

Male adolescents' sense of self after reintegration into schools in the Western Cape

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Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Psychology

at the

Potchefstroom campus

of the

North-West University

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November 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the following for their contribution to this study:

The adolescent boys who took part in the study.

Mrs Daleen Labuschagne from the Khula Development Group.

Mr Desmond Ceaser from Groenheuwel Primary School.

Dr Herman Grobler.

My parents, Annette and Theo Bernhardt.

Ian, for all the support.

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FOREWORD

This dissertation is presented in article format in accordance with the guidelines set out in the **Manual for Postgraduates Studies, 2008 of the North-West University**. The technical editing was done according to the guidelines and requirements set out in Chapter Two of the Manual.

The article will be submitted to the *American Journal of Community Psychology*. The guidelines for the submission to the journal are attached in Addendum 4, Journal submission guidelines.

DECLARATION

I, Melanie Bernhardt, declare herewith that the dissertation entitled:

Male adolescents' sense of self after reintegration into schools in the Western Cape, which I herewith submit to the North-West University: Potchefstroom Campus, is my own work and that all references used or quoted were indicated and acknowledged.

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SUMMARY

KEY TERMS: dropouts; male adolescents; school reintegration; sense of self; qualitative data collection methods

This study focuses on the sense of self of adolescents when they are reintegrated into schools after dropping out. Dropout is a global phenomenon and yet very little research has been undertaken regarding reintegration and especially the successful reintegration of adolescents and how this reintegration affects their sense of self. The goal of the study was to determine how reintegrated adolescents experience their reintegration into schools, and how this has affected them in terms of how they see themselves. The research hoped to discover what personal difficulties the adolescents had overcome in their return to school as well as the motivating factors that would keep the reintegrated adolescents in school. The research was conducted from a phenomenological Gestalt, field approach and followed a qualitative research design within an interpretivist framework. This research design allows the participants to give meaning to their own experiences. A total of six adolescent boys between the ages of 13 and 17 were purposefully selected from the informal settlement of Groenheuwel, Paarl in the Western Cape. Five of the six adolescents had been reintegrated into schools in 2011 and 2012 by the Khula Development Group. One adolescent participant was a peer educator and although he had never dropped out, he contributed meaningful data on how reintegrated adolescents are experienced as seen from his role as a peer educator. Other participants in the research included the Headmaster of Groenheuwel Primary School and the President and Project leader of the Khula Development Group. The qualitative data were collected in the form of individual open-ended interviews with the adolescents, project leader and headmaster. The researcher's objective was to understand and interpret the meanings the participants gave to their own experiences, which was further done through observation, member checking, and a reflective group discussion including the application of an art technique. The interviews were recorded on DVD. The reflective group discussion was held with the adolescent participants two weeks after the individual interviews. The group discussion included an art technique, where the adolescents were asked to create their experiences of their return to school in clay. This session was also recorded on DVD. Recordings were transcribed by the researcher to ascertain certain emerging themes and categories. Thematic data analysis was used to transform the transcribed data into meaningful information. The principles and strategies for enhancing the trustworthiness of

the data were done through crystallisation. The findings of the study revealed the unrealistic expectations with which the adolescents view their sense of self.

OPSOMMING

SLEUTELTERME: uitvallers; tienerseuns; herintegrasie; sin vir self; kwalitatiewe data insameling metodes

Hierdie studie fokus op die sin vir self van tieners wanneer hulle as uitvallers herintegreer word in 'n skool. Uitvallers is 'n globale fenomeen, tog is daar baie min studies wat gedoen word oor reintegrasie en die suksesvolle reintegrasie van tieners asook die effek van reintegrasie op skoliere se sin vir self. Die doel van hierdie studie is om te bepaal hoe tieners hierdie herintegrasie na skole ervaar en hoe dit hulle affekteer in terme van hul sin vir self. Hierdie studie het gepoog om die persoonlike uitdagings uit te wys wat tieners moet oorkom tydens die herintegrasie proses asook die moontlike faktore wat herintegreerde skoliere sal motiveer om hulle skoolloopbaan suksesvol te voltooi. Die ondersoek is geloods vanaf 'n fenomenologiese Gestalt, veldteorie aanslag en het 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp gevolg binne 'n interpretatiewe teoretiese raamwerk. Hierdie navorsingsontwerp maak dit moontlik vir deelnemers van die studie om betekenis te gee aan hulle persoonlike ervarings. 'n Totaal van ses tienerseuns tussen die ouderdomme van 13 en 17 is doelbewus geselekteer uit die Groenheuvel informele nedersetting van Paarl in die Westelike Provinsie van Suid Afrika. Vyf van die ses deelnemers is voorheen herintegreer in skole tydens 2011 en 2012 deur die Khula Ontwikkelings Groep. Die sesde deelnemer was 'n medeskolier en portuurgroepopvoeder wat 'n waardevolle bydrae gelewer het om die siening van die herintegreerde skolier uit te wys vanaf medeskoliere se perspektief. Ander deelnemers van hierdie studie het die skoolhoof van Groenheuvel Primêr asook die president en projekteur van die Khula Ontwikkelings Groep ingesluit. Die kwalitatiewe data is ingesamel in die vorm van informele onderhoude met die tienerseuns, projekteur en skoolhoof. Die navorser se doelwit was om die ervaring van deelnemers se ondervinding te verstaan en te interpreteer deur middel van waarneming, bevestiging deur groepslede en 'n reflektiewe groepsbespreking wat 'n kunstegniek ingesluit het. Die onderhoude is op visuele media vasgelê. Die groepsbespreking met die tienerseuns is gedoen twee weke na voltooiing van die individuele onderhoude. Die groepsbespreking is gedoen aan die hand van 'n kunstegniek waar die tieners gevra is om hul ervaring van herintegrasie in die skool in klei uit te beeld. Hierdie sessie is ook op visuele media vasgelê. Visuele beeldmateriaal is deur die navorser ontleed en gekategoriseer volgens temas en kategorieë. Tematiese data-analise is gebruik ten einde die getranskribeerde data in betekenisvolle inligting te omskep. Prinsiepe en strategieë

om die geloofwaardigheid van die data te verhoog is gedoen deur middel van kristallasie. Die resultate van die studie het uitgewys dat die tienerseuns onrealistiese verwagtinge het rakende hulle sin vir self.

ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The researcher currently works with the Khula Development Group in a volunteer capacity assisting adolescent learners who have dropped out of school due to personal circumstances and have been reintegrated into schools in the beginning of 2012. The Khula Development Group was established in 2003 by social workers who recognised the gap in care-taking and assistance for out of school youth living on the streets in Paarl. In August 2011 Khula started reintegrating dropouts into schools in the Paarl area. The basic services of the organisation include: effectively helping children in Paarl East from dropping out of schools, to reintegrate the dropouts as soon as possible, to provide sustainable support to the children and to empower them to become responsible members of society. The researcher has weekly sessions with adolescent learners in an attempt to provide a safe space for open communication in order to motivate and encourage them to share their experiences. The sessions are used to support the adolescents with guidance and solutions to any problems that may hinder the completion of their school career. During these sessions, the complicated dynamics of dropping out of school and being reintegrated came to the fore. The weekly group session participants were excluded from this study. The male adolescents forming part of the research study were referred by the project leader of the Khula Development Group.

Dropping out of school is a global phenomenon with school dropout rates differing from country to country. In the United States of America, where dropout rates are recorded by age, the 2009 dropout rates for learners in the typical age range for high school enrolment (ages 15 through 17) were lower than those for older learners (ages 20 through 24). Specifically, 2,8 percent of 15 through 16 year olds and 2,5 percent of 17 year olds dropped out in the first year reference period, compared to 19,1% of 20 through 24 year olds (U.S. Department of Education, National Centre for Education Statistics, 2010:5). Lahey (2003:7) reports that in Australia, 20% of adolescents do not complete their schooling. In Germany, nine percent of learners dropout before completing school, and six percent in Korea (Lahey, 2003:7). The dropout rate for Norwegian learners is only three percent for junior high school, which is compulsory in this country, and 10,8% among those who enter the voluntary high school (Wichstrøm, 1998:413). According to Townsend *et al.* (2008:22) South African

school dropout rates show, as per the South African Department of Education in 2003 that 60% of children who enrol in grade one dropout before reaching grade 12.

The number of compulsory school aged children (ages 7 through 15 years) who were not attending an education institution in South Africa decreased steadily from 345 501 children in 2002 (four percent of all children of this age) to 142 843 children in 2009 (less than two percent). From grade nine upwards, the dropout rate increases reaching almost 12% in both grade 10 and 11. In total 10% of learners who had been enrolled in grades nine to 11 dropped out of school between 2007 and 2008 (South African Department of Basic Education, 2011:38). The decline in the proportion of learners from grade 11 to grade 12 is significant, suggesting possible dropout or movement out of the schooling system to other education institutions (Department of Basic Education, 2012:13). The proportion of South African youths entering upper secondary schooling is above the trend found in comparable middle income countries; the proportion entering the last grade (grade 12) is about average, but the proportion successfully completing secondary schooling (40%) is below average (Gustafsson, 2011:1).

In 2008, 62 524 learners from Western Cape public ordinary schools between grades eight and 12 dropped out. School dropout rates show a dramatic increase once learners reach the age of 15, when schooling is no longer compulsory (Provincial Government of the Western Cape, 2010:2). The previous South African Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor (2008) confirmed this increase in dropout numbers after the age of 15 by stating that “a significant number of children drop out of the schooling system after grade nine”. Furthermore, studies indicate that Coloured youth has the tendency for lower school participation than some of the other populations. This low attendance rate of Coloured youth is confirmed by Strassburg *et al.* (2010:5) who states that Coloured youth are far more vulnerable to being out of school than Black, White or Indian youth. According to the Surveys and Centre for Applied Social Studies (2009:40) in 2009 only 68% of Coloured youth attended school, compared to 80% for Indians, 85% for Africans and 87% for Whites.

There is not, nor has there ever been, a clear definition of the population group referred to as Coloured and the usefulness of the term has been questioned. The term does refer however to a group of people who, rightly or wrongly, were lumped together in the past, and therefore share a common history. This history has often been a troubled one. The commonly heard

lament is that Coloured people were not ‘white enough’ under apartheid and are not ‘black enough’ in the new democracy. The sense of this complaint is that Coloured people continue to feel socially excluded, even under democracy. Assigned a status above black Africans under apartheid, the largely Afrikaans-speaking coloured population found itself voting for the National Party in 1994 and thus initially delivering the province to the opposition. Arguably, this affiliation has led to continued marginalisation (Leggett, 2004).

Surveys have shown a consistent trend in lower school attendance rates for Coloured youth in South Africa (Strassburg, *et al.*, 2010:13). Possible reasons for the lower participation of Coloured youth include: historically better access to the labour market; the negative impact of gang involvement in areas of the Western Cape; youths taking up farm work in the Western Cape to support household income; and the possible effects of foetal alcohol syndrome (Surveys and Centre for Applied Social Studies, 2009:40).

In-depth and specifically focussed research on school dropout and reintegration in a South African context is scant. The research gap identified in the South African context is the lack of data on adolescents who had dropped out of school and returned to try and successfully complete their education (Strassburg, *et al.*, 2010:13). No research could be identified on the success or failure of school reintegration and the role it plays in the sense of self of the adolescent in the South African context.

From the problem formulation the following research question was formulated: How do male adolescents experience their sense of self in the context of reintegration into schools?

2. RESEARCH AIM

The aim (Eve, 2008:21) of the study was to explore how male adolescents define their sense of self in the context of reintegration into schools. The male adolescents in the study were referred by the Khula Development Group and were identified as adolescents who had been reintegrated into schools in 2012.

3. CENTRAL THEORETICAL STATEMENT

Adolescence is an important developmental period in life where identity formation and creating a sense of self and individuality from personality traits and life circumstances is essential. The reintegration of learners into schools once they have dropped out may have an effect on an adolescents' sense of self. If it is known how Coloured male adolescents view their sense of self after being reintegrated into schools they might be supported to adapt successfully into schools and not drop out again.

4. CONCEPT DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of the research the following concepts are defined:

4.1 Gestalt theory

A Gestalt is a German word which has no direct equivalent in English and can best be described as a form or pattern. A Gestalt entity is something which is greater than the sum of its parts. In order to understand an event, or something or someone, the entire situation and the components which go to create that particular form at that point in time must be considered (Yontef, 1993:178). In Gestalt theory it is understood that "lives and collective systems intertwine and need to be considered together as a unified field" (Partlett, 1997:16).

4.2 Field

A person's entire context is referred to as their field. Every emerging figure is context-dependent for its meaning (Joyce & Sills, 2006:24). The individual is always organising his field with current needs or earlier configurations that are still residue of past unfinished business (Joyce & Sills 2006:25). There is mutuality of influence between the organism and its' field. According to Gestalt theory (Yontef, 1993:295), the problems that the adolescent experiences do not exist in isolation but as part of the whole milieu (field) of which the adolescent is a part, and has been a part. Human beings are self-regulated and growth orientated and they cannot be understood apart from their environment or field (Blom, 2006:22).

4.3 Sense of self

The self as a concept has evolved over time within the humanistic and existential perspectives of which Gestalt is one; “The self is not a static entity, but rather a function, a process and a concept” (Perls, *et al.*, 1994:156-157). There is the idea that the self is both fluid and integrated. In Gestalt theory the self is seen as an emerging process (Mackewn, 1997:74). Self is not seen as a fixed structure but changes according to the needs and the demands of the environment (Philippon, 2001:127). It is also the capacity of the organism to make contact with the environment and function within this organism-environment field (Lobb & Lichtenberg, 2005:31). People learn to know themselves by means of relationships, past relationships impact on the approach they take with current relationships. In this way the self is inter-subjective, a process of contacting and relating (Mackewn, 1997:73). Self as a concept is the sense that one abides over time with individually descriptive characteristics. Self as a changing process and self as an enduring identity and groundedness need not be seen as mutually exclusive but as two poles along a continuum (Mackewn, 1997:76).

4.4 Eriksonian theory

Erikson (1902-1994) divided human development into eight life stages, each stage facing a crisis to be worked through to move to the next stage. Although Erikson was influenced by Freud, he believed that the ego exists from birth and that behaviour is not totally defensive. Erikson became aware of the massive influence of culture on behaviour and placed more emphasis on the external world. Erikson states that many traits displayed in human behaviour are inborn, however others such as feeling either competent or inferior, appear to be learned, based on the challenges and support we receive in growing up (Harder, 2012). Erikson argues that the course of development is determined by the interaction of the body (genetic biological programming), mind (psychological), and cultural (ethos) influences. His developmental stages were based on his philosophy that, the world gets bigger as we go along and failure is cumulative (Harder, 2012).

For the purpose of this study the focus falls on the developmental stage of adolescence, 13 to 18 years (Thompson, 2012). From adolescence, development depends primarily upon influences and actions by the individual on the environment. Adolescence can be viewed as an ‘in between stage’, the stage between childhood and adulthood. The complexity of adolescence includes the finding of an identity, struggling with social interactions and grappling with moral issues. Erikson refers to the crises at the stage of adolescence as

identity vs. role confusion. The task of adolescence is to discover individuality separate from family of origin and as members of a wider society. The unsuccessful navigation of this stage leads to role confusion and upheaval (Harder, 2012).

4.5 Symbolic interactionism

According to symbolic interactionism, a theory developed by George Herbert Mead (1863-1931), humans develop meaning in their worlds in their interactions with their environment and other people. Individuals are not born with a sense of self but rather that this is developed through the process of interaction and communication. The interactions are subjectively interpreted through existing symbols and understanding these symbols is important in understanding human behaviour. These shared symbols are the language of the people and the way meaning is shared (La Rossa & Reitzes, 1993; Nelson, 1998).

