

Autobiography and Effective Teaching: Experiences of Two Day-Care Centre Teachers

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ABSTRACT In recent decades life stories have begun to inform research, and various studies acknowledge the usefulness of understanding coherence and meaning in narratives. A person's life story reflects past experiences, reveals the present and shows how the future is envisaged. It is a script that paints some coherence and development in people. This qualitative action research focused on the life stories of two kindergarten teachers who taught in Black African day-care centres in South Africa. It investigated the narrative identities of these teachers. Among the major findings in the case studies was the intentionality of the life story; it has a potential of addressing aspects that might have left a void in people's lives. They use their life stories to enhance the positive experiences from their stories and discount aspects that they deemed detrimental to the social health of the children. Therefore, the teachers' own positive and negative experiences of their childhoods became invaluable in enhancing learning in their classes.

INTRODUCTION

The Self and the Story

Autobiographical memory is beginning to take centre stage in the classes of conscientious teachers who want to see their learners succeeding. Josselson (2009) defines autobiographical memory as a process of reconstruction rather than faithful depiction. Furthermore, Hobson (1995) cites Kurt Lewin who points out that an individual stands at the centre of his or her own life space, that an understanding of that life can only be accomplished by beginning with the perspective of that individual. Lewin was also instrumental in bringing the *action* into action research. Hobson (1995: 2) contends:

Through action, teachers come to understand what is really happening in their classrooms. If you want to understand something, try to change it. This matter of change, of actually doing something even as one is studying it, is central to classroom-based teacher conducted research. The teacher-researcher is not just standing back and observing some pristine phenomena from a distance. No, the teacher is in the midst of a group of children, and is doing: taking action, making things happen.

The above shows that assiduous teacher-researchers will start with their own selves. The personal narrative contained in memory can positively affect the direction of teaching and learning in classrooms. McAdams (2008) argues that the stories that we construct to make

sense of our lives are basically about our struggle to reconcile who we imagine we were, are and might be in our heads with whom we were, are and might be in social contexts of family, community, the workplace, ethnicity, religion, gender, social class and culture. The self in society happens through narrative identity. McAdams (2001) also uses a life-story model when he argues that identity itself assumes the form of a story complete with setting, scenes, character, plot and theme. "In late adolescence and young adulthood, people living in modern societies begin to reconstruct the personal past, perceive the present, and anticipate the future in terms of an internalised and evolving self-story, an integrative narrative of self that provides modern life with some modicum of psychosocial unity and purpose" (McAdams 2001: 101).

Jalongo and Isenberg (1995) state that stories from the classroom involve the lives of teachers and children, values and beliefs, teaching and practice. These writers also state that teachers frequently neglect the magnitude of their own childhood experiences in shaping their attitudes about teaching and learning. "Those early experiences often become 'hidden curriculum' lessons that we remember far better than any of the thousands of content coverage lessons directly taught" (Jalongo and Isenberg 1995: 36). Both positive and negative experiences we had as children in schools have an impact on our actions as teachers. This study explores how two day-care teachers utilise their autobiographical narrative to enhance teaching

and learning in their classes. Both taught in neighbouring township day-care centres situated in a historically Black African area called Motherwell in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The main question asked was: How can kindergarten teachers use their autobiographical narrative to enhance teaching in their classrooms?

The Intention of Using the Self as a Starting Point in Teaching

McAdams (2008) cites Bruner who points out that stories that people tell are about the ups and downs of human intention organised in time. Furthermore, McAdams states that human intentionality is at the heart of the narrative and therefore the development of intentionality is of prime importance in creating the mental conditions necessary for storytelling and comprehension. Intentions of telling the autobiographical narratives are particularly significant when dealing with children. Nelson and Fivush (2004) affirm that when adults tell their narratives to pre-schoolers this directly influences the nature of the children's autobiographical narratives in the future. Children might perceive this as some form of a collective form of reality.

