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An investigation into how school leaders interpret decolonisation in the English curriculum, and its impact on schools' internal education policies: A case study of two independent schools in Johannesburg

Paul Martin Emant

(582266)

A mini dissertation in fulfilment of the requirement for the Independent Research Module Master of Education (Coursework and Research Report) Degree in the discipline of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS)

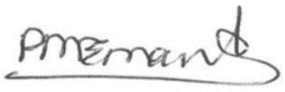
Supervisor: Dr B.J. Johnson

DECLARATION

I, Paul Martin Emant (582266), declare that **"An investigation into how school leaders interpret decolonisation in the English curriculum, and its impact on schools' internal education policies: A case study of two independent schools in Johannesburg."** abides by the following rules:

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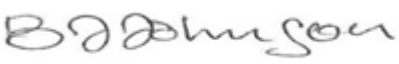
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STATEMENT OF SUPERVISOR

This project is submitted with my approval.

Signature:  **Date:** 24 September 2024

Dr B.J. Johnson

DEDICATION

This research started as a means to an end, but then became all-consuming. My own teaching career started in the late 1990s, and the idea of decolonisation was not central to my thinking, in those early days.

With age comes wisdom and with wisdom comes an understanding that change can only begin with each individual teacher. I have taught, but more importantly, I have been taught. I have been blessed with incredible teachers, but similarly I have been blessed with students who have taught me more than I could have imagined.

Change does not have to be painful; change is exciting when its intention is for the inclusion of all.

The words ‘GET IT DONE’ have been a resounding motivator and to Kate, Jane, Lindsay, Nadine and Jacqui – thank you. All of these friends are strong supporters and know me well enough to have the honest and, sometimes, difficult conversations when my efforts have stalled.

My late mother, Joan Emant, tried with all her might to convince me to do a ‘real’ degree after I finished my BA and then my HDE at the University of Port Elizabeth. She was adamant that I should not teach. It was only two years into my career that she looked at me and acknowledged that she could see that teaching made me happy. I know that she would have been proud of this research.

In conclusion:

“If I am walking with two other [people], each of them will serve as my teacher. I will pick out the good points of the one and imitate them, and the bad points of the other and correct them in myself.”

Confucius

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The WSOE is my post-graduate home and my belief in my ability to complete this research is rooted in their incredible work. My supervisor, Dr B.J. Johnson, has continued to be my primary supporter, even in the dark moments when I have had false starts and constant delays. Dr Johnson will never truly be able to comprehend how her support kept me grounded and helped me to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Thank you, Dr J. I will be forever grateful for your support. Kgomotso Morapedi – thank you for always being willing to answer my questions – A LEGEND! I look forward to reading your PhD.

Thank you, also to Professor Brahm Fleisch, for encouraging me during my Honours to go one step further.

School A and School B were welcoming to me, even though they risked seeing skeletons in the dark corners. Both School A and School B are beacons of educational hope, and I know that this research will continue to inspire them to plan for the continued inclusion of all their pupils.

Thank you also to my own school, St John's College, for their commitment to me. While I could not conduct this research at SJC, I know that the impact of this research will continue to infiltrate the College English Department discussions as we grapple with which texts to teach. Our debates continue to focus on what is best for our students and how to represent all students in the 21st Century.

Ricky Woods: firstly, my own high school English teacher, then my colleague and friend, and now my editor. You continue to inspire me, even after 33 years since I first walked your library at Lawson Brown High School for English. Thank you for seeing what I could not see in my research and for showing me how to make it better.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the extent to which two independent schools conceptualised, mediated, and managed decolonisation of the English curriculum through the selection of literature texts to be taught from Grade 8 to Grade 11. A small-scale, case study-based, qualitative research design was used to conduct research at one co-educational schools and one all-girls school in Johannesburg. Semi-structured and open-ended interviews were conducted with the following members of the School Management Teams: Deputy Headmistress of Academics; Deputy Headmistress of Transformation and Diversity; and the Head of the English Department. Each member interviewed was involved directly in the selection of texts to be taught in the English departments. Following the interviews, verbatim transcripts were coded thematically. The findings show that, while the practices of the schools' current School Management Teams are addressing transformation and diversity, as specified by the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA), there are still systemic issues that prohibit decolonisation of the English curriculum. It is recommended that a greater understanding be achieved of the national objectives of transformation and diversity: this will enable the two independent schools to claim truly to be decolonising the curriculum.