4.6 Ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) developed the ecological systems theory, which emphasizes the importance of considering the various levels of the environment that influence an individual's growth and behaviour. The individual is the centre of the system and is active in this environment, being influenced and having influence on the system. The level of environment known as the microsystem specifically studies the influence of the immediate surroundings such as the family, peer group and community on the individual. The second level is the mesosystem which refers to the relationships among the microsystems. The mesosystem can be seen as the connections which bring together the different contexts in which the individual develops. The exosystems are the broader social settings that provide support for the development of adults. These are the social settings and institutions that do not directly involve the children but still have a profound influence on their development e.g. extended family, social support networks. The macrosystem is the outermost level of Bronfenbrenner's model this is an overarching ideology, value, religion, laws and regulations which effect adolescent development. Bronfenbrenner includes a chronosystem in his theory which involves historical time and how aspects of time impact development (Keenan & Evans, 2009:13; Muus, 2006:301).

4.7 Adolescence

Although there is much debate on the definition of adolescence, adolescence can be defined as the development stage applicable to children aged 13 through 18 years; it is the final stage of childhood after which the person is generally accepted as an adult human being (Thompson, 2012).

The task facing adolescents is to forge a stable identity, to achieve a sense of themselves that they are able to bridge the childhood they must leave and the adulthood they have yet to enter (Cobb, 2010:7). The task arises naturally from forces present in early adolescence; puberty, cognitive maturation, and changing social expectations.

4.8 Reintegration

Reintegration for the purpose of this study means adolescents returning to school after they have been away from school for some time, irrespective of the length of absence from school or the length of periods in school. The length of the period of school attendance is referred to in the research as the longevity of their reintegration. The actual time frames of school dropout and attendance is irrelevant, as the research focus is on how these adolescents see themselves in terms of this dropout and reintegration. The school attendance of the adolescent research participants is intermittent and even with continued absenteeism and inconsistent school attendance the adolescents do not regard themselves as dropouts.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1 Literature review

The following themes were investigated in the literature review: adolescent development and adolescent identity formation; Gestalt theory; field theory; Eriksonian theory; symbolic interactionism; the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner; sense of self; reintegration processes; school systems; dropout phenomena and male identity.

The body of literature under initial review included journals, newspaper articles, dissertations and books. Working papers and reports from the United States, Australia and South Africa were also included in the review. Other reviews included: Social surveys and statistics, Education reviews by the Departments of Education, Basic Education together with reports

from Western Cape Provincial Government. Search engines included Google, Google Scholar, as well as the North-West University databases.

5.2 Empirical investigation

5.2.1 Research approach and design

A qualitative approach, (Creswell, 2007:80; Mack, *et al.*, 2005:9; Marshall & Rossman, 2006:3) was followed with an explorative and descriptive nature (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:24). Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours and social contexts of particular populations (Mack, *et al.*, 2005:1), as was the case in this study where the focus fell on Coloured male adolescents in the specific geographical area of Groenheuwel, Paarl. The value of the qualitative approach for the research was in providing in-depth information on intangible factors that were necessary to identify and describe complex experiences (Mack, *et al.*, 2005:1). A qualitative research design is also flexible, allowing new themes to emerge and other avenues of interest to open (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:18). Such flexibility was important for this specific study, as it was done within an interpretivist framework in which knowledge was gained by meaning-making and self understanding. In order to understand the phenomenon (e.g. sense of self), the researcher had to look at different places and at different things (Henning, 2004:19-20). The researcher spent time walking through the streets of Groenheuwel and gained access to one person's home in order to gain exposure to the neighbourhood where the adolescents live. Researcher observations were made and recorded. Furthermore, data were collected from the Headmaster of the Groenheuwel Primary School as well as from the project leader of the Khula Development Group to gain a wider viewpoint on the dropout and reintegration of the adolescents and to gain a better understanding of the situation as a whole. During the interviewing process, questions were posed to the adolescents and then reframed and repeated to ensure the adolescents understood what was being asked. The researcher checked and confirmed with all the members of the participant group that what she had heard and interpreted was correct.

The study followed a phenomenological research design, which, according to Fouché and Schurink (2011:316-317) allows participants to give meaning to their own experiences. The researcher's objective was to understand and interpret these meanings, which was done through interviews. According to Brownell (2003:44) the aim of the phenomenological design is to look at "what is" and not to determine cause and effect. This view is supported

by Barber (2006:77) who says that “phenomenology keeps holistic inquiry mindful of the ways individuals uniquely construct their world”. This description of phenomenological design fitted in well with this study as the researcher hoped to gain access to the participants’ unique experiences through open-ended interviews, observation, member checking, reflective group discussion, as well as an art technique.

5.2.2 Participants

The specific population (Strydom, 2011:225) for this study included Coloured male adolescents, age ranges 13 through 17 years from the informal settlement of Groenheuwel, Paarl in the Western Cape, as well as the Headmaster of Groenheuwel Primary School, a peer educator and a project leader from the Khula Development Group. The sample (Mack, *et al.*, 2005:5) consisted of five boys who the Khula Development Group in Paarl had reintegrated to schools in the beginning of 2012. Current figures of reintegrated male adolescents, facilitated by Khula from August 2011 to date, stand at eight adolescents.

Stratified purposive sampling method (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:79) was used, as the participants needed to comply with specific criteria identified in the research question, namely Coloured male adolescents who have been reintegrated into schools. The researcher approached the Khula Development Group to ask for assistance in gaining access to the adolescents. The Khula Development Group referred adolescents that had been reintegrated into school in 2012. The Khula Development Group further introduced the researcher to the Headmaster of the Groenheuwel Primary School as well as the peer educator.

The specific inclusion criteria of the sample included:

- Coloured male adolescents (aged 13–17) who had dropped out and been reintegrated into schools in 2012;
- A peer educator in one of the schools where adolescents had been reintegrated to provide information on how the reintegrated adolescents were perceived by him;
- Adolescents had to be available to attend at least two interview sessions;
- A headmaster of a school where adolescents had been reintegrated into their school and classes in 2012;
- A project leader from Khula who had assisted in reintegrating adolescents into the schooling system in 2012;

5.2.3 *Research procedure*

- The researcher made contact with the Khula Development Group and advised them of the research proposal and discussed data collection plans, techniques and research value. (The Khula Development Group acts as a protector of the reintegrated adolescents as their parents are unavailable);
- Ethical clearance was obtained from the North-West University: NWU-00060-12-A1 and Khula Development Group;
- A literature study was conducted;
- Informed assent was obtained from all the participants (Addendum 3). The participants include the reintegrated adolescents, the peer educator, the Headmaster of Groenheuwel Primary School and the project leader of the Khula Development Group;
- The Khula premises were organised as the venue where interviews and the group discussion was held. Relevant days and times were organised and communicated to all the participants;
- The data were gathered, transcribed and analysed;
- The findings are discussed in Section B;

5.2.4 *Data collection method*

The study followed a data collection method in the form of open-ended interviews (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:87) which proved to be an efficient data collection method for this research as it allowed for a personal account from the adolescents to reflect a true story of their life experiences (Crabtree, 2006) during reintegration into schools (Addendum 1 as example). This open-ended interview method also left space for flexibility and offered the adolescents the opportunity to express their views. Since the researcher perceives herself as fairly removed from the participants, leading and closed questions would have affected the credibility of the research. The exploratory nature of the approach to the research resulted in new and emerging lines of enquiry (Crabtree, 2006).

The initial individual interviews were arranged and the adolescents were required to meet at the offices of the Khula Development Group. The researcher explained the reason for the meeting as well as what her expectations were of the participants. The adolescents were then given the opportunity to ask any questions they wished to ask as well as state if they

felt they needed more clarity on what was expected from them. The adolescents were satisfied with the explanations and were happy to take part in the research project. The researcher started the interview process by making the adolescent feel as comfortable as possible and asking them a little about themselves to allow them to feel more relaxed. The open-ended questions were then asked to ascertain the experience of their reintegration, what it meant to them and how this process had affected their sense of self.

The peer educator was also interviewed at the premises of the Khula Development Group. An open-ended interview format was also followed to ascertain how he perceived the adolescents that dropout and reintegrate into schools.

The researcher arranged to meet the Headmaster of Groenheuwel Primary at the school premises. This opportunity allowed the researcher to see the school and its facilities for herself. The Headmaster of Groenheuwel Primary, during his open-ended interview, shared insightful data on the reintegrated adolescents and the challenges they face on reintegration. The leader of the reintegration project for the Khula Development Group agreed to meet to be interviewed and exposed the broader context of the problems the reintegrated adolescents face.

A reflective group discussion was scheduled in order to obtain further insight into the experiences of the participants. The adolescents were given the opportunity to reflect on the previous interview and asked to share any further comments or questions they may have had in that regard. The adolescents were then provided with clay, beads and sticks and asked to create in clay how their sense of self had been affected by their reintegration into school. The researcher realised the concept of creating thoughts and feelings in clay proved foreign for the adolescents and the question was reformulated to ask how they felt when they returned to school. The art technique was not used as a projective or interpretative technique but as a method to encourage and assist the adolescents to share how they felt on their reintegration. All the interviews were recorded on DVD. The adolescents were asked for permission to be filmed and agreed.

Trustworthiness of data gathering was enhanced by the researcher who checked with participants during the interviews that she understood what the participants were saying and whether she was interpreting meaning correctly to confirm that correct messages and

meanings had been received and recorded. This way of enhancing trustworthiness is confirmed by Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007:38) who state that data that is both valid and reliable can be measured by the degree in which the interpretations and concepts have the same meaning for the researcher and the participant.

In further meeting the trustworthiness criteria, the researcher as mentioned conducted interviews with a peer educator, a project leader from Khula and a headmaster to improve the credibility of the findings. The researcher took the culture and the environment of the adolescents into account to identify what other influences may have had an effect on the phenomena being studied, namely the sense of self of the reintegrated adolescent.

Interview notes were made during the interviews of any interesting events, processes, statements and proceedings relating to both data collection and analysis (Schurink, 2011:405). Notes were made during the reflective group discussion on the group dynamics as experienced by the researcher. The art technique was used to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying processes and functions (Deacon, 2000) of the participants. After completion of the art technique, the participants were asked to share their thoughts about their creations of clay by participating in a further group discussion. The adolescents were asked how their clay creation related to their sense of self on reintegration. The researcher's supervisor was present at the reflective group discussion. The variety of the above data collection methods has enhanced the trustworthiness of the data by means of crystallisation as described in table 1 below.

5.2.5 Data analysis

Inductive data analysis were used to transform the transcribed data collected (Addendum 2 as example) from the sample into meaningful information. Inductive reasoning moves from the particular to the general, from concrete observations to a general theoretical explanation. Inductive reasoning begins with an observation and not a pre-established truth or assumption (Babbie, 2007:49). The researcher used the particular sample, namely the five reintegrated adolescent boys and their experiences together with her own observations to draw conclusions about entire group of reintegrated adolescents within the Groenheuwel community. Inductive analysis includes observing a sample and then drawing conclusions about the population from which the sample comes. To theorize in an inductive direction thus means the researcher begins with observing the empirical world and then reflects on

what is taking place, thinking in increasingly more abstract ways moving towards theoretical concepts and propositions (Neuman, 2006:60).

Thematic data analysis was used to transform transcribed data into meaningful information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data were coded into categories from which themes and sub-themes emerged. The analysis of the data moved from observations to general theoretical explanations (Delpont & De Vos, 2011:49). The face of the data largely reflected the socio-economic problems facing the adolescents in their reintegration, in looking behind the data themes emerged that were analysed in such a manner that an authentic picture of the participants and their worlds were represented in the research. The successful reintegration of the adolescent is blocked by a much larger concept than originally anticipated. The themes emerging as affecting the sense of self of the reintegrated adolescent include a lack of support and a missing value system which leads to the struggle the adolescents have of defining their sense of self.

The data were presented by interpreting and retelling what the participants had experienced in their reintegration (Schurink, 2011:405). The data analysis contained a thick description of the categories under scrutiny and an examination of previous research was done to frame findings (Shenton, 2003:63). The researcher undertook a literature review to gain access to the current body of knowledge on dropout, reintegration, adolescence and the formation of adolescent identity to ensure the research was relevant and in line with previous findings on similar subject matter.

The collected data were read and re-read until patterns and categories emerged. This fragmented data in the forms of patterns and categories were then coded (Schurink, 2011:411). The fragmented data consisted of interview transcriptions from all the participants as well as from the reflective group discussion. The researcher kept observation notes and these were also added to be coded. Once a particular theme emerged other relating concepts were grouped around it. A table containing the emergent themes and coding of data is reflected in Addendum 2 (Schurink, 2011:412).

The principles and strategies for enhancing the trustworthiness of the data were done through crystallisation (Ellingson, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and are outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The principles and strategies for enhancing the rigour of the data through crystallisation

Principles	Strategies	Application in the research
Deepened complex interpretations	Data collection	The researcher followed a variety of qualitative research methods including open-ended interviews, observation, member checking, a reflective group discussion and an art technique. The interviews and the group discussion provided rich and detailed descriptions. The interviews were recorded using a video camera, notes and observations were made by the researcher.
	Member checking and art technique	During the open-ended interviews members were constantly asked to clarify their descriptions. The interpretations made by the researcher linked to these discussions were checked and clarified with the members of the group who participated in the research. The art technique allowed the researcher to obtain first hand information given by the participants and relied on the participants to clarify the information.
Analyses	Multiple methods	Inductive data analysis was used to transform data into meaningful information. Thematic data analysis was done and themes emerged. (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
	Rich, detailed descriptions	The researcher has provided a rich, detailed description of the research findings. These descriptions allow for the creation of a holistic picture of the findings in a multiple-integrated manner thus sketching the realities as experienced by the participants.
	Paradigms	Contrasting findings has allowed the researcher exposure to knowledge on multiple levels. This exposure has shown multiple ways of knowing about the phenomenon and this is supported by the interpretivist nature of the study.
Genres of representation	Multiple texts	Data was collected from various sources and has allowed the researcher to combine, juxtapose and interweave accounts of the particular phenomenon in various ways.
Researcher reflections	Reflexivity	The researcher has kept field notes in which experiences of the research process have been recorded together with her observations and assumptions forming an important part of the researcher's self-awareness. Throughout the processes described, the researcher continually considered how her perceptions might influence the findings. By keeping track of emotions, observations and notes, the researcher has evaluated any possible bias she had towards a particular finding or response. This has made her conscious of her role as a researcher and her responsibility to confirm the true meanings participants gave to their experiences and not include her own interpretations thereof.

5.2.6 *Ethical considerations*

The fundamental ethical consideration is to ensure that the participants come to no physical or emotional harm (Mack, *et al.*, 2005:9). The researcher tried to be respectful of the participants and did not exploit their vulnerability or simply see them as a means of completing her research. The researcher worked with the participants to identify what risk and what potential benefit may arise from the research. Further, the researcher covered the following points to ensure the emotional and physical well-being of the participants:

- Informed consent/assent was obtained from all the research participants, including the reintegrated adolescents, the peer educator, the headmaster and the project leader from the Khula Development Group. The overall purpose of the research was explained to all participants and the point that participation in the research was voluntary was reiterated (Brinkman & Kvale, 2008:216);
- Consent was received from the Khula Development Group to conduct interviews with the reintegrated adolescents;
- Consent was requested and given by all the participants for the recording of the interviews with a DVD recorder;
- The researcher's supervisor joined in the group session and also adheres to the ethical codes of university. Ethical clearance was received from the University: NWU-00060-12-A1;
- Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any time and that their withdrawal would not be held against them in a discriminative manner;
- Participants were informed that there will be no remuneration involved;
- Confidentiality was discussed with the participants. Private data identifying the participants was not reported on. Interviews were done on a one-on-one basis at the offices of the Khula Development Group, some distance from their local community, ensuring anonymity from outsiders. The adolescent participants in the group discussion knew each other as they are all from the same neighbourhood and were very comfortable in sharing their thoughts and ideas in the group setting;
- The researcher did not pass on any information from one participant to the other, irrespective of how inconsequential the information might have seemed. The research documentation will be stored at the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies for five years. The Centre stands under ethical obligation to participants and operates

under a code of conduct of the North-West University. The researcher also advised the participants that the findings would be reported, but that their names would be withheld (Brinkman & Kvale, 2008:216);

- Food was provided at the beginning of each session as the participants were from deprived circumstances;
- The Khula Development Group will be advised of research dissemination and findings and presented with a research report after the study has been examined and completed;

The role of the researcher entails not only the collection of valid and trustworthy data but also one of moral responsibility, integrity and sensitivity (Brinkman & Kvale, 2008:218). The researcher followed the codes and practices of research ethics and strived for honesty, objectivity, openness, social responsibility and respect for intellectual property (Resnik, 2011:3).