Pasupathi et al. (2007) point out that stories, selves and autobiographies are shaped by cultures within which individual experiences unfold. Furthermore, these writers cite Thorn and McClean who posit that stories and life stories that may be relevant for a particular group will also differ by gender or socioeconomic class within cultures. Intentionality is very crucial in the utilisation of this autobiographical narrative. Above we have seen the importance of culture in the narratives. However, Brockmeier (2009) also underscores the individual as a subject of intentionality in a narrative; a person with social life, emotions, motives and desires. "Without recognising the subject's intentional attitude toward temporality and the personal significance of remembrance as well as of specific memories we cannot comprehend the concrete temporal scenarios that emerge in his or her autobiographical discourse" (Brockmeier 2009: 125).

Habermas and Bluck as cited by McAdams (2001) use the concept of *causal coherence* whereby adolescents are able to provide causal narratives to explain how different events are linked together in the context of biography. McAdams (2001) also cites these writers as

pointing out that causal and thematic coherence are intensified in adulthood; adults are able and eager to construct stories that show sequential, biographical, causal and thematic coherence. There is always coherence and intentionality in autobiography (Brady 1990; McAdams 1985, 1990). Brady (1990) states that through autobiography, human beings are able to build order in their present day lives and he refers to autobiography as cosmological. Autobiography brings out the "ordered self" which ensures the understanding and interpretation of one's life. In addition, Bruner (1993: 39) argues that life is created by autobiography and he explains, "Like all forms of interpretation, how we construe our lives is subject to our intentions, to the interpretive conventions available to us, and to the meanings imposed upon us by the usage of culture and language."

The concept of self-defining memories is crucial when one explores the content of autobiographical narrative. Singer and Blagov (2004) examine this concept and link it to goals and motivation. Moreover, these writers explain that the self-defining memories are connected to goals that reflect central themes of identity within the personality. Beike et al. (2004) refer to self-defining memories as highly emotional memories that fascinate and transform people. These affect the identity of individuals. "By identity we mean the system of the personality that is responsible for creating an overall sense of coherence and meaning within the individual life" (Singer and Blagov 2004: 120). Therefore, personal memories enable people to make decisions. Beike et al. (2004) discuss a subtype of autobiographical memories called *personal event memories*. They contend that personal event memories guide us in making decisions and these represent the wisdom of experience or autobiographical intelligence. The self of every person is influenced by the personal event memories. Conway et al. (2004) point out that self-defining memory has the following attributes; affective intensity, vividness, high levels of rehearsal, linkage to similar memories, as well as connection to an enduring concern or unresolved conflict. Furthermore, they state that the affective quality of self-defining memories is a function of the relevance of the memories to the attainment of a person's most desired goals. Conway et al. above concur with McAdams (2001) who argues that the life story

examines themes that are important to an individual and it reviews the individual's primary motivation of what he or she is striving for in the present.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Inquiry

This study was conducted as an action research in two historically Black day-care centres in Motherwell Township, South Africa. South African schools situated in the townships or historically Black areas continue to serve Black families only long after the fall of apartheid. The two centres under study have Black African pupils whose parents insist on them being taught in English despite the dominant isiXhosa being the first language in the households. The study followed the autobiographies of two teachers in these schools. Myrah teaches at Likhaya Pre-school and Tina in Vuyo Day Care (all the names used are pseudonyms). Both centres serve pupils who are from age 6 months to six years old. The focus of the study though was only the five year olds who were taught English as a second language. Action research was appropriate for the study because it is usually employed as a strategy to bring social change through action, developing and improving practice (Brink 2000). The two teachers were trying to confront the challenges of teaching second language to the grade R pupils; they were attempting to solve some of the problems encountered by second language learners. Struwig and Stead (2004) state that action research is meant to empower a disadvantaged community and social justice is an important guiding principle here. Both schools were selected through purposive sampling.

