

**DEMOCRACY:
A REALITY CHECK FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS**

**A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the
Witwatersrand in partial fulfillment of the degree of Masters of Education by
coursework and research report.**

**SUPERVISORS
DR. J. CALVERT-EVERS
&
V. LININGTON**

**Submitted By: ELEANOR ANNE HUGGETT
Student Number: 0318102K**

Date: February 2008

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. The report is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other university.

Eleanor Anne Huggett

_____ day of February 2008.

ABSTRACT

The majority of educators/practitioners practicing in South Africa today were either educated under the apartheid regime or experienced a post apartheid education that was given by people socialized under the apartheid regime. Therefore, there is a strong possibility that democratic practice in schools is compromised due to the socialization of the practitioners. ECD practitioners' perceptions on democracy and how they implement democratic practices in their workplace are explored in order to begin to identify the elements of a learning and working environment that could promote the values of a liberal democracy. A dialogic, participatory approach using questionnaires, focussed group discussions, personal interviews and critical incidents, investigated relevant issues such as perceptions of democracy, socialization, leadership, adult education and the impact of crime and HIV/Aids within the ECD context. The findings show that democracy is recognized as a positive and welcomed development in South Africa. There is a genuine 'spirit of ubuntu' present and the participants relish the diversity in their midst. A common feature between all groups is the concern over crime and corruption. However, it also revealed that although the surface levels of understanding of the principles of democracy are similar between various groups, the in-depth perceptions regularly differ. Improved avenues for legitimate communication between participants at all levels is advised, not only to discuss differences but also common ground. Understanding the factors that promote democratic principles such as cultural interaction, diversity, etc. could help both the participants of this study and other ECD practitioners in creating and promoting legitimate democratic practice in the workplace.

KEY TERMS:**Adult Education****Communication****Democracy****Leadership****Socialization****Ubuntu****Human Rights****Early Childhood Development**

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research report to my father Bernard William Huggett – and my mother Pamela Mary Huggett (1934 – 1992) who longed for, and would have delighted in, democracy in South Africa.

And to

Bluebird Pre-Primary
Greenpark Nursery School
Parkmore Nursery School
Stepping Stones Pre-Primary
Parkview Pre-Primary

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to the ECD practitioners of Bluebird Pre-Primary, Greenpark Nursery School, Parkmore Nursery School and Stepping Stones Pre-Primary for participating in this study and being so generous with their support and time. Also to the staff of Parkview Pre-Primary for their endless support.

I would like to thank my supervisors, Jeni Calvert-Evers and Viv Linington for all their help and encouragement and to Jane Castle for all her support throughout both the Honours and Masters course. I would also like to extend my gratitude to all the adult educators at Wits University who throughout my studies caused so many paradigm shifts in my life.

Lastly, I would like to thank my support system. Debbie Brown, Helen Theron, Di Charter, Margaret Posgate, Jill Orpen and Rene Hoenderdos, my cousins Elizabeth Roper and Jennifer Kinghorn, my brother John for all his help with computers, my sisters Coralie and Diana for all their encouragement and in particular, my father Bernard Huggett.

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|----------|
| Declaration..... | ii |
| Abstract..... | iii |
| Key Terms..... | iii |
| Dedication..... | iv |
| Acknowledgements | v |
| Contents | vi |
| List of Figures | x |
| List of Tables | xi |
| Acronyms..... | xii |
| | |
| CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| 1.1 Statement of the Problem | 1 |
| 1.2 Rationale..... | 3 |
| 1.3 Purpose Statement..... | 4 |
| 1.4 Research Questions | 4 |
| 1.5 Research Aims | 4 |
| 1.6 Significance | 5 |
| 1.7 Outline of the Research Report..... | 5 |
| | |
| <u>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW</u> | 6 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 6 |
| 2.2 Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy..... | 6 |
| 2.3 Sociological Historical Perspective of South Africa..... | 7 |
| 2.4 Educational Perspective | 8 |
| 2.5 Socialization and Culture | 11 |
| 2.6 Diversity in the ECD Context..... | 13 |
| 2.7 Liberty, Human Rights and Democracy..... | 18 |