6. CHOICE AND STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH ARTICLE

The dissertation follows the article format as prescribed by the North-West University. The dissertation consists of the following sections:

Section A

Part I: Orientation to the research (Harvard referencing style)

Part II: Literature review (Harvard referencing style)

Section B: Article (APA referencing style)

Section C: Summary, evaluation, conclusion and recommendations

Section D: Addenda

The American Journal of Community Psychology has been identified as a possible journal for submission.

7. SUMMARY

The way in which adolescents view their sense of self may be affected by their reintegration. It is the hope of the researcher that the exploration of this problem may reveal new data in this light. In this section an overview of the rationale and method of the study was described. The problem formulation, aims and objectives and research question were discussed. Key concepts were briefly defined and described. Part II will be the literature review followed by Section B further detailing the research study.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

The literature review moves from a global perspective on the subject matter of dropout and reintegration to a more focussed perspective in the South African context, from broad reviews on global dropout rates, including reports and working papers from the United States, Australia, Western Europe and Scandinavia to a narrow focus relating to the sample as drawn and represented by the adolescents participating in the research, namely Coloured adolescent boys from Groenheuwel in Paarl. South African based statistics documented in reports, surveys and working papers published by the South African Department of Education, The South African Department of Basic Education, The Provincial Government of the Western Cape and Social surveys were reviewed to establish dropout and reintegration rates in a South African context.

The literature on reasons for dropout and the impact of dropout were reviewed. The specific socio-economic problems experienced in the Western Cape especially those by the group classified as Coloured were researched as well as the experiences of adolescents and the challenges they face in general. The theories used as frameworks to support the research were examined. Recommendations on alleviating the problems of consistent dropout were reviewed together with the South African Department of Education's strategic plan 2010-2013 to manage the problem of high illiteracy rates.

In-depth and specifically focussed research on school dropout and reintegration in a South African context is scant. The research gap identified in the South African context is the lack of data on adolescents who had dropped out of school and returned to try and successfully complete their education (Strassburg, *et al.*, 2010:4).

Research shows that the South African school system is failing to sufficiently educate all its learners (Van der Berg & Burger, 2003; The 7th Report on Economic and Social Rights, 2010; Education Statistics in South Africa, 2010). The result of illiteracy and lack of education in South Africa has an impact on the South African economy (Gustafsson, *et al.*, 2010:3). Failure to complete a basic cycle of primary school not only limits future

opportunities for children but also represents a significant drain on the limited resources that countries have for the provision of primary education (Sabates, *et al.*, 2010:5).

2. DROPOUT STATISTICS

Research reflects that dropouts are occurring globally. School attrition represents a major educational and social challenge, particularly in the developing world, where over 40% of children enrolled in primary schools fail to progress to secondary education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2003/4).

The United States of America has seen more graduates, 75,5% in 2009 from 72% in 2001 but dropouts are still a problem (Reuters, 2012). Graduating one more student from dropout status would yield more than \$200,000 in higher tax revenues and lower government expenditures over his or her lifetime. Graduating half of one class of dropouts would save the U.S. taxpayer \$45 billion in that year (Reuters, 2012).

Lahey (2003:7) reports that in Australia 20% of adolescents do not complete their schooling. In a report by Mission Australia, 50,000 young Australians drop out of school each year (Mission Australia, 2009). School dropouts are a cause of concern to many governments across the European Union countries. The consequences of dropout often mean that young people that drop out of school end up dropping out of society to a life of anti-social behaviour and possibly crime. The highest priority needs to be assigned to ways of addressing the dropout issue (Feron, 2008).

In South Africa 60% of children who enrol in grade one drop out before completing high school (Department of Education, 2003). This may be related to relatively high rates of grade repetition, for example, 36% of students in the country sitting the grade 11 examinations in 2006 failed the examination (National Assembly, Republic of South Africa, 2007). Children and adolescents who drop out of school prematurely are at risk for a range of adverse outcomes, including reduced occupational opportunities and income, poorer mental and physical health, and involvement in crime (Beauvais, *et al.*, 1996).

3. REASONS FOR DROPOUT

The last decade has seen 41 million more children who would have been out of school receiving an education. However, data still indicates that 61 million primary school aged children and 71 million secondary school aged children globally were out of school in 2010 (United Nations Childrens' Fund, 2012).

Research shows the most popular reasons for dropping out of school are divided into two broad categories. The one reflects the personal characteristics of the student including the perception that school is boring, feeling de-motivated and difficulties experienced with academics. The other reasons are associated with the institutional characteristics of their family, schools and communities (Rumberger & Lim, 2008). Family characteristics that have shown to affect dropout include lack of parental education, low parental income and bad parenting practices (United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation, 2009:3). Characteristics of schools including the resources schools have at their disposal, the way in which the school is run and the composition of the student body may play a role in influencing dropout (Rumberger & Lim, 2008).

Literature reveals both globally and in the South African context that there is not one single cause for dropout. Dropout is better described as a process rather than the result of one single event (Hunt, 2008). Further investigation into reasons contributing to learner absenteeism and dropout show although varied, that these reasons generally fall into three broad categories. Firstly, there are reasons associated with personal and contextual factors, such as illness, age, gender, learning difficulties, bullying, peer pressure and drug abuse. Secondly, there are reasons caused by socio-economic factors relating to food insecurity, problems with transport to school, the impact of HIV/AIDS on children and families, teenage pregnancy and situations of child labour. Finally, there are a range of reasons relating to schools that may contribute to learner absenteeism and dropout, for example the inability to pay school fees, poor learner educator relationships and poor school facilities (Corrigan, 2009; Simonia, 2009; Weideman, *et al.*, 2007:9).

3.1 Personal reasons for dropout

According to the Centre of Social Science Research report (2005), the more adults there are in a household, the more likely it is that the individual concerned will be in school

(Weideman, *et al.*, 2007:11). However, it is not only the size of the family that plays a role, but also the relationship between family members. According to Ekstein and Wolpin (1999), Roderick (1993) and Tanner *et al.* (1995) the relationship between family background and dropping out is particularly notable. Research shows that youths from poor families, those from single-parent families, and youth of poorly educated parents in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations, who have fewer educational advantages and fewer role models that have gone on to higher education, are more likely than others to leave school before graduating (May, *et al.*, 1998). Another aspect that plays a role and is also worth noting is that in South Africa adolescent pregnancy is identified as a major cause of interrupted and discontinued education, and is reported in the South African Participatory Poverty Assessment (SA-PPA) as such (May, *et al.*, 1998). Linked to adolescent pregnancy is the fact that boy learners that drop out of school double their chances of becoming a father at a young age (Panday, *et al.*, 2009:15).

3.2 Contextual reasons for dropout

Contextual factors contributing to dropout and reintegration include experiences of bullying, peer pressure and drug abuse (Lamsaouri, 1995; Oswald & Suss, 1988; Townsend, *et al.*, 2008). Bullying is generally defined as largely unprovoked, negative physical or psychological action perpetrated repeatedly over time between bully/ies and victims. Bullying can lead to fear of school, absenteeism, and stunted academic progress, which in turn can be the catalyst for school dropout (Townsend, *et al.*, 2008:22). Research further shows that peer pressure influences the adolescents' personality and intervenes in the development of their morality. Indeed, peers are one of the largest factors that influence the adolescent's psychological development (Oswald & Suss, 1988).

Drug abuse is one example of the dangerous negative effects that peer pressure has on adolescents. According to Lamsaouri (1995:46) the excuse for substance over use among adolescents is that everyone else is using it and there is no problem to use it. All peers in the same group are obliged to do the same thing and conform to the rules of the group. Therefore, adolescents start using drugs even if they are convinced that they are harmful for their health (Boujlaleb, 2006:3). In general, adolescents, use drugs to fulfil their need of belonging since belonging to a peer group is a source of self esteem for teens. In fact, Haynie (2002) states that adolescents get their self esteem from the group they belong to and cannot imagine themselves outside that gathering. Adolescents see friends or peers as a vital

component in their life without which they cannot live (Boujlaleb, 2006:3). This need to belong may cause them to partake in drug use. The drug use may be a contributing factor to drop out (Flischer, *et al.*, 2010). The use of drugs and alcohol effect the ability to concentrate and frequently have an impact on adolescent academic achievement (Jeynes, 2002:16).

3.3 Socio-economic reasons for dropout

Although it is noted that the reasons for absenteeism and dropout reported by school principals, district officials and representatives of provincial departments in South Africa is varied, the five most commonly cited reasons are: poverty, transport, illness, lack of parental involvement and food insecurity. These reasons point to the predominance of socio-economic factors in explaining dropout in South Africa (Weideman, *et al.*, 2007:9).

The greatest socio-economic problems currently facing South Africa are unemployment, HIV/AIDS, xenophobia, and poor health care systems (Corrigan, 2009). Unemployment has an impact on poverty and poverty has a direct impact on the economy. An increase in the number of unemployed people leads to an increase in the number of people who are dependent on social assistance/welfare programmes (Simonia, 2009).

High unemployment rates lead to a lack of financial resources within the community, leaving the parents of adolescents unable to pay for their school fees, purchase school clothing and/or stationery and pay for any remedial classes or extra-mural activities, all of which may contribute to adolescent dropout (Meintjies & Hall, 2009). Unemployment further forces the jobless and their families to share smaller living spaces. The cramped living spaces in the makeshift and small dwellings leave Coloured youth on the streets. The playgroup becomes a kind of surrogate family, but with a different set of norms. When the norms of the street become more important than the norms of the home, a gang may be formed. Research on gangs revealed a strong presence of gangs within the Coloured communities especially in the Cape Flats (Standing, 2006:2). Gangsterism has been highlighted as one of the major causes contributing to the high dropout rate in schools (Loggenberg, 2012).

Unemployment has a cyclical relationship with poverty (Simonia, 2009) and poverty has an effect on school dropout, not only are parents unable to pay school fees but are not able to pay associated school costs which include, transport costs, uniforms, stationery, transport and books. In 2007, 68% of children lived in households with a per capita income of less than

R350,00 (Meintjies & Hall, 2009). Poverty also interacts with other points of social disadvantage, with the interaction of these factors putting further pressure on vulnerable and marginalised children to drop out (Hunt, 2008:52). Children who are poor experience a significant amount of stigma and discrimination. Moreover, inequality in poverty leads to higher dropout rates for those children who are relatively poorer than their peers. Children who are enrolled in schools where all children are equally poor are less likely to drop out than those who are enrolled in schools with a great socio-economic divide (Dieltiens & Meny-Gibert, 2007).

Research further shows that poor children are more likely to drop out of school, or attend with less regularity, due to a need to work either within or outside of the household to support their family. This can include paid employment, or household chores such as gathering water or fuel for the cooking fire (Department of Labour, 2003. The National Child Labour Programme Action Programme for South Africa, 2003:2). The TECL (Towards the Elimination of the worst forms of Child Labour) project found, children in the rural areas spend on average, 12,5 hours per week collecting water – up to 40 hours a week for some children. The impact on educational outcomes appears to be significant as 85% of children who were involved in fetching water, compared to 15% who were not, were not in the appropriate age group for their grade (Department of Labour, 2007. The Child Labour Programme of Action (CLPA) 2008-2013).

The South African Human Rights Commission (2006) found that, in South Africa, transport costs often pose a greater barrier to access education than school fees. In 2006, 17% of primary school children and 29% of secondary school children travelled more than 30 minutes to arrive at school (Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 2007). According to the 2003 National Transport Survey, of those who used public transport, 87,4% said that the maximum walking time to the nearest transport facility was between one and 15 minutes. According to the Western Cape draft strategic plan (2010) just more than 56,3% of respondents said that they walk to their education institution.

Children living in poverty are more likely to be hungry, malnourished or ill. Illness has been found to be one of the main causes of absenteeism in schools in South Africa (Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 2007). The 2007 General Household Survey found there to be a significant drop from 2002 in the percentage of children living in households where child

hunger is experienced, but the figure was still high. In 2007, 14,9% of South African children lived in households where there was child hunger (Lake & Marera, 2009). This is consistent with CASE's 2007 findings that an estimated 14% of South African children go to school having either had nothing to eat or only a cup of tea in the morning (Community Agency for Social Enquiry, 2007).

Children who live with non-parental caregivers have less money, on average, spent on their educational needs than the caregiver's biological children in the same household. Of those children living with non-related caregivers, 10,6% were not enrolled in school (Fleisch, Shindler & Perry, 2009). It is also evident that children whose parents have received some sort of schooling are more likely themselves to attend school for longer (Lloyd, *et al.*, 2009). Family involvement is one of the most important contributors to school completion and success. The most accurate predictor of a student's school achievement is the extent to which his/her family encourages learning. Success is more likely if the family communicates high, yet reasonable, expectations for the student's education and future career and becomes involved in his/her education. Middle school and high school students whose parents remain involved tend to reach better success in completing their schooling (Clark, 1993; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Mapp, 2004; Schargel & Smink, 2001; Williams Bost, 2004).

3.4 School-based reasons for dropout

Literature by authors focussing on the role of education in school dropout argue that poor quality education is seen as the primary driver of dropout and resources should be directed into providing better support mechanisms for poorer learners (Dieltiens & Meny-Gibert, 2008/2009:46). School based factors that play a role in increasing dropout include: teacher absenteeism, school location and poor quality education (Sabates, *et al.*, 2010). Children who are poor are more likely to attend schools lacking educational infrastructure, including a lack of adequate numbers of reasonably-sized classrooms, well-trained teachers, learning resources and libraries. Schools in poor and rural communities often suffer due to large class sizes and overcrowding (United Nations Childrens' Fund, 2009).

In the light of understanding adolescent dropout in the context of this study, the researcher worked from a Gestalt meta-theoretical perspective. Furthermore, the experiences of adolescent drop out and reintegration regarding the sense of self was researched by reviewing theories of childhood growth and development focussing on Gestalt theory, field theory,

Eriksonian theory, symbolic interactionism and the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner. These frameworks are defined below.

4. DEFINITIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Theories of identity formation from a Gestalt field theory perspective explain that in the Gestalt model of human development, growth and formation of self come about through contact and interaction with the environment (Yontef, 1993:272). Through contact with the environment organisms take what they need for survival and development, assimilate those novel experiences necessary for growth and change and reject that which cannot be assimilated (Perls, *et al.*, 1951:190). Self emerges as an ongoing process and function of the organism/field (Bloom, 2009; Philippson, 2009). The sense of self of the reintegrated adolescent therefore needs to be seen in light of his environment within which he makes contact to have a better understanding of how his sense of self may have been formed (Schachter, 2005:376). It has been shown that the environment has a dramatic impact on the development of self (Schachter, 2005:378). The environment of the reintegrated adolescent is referred to as his field.

The field theory is described by Kurt Lewin (1952:45) as a set of principles an outlook a method and a whole way of thinking that relates to the intimate interconnectedness between events and the settings or situations in which these events take place. So theory in this case denotes a general theoretical outlook or way of appreciating reality that involves in Lewin's words "looking at the total situation and being willing to address and investigate the organised interconnected, interdependent, interactive, nature of complex human phenomena".

The Gestalt theory of holism together with field theory implies that everything is connected. What happens in one part of our field has an effect on our entire field. The self is in an interrelationship with others and situations in the field. The self has a permeable boundary that allows for receiving from the environment what it needs. Human beings need to interact and make contact with others and situations in the field in order to survive (Perls, *et al.*, 1951:372). Yontef (1993:136) states a person exists by differentiating self from other and by connecting self and other. In understanding the self it is important to understand that the self is in the field and part of the field. The self is the integrator of the field and is in constant flux in relation to experiences in the field within which it exists (Mackewn, 1997:74). The

family, community, value system and society of the adolescent is not simply to be viewed as the environment of the adolescent but as a dynamic part of what the adolescent is integrating as part of his identity (Wheeler, 2002:50). The field in Gestalt theory can be defined as “a totality of mutually influencing forces that together form a unified interactive whole” (Yontef, 1993:295).

The writings of Uri Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1989) and Lev Vygotsky (1978) were studied to understand the effect of the environment on the adolescent and further affirm the impact environmental factors have on the formation of identity. Bronfenbrenner emphasized the importance of considering the various levels of the environment that influence an individual's growth and behaviour. The individual is the centre of the system, the individual is active in this environment being influenced and having influence. The level of environment known as the microsystem specifically studies the influence of the immediate surroundings such as the family, peer group and community. The second level is the mesosystem which refers to the relationships among the microsystems. The mesosystem can be seen as the connections which bring together the different contexts in which the individual develops. The exosystems are the broader social settings that provide support for the development of children and adults. These are the social settings and institutions that do not directly involve the children but still have a profound influence on their development e.g. extended family, social support networks. The macrosystem is the outermost level of Bronfenbrenner's model this is an overarching ideology, value, religion, laws and regulations which effect adolescent development. Bronfenbrenner includes a chronosystem in his theory which involves historical time and how aspects of time impact development (Keenan & Evans, 2009:13; Muus, 2006:301). Lev Vygotsky (1978) confirms “a child's social environment is an extremely important force in their development, it is through social interactions with more experienced and more knowledgeable members of their society that children are able to acquire the knowledge and skills that a culture deems to be important”.

Literature on symbolic interactionism theory was reviewed to further investigate how human beings develop meaning and value in their worlds and how these meanings and values may have an influence on adolescent identity. The symbolic interaction theory developed by George Herbert Mead (1934) postulates that humans develop meaning in their worlds in their interactions with their environment and other people. Individuals are not born with a sense of self but are developed through the process of interaction and communication. The

interactions are subjectively interpreted through existing symbols and understanding these symbols are important in understanding human behaviour. These shared symbols are the language of the people and the way meaning is shared (La Rossa & Reitzes, 1993; Nelson, 1998).

The field of the reintegrated adolescent is influenced even before their birth by numerous factors, one such factor being the parental reception and support of the child (Fernandes, *et al.*, 2006:102). Missing parental guidance and support may have long term effects on adolescents and their education longevity (Killen & Coplan, 2011:5). This concept is supported by modern theory and research supports the notion that early relationships established between infants and their caregivers have enduring implications for children's development (Bowlby, 1969; 1973). Reviewed literature agrees that a universal task of parenting is to support children's acquisition of the skills necessary to function in their environments. Parents transmit values, rules and standards about ways of thinking and acting and provide an interpretive lens through which children view social relationships and structures (McGillicuddy-De Lisi & Sigel, 1995; Ogbu, 1988; Harkness, *et al.*, 2002). The foundations of adolescent self esteem are built in relationships with parents. When parents are loving children feel loved and develop feelings of self-worth. These feelings become established early in life. Children at an early age know with whom they can develop a sense of trust. The establishment of trust in these first basic relationships permeates all later ones (Bolognini, *et al.*, 1996; Tunnage, 2004). The literature here again supports the theory of the strong importance of the parenting relationship on the strength of self and the influence the relationship has on the future success of the adolescent. Research shows that adolescent beliefs about self-competence are related to both motivation and self esteem. Research on achievement motivation has documented the role of self-competence beliefs as mediators of actual achievement. Adolescents perform better and are more motivated to take on increasingly challenging tasks when they believe they have the ability to accomplish a specific task (Eccles, *et al.*, 1998).

Sadock and Sadock (2007:36) explain that adolescence can be subdivided in three stages namely: early, middle and late adolescence. These stages can be identified as follows: early adolescence, generally defined as the ages between 12 to 14 years is the period in which the biggest changes are noticed in terms of physical appearance, attitude and behaviour. Early adolescents start to display their autonomy and challenge parents and authority figures. At

this stage adolescents may show a disdain for rules and experiment with drugs and alcohol. Although there are differences in the ways in which new behaviours are acquired most early adolescents make new friends and modify their image. Further most adolescents maintain good family connections, old friends and their family values.

According to the authors, middle adolescence representing the ages 14 to 16 years, sees the strong influence of the peer group. At this development stage sexual behaviour intensifies making romantic relationships complicated. The ability to combine abstract reasoning, with realistic decision making and the application of social judgement is tested in this phase. The need to be autonomous may still cause conflict with parents, however most teens in the process of defining themselves, still maintain good family relationships (Sadock & Sadock, 2007:37).

Late adolescence, the ages 17 to 19 years is a time of continued exploration of personal pursuits, in doing so a greater definition of self and sense of belonging to a certain group with the same interests is formed. Well-adjusted adolescents are comfortable with their current choices of activities but realise their identities will continue to be refined during adulthood (Sadock & Sadock, 2007:37).

In line with field theory and the affect the environment has on adolescent identity the literature under review shows that the self and the formulation of the self is largely influenced by the parents, families and communities within which the child lives. Further the development phase of adolescence is where identity is formed, and while this process is taking place the adolescent is in a phase of uncertainty about who he is. The uncertainty the reintegrated adolescents face in terms of the change in their identity and of how the reintegration had affected their sense of self is understandable placed in context of literature on adolescent identity formation. Adolescence is essentially where identity is formed, a phase of transition, growth out of childhood toward adulthood. Adolescent development continues along a physical, cognitive, social and emotional context. Individuals develop in unique and complex ways at different rates and at different stages of life. The different aspects cannot be separated and mutually influence one another (Gouws, *et al.*, 2008:6). Adolescents are aware that they are not the children they once were but they are equally sure that they have not yet reached adulthood (Cobb, 2010:19; Keenan and Evans, 2009:141;

Waterman, 1982:373). Erik Erikson (1959) identified the central most pressing question of adolescence as a search for identity.

Erik Erikson (1959) has provided the most comprehensive description of identity development during adolescence, according to Erikson an identity crises occurs during adolescence, as adolescence is the phase where the adolescent is engaged in redefining himself and his role in society. Identity as Erikson (1963) used the term refers to the sense of self achieved through examining and committing to the roles and pursuits that define an adult in society. Identity gives us a sense of who we are, allows us to experience a continuity of self over time. This continuity helps us relate what we have done in the past to what we hope to do in the future to our ambitions and dreams. Our perception of self includes how others see us and the importance they attach to our values and accomplishments (Cobb, 2010:22; Keenan & Evans, 2009:142).

The phase of adolescence is a transient one, where adolescents try out different roles and ways of being. Erikson (1959) suggested that adolescents imagine a number of possible selves, mentally trying them on to get a sense of who they might become or what their lives might be like. Some of these versions of the self are positive or hoped for selves whereas others represent feared outcomes that adolescents nonetheless believe could be possible as well (Cobb, 2010:22; Muus, 2006:302). Adolescence is a period where the organisation of an identifiable self starts to be created, younger adolescents in particular have a remarkable capacity for projecting unwanted aspects of themselves onto others, often seeing themselves as the victims and make others responsible for their outcomes of their own behaviour (McConville, 1995:61).

5. CONCLUSION

The literature reviewed shows that dropout is a significant problem experienced throughout the world. South African statistics show high dropout rates for various reasons and shows that the South African education system has failed to produce competent learners. Learners are not able to read, write and count at expected levels, and they are unable to execute tasks that demonstrate key skills associated with literacy and numeracy.

Not only is the sense of self of the reintegrated adolescent affected by his developmental phase of adolescence but other factors may be contributing to the difficulty he has in defining his sense of self, namely missing support and value systems.

The literature researched with reference to dropout and successful reintegration was scant. A thesis by Jakuja (2008), researched the social experiences of school dropouts following their reenrolment in secondary schools in the Stutterheim District. No research could be identified on the success or failure of the reintegration and the role it plays in identity formation of the adolescent in the South African context. A wider statistical survey will need to be undertaken to measure dropout and successful reintegration rates in South Africa.

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Self-work with male adolescents who are reintegrated into schools

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Abstract

Dropping out of school and then returning may play a role in how adolescents experience their sense of self. The aim of this article is to explore how male adolescents define their sense of self in the context of reintegration into schools. The Gestalt theory, Eriksonian theory, field theory, symbolic interactionism and the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner are used as theoretical frameworks for this study. The study followed a phenomenological research design. Six coloured male adolescents, age ranges 13 through 17 years were purposively selected from the informal settlement of Groenheuwel, Paarl in the Western Cape together with the Headmaster of Groenheuwel Primary School and the President and Project Leader of the Khula Development Group. Open-ended interviews, observation, member checking, and a reflective group discussion, as well as an art technique were used to determine the adolescents' sense of self in the context of reintegration into schools. The findings show a missing support system, an underdeveloped value system, and the struggle of the reintegrated adolescents to discuss and convey their sense of self. The findings support the theoretical frameworks of this study that human development, growth and formation of self comes through contact with the environment (Kepner, 1999; Philippson, 2009). The findings further show the effect of personal and contextual factors on the sense of self of the reintegrated adolescent.

Introduction

The period of transition from adolescence to adulthood is a critical period that shapes the identity of the individual (Erikson, 1959). Adolescence is regarded as an extraordinarily confusing time which involves complex biological, physical, behavioural and social growth (Hunter & May, 2002). Dropping out and reintegrating into school may have an effect on the identity and the sense of self of the reintegrated adolescent.

Dropping out of school is a global phenomenon (Lahey, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, National Centre for Education Statistics, 2010; Wichstrøm, 1998) and not confined to South Africa alone (South African Department of Basic Education, 2011). It is encouraging to see, according to the African Social Surveys' 2010 Household Survey in South Africa (Meny-Gibert & Russell, 2009), that only 1,2 percent of children and youths of compulsory school-going age (seven to 15) were not in school in 2007. However, this proportion rose to 10% for youths aged 16 to 18 years, the age range specified in the age-grade norms for grades 10 to 12.

Age-specific enrolment rates dropped more steeply after age 15, with 20% of 18-year-olds out of school, and not having completed their matric. Levels of completion of the full school curriculum were low, with an 'achieved' completion rate for grade 12 of only 44%. Reasons for low matric or (National Senior Certificate) completion rates result from the hurdle the matric exams still hold for many learners. Learners may continue with their education into their early twenties after having repeated grades or missing periods of schooling, and still drop out before completing matric (Strassburg, Meny-Gibert & Russell, 2010). Enrolment rates remained very high up to age 15, dropping progressively from age 16 to age 18. However, the fact that 99% of children and youths aged seven to 15 are in school does not mean that the majority are obtaining a full primary or basic education – they may,

for example, start school late or repeat often and leave school at age 16 with a grade four education.

In 2007, a total of 368 217 learners passed the National Senior Certificate exams, amounting to a pass rate of 65,2% (compared to 66,5% in 2006) (Meny-Gibert & Russell, 2009). From Grade nine upwards the dropout rate increases, reaching almost 12% in both grade 10 and 11. In total 10% of learners who had been enrolled in grades nine to 11 dropped out of school between 2007 and 2008 (South African Department of Basic Education, 2011).

Considerable attention has been given to explanations for school dropout, and a number of reasons for early school leaving have been found (Ekstein & Wolpin, 1999; Roderick, 1993; Tanner, 1995). Among these are adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds characterised by poor family relationships, mental illness, substance abuse and poverty, lower school ability and/or motivation, signs of disengagement from school, and conflict with school authorities (Dieltiens, 2006). The area of Groenheuwel in Paarl is one such disadvantaged community with a low socio-economic status. The neighbourhood largely consists of makeshift dwellings with no running water or bathroom facilities. The effects of poverty, unemployment, food and financial insecurity, violence, drug and alcohol abuse has taken its toll on the residents of this community and is expressed by their feelings of hopelessness and helplessness.

Conceptual framework

The research into how school dropout and reintegration affects the sense of self of the reintegrated adolescent was not done in isolation, but the participants were viewed within the context of their circumstances to support the meta-theory on which the research study was based, namely Gestalt theory. Furthermore, other theories like the ecological systems theory and symbolic interactionism were integrated as theoretical frameworks for this article.

Gestalt theory (Joyce & Sills, 2010) views the individual in the context of the broader field or system. In the Gestalt model of human development, growth and formation of self comes about through contact and interaction with the environment (Kepner, 1999; Philippon, 2009). The Gestalt approach tries to understand the nature of change and how this change can have an effect on behaviour and how things come to be as they are (Brownell, 2009; Crocker, 2005), which makes it relevant for this study. Special attention was given to the field theory that entails an interconnectedness of all events (Joyce & Sills, 2010; Parlett, 2005). The self is not seen as fixed and apart from the field. The self is a process and is constructed in the current organism/environment field (Clarkson, 2004; Fernandes, Cardoso-Zinker, Nogueira, Lazarus & Ajzenberg, 2006; Yontef, 1998).

No literature could be found on the experience of the adolescent on reintegration with a focus on their sense of self. The research question directing the research, “How do male adolescents experience their sense of self in the context of reintegration into schools?” hoped to drive value by the discovery of motivators and opportunities to keep the reintegrated adolescents in school and strengthen their sense of self to assist them with any adversity they may face. These motivators and opportunities will then be shared to assist a wider audience that may be experiencing the same situation in order to cultivate a better educated youth.

Method

A phenomenological research design was followed, which, according to Fouché and Schurink (2011), allows participants to give meaning to their own experiences. The researcher’s objective was to explore these meanings, through various techniques including open-ended interviews, observation, member checking, a reflective group discussion, as well as applying an art technique. Thematic data analysis was used to transform transcribed data into meaningful information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The principles and strategies for enhancing the trustworthiness of the data were done through crystallisation (Ellingson, 2009;

Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ethical clearance was given by the North-West University: NWU-00060-12-A1.

Participants

The participants included six Coloured male adolescents, age ranges 13 through 17 years from the informal settlement of Groenheuwel, Paarl in the Western Cape, of which one had the role of peer educator. Other participants included the Headmaster of Groenheuwel Primary School and the President and Project Leader of the Khula Development Group who reintegrated the adolescents into schools in 2011 and 2012. The adolescent sample (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest & Namey, 2005) consisted of boys who the Khula Development Group in Paarl had reintegrated into schools in the beginning of 2012. Stratified purposive sampling (Nieuwenhuis, 2007) was used.

Results and Discussion

The sense of self of the reintegrated adolescent

The findings show that the adolescent participants had difficulty comprehending the concepts of self and identity and struggled to communicate their true thoughts and feelings. Comments from the headmaster (HM) and project leader (PL) from Khula were as follows, *“The reintegrated adolescents have difficulty talking about themselves and explaining what they think and feel”* (HM). *“It’s difficult to get to the root of how these children are feeling or how they see themselves. The children do not know how to explain themselves, they struggle to communicate and explain their thoughts”* (PL). The participants were only capable of giving superficial answers regarding their sense of self. The following answers reflect the abovementioned point as they could not really refer to self but rather to school engagement and relationships, *“I like being back in school – I feel good when I am there, I feel like I can have a good future”* (P3). *“I find school very enjoyable and I like to learn new*

things” (P5). *“I try and stay strong and go to school because I know it’s good for me to be there. I play with my friends, we play games, we play touch rugby, we have fun”* (P5).



Clay representation

Figure 1. Representation in clay of how participant 5 sees his sense of self on reintegration.

The researcher reformulated the questions directed at the adolescents regarding their sense of self on reintegration by keeping the questioning style as open-ended as possible and rephrasing questions in a simpler manner to ensure the participants understood what was being asked. The answers to the reformulated questions did not give any significantly different answers as seen by the following comment, *“I feel good about myself when I am in school, I want to finish school, I want to buy a boat, I want to be a policeman”* (P5).

Participants had difficulty motivating what had changed in their lives to ensure they did not drop out of school again. The participants were guarded, giving short answers. Participants all commented that they felt okay about themselves, *“I feel okay”* (P3). *“I feel alright”* (P5) and yet were unable to truly answer what they liked about themselves and what they would like to change or improve about themselves. One exception was from participant 2 who stated, *“When somebody swears at me I would like to just be able to walk away, not swear or fight back. I need to learn to do that”*.