Procedures

The study took place over a period of three months during which the researcher interviewed and observed Myrah and Tina's language classes three times a week per person. During observation the researcher noted a number of aspects: the teachers' communication with the pupils, the pupils' communication when talking to the teachers, interpretation of stories and pictures. The teachers were interviewed twice each week, on Mondays and Fridays. The intention was to

discuss each week's preparation as well as what was accomplished or not. The researcher was also interested in talking to the teachers about their own biographies as to how their childhood remembering affected their teaching. The visit in each of the two schools lasted for four hours each day; this then means visits lasted eight hours each week. The researcher also did document analysis by mainly looking at lesson plans, drawings or illustrations, stories for the year, as well as the syllabus in its entirety.

The Main Participants

The two participants, Myrah and Tina were both in their thirties. Myrah had been teaching in the day-care centre for three years. She had a teaching qualification and went to the centre after she could not get work in any public primary school. She was not trained to teach pre-school learners. At university she specialised in the teaching of intermediate classes. However, since joining the centre, she attended a number of short courses organised by various non-governmental organisations and said that she enjoyed teaching the preschoolers although she would like to work in a school. She was a committed teacher with materials that she developed on her own from songs to rhymes. She taught the learners in isiXhosa and in English. All the learners in the schools came from homes where the mother tongue was isiXhosa, but the parents wanted the schools to emphasise the English language. Tina had worked in a post office as a messenger before. She started at the day care centre as a cleaner but became more interested in the actual teaching after she was used as a substitute whenever one of the teachers was absent from work. The principal then decided to send her to a number of in-service training sessions organised by the Department of Education or the NGOs. She had just completed a two year qualification in pre-primary education when the study was conducted.

Both centres where these two work serve poor families who mostly do menial jobs and live in surrounding informal settlement areas. They do not have the many resources that one would find in affluent schools. The teachers usually improvise by creating some props for drama, for example. They usually struggle to obtain photocopy material because they do not have properly working machines. Vuyo Day Care Centre

once possessed two computers as well as printers but these were stolen by vandals one evening. The centres do not have any computers and rely on various people from the community for typing materials. However, the principals of the centres have tried very hard to make sure that the centres do look like other day-care centres. As one enters Likhaya Day Care Centre there are old red painted tyres in the small playground and the paving is painted in various bright colours. A painting of Humpty Dumpty, Mrs Hubbard and Little Jack Horner adorns the walls next to the main door. Vuyo Day Care Centre is not as colourful, but youthful gnomes and the two swings show that it is a place for young children. Each centre has more or less 30 pre-school (5-6 year old) pupils.

THE FINDINGS

The Two Teachers

The study's results reflected how the two teachers were shaped by their autobiography and memory. The researcher perceived how reminiscing about the past can be a crucial aspect in teaching children as early as kindergarten. The two teachers' reminiscing also reflected how memory becomes an aspect that reflects society, history and culture while it underscores self-representation. The principal aspects that came out clearly in this study were the impact of memory on the cultural self, as well as the influence of learning English as a second language on the pre-school child. Both teachers appeared to have used their autobiography often, although Tina points out that until the previous year before this study, she was not aware of the immense influence of her biography on teaching. She said she was aware of some aspects that she used intentionally, but was surprised when she realised that much of what she was doing was largely influenced by her past. The theoretical framework above shows how intentional story telling can be in making sense of the present. The two teachers showed how people "constantly construct a self to meet the needs of the situations we encounter, and do so with the guidance of their memories" (Bruner 2003: 210). During conversations about their practice, they justified why they were doing what they were doing in their classrooms.

Myrah stated:

In my classrooms, I find myself doing many things intentionally as I have gleaned from my past. These make my classes and enrich the world of my classes. Of course during your questioning in this research, I have realised there are also some aspects that were in my unconscious but these influence my dealing with my children.