Keywords: colonisation, decolonisation, curriculum, transformation, diversity, curriculum theory, critical diversity literacy, zone of mediation

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Title of the Study

An investigation into how school leaders interpret decolonisation in the English curriculum, and its impact on schools' internal education policies: A case study of two independent schools in Johannesburg.

1.2 Focus of the Study

This study was an investigation into how school leadership structures conceptualise, mediate, and manage their own understanding of decolonisation and how their understanding might have implications for their schools' internal policies and subsequently for the selection of literature texts to be taught as part of the English curriculum in Grade 8 to Grade 11. Similarly, the focus of the study investigated the processes by which English departments selected their texts and to what extent they engage actively with the concept of decolonisation.

1.3 Location of the Study

Research was conducted at two independent high schools in Johannesburg, South Africa. As such, the conclusion of Soudien (2004) regarding the reconstitution of privilege in independent schools, where race and class are being reticulated, can be deconstructed using a research-based, multidimensional lens. Independent schools serve as microcosms of larger societal structures and trends, where historical inequalities, especially regarding race and class, are being reshaped. South African independent schools have historically been spaces of privilege, primarily accessible to those who have means to pay the school fees, and racial minorities, especially during the apartheid era. Meier and Hartnell (2009) also suggest that equity-minded reform programmes, if not articulated properly, do not necessarily lead to changes in attitude but can rather lead to "heightening of tension and prejudices" (p. 180). The schools in question (Independent Schools A and B) are members of the Independent Schools' Association of Southern Africa (ISASA). Students at the end of their schooling in matric write the Independent Examinations Board school-leaving assessment. Both schools use their academic results as a primary marketing avenue. The main entry points across the schools are Grades 000, 3 and 8. The focus of this research will be the selection of the literature texts taught in these schools from Grades 8–11, since the texts taught in Grade 12 are determined by

the external examining body: the Independent Examinations Board (IEB). Despite each school's location within the IEB, it is important to consider how each school has their own set of rules and regulations that dictate the institutional culture present. Jansen and Walters remind us that institutions are "agile [and can] adjust to changing environments" (2022, p. 60) if the institutions consider it necessary.

1.4 Introduction to the Study

Despite the unification of previously racially divided education departments into a single and democratic department, the effects of inherited policies continue to plague the education landscape of South Africa (November et al., 2010). For transformation and diversity to be more than just symbolic, a process of decolonisation needs to be applied across syllabi as a starting point. This study is set in two suburban independent schools in Johannesburg that are contending with elements of this process within their respective English departments. It focuses on how school leaders understand the concept of decolonisation and how their understanding affects the various education policies within their respective schools.

1.5 Background to the Study

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*,* Section 29 (3) (1996) allows anyone to establish an independent school and, as such, one of the key characteristics of these schools is that "they determine how they are governed, financed and staffed, within the boundaries of the law; and in line with good governance practice" (DBE, 2010, p.3). In some instances, the establishment of independent schools continues to exemplify the colonial attitudes reflected in the title of the study by Peter Randall (1982), "Little England on the Veld." This continues, in many instances to be the case, even though one of the strategic imperatives of the Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA) is to promote transformation and diversity in its member institutions (ISASA, 2015, p. 12).

Independent schools need to move beyond the pure assimilationist version of transformation and diversity, and it is important to understand that "education policymaking does not 'happen' in a vacuum […] but is subject to a range of competing influences, which can be broadly categorised [as] social, political, economic, technological, religious, and cultural forces" (Forrester & Garratt, 2016, p. 1), and these influences will affect schools' approaches to change. Bongwe (2010) mentions that there

is a shift in how we respond to the concepts of both transformation and diversity within educational institutions. Consequently, he proposes that the appropriate action for transformation and diversity to occur in independent schools "would be to unlearn the old, negative and destructive attitudes and behaviour [when it comes to understanding decolonisation] and to learn, teach, nurture, and live new and constructive ones, as individuals first and then as collective, in order to impact the collective whole" (Bongwe, 2010, p. v).