Their struggle with defining their sense of self on reintegration was further reiterated in the reflective group discussion. During this session, participants were asked to create in clay how their dropout and reintegration had affected them. The adolescent participants struggled to create this reflection. The clay creations were not used as interpretative or projective techniques but to facilitate discussion. The researcher continually needed to bring their focus back to the original question of how they felt when they went back to school and how their creation of clay represented that feeling. Participant 2 for example, whose dad has passed away, made a graveyard and said that he “*thought about that because I think of my dad*”.



Clay representation

Figure 2. Representation in clay of how participant 2 sees his sense of self on reintegration.

Themes and subthemes which emerged during the thematic analysis are outlined below and are subsequently discussed in detail.

Missing support systems

The findings show the adolescents did not receive enough support during the process of reintegration. The lack of support is reflected in the following comment, “*The difference for these children is that there is no support*” (HM). The following subthemes were identified as missing support systems:

Lack of parental guidance

It was clear that there is a definite lack of parental guidance in the form of support. Research findings by Topor, Keane, Shelton and Calkins (2010) show that the scholars whose parents are interested in their school career and offer them support have a better chance of completing their schooling. Bowlby (1969) explains that good relationships with primary caregivers in childhood lead to greater expectations of the self and others.

According to the headmaster, *“There is a lack of parental guidance with the adolescents that drop out, most of the children come from single parent households”*. None of the participants in the study lived with their biological fathers and only one participant lived with a father figure in the form of a step-father. The headmaster stated that, *“The fathers of the adolescents are largely absent. There is no father or authoritative figure in the home that inspires respect”*. Responses from adolescents that confirmed the absenteeism of fathers were: *“I live with my mom”* (P1). *“My dad passed away when I was little”* (P2). *“My dad does not live with us”* (P3). The absence of a father or a respected father figure has an effect on the sense of self of the adolescent and more specifically on the male adolescent. According to McConville (1995) male youths who do not have male role models may behave in what can be described as strange ways as they try and work out what it means to be male. The author further states that delinquent boys as a group often come from homes where male role models and father figures are absent.

Missing community support

The findings show that the field of the adolescent and his sense of self was affected by the community. The community in which the adolescent participants found themselves did not seem to be able to provide the support the adolescents had not received at home. The lack of community support is evident in the following comment, *“The communities don’t seem to want to help. The communities tend to be looking down at these children. The support for*

them staying in school is absent” (PL). “The people in the community do not motivate us children to finish school. They say that their children, even those that finished matric, cannot find a job, so what is the point then of going to school” (P1). The peer educator further supported the point that the community held little support for the reintegrated adolescents.



Clay representation

Figure 3. Representation in clay of how the peer educator saw the reintegrated adolescents.

The community of Groenheuwel, Paarl in the Western Cape, where the participants live, can be regarded as one representing a lower socio-economic area where financial and food insecurity, violence, drug and alcohol abuse are experienced. The community reflects a feeling of anomie. The participants agree that members of the community do not motivate them to complete their schooling but rather explain the arbitrariness of an educational qualification as gainful employment with or without the high school qualification is difficult. According to Bronfenbrenner (1989) and Vygotsky (1978) the community has an effect on the children and adolescents living within it. Vygotsky further states that the social environment of the child is very important because it is through social interactions that children receive the knowledge and the skills that the particular culture and community deem important.

Missing educational support

The findings reflect missing educational support: *“It’s difficult for the teachers. They have 45 children in a class, sometimes 52 children. Fifty-seven pupils is my biggest class in this school, so it is very challenging. It’s not that we don’t want to help them, it’s just very challenging to focus on one child and give them the attention they need in these huge classes”* (HM). *“It is not that teachers do not want to help, they simply do not have the capacity to attend to everything”* (HM).

A lack of educational support and insufficient resources in the form of big classes, understaffed schools, the inability of teachers to reach special needs and poor teacher/adolescent relationships are all contributing factors to dropout and reintegration longevity. The adolescents stated that they were afraid of some of their teachers and the teacher/adolescent relationships were not necessarily as good as they should be. The following reflected the views of the participants: *“The teachers are all different, some are really good and others not so much. We have a teacher that hits us with his fists. He puts three of us in a corner and just starts hitting. You have to cover your face and make sure you don’t land a punch. He stands on our feet so we cannot get away”* (P1). *“I think children are afraid in schools. The teachers shout at the children and give the children hidings, so they become scared of the teachers, and just stay away from the school rather”* (P2). *“I have had the experience that if you don’t understand the teachers they shout at you if you ask questions. They say they have already explained something, and did you not listen the first time, so you feel embarrassed and just want to get out of there”* (PE).

The participants felt that the teachers were unable to discipline older children effectively or to remove bullies and gangs from school premises. Their arguments in this regard were as follows: *“The older children in our school encourage us to be rude to the teachers, they tell you to not worry about what the teacher says. These older children don’t*

listen to the teachers, they don't do their homework, they don't want to learn. They just stay in the classes and cause trouble. I think they (the teachers) are scared of some of the bigger children" (P1). The inability of the teachers to discipline the older children was supported by participant 2.

The project leader from Khula and the headmaster agree that there is a shortage of resources available for adolescents and children that have fallen out of mainstream schooling. There is also a lack of remedial schooling and trade schools in the Paarl area. *"There is a lack of remedial facilities and trade schools, special needs schools are filled to capacity and often are not within the relevant schooling district"* (HM).

In comparing the schooling, as described by the participants in the study to what is described in Cobb (2010) as effective schooling, a large disparity is displayed. Effective schools have skilled teachers, provide a supportive school climate and involve parents and the community in the services they offer. Garborino (1980) explains that adolescents attending smaller schools and learning groups have more positive interactions with each other, have fewer discipline problems, less absenteeism and fewer dropouts. Teachers who are supportive and fair and who have a clearly defined expectation of their students contribute substantially to a school's climate (Barber & Olsen, 2004).

The most important aspect of a school (Olweus, 2001) is the safety of the children and adolescents within it. The participants in the research study agreed that some children are afraid of going to school because of bullies and gangs and the participants feel that the teachers are unable to discipline older children effectively or to remove bullies and gangs from the school premises.

The headmaster commented that there are big problems facing the education system and the needs of all the children are not met. The teachers are trying their best, but are still

struggling to meet the demand as they simply do not have the resources or the capacity to manage special needs. The inability of the education system to address the problems of dropout and successful reintegration of adolescents and children may very well lead to further socio-economic problems in the future for the wider community (Gustafsson, van der Berg, Shepherd, Burger, 2010).

The under developed value system

The findings show that the adolescents seem to have an underdeveloped value system. The Khula project leader shares the following insights, *“We are going back to basics with these children. There is no discipline, there is no basic value system. They don’t know how to behave, they don’t know why stealing, if I am hungry, is a problem. We need to teach them the basics of social behaviour. The adolescents are not socialised. We have to start somewhere with these children even if it takes us years, we need to build them up from ground level”*.

A culture of violence, a lack of discipline and an inability to take ownership, accountability and responsibility for behaviour are recognised themes emerging as contributions to this under-developed value system. Moral development has been closely linked with cognitive development (Kohlberg & Gilligan, 1972). Age in itself cannot cause a change in moral judgement; rather a change in age is accompanied by a change in cognitive, affective social and other kinds of development that affect moral development (Bester 1992).

A culture of violence

The culture of violence is reflected in the following comments: *“This one guy he threatens you. If you don’t give him money he hits you”* (P3). *“I used to be threatened at my old school but in my new school I am not threatened anymore”* (P2).

The adolescent participants felt that certain children do not attend school because they are afraid. One participant dropped out of school because he was intimidated by other

scholars. The community the adolescents live in is described as a violent one. Statistics on violent crime and assault show that Paarl East where Groenheuwel is situated has the highest incidence of violent crime in the Paarl, Wellington area (Erasmus & Mans, 2003). The quality of children's neighbourhoods affects the likelihood of delinquent behaviours.

Children who grow up in neighbourhoods characterized by high levels of social cohesion in which neighbours are willing to step forward in support of each other are less likely to engage in delinquent activities (Odgers, Moffitt, Tach, Sampson, Taylor, Matthews & Caspi, 2009).

A lack of discipline

The reintegrated adolescent tends to lack discipline. The headmaster reflects, "*There are no parameters and the children do as they please. Schools are run by a set of rules, the reintegrated adolescent now needs to learn to follow the rules, and the readjustment may be difficult for them*".

It would seem that the adolescents have no boundaries of discipline within which to operate; absent fathers and little parental guidance mean these adolescents are left to their own devices to choose to behave as they please. The absence of the parental guidance, discipline and inadequate behavioural control has been found to contribute to problems such as drug abuse, truancy and anti-social behaviour (Barber, 1996; Pettit, Laird, Dodge, Bates & Criss, 2001). The fundamental principle of development is that children and adolescents must acquire an understanding that social interactions are governed by rules and structures that must be recognized and followed to be competent members of society (Smetana & Daddis, 2011).

Inability to take ownership, accountability and responsibility

The adolescents struggle to take ownership, accountability and responsibility for their behaviour. The following emerged from the adolescents in the reflective group discussion: Participant 3 blamed bad friends for his behaviour "*when I was not in school, bad friends*

influenced me to take tik and stay out of school". According to participant 1 it is pointless to go to school because *"parents don't have money for them to go to university or to study further. They say there is no point of finishing matric"*. This viewpoint was confirmed by the peer educator who stated, *"The older children say what is the point of going to school; you will not find a job anyway"*.

Stemming from the lack of discipline it is evident that tenacity is not exercised in the taking of ownership or responsibility for a situation and seeing it through to its completion. The participants did not seem to take responsibility for their dropout and continued dropout and reintegration and were very quick to blame others. Participants mentioned 'bad' friends that have influenced them to take drugs or to dropout but none take the responsibility or view themselves as the bad influence. Adolescence is a period where the organisation of an identifiable self starts to be created, younger adolescents in particular have a remarkable capacity for projecting unwanted aspects of themselves onto others often seeing themselves as the victims and make others responsible for their outcomes of their own behaviours (McConville, 1995).

Missing self-motivation and perseverance

A value system that does not dictate responsibility and discipline influences the identity of the adolescent to be shaped into one where self-motivation and perseverance to complete a task are missing, *"Initially the reintegrated adolescent is motivated to stay in school and do their best, but attending school to keep someone else happy only lasts for a short amount of time and then they drop out again"* (HM). *"The adolescents need to get to a point where they can motivate themselves"* (PL). The difficulties the adolescents experienced with self-motivation and perseverance were shown by their inconsistent school attendance. According to the project leader, *"The reintegrated adolescents fall out and return, fall out*

and return". This was confirmed by the headmaster who stated that, "*They manage their school career in waves*".

The foundations of adolescent self-esteem are built in relationships with parents. When parents are loving, children feel loved and develop feelings of self-worth (Bolignini, Plancherel, Bettschart, & Halfon, 1996; Tunnage, 2004). A lack of parental guidance and support can then be argued to leave the opposite effect, namely an adolescent with a lower self-esteem. According to Eccles, Wigfield and Schiefele (1998) the particular value of a task or activity together with the self-belief that one can achieve it are motivating factors that influence task completion. The competency beliefs, expectations for success and task values to achievement are all contributions to what would motivate the adolescent to complete his schooling (Killen & Coplan, 2011). The reintegrated adolescent is in an environment that does not give him support in his task completion, deems education pointless and does not seem to contribute to his healthy self-image. This leaves him, understandably, with a low motivation for task completion.

Adolescent beliefs about self-competence are related to both motivation and self-esteem. Self-competence beliefs are seen as mediators of actual achievement. Adolescents perform better and are more motivated to take on increasingly challenging tasks when they believe they have the ability to accomplish a specific task (Eccles et al., 1998). The reintegrated adolescent is very motivated in his initial reintegration but it would seem, once he realises the enormity and the length of time necessary to complete his schooling, he becomes overwhelmed and de-motivated as he realises he may not be able to complete his task resulting in him giving up and dropping out of school (Killen & Coplan, 2011).

Unrealistic sense of self

The participants displayed an unrealistic sense of self. There seemed to be a distinct difference between how the adolescents defined their sense of self with reference to their

school experience when compared to what was actually happening in reality. The adolescent participants shared their enjoyment of being in school, *“I feel much better about myself when I am in school”* (P1). *“I don’t like being out of school”* (P2). *“I like being in school, when you are not in school you get up to naughty things. I don’t like it when I am not in school, I don’t feel good about it”* (P3). Although they were very convincing in their statements that they would not be dropping out again, their statements did not always ring true. Answers were given as if they were sharing what they wanted the researcher to hear. This was confirmed by the Khula project leader who shared that these adolescents attended school inconsistently. It seems as if incongruity exists between their sense of their experiences of school and the actual reality. This led to the assumption that the adolescents have an unrealistic view of their sense of self. Some comments were: *“Leaving school is a stupid choice. Once you have done that most of the guys then walk a wrong path. The best choice is to stay in school”* (P1). *“I now have the sense to stay. I want to learn, do maths, study and I like to think and work out answers and solutions”* (P2). *“I want to learn, that is what makes me strong”* (P4).

The reintegrated adolescents have alternated between identifying with attending school and with dropping out of school and this has continued over a period of time. Their lack of conviction and unrealistic sense of self may purely be an uncertainty in how they are going about deciding who they are and who they are not. This decision about who they are is explained by McConville (1995) who states that adolescents work through and organise the complex field of new experiences in order to work out what is me or not me. This sorting task means owning and disowning aspects of self. The process of taking ownership of the self is essentially a matter of organising the field of potential experience to that which I identify with. The other side of this process is disclaiming and disowning the parts of self I don’t like

or agree with (Kepner, 1999; McConville, 1995). The reintegrated adolescent seems to be struggling to define who he is and who he is not.

Unrealistic self-confidence

The adolescents displayed an unrealistic self-confidence and the thought that they may not actually be able to complete school did not seem to have occurred to them.

Participant 1 seemed to not be the least bit concerned and displayed the confidence that he would be completing his schooling, *“I know I can do it, I must not give up”*. Participant 4 also believed he would be completing his schooling and stated, *“I am going to stay because I want to learn, and I want to play with my friends”*.

This unrealistic self-confidence on the part of the adolescents in their conviction to complete their schooling was refuted by the inability of the participants to impart information on what was different with their reintegration this time. The participants had difficulty in answering what obstacles they had overcome or how they would manage these obstacles in the future in order to insure no further dropout. Not one of the adolescent research participants knew of anyone who had successfully reintegrated and completed their schooling. The participants agreed that the adolescents who drop out need to reintegrate as quickly as possible otherwise reintegration can become very difficult. Although the participants all agreed with these statements they seemed to lack the insight that this may very well be their own reality.

These reintegrated adolescents with their missing parental guidance, role models and family support have emerged as adolescents that are struggling to establish a sense of self. Their unrealistic self-assessments can be seen as their confusion in creating a sense of self that may be the reflection of their peers and others in their environment and not based on their own childhood ground which is seemingly unstable (McConville, 1995).

Lack of understanding of educational requirements

The adolescents tended to lack a true understanding of the requirements necessary to complete their school career. The headmaster commented, *“The adolescents seem to have a desire to be in school, we bring them in, but then they realise the enormity of what they have let themselves in for and tend to fall out again”* (HM). The participants did not believe they had difficulty with their school work and it became clear that they unrealistically assessed their own ability measured to the required level needed for academic success in this age range. Participant 5 claimed that, *“Nothing is difficult for me, except for reading, I find reading difficult”*. This statement reflects the inability to see the growing gap in their education.

Unrealistic assessment of abilities

The adolescents displayed an unrealistic sense of self in their assessment of abilities, especially referring to future career aspirations: *“I want to be a lawyer”* (P1). *“I would like to start my own business and be successful”* (P2). *“I want to buy a boat. I want to be a policeman”* (P5). *“I want to be a magistrate”* (P3). *“It is wonderful for adolescents to have dreams and aspirations for a better future however we also need to help them focus on reality. We don’t want to break down their dreams but we need to be realistic in assisting them”* (PL).

Despite their intermittent school attendance, the adolescents all have aspirations of highly successful careers. According to Yontef (1993) the field of uncertainty in which the reintegrated adolescent comes into contact in the educational environment exposes him to a new situation to which he has not yet contributed a definite meaning. Self in this situation is still in the process of formation as suggested by Gestalt theory and this may contribute to the understanding of the unrealistic sense of self displayed by the reintegrated adolescents in

terms of their educational ability and future career aspirations (Lobb, 2005; Philippon, 2009).