| | | |
|--|---|-----------|
| 2.8 | Morality, Ubuntu, Human Rights | 23 |
| 2.9 | Change..... | 29 |
| 2.10 | Leadership and Management..... | 30 |
| 2.11 | Adult Learning and Knowledge Acquisition..... | 31 |
| 2.12 | The Dialogic Approach | 34 |
| 2.13 | Conclusion..... | 35 |
| <u>CHAPTER 3</u> RESEARCH DESIGN | | 36 |
| 3.1 | Research Paradigm..... | 36 |
| 3.2 | Sources of Information..... | 37 |
| | 3.2.1 Sample Population..... | 37 |
| | 3.2.2 Data Collection..... | 37 |
| 3.3 | Methodology..... | 38 |
| 3.4 | Methods | 39 |
| | 3.4.1 Questionnaires..... | 39 |
| | 3.4.2 Focus group discussions | 40 |
| | 3.4.3 Personal Interviews | 40 |
| | 3.4.4 Critical Incidents | 41 |
| | 3.4.5 Document Review | 41 |
| 3.5 | Validity and Reliability | 42 |
| 3.6 | Limitations..... | 43 |
| 3.7 | Ethical Considerations..... | 43 |
| <u>CHAPTER 4</u> RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSES | | 45 |
| SECTION 4.1 PARTICIPANT PROFILE & PERCEPTIONS REGARDING DEMOCRACY | | 46 |
| SECTION 4.2 EMERGING THEMES..... | | 48 |
| | 4.2.1 Equality..... | 49 |
| | 4.2.2 Crime and Violence..... | 53 |
| | 4.2.3 Country Leaders and Democracy..... | 57 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 4.2.4 Ubuntu | 58 |
| 4.2.5 Freedom | 61 |
| 4.2.6 Opportunities..... | 64 |
| 4.2.7 Children’s Act / Children’s Rights and Freedom..... | 65 |
| 4.2.8 Affirmative Action | 66 |
| 4.2.9 Franchise..... | 67 |
| In Conclusion – Reflections of the Past | 68 |
| | |
| SECTION 4.3 SOCIALIZING FACTORS AFFECTING ECD PRACTICE..... | 69 |
| 4.3.1 Significance of Age in Participants..... | 70 |
| 4.3.2 Language..... | 75 |
| 4.3.3 School Education..... | 75 |
| 4.3.4 Community | 76 |
| | |
| SECTION 4.4 ISSUES RELATING TO IMPLEMENTING OF CHANGE..... | 79 |
| 4.4.1 Democratic Practices in the Workplace..... | 79 |
| 4.4.2 Transformation and Diversity | 83 |
| 4.4.3 Discrepancies and Contradictions | 86 |
| 4.4.3.1 Education..... | 86 |
| 4.4.3.2 Cultural Differences..... | 86 |
| 4.4.3.3 Economic and Logistical Considerations..... | 87 |
| 4.4.3.4 Implications for the Learners | 88 |
| | |
| <u>CHAPTER 5</u> RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS | 89 |
| 5.1 Recommendations..... | 89 |
| 5.1.1 Strategic Planning | 89 |
| 5.1.2 Strategies to Improve Democratic Practice | 90 |
| 5.1.2.1 Concerning the Practitioners | 91 |
| 5.1.2.2 Concerning the Learners | 94 |
| 5.1.2.3 Concerning the Parents | 95 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 5.1.3 Community ‘Ubuntu’ | 96 |
| 5.1.4 Crime | 98 |
| 5.2 Conclusions | 99 |
| 5.2.1 Research Design and Methods: Strengths and Weaknesses | 99 |
| 5.2.2 Relevance for Educators | 100 |
| 5.2.3 Recommendations for further Research | 100 |
| 5.2.4 Unforeseen Issues and Pertinent Findings..... | 100 |
| 5.3 Personal Reflections..... | 102 |
| IN CONCLUSION | 102 |
| APPENDICES | |
| APPENDIX A: Questionnaire..... | 103 |
| APPENDIX B: Focused Group Discussion /Interview Guide..... | 105 |
| APPENDIX C: Critical Incident Guide..... | 107 |
| APPENDIX D: Participant Information Sheet..... | 108 |
| APPENDIX E: Participants Consent Form | 109 |
| APPENDIX F: Venue Consent Form | 110 |
| APPENDIX G: Permission Letters from Schools..... | 111 |
| APPENDIX H: Roper Guidelines Re Crime & Children’s Act..... | 112 |
| REFERENCES | 118 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | | |
|------------|--|----|
| Figure 2.1 | Socialization Tree | 12 |
| Figure 2.2 | Diversity - Rijamampianina & Carmichael..... | 14 |
| Figure 2.3 | Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs | 19 |
| Figure 2.4 | Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle | 33 |
| Figure 2.5 | Gravett's Learning-centred Teaching | 34 |
| Figure 3.1 | Data Collection Schedule | 38 |
| Figure 4.1 | Data Collection Bar Graph | 46 |
| Figure 4.2 | Participants Place of Origin | 47 |
| Figure 4.3 | Tertiary Education of Participants | 47 |
| Figure 4.4 | Work Experience of Participants | 48 |
| Figure 4.5 | Themes and Factors affecting Democratic Practice | 49 |
| Figure 4.6 | Participants Perceptions of Equality | 50 |
| Figure 4.7 | Participants Perceptions of Freedom..... | 62 |
| Figure 5.1 | Strategies for Dealing with Crime | 98 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | | |
|-----------|---|----|
| Table 2.1 | RESA SAIRR Survey – Per capita expenditure in South Africa..... | 21 |
| Table 4.1 | Participants Perceptions of the term ‘Ubuntu’ | 59 |
| Table 4.2 | Age Groups of Participants | 70 |
| Table 4.3 | Perceptions of Change in the Workplace | 82 |
| Table 5.1 | Strategies for Improving Democratic Practice | 91 |
| Table 5.2 | Democratic Practice – Communication & Leadership | 93 |
| Table 5.3 | Community – Promoting Ubuntu | 97 |

ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|--|
| AVP | Alternatives to Violence Projects |
| CNE | Christian National Education |
| DoE | Department of Education |
| ECD | Early Childhood Development |
| FGD | Focused Group Discussion |
| IK | Indigenous Knowledge |
| IKS | Indigenous Knowledge Systems |
| ISASA | Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa |
| ISS | Interpretive Social Science |
| NECC | The National Education Co-ordinating Committee |
| NEPI | National Education Policy Investigations |
| OBE | Outcomes Based Education |
| PBO | Public Benefit Organisation |
| NCS | National Curriculum Statement |
| RNCS | Revised National Curriculum Statement |
| SASA | South African Schools Act |
| SETA | Sector Education Training Authority |
| SGB | Schools Governing Body |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |