et al.*, 2003:40; *cf.* 3.4.1). The National Policy Act (27 of 1996) is – according to Nieuwenhuis (2007b:61) – committed to enabling the education system to contribute to the full personal development of all learners to advance their human rights (*cf.* 3.4.2). Furthermore, the Norms and Standards for Educators (SA, 2000), as determined in terms of section 3(4)(f) and (l) of the National Policy Act (27 of 1996), contain the seven roles of educators. One of these roles is that an educator should act as learning mediator (*cf.* 3.4.2.1). The SACE Act (31 of 2000) aims at supporting educators' registering officially, endorsing educators in their development and putting in place professional measures for all educators (*cf.* 3.4.3). When educators are registered, learners' fundamental rights will be advanced. Lastly, the

Employment Act (76 of 1998) serves as a vital Act regarding employment matters in education (Oosthuizen *et al.* 2009:184; *cf.* 3.4.4), specifically regarding PAM that highlights the central role of educators as involving the use of a selection of teaching strategies and engaging learners actively in constructive learning (*cf.* 3.4.4.1). Acts that are relevant to educators will advance learners' fundamental rights when educators adhere to the stipulations.

7.5.3 Objective 3: To determine English educators' understanding of the concept *mediator of learning*

This objective was achieved by analysing the data obtained from the questionnaires, focus group interviews and observations.

The researcher was able to establish that the English educators who participated in this study did not have the faintest idea of the concept *mediator of learning*. Although it appeared from the quantitative data analysis that they fully understood this concept and even comply with it, the qualitative data proved that educators seemed to be unsure of what an educator as mediator entails. Some of the participants seemed to have touched on the duties and definition of the term *mediator* (*cf.* 2:12), while the majority were notably unsure what being a mediator involves (*cf.* 2:9; 3:9). The researcher's doubt as to whether the participants really understood the concept was confirmed by the observations. No observed participant applied the twelve principles of mediation in any lesson.

7.5.4 Objective 4: To gauge English educators' understanding of the competences expected from mediators of learning

The objective was achieved by analysing the data from the questionnaires, focus group interviews and observations.

The researcher concluded that the participants did not understand what was expected of a mediator of learning. Some responses were totally irrelevant regarding an educator's competence concerning mediation. For example, one response was *a mediator needs softness and human touch* (*cf.* 1:15; 1:16;

3:8). Even though it seemed from the responses in the educator questionnaires that the participating educators knew and applied the competences required of mediators of learning, the responses proved to be unreliable when compared to the responses during the focus group interviews and observations. None of the twelve parameters of mediation was ever met during the observed lessons.

7.5.5 Objective 5: To identify learners' understanding of how their rights were managed in the English classroom

This objective was achieved by analysing the data obtained from the questionnaires, focus group interviews and observations.

The researcher managed to determine that many learners were of the opinion that their rights were not promoted as they should be in their classrooms. Looking at the learner responses obtained from the learner questionnaires (*cf.* 5.3.2), it is evident that many learners were not convinced that their fundamental rights were advanced in their classrooms. In total, 68.1% (35.2% strongly disagreed; 32.9% disagreed) of the learners felt that their fundamental rights should be an educator's concern (*cf.* 5.3.2).

7.5.6 Objective 6: To observe how English educators complied with the principles of mediation during teaching

This objective was achieved by analysing the data obtained from the questionnaires, focus group interviews and observations.

According to the findings made in the qualitative data, the empirical study revealed that the educators contradicted their opinions in the questionnaires. It was clear from both the focus group interviews and the observations that no mediation took place as required in any of the participants' classrooms, while from the questionnaires it seemed as if mediation was applied in all the classrooms. The qualitative data disproved this altogether. It was alarming to notice that, during the focus group interviews, most educators seemed to be confused when asked what the main purpose of an educator was. Responses like *forcing the horse at the water to drink* (*cf.* 1:9) and *to supply mediation*

between the parent and child (cf. 2:10), proved to the researcher that educators do not even know what a mediator of learner entails, let alone apply mediation in the classroom. Observing the teaching in the classrooms, proved beyond any doubt that mediation and the application thereof did not exist in these classes.

7.5.7 Objective 7: To investigate how English educators accommodated learners' fundamental rights

This objective was achieved by analysing the data obtained from the questionnaires, focus group interviews and observations.

Although many learners indicated in the questionnaires that their fundamental rights were not advanced in their classrooms, their educators differed in opinion (*cf. 5.2.1*). During the focus group interviews, most of the participants seemed to pass the buck concerning who should be taking the responsibility to advance learners' rights in the classroom. Some educators argued that parents are responsible for accommodating their children's fundamental rights (*cf. 2:40; 3:8*), while others blamed it on the Department of Education to support learners (*cf. 3:2; 2:41*). The researcher also noted that learners' fundamental rights were not advanced in the observed classrooms (*cf. 5.5.1*).

7.5.8 Objective 8: To establish how a mediational approach supported learners' fundamental rights

This objective was achieved by analysing the data obtained from the questionnaires, focus group interviews and observations.

The researcher established that mediation and fundamental rights go hand-in-hand. The data revealed to the researcher that it is impossible to advance a learner's fundamental rights, if educators do not fulfil their duty to apply mediation in the classroom. Unfortunately, the participating educators' lack of applying mediation in their classroom was not only detrimental in a pedagogic environment, but also in advancing each learner's fundamental rights. When educators do not apply mediation in teaching, it is impossible that learning will

occur optimally and, in such a case, it is also highly improbable that learners' fundamental rights will be advanced.

7.5.9 Objective 9: To suggest mediational processes (the application of principles) and components (the twelve principles of mediation) to design a teaching and learning programme aimed at advancing learners' fundamental rights in a language classroom context

This objective was achieved by designing a teaching and learning programme aimed at advancing mediation and learners' fundamental rights in Chapter Six.

The researcher identified difficulties that English educators experienced in applying mediation while teaching poetry to Grade 11 learners. Therefore, the researcher compiled a teaching and learning programme aimed at presenting a mediational way in teaching poetry to English First Additional Language learners while advancing their fundamental rights.

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher would like to make thirteen recommendations based on the findings of this study.

7.6.1 Recommendation 1: Intentionality and reciprocity

It is essential that educators be reminded that they have a legal obligation to apply mediation in their classrooms. It is recommended that it should be pointed out to educators that applying mediation is one of their duties stipulated in the Norms and Standards (SA, 2000). The first of the universal criteria in mediation is intentionality and reciprocity. It was found that educators neglect conveying the intention. When the educator does not convey the intention of the lesson, reciprocity will not occur, which means that learners will not share in the intention of the mediator and transform the intention into an intentional act (*cf.* 2.4.1.1). It is therefore necessary to

recommend that educators should start their lessons by conveying the intention of the lesson.

7.6.2 Recommendation 2: Transcendence

In transcendence, learners interact between themselves as human beings and the world. Learners are taught to relate to past, present and future experience (*cf.* 2.5.1.2). Unfortunately, this universal criterion is often omitted in lessons, although it fulfils a vital role. It is recommended that educators be reminded of the importance of mediating transcendence in their classrooms.

7.6.3 Recommendation 3: Mediation of meaning

To mediate meaning is the third universal criterion to be met. This implies that the purpose of the interaction and the content of the interaction are connected with other contents (*cf.* 2.5.1.3). Once again: it was determined that educators did not mediate this mediation principle. The third recommendation is that educators would mediate meaning to their learners when doing work.

7.6.4 Recommendation 4: Mediation of competence

The first of the situational criteria is mediation of competence. When mediating competence, the mediator arranges the environment to guarantee the learners' success (*cf.* 2.5.2.1). It is therefore evident that, when competence is not mediated, it will have a detrimental effect on learners' feeling and attainability of success. It is recommended that educators mediate competence.

7.6.5 Recommendation 5: Mediation of self-regulation and control of behaviour

When mediating behaviour, the mediator matches the task requirements with the learner's capacities and interests (*cf.* 2.5.2.2). When analysing the data obtained in this research, the researcher came to the conclusion that the educators did not consider the mediation of self-regulation and control of behaviour as a priority. It is thus recommended that educators mediate self-regulation and control of behaviour.

7.6.6 Recommendation 6: Mediation of sharing of behaviour

Learners should be given the opportunity to engage in group work, to learn from another and to alter themselves to one another to increase insight and support from one another (*cf.* 2.5.2.3). The researcher came to the conclusion that educators are prone to limit group work. This is clearly detrimental to a child's development. It is therefore recommended that educators mediate sharing of behaviour in their classrooms.

7.6.7 Recommendation 7: Mediation of individuation

Educators should value and motivate various individual responses from their learners (*cf.* 2.5.2.4). If educators limit responses from learners, they limit mediation. It is recommended that educators should value mediation of individuation.

7.6.8 Recommendation 8: Mediation of goal-seeking, setting and achieving behaviour

Educators should lead learners to set their own goals and work towards achieving them. Learners can easily feel aimless when they do not set goals and aim towards the achievement thereof. It is recommended that educators should motivate their learners to set reasonable goals for themselves and encourage them to achieve their goals.

7.6.9 Recommendation 9: Mediation of challenge

Monotony should be avoided in learning content and learners should be motivated to tackle challenging situations (*cf.* 2.5.2.5). It is recommended that educators should create and implement novel and complex tasks to give their learners the opportunity to master challenging situations.

7.6.10 Recommendation 10: Mediation of an awareness of the human as a changing entity

Even though mediation of change is not a universal, but an integrative orienting belief system criterion, it does not mean that it should not be applied.

Educators should bear in mind that learners are prone to undergo extreme changes in all possible areas (*cf.* 2.5.3.1). It is recommended that educators encourage change in their learners and supply sufficient opportunities for learners to change.