The independent schools included in this study write the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) National Senior Certificate Examination at the end of Grade12. The IEB, through their consultation process with various stakeholders, determines the prescribed works to be studied. The Policy for the Selection of the Prescribed Works in the IEB National Senior Certificate Examination clearly outlines that literature texts must "include an African/South African novel" (IEB, 2014, p. 3), and that the prescribed poetry must be representative and should include poets of "different nationalities of poets and different gender" (IEB, 2014, p. 3). The intended focus of this study is how English departments and their respective school leaders approach the concept of decolonisation of the curriculum in Grades 8–11, since the IEB's policy on the selection of prescribed texts does not extend to these grades. English departments are, therefore, free to select their own literature texts to be taught and, in my view, it is in this space that English departments can unlearn old attitudes, first as individuals, and then applying new attitudes to the collective whole through the texts that they choose to teach, as suggested by Bongwe (2010). In addition to this, the study will include how each of the schools can be considered a "mediating institution […] situated within locally constructed 'zones' [that] embody larger cultural patterns" (Oakes et al., 2005, p. 232), and how these departments are subjected to various internal school policies that may encourage or hinder transformation and diversity through the decolonisation of literature texts. Similarly, as suggested by Oakes et al. (2005), schools will also be subjected to external influences that extended beyond internal school policies. The curriculum and the content taught is symbolic: "the curriculum, like a flag, stands for something else [as] the curriculum can amount to little more than a statement of intent or a signal of association" (Jansen & Walters, 2022, p. 61).

As such, it is essential to understand how school-based micro-education policies like the selection of texts to be taught are also influenced by "values, attitudes and beliefs"

(Forrester & Garratt, 2016, p. 9) of those selecting the texts. Decolonisation is not the end goal, as suggested by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), since the process of decolonisation has not removed 'coloniality' from syllabi. Part of this research will examine to what extent English departments are aware of the colonial aspects of the texts taught. Maldonado-Torres, in Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), emphasises that "coloniality refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that defined culture, labour, intersubjectivity relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limitations of colonial administrations" and that coloniality is a power structure that is invisible (p. 13).

1.6 Purpose and Rationale for the Study

My own schooling and subsequent teaching experience since 1998 have been that of white privilege in both a former Model C and, subsequently, in an independent school. My own placement in society provides a lens through which I understand my role as an educator. Writing about decolonisation as a white, middle-aged male provides a very specific understanding and perception of education. As a result of this lens, my perception is that independent school education, as proposed by Randall (1982), is "essentially the preserve of a numerically tiny but culturally and economically powerful group" (p. 25), and that this has continued for more than two decades into South Africa's democracy. The power dynamic held by this group is evident, since approximately 20% of independent schools in former white areas account for more than 80% of the students who pass the Grade 12 examinations (Letseka, 2013, p. 74). The unfortunate contextual situation that arises from this is that many of these schools serve privileged students and perpetuate inequalities. The question that arises is how committed English departments of independent schools are to transform and diversify the selection of texts that they choose to study to represent the South African and African context. Independent schools, like former Model C schools, allow parents to preserve their educational privilege "through control over cultural and religious ethos of [the schools] as well as over language policies" (Tikly & Mabogoane, 1997, p. 163), and this also applies to the teaching content. School reform, like decolonisation, cannot be rushed but, instead, change is a process that requires mutual reworking of the current situation depending on the unique nature and context of the school (Oakes et al., 2005).

Furthermore, Soudien (2004) suggests that race is the predominant lens through which South African difference is understood, but I have also become increasingly aware that those in dominant positions (whether their dominance is defined by race, gender,

language, or class) “make space for new constituencies but they have done so on their own terms” (Soudien, 2004, p. 111). Many schools have claimed to be fully integrated, but I would suggest that their levels of integration are more about assimilation, in that students who are considered different are expected to conform to the school rather than the school allowing integration: the schools serve those families who can afford the school fees (Letseka, 2013, p. 74). In this context, an understanding of decolonising the texts studied at school level needs to be viewed through the African lens that “imperialism continues to control the economy, politics, and cultures in Africa” (wa Thiong’o, 1986, p. 4). It must also be acknowledged that there are various aspects that need to be taken into consideration when effecting change, namely “global, societal, regional, local and individual norms and politics” (Oakes et al., 2005, p. 285), which form part of this research to a greater extent than can be discussed at this level.