Both Myrah and Tina taught English among the pre-schoolers and realised the challenges faced by the second language learners. Tina said:

Looking back into my own past, I realise how difficult it can be to learn English at this level. It is confusing and as a child I always found a school a different place, a place where we speak differently. It was a threatening world and in primary school we had teachers that would punish us if the prefects or monitors overheard us speaking in isiXhosa. This was a language of fear and some of us attached fear to school.

Myrah concurred:

The English language was different. As children we would listen to the radio and not make any meaning out of the unintelligible gibber that we heard. Then they would ask us to read. Then there would be confusing moments, "John is a he and Mary a she", the teacher would say. It was all so confusing.

The two also related several stories from their narrative; stories that continue to build their professional selves. Both of them shared a number of negative incidents that happened while at school, especially in English classes. These included being scared of one's voice as they listened to themselves speaking in a foreign language, being rebuked by teachers for mispronouncing words, and being laughed at by others in the classroom. These teachers pointed out that these negative experiences from their story shaped the way they taught, trying to ensure that their learners do not experience the same. Myrah also stated something interesting regarding to these experiences:

Sometimes the present helps to make some aspects of the self more salient for we sometimes theorise about certain aspects of teaching not being aware that the present experiences also shape the memory and enable me to dig deep in my past and adjust the way I think and see my learners.

It became clear in this study that language learning was influenced by the way in which the teachers understood their narrative. How-

ever, linked to all these was what Tina referred to as “the big umbrella of culture, that culture influenced our education.”

Tina said:

From the first crèches that some of us attended, our culture was instilled in us. From early age you learnt to behave as a boy or a girl. I found nothing wrong in playing with boys football until one teacher in primary school told me that soccer is for boys and I should rather play with other girls, girlie sports.

Myrah also concurs on the role of schools in moulding the cultural self and socialising the young when she stated:

Schools were all about socialisation into determined roles. We were always taught how to behave properly in our gender roles. You had to act like a proper girl and a proper boy. We all knew that boys don't cry and dolls are for girls. I liked to work with my hands for example but teachers told me handwork was for boys and I should go and do Domestic Science where I would learn to cook. When I look at these kids I always think of the effects of culture in their own lives.

The teachers talked about the isiXhosa recitations and rhymes they did which usually reflected culture and the way in which they should enact culture. They say that their notions of culture were built when they were children and as much they would think that “they are against other patterns” they find themselves unintentionally supporting others. However, Myrah says that she frequently tries and “correct aspects of culture that are not justifiable”. Unlike her teachers in her past, she promotes the show of emotions by boys and let girl learners explore “boy games” during free play. Many such aspects were taboo in her schooling past. Both teachers concurred that their autobiographical memory enables them “to judge their learners in a particular way”. As Myrah put it:

When I look back at my own life, I am able to determine the present course of my teaching and influence the future of my learners”.

Tina also stated:

I think a good teacher will know the fears, excitement involved in learning. They look at the learners and tell when the learners are emotionally detached. They see when teaching is not happening. For me, personal memory influences all these. Reflective teachers use these a lot.

The two teachers stated that they found it almost impossible to offer best practices in classes when they do not share their life stories. Sometimes socialisation can influence the teaching and learning environment in various ways. Tina tells of how she finds herself perpetrating the stereotypes of ensuring that “boys don't cry” and that it is “okay for girls to be emotional”. Tina also points out that as a teacher she finds herself bowing to the demands of parents. Therefore, her life story would tell her what is right. Her autobiography would inform her that some stereotypes traumatise and misplace children. However, she says sometimes she ends up telling the parents the “socially acceptable” perceptions: that Andrew is very physical, he will definitely play rugby”, that Lisa is caring and will one day be a nurse”. She is pressured to give socialised stereotypical patterns in her reports during parent-teacher conferences. She says she is aware of how some adult responses confused emotional boys in her autobiography. Yet even when she is telling her story, she judges some portions due to “acceptable” cultural patterns.