7.6.11 Recommendation 11: Mediation of the search for an optimistic alternative

According to Feuerstein (2007:15), a learner with an optimistic view anticipates positive outcomes and is motivated to search for ways to solve problems (*cf.* 2.5.3.2). It is recommended that educators should mediate the search of an optimistic alternative.

7.6.12 Recommendation 12: Mediation of the feeling of belonging

One of the biggest advantages of creating a feeling of belonging in learners is that they feel secure and included in a group (*cf.* 2.5.3.3). It is therefore desirable that learners feel that they belong somewhere and it is recommended that educators mediate a feeling of belonging in their classrooms.

7.6.13 Recommendation 13: Advancement of learners' fundamental rights

In view of Chapter Three, it proved to be important that learners' fundamental rights be protected and advanced. Too often, learners experience challenges at school that cause them to fear for their lives, to feel too scared to use facilities at school or even drive them to weak school attendance (*cf.* 3.2.2). It is also apparent that learners have special rights that should protect them (*cf.* 3.3). However, it is evident from the findings of this study that educators do not apply mediation in classrooms, and when mediation does not occur, it proves to be detrimental to learners' fundamental rights. It is thus recommended that educators should be informed of learners' rights and should aim towards advancing them.

7.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The results of the study could have been increased if learners were more involved in the qualitative research. The data analysis proved that the qualitative data did not correspond with the responses in the quantitative data. Both educators and learners completed the questionnaires, but only educators took part in the focus group interviews. The majority of the responses from the questionnaires appeared to be positive, indicating that mediation was indeed applied in classrooms and that learners' fundamental rights were advanced. However, the responses obtained from the focus groups proved otherwise and the findings from the observations supported the findings from the focus group interviews: mediation did not take place and learners' fundamental rights were not advanced. If learners had been interviewed in groups, it could have contributed to the findings.
- Some of the educator participants neglected filling in Sections B and C of the questionnaires. This may perhaps been avoided if the researcher insisted on being present while participants completed their questionnaires.
- Especially during the qualitative research component, time seemed to have been a major problem. It was troublesome to determine a time suitable for all participants to attend the focus group interviews.
- Using non-purposive sampling in only one district was an obstacle. Other dimensions might have been discovered if other districts had been included in the study.

7.8 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

- It would be meaningful to investigate the learners' perceptions on mediation in the classroom and the advancement of their rights.
- It might be interesting to test educators and learners' perceptions on the necessity of mediation in the classroom.

7.9 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY TO THEORY

The contribution of the study to existing theory on mediation in classrooms to advance learners' fundamental rights is mainly found in the teaching and learning programme supporting a mediation approach to advance learners' fundamental rights in English First Additional Language (*cf.* Chapter Six). This presents a novel perspective on existing theory regarding mediation in classrooms. The researcher decided to choose a Constructivist approach as backbone to the teaching and learning programme in an attempt to direct educators in English First Additional Language classrooms to include mediation in poetry lessons and to advance their learners' fundamental rights while doing so.

To the best knowledge of the researcher, it is the first attempt in the South African context to explore the advantages of following a mediation approach to advance learners' fundamental rights.

7.10 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY TO PRACTICE

Following a mediation approach in the classroom to advance learners' fundamental rights in English First Additional Language poetry lessons, the contribution of the study to practice can mainly be found in the significance of empowering Grade 11 educators to improve on-going classroom practices not only to be relevant and applicable to English classrooms, but also to all subjects and learning areas in the educational system (*cf.* 1.7).

7.11 CONCLUSION

According to the Norms and Standards (SA, 2000), as determined in the National Education Policy Act (27 of 1997), an educator has seven roles to fulfil. One of those roles is that of acting as learning mediator. The researcher of this thesis decided to investigate whether educators comply with this role in their classrooms.

Through the literature study in Chapter Two, evidence was revealed that the application of mediation is essential in teaching if the educator wants to teach

optimally and reach all learners in the teaching process. Furthermore, the literature in Chapter Three confirmed that the application of mediation is not a choice, but one of the seven roles of educators (SA, 2000:reg.3(7); *cf.* 3.4.2.1).

Unfortunately, the researcher concluded from her data collection that mediation is not a priority in classrooms and therefore learners' fundamental rights cannot be advanced as they ought to be. Following on the results of the collected data, the researcher compiled a teaching and learning programme to assist educators in succeeding in the application of mediation and the advancement of learners' fundamental rights while teaching poetry to Grade 11 English First Additional Language learners.

It is the wish of the researcher that educators will realize that education encompasses much more than the mere transfer of knowledge; that it involves mediating with the learner, his/her environment and the learning content. Educators will then realize that optimal teaching and learning will occur while they advance their learners' fundamental rights. However, a situation where teaching and learning commence without the application of mediation and the advancement of learners' fundamental rights – as found in the data analysis of this study – proves detrimental to the full development of learners, which will lead to ineffective teaching and learning in a classroom causing disadvantageous effects with regard to ignoring learners' fundamental rights.