Lack of successful examples of reintegration

No successful examples of reintegration could be found. The participants all agreed with participant 2 that *“the boys that fall out because of their problems with drugs or problems at home don’t really come back to school, and those that do don’t stay for too long”*. The peer educator confirmed, *“I don’t know of any children who have fallen out of school for a long time and gone back to finish, you need to go back as quickly as possible and not stay out for too long, because then it becomes very difficult to stay in school”* and yet this fact did not appear to represent their own reality to them.

Experience of an adult world

The adolescents who have dropped out have experienced the adult world of freedom, independence and the capacity to earn money, yet they are still adolescents and the experience can be seen as a false sense of maturity. *“Some of the children that have fallen out think they are adults. They forget that they are actually children because either they have earned money or they have had their own children. They forget that we are the same age and they tell us what we must do. They make out as if they are older and they know more than you and think they can tell you what to do, because they are no longer at school. The out of school experience they think has matured them faster, but leaving school is a bad idea, working on a farm or selling scrap is not the life I want”* (P1). Participant 3 agreed and confirmed this statement. *“These children are on a different level, they are more mature than the other children, they just operate on a different level”* (HM).

The experience of this freedom makes the longevity of their reintegration all the more difficult. Erikson (1968) states that adolescents sometimes find themselves in roles that are still too big for them, and yet the old roles of childhood have become uncomfortably small,

they find themselves looking inward and outward and are aware that they may be judged in terms of how well the others have achieved precisely what they themselves are attempting to do.

An internal battle

The headmaster believed an internal battle between completing school and having their freedom seems to be taking place within the adolescent. *“The friends outside portray this wonderful experience of freedom. The reintegrated adolescent now experiences an internal battle, staying with the rules and confines of school or being out there and having his freedom. School comes at a price, and that price is their freedom. It is difficult to know what is going on in their heads and what the real motivation is for them being at school”*.

Participant 3 agreed that the friends outside have freedom and influence you to not go to school. *“I think that bad friends are a reason why children don’t go to school. The bad friends don’t want you to go to school, the guys that don’t go to school just sit around and smoke dagga (marijuana) and cigarettes”*.

The reintegrated adolescent does not lose his friends outside when he returns to school and they portray a wonderful life of freedom. The adolescent questions his decision to go back to school. McConville (1995) describes this internal battle by stating that adolescence is a paradigm shift, from the familiar child self to the confusion of a wider range of possibilities in the emerging adolescent self. The adolescent has two separate selves, each with its own configurational organisation of internal and external experiences – one the child self and the other the adult self, both competing for ascendancy (Polster, 2005). The challenges of adolescent polarities in the selves of adult self and child self, vying for ascendancy makes the motivation and longevity for the reintegration without support and encouragement even more difficult (McConville, 1995; Polster, 2005). Development proceeds as a sort of dialogue between these alternative selves and each serves to limit and

challenge the other, which promotes contact between the two and ultimately their growth and mutual accommodation (McConville, 1995).

Recommendations

The reintegrated adolescent would benefit from a holistic intervention programme supporting him on different levels providing the scaffolding to assist him to a point where he is able to self support and self motivate. The formation of multi-disciplinary teams providing educational, social, psychological and spiritual assistance under the leadership of the Khula Development Group could facilitate successful reintegration. Further research studies would need to be done to gain insight into how these intervention programmes could be created and maintained to support a lower dropout and higher successful integration rate.

The Khula Development Group, Paarl, in the Western Cape is hard at work in making a difference to the lives of adolescents who have dropped out of school as well as providing the support to those who have been reintegrated. The adolescents have all mentioned the Khula group and how thankful they are for their interventions. The research shows the reintegrated adolescent needs the support from NGOs like Khula, the community, the education department and the State to manage their effective reintegration.

Conclusion

The adolescent participants all originate from the lower socio-economic area of Groenheuwel. The community reflects a feeling of anomie where they have experienced financial and food insecurity, been exposed to violence, drug and alcohol abuse. The adolescents are in lower grades than the age appropriate grade, except for the peer educator. None of the adolescents live with both their biological parents, fathers are absent except for one participant who has a step-father. Taking all these challenging factors for completing school into account, the results show that the overarching factor contributing to dropout and reintegration longevity of the reintegrated adolescent is the support or lack thereof received

from parents, families, friends, the community, role models and the education system. One of the main themes emerging from the data reflects that the reintegrated adolescent seems to have an underdeveloped value system. A culture of violence, a lack of discipline and an inability to take ownership, accountability and responsibility for behaviour are recognised themes emerging as contributors to this under-developed value system.

The findings show the reintegrated adolescents' sense of self is largely a confused and unrealistic one. The factors contributing to this confusion can be attributed to the phase of adolescence, together with a missing support and value system. The adolescents' reintegration into school has however created the awareness that an education is important and that this education and the prospect of a better life may be within their reach. Irrespective of whether they truly believe education will change their lives, the awareness of the possibility is evident. Awareness is primary in Gestalt theory, awareness is the fundamental beginning of change.

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SUMMARY, EVALUATION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

The previous sections of the research described the orientation, findings and discussions of the research project. In this section the findings are evaluated and recommendations made for the reintegrated adolescents and their families as well as educators, social workers and anyone who may work therapeutically with these adolescents. A summary of the research together with an evaluation of the research in terms of the findings meeting the aims and objectives of the study was undertaken and is outlined below together with recommendations that would hopefully inspire some areas for future research endeavours.

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The effect of dropout and reintegration on the sense of self of the reintegrated adolescent was addressed from a phenomenological research design to ascertain how the adolescents were experiencing their reintegration in the here and now i.e. at the point in time of the research interviews with a view to understand how they constructed their sense of self. The interview questions were open-ended to allow the participants the opportunity to give meaning to their own experiences.

3. RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question was formulated from the research problem. How do male adolescents experience their sense of self in the context of reintegration into the school system? This was answered by allowing the adolescents the opportunity in open-ended interviews to give a personal account of their life stories. The exploratory nature of the approach to the research resulted in themes describing the struggle of the reintegrated adolescents to define their sense of self together with factors that may be seen as contributing to this situation.

4. RESEARCH AIM

The aim of the study was to explore how male adolescents define their sense of self in the context of reintegration into the school system. The manner in which the research aim was reached is explained in the research procedures mentioned below. If it is known how Coloured male adolescents view their sense of self after being reintegrated into schools they might be supported to adapt successfully into schools and not drop out again.

5. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The researcher followed a variety of qualitative research methods including open-ended interviews, observation, member checking, a reflective group discussion and an art technique to address the research problem and fulfil the aim of the research.

Interviews with reintegrated adolescents, a peer educator, the Headmaster of Groenheuwel Primary and the project leader of the Khula Development Group were undertaken and revealed interesting information. The interviews and the group discussion were recorded using a DVD recorder, photos were taken of the clay creations made in the art technique and notes and observations were made by the researcher. During the open-ended interviews members were constantly asked to clarify their descriptions. The interpretations made by the researcher linked to these discussions were checked and clarified with the members of the group who participated in the research.

The art technique allowed the researcher to obtain first-hand information given by the participants and relied on the participants to clarify the information. Inductive data analysis was used to transform data into meaningful information. Thematic data analysis was done categorising data into emerging themes. The data collected from the various participants together with the art technique and the observations and field notes of the researcher allowed her to view the effect of reintegration on the sense of self of the adolescent in various ways.

The researcher feels the methodology used was effective and does not foresee that different or deeper data results would have been obtained by following a differently research methodology.

6. RESEARCH SUMMARY

The adolescent participants have all been reintegrated into schools in 2012 and all originate from the lower socio-economic area of Groenheuwel in Paarl, they are all part of the ethnic minority group classified as Coloured and have had exposure to financial insecurity, drug and alcohol abuse, are in lower grades than the age appropriate grade except for one adolescent who presents himself as a peer educator. None of the adolescents live with both their biological parents, all their fathers are absent except for one adolescent who has a step-father.

The ability for true understanding and reflecting on who they are and how their sense of self was affected in their reintegration back to school seems to be missing. The reintegrated adolescents had difficulty in comprehending the concepts of self and identity and struggled to communicate their true thoughts and feelings. The participants were only capable of giving superficial answers regarding their sense of self in terms of dropout and reintegration.

The data shows the overarching factor contributing to dropout and reintegration longevity of the reintegrated adolescent is the lack of support received from parents, families, friends, communities, role models and the education system. One of the main themes emerging from the data shows the reintegrated adolescent as having an underdeveloped value system. A culture of violence, a lack of discipline and an inability to take ownership, accountability and responsibility for behaviour are recognised themes emerging as contributions to this under developed value system.

An interesting theme emerges from the adolescents' inability to truly express and understand who they are and how reintegration has affected them. This theme shows the unrealistic sense of self that the adolescents present. The adolescent participants shared their enjoyment of being in school as well as the benefits that schooling would bring them. They were very convincing in their statements that they would not be dropping out again, and yet, these adolescents attend school inconsistently. There seems to be distinct difference between what the adolescents are saying and what actions they are taking to meet the requirements for successful schooling.

This unrealistic self-confidence is confirmed in the inability of the adolescent to impart information on what is different with their reintegration this time. The participants have

difficulty in answering what obstacles they have overcome or how they will manage these obstacles in the future in order to insure no further dropout.

The adolescents further tended to lack a true understanding of the requirements necessary to complete their school career. The adolescents did not believe they had difficulty with their school work and it becomes clear that they unrealistically assess their academic ability. The adolescents further display an unrealistic assessment of their abilities specifically pertaining to future career aspirations. Not one of the adolescent research participants knows of anyone who had successfully reintegrated and completed their schooling and yet they do not seem to be able to see this as their own reality. The adolescents' experience of the adult world during their time of dropout may have led them to a false sense of maturity, an internal battle seems to be taking place between completing school and enjoying their freedom.

7. GENERAL SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE OF THE RESEARCHER

The researcher sees herself as fairly removed from the adolescent participants and had no preconceived thoughts or ideas as to what direction the research would follow and what it would uncover. An initial literature review unveiled the statistics on the high dropout rates experienced by adolescents throughout the world. The reasons for dropout considered globally and in South Africa are very similar and matched the reasons mentioned by the research group for their dropout. The researcher struggled to find any literature pertaining to dropout and successful reintegration. A longitudinal research survey would need to be undertaken to determine actual dropout and successful reintegration rates. An in depth survey on drop out and reintegration rates may prove challenging especially data collection in rural areas where transitions from one school to another or school dropouts are not necessarily recorded.

The researcher spent time in Groenheuwel to gain insight into the neighbourhood and community within which these adolescents are embedded. The poverty is obvious; the dwellings are small and many of them makeshift and filled to capacity. There are lots of children and scraggly dogs playing in the dirty streets. Toilet facilities are shared and many of the houses do not have running water. This exposure allowed the researcher to have better insight into how difficult it is for these adolescents to lift themselves out of this community and try and better themselves through education.

The interactions the researcher had with the adolescent participants was pleasant, the boys were very respectful and helpful. However, the researcher soon realised that the concepts under question were too foreign and too abstract for the boys to understand. The researcher had to reformulate questions without trying to lead the adolescents to certain answers. It soon became clear that the adolescents were giving answers they thought she wanted to hear including how wonderful it was to be back in school and how beneficial an education was for them. Yet they were not able to share practical ideas on how to stay in school or what advice they would give adolescents in the same circumstances. On the day of the reflective group discussion only three of the five boys had attended school.

8. LIMITATIONS

The research did explore the male adolescents' sense of self in the context of reintegration. The research however did not succeed in finding answers to how they defined their sense of self in the context of reintegration as the participants were not capable of sharing this information. Nor were the obstacles of how to manage dropout and reintegration discovered. The research did not uncover any definite answers on how to motivate other dropouts to return to school and to keep other reintegrated adolescents in school. The study was further limited as the population size was small and generalisation is not possible.

Further research on dropout and reintegration is necessary. The research gap in this regard warrants an extensive survey.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear from the research that there are complex interactions happening in the field of the adolescent, from individual factors of experiencing his transition into adolescence to the relational dynamics of the interactions between himself and individuals in his environment.

The assistance provided to the adolescents in supporting their reintegration would need to follow a holistic approach, considering all contributing factors from the problems they may be experiencing in the home to drug abuse and negative peer influences. Therapy would need to be provided to help the adolescents strengthen their sense of self. The table below

describes themes that emerged during the empirical work alongside some practically based recommendations to assist the adolescents in the reintegration.

Emergent categories	Practical recommendations
True understanding of sense of self seems to be missing.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A missing support system seems to contribute to this lack of understanding 	<p>Parents need to stabilize their home environment and build relationships with the adolescents by spending more time with them and supporting them as much as possible in motivating them to stay in school.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absent parents 	<p>Families need to help adolescents find appropriate role models within the community.</p> <p>Fathers need to spend time building relationships with their children.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missing community support 	<p>Communities need to be educated on how education can break the cross-generational cycle of poverty and support the adolescents as much as possible.</p> <p>The adults in the community need to build relationships with the adolescents to support them where parents are not able to. Community centres and sport facilities may provide opportunities for these relationships to foster and grow.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missing educational support 	<p>Schools need to be managed better, teachers need to be up-skilled and more focus needs to be placed on remedial teaching.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The under-developed value system seems to contribute to this lack of understanding 	<p>Parents and communities need to transmit a value system reflecting mutual respect, support for growth and development and the caretaking of its children. Churches, community centres presenting life-skills workshops, presentations by political leaders and the SAPS may prove to be inspirational.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A culture of violence 	<p>Alternate ways of expressing frustration need to be implemented, like introducing anger management programmes or playing sport.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lack of discipline 	<p>Boundaries need to be drawn by parents, communities and teachers. Appropriate punishment needs to be administered where these boundaries are crossed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to take ownership, accountability and responsibility 	<p>Role models in the community need to assist adolescents in showing them how to take ownership</p>

	and accountability for actions. Buddy projects or big brother big sister projects may prove helpful.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing self-motivation and perseverance 	Parents should provide support, praise and encouragement to help their adolescents persevere in order to complete their schooling. The parents need to be taught the value of education and those adults who are illiterate can attend adult based education programmes to empower them.
The unrealistic sense of self	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unrealistic self confidence 	Self-confidence is necessary, support needs to be provided to help the adolescents fulfil their educational requirements and focus on what is attainable. An open-day could be held at schools or at community centres where professionals/businessmen can advise scholars of what is necessary to attain a certain qualification and what it takes to be successful within a certain profession.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding of educational requirements 	Educators need to carefully explain the requirements necessary in order to obtain an education. Educators can advise scholars on time needed to complete the school syllabus, and help scholars work out timetables to manage their homework and study load for exams.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unrealistic assessment of abilities 	Regular assessments should be done of academic achievement with guidelines for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of successful examples of reintegration 	Educators need to find role models that have successfully reintegrated and completed their schooling and have them present workshops on practical ideas of how to overcome obstacles. This would also help to inspire and motivate the adolescents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of an adult world 	The communities need to encourage adolescents to return to school and help them to stay there. With adult based education programmes everyone in the community can be educated and realise the advantages of the adolescents completing their schooling.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An internal battle 	Socio-economic problems facing the adolescents may force them to go out and look for employment. State funded assistance for the families of these adolescents would alleviate the internal battle these adolescents fight.

10. CONCLUSION

The adolescents' difficulty in struggling to convey their thoughts on their sense of self is understandable in light of the literature that describes the phase of adolescence as a transitional one from childhood to adulthood where the process of identity formation is still underway. Themes have emerged from the research that may have an effect on the confusion of the adolescents in defining their sense of self in terms of reintegration. The data shows a lack of support received by these adolescents from their environment together with the missing transmission of a value system. These points may contribute to the confusion of the adolescents in their attempts to define their sense of self in terms of their reintegration.

The earliest experiences of self are configured according to the relational field of childhood. As adolescence gets underway the experience of the self becomes more separate from the family and includes more ownership and organisational integrity. The self becomes more of a Gestalt - a segregated, coherently organised whole. In earlier childhood the organisational integrity of the self is still the organisational integrity of the family field from which the child self emerges. Whatever the nature of this self in the family field, it serves as a backdrop of what is to follow; differentiating from the family defines adolescence. The specific form that differentiation takes is determined to a considerable extent by the developmental work of childhood. Some children arrive at adolescence with a sense of themselves and others with an abiding sense of their own insufficiency and a pervasive confusion about what is included in and what is excluded from the boundary of the emergent adolescent self. Whether or not a particular child can develop in adolescence a sharp figural sense of self will depend on the ground of the child self experiences that have accrued over the years. When the ground of the child self is confused or amorphous, the adolescent may be compelled to import a figural identity from his peer environment. Meaning he may take on the philosophy, ideals, attitudes and behaviours of his peer group.

In the light of this discussion it seems as if the adolescents need a better ground in childhood to allow them the opportunity of a stronger sense of self in adolescence.

Addendum 1

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

Excerpts of interview transcriptions for adolescent participants.

Tuesday, 24 July 2012.

PARTICIPANTS:

P1	16 years old	Grade 9	Noorder Paarl High School
P2	16 years old	Grade 8	Noorder Paarl High School
P3	14 years old	Grade 6	Daljosphat Primary
P4	13 years old	Grade 5	Daljosphat Primary
P5	13 years old	Grade 5	Daljosaphat Primary
PE	15 years old	Grade 9	Weltevrede High School

Researcher: “How did your experience of leaving school and then returning effect your identity and your sense of self?”

- P1: “I really wanted to go back to school when you are not in school you get up to naughty things”. “You are just not going anywhere”. “When I went back to school earlier this year it felt like I was back in school for the first time”. “I really enjoyed it – I feel much better about myself when I am in school”. “I want to achieve something in my life”. “I want to reach my dreams”.
“I want to be a lawyer and I want to play sport, rugby is my favourite sport”.
- P2: “I don’t like being out of school”. “I want to have a better future, I would like to start my own business and be successful”.
- P3: “I feel okay”. “I really wanted to go back to school”. “I like being in school, when you are not in school you get up to naughty things”. “I don’t like it when I am not in school, I don’t feel good about it”. “I want to be in school, I want to be a magistrate, I want to finish school”.

P4: “It’s not nice at home, it’s very boring”, “Going back to school is difficult it’s difficult to adjust to being there”. “You feel sad, unhappy and everyone looks at you”. “I wondered why they were all looking at me it was not very nice”.

P5: “I feel alright”. “I feel good about myself when I am in school”. “I want to finish school”. “I want to buy a boat”. “I want to be a policeman”.

PE: “Those guys that fall out and then go back they fall out again, they don’t get very far, they struggle to adapt to school again and to stay in school”. “They go back for a short time, but it does not work out for them, either the work is too difficult to finish, or the situation does not feel right from them”.

“Most of those guys, the ones that fall out, are not worried to go back, they make money, they go and work in the vineyards they make R80 a week but they think that is a lot of money, but it’s not a lot of money”. “They drink and take drugs and are happy with their lives and the money they are making”.

“Some of the children that have fallen out of school that have worked or have sold scrap for money and then go back in school struggle”. “They know what it’s like to have money; they feel like being in school is a waste of time as they have had the opportunity to earn money – now they are back in school.”

Notes: Adolescents struggle to really answer how the dropout and reintegration has affected them. The true understanding of the adolescents’ sense of self seems to be missing. The participants were only capable of giving superficial answers regarding their sense of self in terms of dropout and reintegration. High expectations of future career aspirations may be unrealistic

Researcher: “In your opinion why do children drop out and stay out of school?”

P1: “These children that are out of school say to us: ‘Why must they go to school?’ ‘There is no reason to go to school’. ‘What is the point of finishing school?’ ‘Most matriculants don’t get jobs anyway’”.

“Drugs are a very big problem in our community”. “Lots of children use drugs”. “They use dagga, tik and buttons”.

“Bad friends influence you to take drugs”.

“Some of the children that have fallen out think they are adults they forget that they are actually children because either they have earned money or they have had their own children”. “The out of school experience they think has matured them faster”.

P2: “I think children are afraid in schools”.

“The teachers shout at the children and give the children hidings, so they become scared of the teachers, and just stay away from the school rather”.

“I think money is a big factor, if you have money, you can buy clothes and shoes and it’s easier in school”.

P3: “I think that bad friends are a reason why children don’t go to school”. “The bad friends don’t want you to go to school; the guys that don’t go to school just sit around and smoke dagga and cigarettes”. “They look for tins to go to the scrap yard for money for drugs”.

“The boys fall out because of their problems with drugs or problems at home”.

P4: “Drugs is a big reason as to why the guys leave school”.

P5: “I left school because I was sick”.

PE: “A big problem children face, is that teachers tell the children they are stupid”. “The teacher breaks the children down so they decide that they won’t go back to school, the teachers shout at the children so they don’t go back to school”.

Notes: *Influence on dropout: community, peer pressure lack of community support, drug problems, poverty, fear, teacher relationships, and illness. Not one of the participants were able to find an example of someone they know who had dropped out and successfully reintegrated.*

Researcher: “What do you would think is the reason that some children stay and finish school and other children just give up and leave school?”

P1: **“Sometimes it’s their environment and sometimes it’s their personality”**
“Some children feel they are ready to leave school and they would rather achieve something else”

“This is where you get influenced and get caught up in a bad group”. “If you don’t do the drugs, and do as they do, you end up alone and without any friends”.

“Some children just don’t bother with school because their parents don’t have money for them to go to university or to study further they say there is no point of finishing matric”.

P2: “I think if you stay away from drugs you also have a better chance of finishing school”.

“Children are afraid to go to school because of the fights, the children fight with each other and they use knives and stab each other”. “There is a lot of fighting happening between the children”. “When you get into a fight the principal refuses you entry”. “The children can be very aggressive and then they are sent away”. “The children don’t tell their parents they have been refused access to the school so they just don’t come back to school and just stay away”.

P3: **“The guys that leave don’t really come back to school, and those that do don’t stay for too long”.**

P4 “What makes us different is that we are prepared to listen to what people say and go back to school some of the guys they don’t listen, they don’t care, they don’t want to go back to school and enjoy being outside”.

P5: Did not have an insight to offer.

PE: “I think their parents make the difference”. “Where children are broken down by their parents and shouted at by their parents, they don’t seem to care too much about themselves”. “These children that have parents that drink and take drugs and use the money for that instead of spending the money on their children, means the children don’t have shoes or clothes to wear”.

Notes: Peer influences, drugs, guys out of school feel they are ready to leave school. False sense of maturity. Fear, bullies, gangs. Lack of support. Seems to be a lack of control over own destiny. Not taking ownership. P5 could not really answer, he went back to school because of Khula.

Researcher: “Do you get the support you need to stay and finish school?”

P1: “Some of the teachers are really good and others not so much”. “We have a teacher that hits us with his fists”.

“The older children in our school encourage us to be rude to the teachers they tell you to not worry about what the teacher says”.

“I also think this is best for the teachers because they don’t do anything when the younger children are bullied by the older children, I think they are just as scared of some of the bigger children”.

“You must just work hard and stay in school and finish school then you can become something and do something with your life”.

P2: “The teachers shout at the children and give the children hidings, so they become scared of the teachers, and just stay away from the school rather”.

“The teacher also hits you behind your head when they think you are not listening, I don’t like this, I don’t think that this is right”.

P3: “I do not live with my parents, so Khula helped me”.

P4: “Nobody really motivates me to go to school”. “I live with my mom my dad does not live with us”.

P5: “Uncle Munkas says I must go to school, I live with my mother my father is in jail”.

PE “The people in the community do not motivate the children to finish school, they say that their children even those that finished matric cannot find a job so what is the point then of going to school”. “An education is supposed to give you a better opportunity but if you with a matric cannot even find a job then what is the point”. “The children then believe this and just drop out”.

Notes: Teacher/adolescent relationships not good. Missing parental and community support. High incidents of absent fathers.

Addendum 2

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Data from the interviews with all participants, together with the reflective group discussion were read and re-read until patterns and categories emerged. The categories were then broadened and themes and subthemes formed.

P1	16 years old	Grade 9	Noorder Paarl High School
P2	16 years old	Grade 8	Noorder Paarl High School
P3	14 years old	Grade 6	Daljosphat Primary
P4	13 years old	Grade 5	Daljosphat Primary
P5	13 years old	Grade 5	Daljosaphat Primary
PE	15 years old	Grade 9	Weltevrede High School
HM	Headmaster Groenheuwel Primary School		
PL	Project Leader of Khula Development Group		

Table shows how certain themes emerged

EMERGENT CATEGORIES	DATA	DISCUSSION
True understanding of sense of self seems to be missing.	<p><i>“I want to be a lawyer and I want to play sport, rugby is my favourite sport” (P1).</i></p> <p><i>“I like being back in school, I feel good when I am there, I feel like I can have a good future”. “I find school very enjoyable and I like to learn new things” (P3).</i></p> <p><i>“I try and stay strong and go to school because I know it’s good for me to be there. I play with my</i></p>	<p>The true understanding of the adolescents’ sense of self seems to be missing. The participants were only capable of giving superficial answers regarding their sense of self in terms of dropout and reintegration.</p> <p>Unable to truly answer what they liked about themselves and what they would like to</p>

	<p><i>friends, we play games, we play touch rugby we have fun” (P5). “I feel okay” (P3).</i></p>	<p>change or improve about themselves.</p>
<p>Reasons for dropout as felt by the participants</p>	<p><i>“There are lots of reasons, why the children drop out of school, the children have big problems, they have problems at home and they get involved with the wrong friends” (P1).</i></p> <p><i>“Money is a big factor as to why children drop out”. “Some children’s parents don’t work and they don’t have money to buy stuff for school – or maybe your clothes are not washed – then the other children tease you and are rude to you – because they say you are dirty – or your mother is an alcoholic – it’s not nice when your mother cannot give you what you need – if your mother drinks – so you don’t have pens or other school items that you need”. “This means you may need to lend pens from your classmates and then they say: ‘No, you are loafing pens, get your own pens’, so the children are very mean to you” (P1).</i></p> <p><i>“I think money is a big factor, if you have money, you can buy clothes and shoes and it’s easier in school”. “I have heard that some of the children have been given new clothes and then sold their new clothes and school shoes for money for drugs”. “So I think if you stay away from drugs you also have a better chance of finishing school” (P2).</i></p>	

	<p><i>“Drugs are another big reason why the children drop out of school”. “Everyone uses drugs in our community especially the tik”. “It is really bad and very addictive everyone uses it even the very young children” (P3).</i></p>	
<p>Missing support systems seem to contribute to this lack of understanding</p>	<p><i>“These children that are out of school say to us: ‘Why must they go to school?’ ‘There is no reason to go to school’. ‘What is the point of finishing school?’ Most matriculants don’t get jobs anyway” (P1).</i></p> <p><i>“I think their parents make the difference”. “Where children are broken down by their parents and shouted at by their parents, they don’t seem to care too much about themselves”. “These children that have parents that drink and take drugs and use the money for that instead of spending the money on their children, means the children don’t have shoes or clothes to wear” (PE).</i></p>	<p>The data shows the overarching factor contributing to dropout and reintegration longevity of the reintegrated adolescent is the lack of support received from parents, families, friends, communities, role models and the education system.</p>
<p>Communities</p>	<p><i>“The people in the community do not motivate the children to finish school, they say that their children even those that finished matric cannot find a job, so what is the point then of going to school” (P1).</i></p> <p><i>“An education is supposed to give you a better opportunity but if you with a matric cannot even find a job then what is the point. The children then believe this and just drop out” (PE).</i></p>	<p>The community reflects a feeling of anomie and expression of hopelessness.</p>
<p>Education</p>	<p><i>“The teachers are all different;</i></p>	<p>A lack of educational support</p>

	<p><i>some are really good and others not so much". "We have a teacher that hits us with his fists". "He puts three of us in a corner and just starts hitting, you have to cover your face and make sure you don't land a punch, he stands on our feet so we cannot get away" (P1).</i></p> <p><i>"A big problem children face, is that teachers tell the children they are stupid". "The teacher breaks the children down so they decide that they won't go back to school, the teachers shout at the children so they don't go back to school" (PE).</i></p> <p><i>"Some of the children are scared of the teachers". "The teachers give them hidings". "Some of the teachers hit the children with their fists and that is why they don't want to go back to school" (P2).</i></p> <p><i>"I have had the experience that if you don't understand the teachers shout at you if you ask questions, they say they have already explained something, and did you not listen the first time, so you feel embarrassed and just want to get out of there" (PE).</i></p> <p><i>"The older children in our school encourage us to be rude to the teachers, they tell you to not worry about what the teacher says." "These older children don't listen to the teachers, they don't do their homework, and</i></p>	<p>and insufficient resources in the forms of big classes, understaffed schools, the inability of teachers to reach special needs and poor teacher adolescent relationships are all contributing factors to dropout and reintegration longevity.</p> <p>Adolescent teacher relationships are not necessarily as good as they should be.</p>
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	<p><i>they don't want to learn". "They just stay in the classes and cause trouble". "If you are in grade 9 and you are 17 you have to leave the school if you fail that year again". "The school gives a letter to your mother and you are out because you are too old for your standard". "I think this is a good thing, it is better to have them leave the school it is less disruptive for the rest of the class". "We need to put in everything we have to pass our grades". "We need to work hard at it". "I also think this is best for the teachers because they don't do anything when the younger children are bullied by the older children, I think they are just as scared of some of the bigger children" (P1).</i></p>	<p>The participants feel that the teachers are unable to discipline older children effectively or to remove bullies and gangs from school premises.</p>
<p>The under-developed value system seems to contribute to this lack of understanding</p>	<p><i>"I was out of school for two months, I left school because I smoked tik, I broke in at school for money for drugs and they caught me so I went to court". "They kicked out my case and told me to go back to school" (P4).</i></p>	
<p>A culture of violence</p>	<p><i>"Children are afraid to go to school because of the fights, the children fight with each other and they use knives and stab each other". "There is a lot of fighting happening between the children" (P2).</i></p> <p><i>"Some children are very badly bullied by other children". "Especially by the older children in the school". "The bullies come and take our balls away</i></p>	

	<p><i>while we are playing, some of the children pick fights with us". "This fighting makes you scared to come back to school". "And we are also too scared to report it because then the bullies are really going to hurt us" (P2).</i></p>	
A lack of discipline	<p><i>"The older children in our school encourage us to be rude to the teachers – they tell you to not worry about what the teacher says."</i></p>	<p>The reintegrated adolescent tends to lack in discipline it would seem that the adolescents have no boundaries of discipline within which to operate, absent fathers and little parental guidance mean these adolescents are left to their own devices to choose to behave as they please.</p>
Inability to take ownership, accountability and responsibility	<p><i>"When I was not in school, the bad friends that have influenced me to take tik and stay out of school" (P3).</i></p> <p><i>"Some children just don't bother with school, because their parents don't have money for them to go to university or to study further they say there is no point of finishing matric" (P1).</i></p> <p><i>"The older children say what is the point of going to school; you will not find a job anyway" (PE).</i></p>	<p>An inability to take ownership, accountability and responsibility for their behaviour emerged from the reflective group discussion.</p> <p>Stemming from the lack of discipline it is evident that tenacity is not exercised in the taking of ownership or responsibility for a situation and seeing it through to its completion. The participants do not seem to take responsibility for their dropout and continued dropout and reintegration and are very easy to blame others.</p> <p>Participants mention 'bad' friends that have influenced them to take drugs or to dropout but none take the responsibility or view</p>

		themselves as the bad influence.
Missing self-motivation and perseverance	<p><i>“Sometimes it’s their environment and sometimes it’s their personality”. “Some children feel they are ready to leave school and they would rather achieve something else” (P1).</i></p>	<p>A value system that does not dictate responsibility, and discipline influences the identity of the adolescent to be shaped into one where self-motivation and perseverance to complete a task are missing.</p> <p>The difficulties the adolescents experience with self-motivation and perseverance are shown by their inconsistent school attendance</p>
The unrealistic sense of self	<p><i>“I feel much better about myself when I am in school” (P1).</i></p> <p><i>“I don’t like being out of school” (P2).</i></p> <p><i>“I like being in school, when you are not in school you get up to naughty things”. “I don’t like it when I am not in school, I don’t feel good about it” (P3).</i></p> <p><i>“It’s not nice at home, it’s very boring” (P4).</i></p> <p><i>“I want to have a better future, I would like to start my own business and be successful” (P2).</i></p> <p><i>“I want to finish school, I want to buy a boat, I want to be a policeman” (P5).</i></p> <p><i>“Leaving school is a stupid choice”. “Once you have done</i></p>	<p>The adolescent participants shared their enjoyment of being in school.</p> <p>Participants shared the benefits an education would bring them.</p>

	<p><i>that most of the guys then walk a wrong path". "The best choice is to stay in school" (P1).</i></p> <p><i>"I now have the sense to stay I want to learn, do maths, study and I like to think and work out answers and solutions" (P2).</i></p> <p><i>"I want to learn, that is what makes me strong" (P4).</i></p> <p><i>"I have faith in myself that this time I am going to stay in school". "I trust myself now to stay in school" (P5).</i></p>	<p>The adolescent participants were very convincing in their statements that they would not be dropping out again, however they are still attending school inconsistently.</p>
<p>Unrealistic self confidence. An incongruence exists between what they are saying and what is happening in reality</p>	<p><i>"Yes, I want to finish school". "I enjoy being there" (P3).</i></p> <p><i>"I know I can do it, I must not give up" (P3).</i></p> <p><i>"I am going to stay because I want to learn, and I want to play with my friends". "I have other friends now" (P5).</i></p>	<p>There is an unrealistic self-confidence on the part of the adolescent in their conviction to stay in school and yet the participants are unable to impart information on what is different with their reintegration this time. The participants have difficulty in answering what obstacles they have overcome or how they will manage these obstacles in the future in order to insure no further dropout.</p>
<p>Lack of understanding of educational requirements</p>	<p>Adolescents attending school inconsistently yet have high career aspirations.</p>	<p>The adolescents tend to lack a true understanding of the requirements necessary to complete their school career,</p>
<p>Unrealistic assessment of abilities</p>	<p><i>"I want to be a lawyer" (P1).</i></p> <p><i>"I would like to start my own business and be successful" (P2).</i></p> <p><i>"I want to be a magistrate". (P3)</i></p> <p><i>"I want to buy a boat. I want to</i></p>	<p>The adolescents display an unrealistic sense of self in their assessment of abilities especially referring to future career aspirations.</p>

	<i>be a policeman” (P5).</i>	
Lack of successful examples of reintegration	<p>The participants agree with (P2), <i>“The boys that fall out because of their problems with drugs or problems at home don’t really come back to school, and those that do don’t stay for too long”.</i></p> <p><i>“I don’t know of any children who have fallen out of school for a long time and gone back to finish, you need to go back as quickly as possible and not stay out for too long, because then it becomes very difficult to stay in school” (PE).</i></p>	<p>Not one of the adolescent research participants know of anyone who had successfully reintegrated and completed their schooling.</p> <p>Although the participants all agree with these statements they seem to lack the insight that this may very well be their own reality.</p>
Experience of an adult world	<p><i>“Some of the children that have fallen out think they are adults they forget that they are actually children because either they have earned money or they have had their own children”. “They forget that we are the same age and they tell us what we must do, they make out as if they are older and they know more than you and think they can tell you what to do, because they are no longer at school”. “The out of school experience they think has matured them faster, but leaving school is a bad idea, working on a farm or selling scrap is not the life I want” (P1).</i></p>	<p>The adolescents that have dropped out have experienced the ‘adult’ world. Freedom, independence, the capacity to earn some money, yet they are still adolescents and the experience can be seen as a false sense of maturity.</p>
An internal battle	<p><i>“I think that bad friends are a reason why children don’t go to school”. “The bad friends don’t want you to go to school, the guys that don’t go to school just sit around and smoke dagga and cigarettes”. “They look for tins to go to the scrap yard for money for drugs” (P3).</i></p>	<p>The reintegrated adolescent faces a divided sense of self an internal battle seems to be taking place between completing school and having freedom.</p>

Addendum 3

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Male adolescents' sense of self after reintegration into schools in the Western Cape

NAME OF PRINCIPLE RESEARCHER: Melanie Bernhardt

DEPARTMENT: NWU: Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies, AUTHeR

Telephone: 021 - 864 3593

Researcher details:

Email: melanie@forwardslash.com **Telephone:** 0835731747 / 021 528 6918

NAME OF PARTICIPANT: _____

PARTICIPANTS INVOLVEMENT:

What's involved: To partake in the interview process and answer the questions as truthfully as possible.

Tydens die onderhoud moet u die vrae wat aan u gestel word so eerlik as moontlik beantwoord.

Risks: You may feel uncomfortable answering certain questions about yourself.

Die enigste risiko is dat u ongemaklik mag voel om sekere vrae oor uself te beantwoord.

Benefits: You will learn from others in the same situation as yourself. You can teach others how you have handled situations. The information will help teachers and caregivers to assist you and others in the same situations.

Die voordeel is dat u van ander persone in dieselfde omstandighede kan leer. Die inligting sal onderwysers en voogde in staat stel om leerlinge wat in 'n soortgelyke situasie is, beter te verstaan en te kan bystaan.

Costs: N/A

Payment: Meal subsidy will be provided for interview and group discussion.

Middagete sal voorsien word vir onderhoud en groeibespreking.

As part of my participation I agree to and/or confirm the following:

As deel van my deelname onderneem ek en/of bevestig ek die volgende:

- I have read this consent form and the information it contains and had the opportunity to ask about it.

Ek het die vorm gelees en die geleentheid gehad om vrae te vra rakende die inhoud.

- That my responses be used for education and research on condition my privacy is respected, subject to the following:

Dat my antwoorde vir die doel van onderwys en navorsing gebruik mag word op die voorwaarde dat my privaatheid gerespekteer word en dat dit onderhewig is aan die volgende:

- I understand that my personal answers will be used but that I will not be personally identifiable.
- ***Ek verstaan dat my persoonlike antwoorde gebruik sal word, maar niemand my sal kan identifiseer nie.***
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project.
- ***Ek verstaan dat ek nie verplig is om deel te neem aan die navorsing nie.***
- I understand I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.
- ***Ek verstaan dat ek ter enige tyd van die projek kan onttrek.***

Signature of Participant / Guardian (if under 18): _____

Name of Participant / Guardian: _____

Name of person who sought consent: _____

Signatures of principal researchers: _____ (Melanie Bernhardt)

Date: _____

Addendum 4

TECHNICAL GUIDELINES FOR JOURNAL

Journal submission guidelines

American Journal of Community Psychology

Manuscript Submission

Manuscripts should be submitted in English to Editorial Manager, the online system: <http://ajcp.edmgr.com>. Inquiries regarding journal policy, special issues, and other topics should be made to the Editor at: jacob.tebes@yale.edu. Editorial Manager offers easy access for manuscript submission, supports a range of submission file formats, and provides opportunities for submission of Electronic Supplemental Material (ESM).

Manuscript Style

The 2009 (Sixth Edition) of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association should be used as the style guide for the preparation of manuscripts, particularly with respect to reporting research results, citing references, and reducing language bias. It is the policy of the journal to avoid use of the term "subjects." Research participants, respondents, or a more specific appropriate designation should be used. The text should describe the background characteristics of participants; this may include information concerning participants' gender, age, racial and ethnic background, sexual orientation, disability status, and socioeconomic status.

The journal also encourages authors to describe the nature and impact of feedback provided to settings involved in the research or intervention, and to include descriptive material about the nature of the settings or communities where the work was carried out as well as the nature of the relationship between professionals and participants involved in the work described.

Academic or professional affiliations of all authors and the full mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the author who will correspond with the Editorial Office and review proofs is required by Editorial Manager, the online submission system. In order to

allow for blind review, authors should avoid including information that may identify the authors in the body of a manuscript.

Additional general style information regarding submissions is as follows:

- All manuscripts should be typewritten and double-spaced using 12-point font. The length for each type of submitted manuscript is noted above under “Types of Articles.”
- Authors should identify how informed consent was obtained.
- An abstract of up to 200 words should be included along with up to 6 key words listed directly below the abstract.
- Tables should be numbered consecutively and referred to by number in the text. Each table should be typed on a separate page and have a descriptive title at the top.
- Figures or illustrations (photographs, drawings, diagrams, and charts) should be numbered consecutively and referred to by number in the text. Photographs should be high-contrast and drawings should be sharp and clear. Each figure should be submitted on a separate page and have a caption below the figure.
- Footnotes should be avoided. When their use is absolutely necessary, footnotes should be numbered consecutively and typed at the bottom of the page to which they refer. A line should be placed above the footnote so that it is set off from the text. Use the appropriate superscript numeral for citation in the text.

Types of Articles

The American Journal of Community Psychology publishes the following types of articles:

Original article. Original articles include innovative quantitative or qualitative empirical research, or theory. Authors are encouraged to follow the recommended guidelines for reporting research results included in the 2009 (Sixth Edition) of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the APA Journal Article and Reporting Standards (JARS) Group. (APA Publications and Communications Board Working Group (2008). Reporting standards for research in psychology: Why do we need them? What

might they be? *American Psychologist*, 63(9), 839-851.) Consistent with these guidelines and in order to indicate the magnitude of a quantitative finding, authors are encouraged to report an appropriate effect size for each finding. In addition, consistent with APA guidelines, authors are encouraged to include a confidence interval for each effect size in order to provide information about the precision of a reported effect size. Further information about the selection, calculation, and interpretation of effect sizes and confidence intervals is provided below under Advancing Science. Manuscripts should not exceed 30 double-spaced, typewritten pages, INCLUSIVE of references, tables and figures.

Mixed methods research. Mixed methods articles report original empirical research that summarizes and integrates quantitative and qualitative findings in the same manuscript. Such research is grounded in the principle of methodological pluralism and embodies the use of study designs that are tailored to the multiple contexts common to community research and action. Manuscripts may include a single methods section or separate sections depending on the study purpose and the author's determination of how best to present the research. Mixed methods research may be particularly well-suited to reporting the results of interdisciplinary, collaborative, or multi-level studies. Authors are encouraged to follow the recommended guidelines for reporting research results included in the 2009 (Sixth Edition) of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)* and the *APA Journal Article and Reporting Standards (JARS) Group*. (APA Publications and Communications Board Working Group (2008). *Reporting standards for research in psychology: Why do we need them? What might they be?* *American Psychologist*, 63(9), 839-851.) Consistent with these guidelines and in order to indicate the magnitude of a quantitative finding, authors are encouraged to report an appropriate effect size for each finding. In addition, consistent with APA guidelines, authors are encouraged to include a confidence interval for each effect size in order to provide information about the precision of a reported effect size. Further information about the selection, calculation, and interpretation of effect sizes and confidence intervals is provided below under Advancing Science. Manuscripts should not exceed 30 double-spaced, typewritten pages, INCLUSIVE of references, tables and figures.

First Person Accounts. Articles that feature first person accounts provide a forum for stakeholders to describe their experiences in a given research, practice, or policy initiative. The article should be a single submission with multiple authors who each have written a narrative about their perspective on or participation in a project. Each narrative should be

written in the voice of the individual stakeholder(s) and included in the manuscript under separate headings. A single manuscript thus provides a “360 degree” window into the diverse perspectives of stakeholders involved in community research and action. The inclusion of these diverse perspectives brings the situated knowledge of lived experience into the scholarly arena.

A wide variety of manuscripts are appropriate for submission. For example, a manuscript may include first person accounts from a program participant, a family member, a funder, a community provider, a policymaker, and a program developer. Or, a manuscript may include the first person accounts of researchers from different disciplines or countries working on the same study as well as the perspective of one or more research participants in that study. Or, a manuscript may include first person accounts from individuals involved in the implementation and evaluation of a statewide program, such as a state agency manager, a program participant, a program consultant, a legislator, a coalition member, and the program evaluator. Finally, first person accounts may also explore differences in perspective about research or practice participation that, in part, may be based on difference in gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, social class, or other markers of human diversity. It is recommended that articles in this section should contain at least three (3) and no more than six (6) narratives of different stakeholders involved in a given initiative. Regardless of the number of stakeholders featured, manuscripts should not exceed 20 double-spaced, typewritten pages, INCLUSIVE of references, tables and figures. In preparing the manuscript, the title page should list all the authors of the manuscript in the intended order of authorship. Also on the title page, the authors of each separate first person account should be listed along with the title of their first person account as it appears in a separate heading in the manuscript. To ensure blind review, author names should not appear in the manuscript.

Advancing Science. Advancing science articles feature original quantitative empirical research in which reported results do not reach statistical significance, but may have either practical significance as indicated by their effect size or may challenge established theory by reporting a failure to replicate a previous result. Articles must be brief (no more than 12 double-spaced pages), include a rigorous study design that reasonably addresses threats to validity, and report effect sizes and confidence intervals. Advancing science articles are intended to address a significant problem in behavioral and social science research: the failure to include null findings from rigorous research into empirical reviews and meta-

analyses, and as benchmarks for estimating power and the potential impact of interventions and policies. Select publication of such research advances science by helping scholars establish more accurate effect size benchmarks when designing risk or protective factor studies, planning intervention research, or conducting reviews and meta-analyses.

Articles should include all of the sections of a standard original article (introduction, methods, results, and discussion) but in reduced form, and include a maximum of two tables or figures. In addition, Advancing Science articles must also include an expanded and detailed Methods section submitted as electronic supplementary material (ESM). Authors should provide sufficient detail about the study methods in their ESM for reviewers to evaluate whether the research adequately addressed threats to validity. Additional information about submitting ESM is provided below under “Submission Electronic Supplementary Material (ESM).” Advancing Science articles are required to contain estimates of effect sizes and confidence intervals in the text, tables, or figures. Further information on the selection, calculation, use, reporting, and interpretation of effect sizes can be found in these sources: a) 2009 (Sixth Edition) of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA); b) Durlak, J. A. (2009)

Empirical Review. The journal welcomes reviews of empirical research and meta-analyses of topics relevant to community research and action. A wide range of empirical reviews may be appropriate, including reviews of quantitative or qualitative research, policy research, and community-based participatory action research. Manuscripts should not exceed 50 double-spaced, typewritten pages, INCLUSIVE of references, tables and figures.

Submission of electronic supplementary material (ESM)

Authors may wish to submit electronic supplementary material (ESM) with their submitted article that is made available to readers as an archive through the journal website. Such material can add texture and dimension to a printed article by providing readers with a more enhanced presentation of the scholarly work. ESM may be submitted to accompany all types of articles published in the journal, and is subject to peer review. ESM may be particularly useful when submitting articles that contain rich, qualitative data that would too lengthy to publish in print. ESM may also enhance other types of articles because it allows for the inclusion of additional relevant data tables or figures, curricula, data spreadsheets, intervention protocols or manuals, and multi-media (e.g., photos, video clips). Authors who

submit ESM should do so wisely and judiciously; ESM should be submitted only if it substantively and significantly enhances readers' understanding of a particular article. Submission of ESM only to circumvent manuscript page limits is not appropriate. As noted earlier, manuscripts submitted as Advancing Science articles are required to include a detailed description of the study methods as ESM. Further information about formats suitable for ESM is provided on the journal website.

Compliance with APA ethical guidelines

Authors are required to state in their submission cover letter that they have complied with APA ethical principles in their treatment of individuals participating in the research, program, or policy described in the manuscript. They should also note that the research has been approved by their organizational unit responsible for the protection of human participants. Copies of the APA Ethical Principles can be obtained from: <http://www.apa.org>.

Publication policies

Submission is a representation that the manuscript has not been published previously and is not currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. A statement transferring copyright from the authors will be required before the final acceptance of the manuscript for publication. The Editor will supply the necessary forms for this transfer. Such a written transfer of copyright, which previously was assumed to be implicit in the act of submitting a manuscript, is necessary under the U.S. Copyright Law in order for the publisher to carry through the dissemination of research results and reviews as widely and effectively as possible.