Observation of Classes

In classes observed it was clear how the teachers tried to combat social stereotypes during their classes. Sometimes they would tell stories where roles of male and female characters have been reversed. Frequently though, the children would be puzzled when “incorrect” roles have been assigned to them. One boy looked uncomfortable when told to pick up a doll and feed it instead of driving a toy truck. The pre-schoolers have already learnt some of the gender roles expected by society. However, the teachers also used some traditional stories and activities that supported socialised gender roles. In a number of stories read to the children many heroes were male, and female characters played a supporting role. Myrah explained that many moral fables from the traditional culture were very useful in teaching children “although they reflected a patriarchal society. She stated that she had learnt many of these as a child. It was interesting though that when children looked at pictures and tried to use them in telling a story, the heroes were likely to be male.

It was also interesting to observe language classes. Some classes were conducted in the

children's mother tongue which is isiXhosa whilst others were conducted in English. Many children who were talkative and participated more during isiXhosa classes became reserved and quiet during English classes. In fact, apart from one word phrases many children tended to be silent as they absent-mindedly looked at the teacher. Language affected the course of learning. Myrah and Tina were not surprised by this because they say English, when they were first introduced to it as children, created some confusion in them. English was always different and made them to be so conscious of themselves. Tina remembers "being afraid of her voice" in English classes. Myrah also said that she had to think for a long time before she could say anything in English "for it was unlike isiXhosa, her mother tongue". These teachers were aware of the same dynamics that might occur in their classrooms.

In what follows, the focus is on the discussion of the findings. The discussion themes had been formulated after the researcher teased out the main topics that came to the fore during the interviews. The two main themes, under which the results are discussed, are memory and cultural self as well as the complexity of learning a second language. The participants' emphasis of these themes pointed to their importance.

DISCUSSION

Memory and Cultural Self

What became apparent in this study was the use of autobiography, memory and their development in shaping self-understanding. The teachers have developed the sense of self and understand the children better because they have enhanced their own self-understanding. Nelson (2003) uses the concept self-understanding to underscore the changes in how self is constructed and understood as development happens. From childhood, the changes in human beings are caused by a number of factors which are dependent on the achievement of many skills unique to human development. Furthermore, among other achievements in the period of development, is the attainment of an advanced level of social and cultural language functions (Nelson 2003). The teachers emphasised how the significant others such as parents and teachers were crucial in building their cultural self

which prepared them to survive in the world. The parents and others contribute to the child's taking up of values and constructions of the social and cultural world within while they are mutually interacting and narrating their lives together (Nelson 2003). Nelson (2003) cites Crapanzano who has stated that in parent-child dialogues of the preschool years, there was always a third voice which is the voice of culture, the society speaking through the adult. Consciously, the two teachers were moulding the children through the building of the cultural self. The rules, punishment and rewards are all part of the cultural self that the teachers pass on to their learners. Both teachers emphasised how the cultural narrative shaped their lives when they were children. In turn, they stated that they could not teach the child without emphasising the cultural narrative.

Nelson (2003: 20-21) contends:

Autobiographical memory, as it has usually been studied in terms of episodes and narratives, develops not only through social language practices, but in the context of cultures that value the individual personal histories of their members. Autobiographical memory from this perspective is a product not only of the social world, but of the cultural world. Children are not only inducted into this practice by their parents, but learn to produce their own stories beginning in preschools, kindergartens, and early grades in terms of the practice of "sharing time" or "show and tell."

The teachers were using practices they have learnt much earlier in their lives; using culture as it was encompassed in their own autobiographies. The context of culture helps immensely in shaping the autobiography. Without the cultural frame of place, time, and social structure the self-history lacks context (Nelson 2003). The teachers in the study used culture in recalling the events of history. The stories, children's rhymes, recitations and songs that the teachers taught the children were part of history that the teachers extracted from their narrative. All these reflect the cultural context of the teachers' world.

Through these materials, the child's own autobiographical memory takes on a cultural patina, and the child's sense of ideal self comes to resemble the cultural models that are included in the current mythologies. It may be noted that some of the myths are outworn and others are newly invented...they provide gen-

eral understandings of how individuals do or should relate to their social and spiritual worlds (Nelson 2003: 22).

McAdams (2008) points out that life stories mirror the culture in which a person's story is created. Bruner (1993) shows how culture can also enhance cultural stability rather than just acting as ego-defence and dissonance-reduction. When the teachers repeated certain stories, rhymes and songs from their past they were also entrenching a culture they were used to. These aspects are situated within a particular society that has certain cultural expectations. Furthermore, Bruner argues that autobiography also functions as an instrument for cultural constraint; it can be a cultural product. Bansberg (2004) describes the effort to make sense of lives outside of the dominant cultural modes as the construction of counter-narratives. These can be found in various cultural venues and are significant among the marginalised and the poor. Fivush (2003) discusses the importance of cultural frameworks in helping people understand the way they live. There are "acceptable" aspects of memory that society might accept and others that need not be told. Fivush (2004), in the article *The Silenced Self*, indicates how personal memory can be silenced in multiple ways by society; among the silencers are aspects such as culture and gender. In the study Tina tells of how she cannot be able to alter the society's perceived roles of being a boy or a girl. She stated that she perpetuated the idea of the "tough image" demanded from boys in a society that normally deprives boy learners in showing their emotional side. Tina said that in parent meetings she cannot shock or demotivate the parents by telling them how easily Mark cries. She is aware how her own self was affected by culture, but sometimes finds herself distorting her beliefs to fulfil the pressures from socialised culture. Fivush (2004: 77) writes at length about the voicing and silencing of emotion in preschool years and beyond. She points out:

Across several studies, we have documented that both mothers and fathers mention and elaborate on emotions more frequently with daughters than with sons, and are more likely to discuss and resolve negative emotions with daughters than with sons. These patterns are especially pronounced when reminiscing about sad experiences.

The above view shows how society teaches boys differently from girls, right from the be-

ginning. This continues throughout their school careers. Tina was aware of this but she was too entrapped by culture to move away from this. Teachers and parents teach children to react to situations in gender-defined ways – something they have also learnt from their own life stories.

The Memory of Two Worlds: Bicultural Dilemma

Above has been discussed code switching in English second language classrooms. Code switching presents different worlds; pupils may think in one language to express something in the other. Second language learning is still fraught with many challenges in historically Black African schools. Biko (1987) debated the problems created by English language in historically African institutions of learning. He pointed out that there was a tendency for Black Africans to be less articulate in English and they tend to be more inward looking because they do not understand much of what the text says. The teachers, therefore, need to understand the lives of their pupils in schools in order to adjust their pedagogy to suit the pupils' experiences. Starting with their own histories and stories is a step towards ensuring a relevant pedagogy that would be understandable to the pupils.

Schrauf and Rubin (2003) write about the complexities of learning a second language; second language acquisition and acculturation are complex psychological processes including cognitive and affective elements. Myrah and Tina's pupils are all from the surrounding township where the dominant language is isiXhosa. The majority of the pupils only speak English at school; this translates to only a few hours each day. The teachers are aware of this from their own autobiographies. "In a crude cognitive sense, there are two of 'something' here: two sets of mental organisations and two contexts of encoding and retrieval" (Schrauf and Rubin 2003: 121). The latter is confirmed by Ramirez-Esparza et al. (2004). They cite studies that show that bilinguals express different personalities when they speak different languages; they are bicultural. These writers refer to bicultural individuals as those who have two internalised cultures that can guide their feelings and thoughts. They also conclude that bicultural individuals change their interpretations of the

world, depending upon their internalised cultures. This was also confirmed by de Zulueta's study (1995) who found that language embodies cultural and individual identity. People using memory can also self-regulate the meaning to make meaning of the self. Language is one of the obvious tools people will use to self-regulate their narratives as they try to make meaning relating to the world around them.

The Teacher's Memory, Self Regulation and the Self

The discussions above highlight the importance of coherence and continuity in the self-narrative. Another crucial aspect of using the self-narrative in classrooms is self-regulation. Carver and Scheier (1991: 168) define the concept self-regulation as referring to how human behaviour reflects the general theme that people continuously work on to maintain a sense of coherence and continuity "via behaviours that occur to desired results". Baumeister and Vohs (2007: 1) identify this term to mean the self's capacity for altering its behaviours. These writers also point out that self-regulation increases the flexibility and adaptability of human behaviour, enabling people to adjust their actions to a broad range of social and situational demands. Therefore, as teachers interact with learners in their classrooms they make self-corrective adjustments. The latter is what the two participants highlighted in the study: they look at their story and make adjustments according to the needs and demands of their classes. This reflects intention and a sense of purpose. It shows how teachers may want to influence their classrooms. As they teach language, rhymes and stories the teachers kept on correcting themselves trying to capture what will be ideal for their classes.

Carver and Scheier (1991) mention that human behaviour reflects the use of goals whose values are represented in memory in an elaborated way. Therefore, in classrooms teachers would organise their experiences as they plan new actions. All good teaching is meaningful and goal-directed. Therefore, teachers who use personal narratives would use the past in the present to inform the future, and this cannot be achieved when there are no goals set. In South Africa for example, assiduous Black African teachers who studied under apartheid would

want to adjust education to move away from the restrictive system they experienced under apartheid education. They would want to facilitate teaching that frees the individual learners, thus preparing them for a just and fair society based on equal opportunities.

Paris and Winograd (2001, online) maintain that it is crucial for teachers to make learning increasingly more authentic, more useful and more contextualised for learners so that they are equipped to solve problems that they confront beyond school. Furthermore, they highlight the need for teachers to help their learners to become more autonomous and motivated. Chye et al. (n.d. online) also argue that for teachers to improve their practice and be equipped "to teach in the schools tomorrow", they need to employ self-regulation. The self needs to accommodate the constant changes and challenges in education. Besides, Chye et al. argue:

Given the rapid advances in information today, knowledge will need to be regularly updated; teaching methods and skills will need to be revisited. Initial training in thinking instruction that provides pre-service teachers with a solid foundation of knowledge, proficiency in pedagogical skills, a deep appreciation and willingness to partake in and contribute to the thinking movement is fundamental, but not sufficient. It is equally crucial that candidates are well-prepared to acquire new knowledge competencies according to future demands, to be open to new ideas and methods, to understand and accept the need to change. In order to take up this role, teachers need to know how to, as well as be willing to learn. This challenge corresponds closely with the concept of self-regulation.

From the above, it can be concluded that teachers who use self-regulation in their classrooms thus enhancing their selves, will be able to grow in the profession. Utilising memory and self-narration will be effective only if the teachers are able to use their story within the context of change. Education changes constantly and teachers need to self-regulate all the time to keep abreast with the changing system and the evolving mind of the learner. The teachers in the study constantly adjusted their teaching and their narrative to suit their current kindergarten classes. This self-regulation can be linked to the opening up of various possibilities for storytelling so as to shape the context (Hobson 1995). There are three separate narratives, sometimes referred

to as 'triple telling', this means that reflection can be sorted into past situation, present situation and future images (Grumet 1987) This multiple telling frees the teller from a single narrative.

CONCLUSION

Autobiographical narrative can play a crucial role in classrooms, as this study has shown. The two protagonists show how their past influences the present course of their lives. As part of intentionality discussed above, teachers who consciously use memory will enrich their classroom experiences. The narrative presents a number of dynamics that are useful in the enhancement of teaching and learning. The two teachers have shown that even the negative experiences from the autobiography can enrich the present classroom practice. The life stories of teachers reflect a causal connection between the present circumstances and their past. When teachers look back into their past, they tend to understand their teacher identity as they build their stories. Both teachers have used their past positive and negative experiences to enhance their professional practice.

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