Resulting from this understanding, the idea of accommodating differences, instead of integration, and the effect that this has on subordinate groups, is again reinforced by Soudien. Soudien (2004) claims that “subordinate groups have been recruited or have promoted themselves into the hegemonic social, cultural, and economic regime at the cost of subordinate ways of being, speaking, and conducting their everyday lives” (Soudien, 2004, p. 111). Instead of accommodating subordinate groups, I believe that there should be a school-based strategy of reforming the education system in South Africa. The starting point needs to be changing the mind-sets of SMTs, leaders and teachers about how they do business (Letseka, 2013). Sarason, in Hinde (2004), suggests that power is the first element that needs to be addressed before any change can occur, and ISASA has reinforced this ideal by stating that its member schools are encouraged to “embrace diversity in their structures and practices [and to] show improvement in their demographic profiles” (ISASA, 2015, p. 12), but this embracing of diversity is not clearly disseminated to the implementation phase at classroom level. ISASA has made the commitment to diversity a condition of membership for its member schools but the question I would like to address is to what extent this commitment has gone beyond the demographics of the student bodies and whether this has filtered down to the literature studied.

1.7 Problem Statement

While schools are under internal and external pressures to achieve a perceived sense of transformation in their taught curriculum, the selection of literature texts is left to the

discretion of individual institutions, apart from Grade 12. Transformation, according to Ramphele, in ISASA (2013), is a “reorientation from past values and practices to a future defined by non-racialism, non-sexism, and social relationships based on greater observance of human rights and more equity” (p. 5). The IEB provides a comprehensive orientation or approach, but there is no actual regulation of the approach through consideration of the text selection or content taught, except for at the matric level, where the National Senior Certificate is accredited by Umalusi. This lack of regulation in the selection of texts allows for contrasting interpretations and understandings of what transformation, diversity and decolonisation may entail. This study investigates the potential differences in understanding and interpretation between the two selected schools. In addition, stakeholders increasingly scrutinise independent schools’ efforts to transform and diversify their environments. This transformation and diversity (T/D) process is frequently highlighted once schools’ deficiencies in this area have been identified, often in the media. In many instances, it appears that schools are merely paying lip service to the processes associated with T/D and are not truly committed. As a newly introduced theme in South African education, decolonisation and its implementation appear to be poorly understood. In comparison, Hinde (2004) posits that a school’s culture is “shaped through interactions with others and reflections on life and the world in general” (p. 2). As a result, there appears to be a lack of regulation, resulting in a variety of outcomes, as multiple stakeholders contribute to the process of decolonisation. The English curriculum’s decolonisation process cannot be quantified through this study. I will examine how leaders interpret and implement decolonisation within the growing field of transformation and diversity. Likewise, institutions are held accountable for their processes, and, in some instances, the absence of internal education policies allows for limited change because there is neither a need for nor a commitment to change. Once school leaders have a common understanding of decolonisation, I believe it will be possible to construct effective and implementable internal school policies.

Subsequently, only through a clear comprehension and interpretation of decolonisation can informed contributions be considered. This research is not only concerned with the final policy documentation that may be drafted, but also with the processes that institutions must undergo to develop a shared understanding. These processes are summarised by Enslin and Pendlebury (1998), who suggest that education can be improved if educators consider the following concerns as mainstream discourse: “To what extent have inequalities in access and resources been eliminated? How democratic has

the education system become? How representative are education and its leadership of the South African populace? How much has education quality improved?" (p. 262). Hence, the purpose of this research is to acquire an understanding of the various perceptions of decolonisation and how they can be combined to form a unified understanding of the concept.

1.8 Significance of the Study

First, the South African school of the 21st century is contending with the fact that, after 30 years of democracy, there is still a need for more consistent curriculum reform. Jansen and Walters (2022) highlight the comments about curriculum reform and suggest that the call for decolonisation is a broad demand. Their research suggests that the focus should be on the decolonisation of knowledge. Their understanding is to consider the function of decolonisation as the new change siren and, as such, leaders must take command of these changes and combine their understandings of decolonisation to make the changes explicit (Jansen & Walters, 2022). Second, it is essential to recognise that school leaders are accountable for the changes made in schools, but it appears that the lack of research in this area means that these leaders are making decisions in the dark. As a significant portion of the decolonisation literature is not school based, this gap must be addressed. This affords the researcher the chance to gain an understanding of decolonisation and the role of leaders in the selection of texts with reference to schools.

Third, while the research of Hofmeyr and Lee (2004) indicates that the independent school sector in South Africa "is rapidly approaching racial equity" (p. 157), I would argue that this does not always reflect the traditional independent (or monolithic) institutions. ISASA (2015) suggests that schools (including traditional independent schools) should be "communities that allow children to interact with and learn from peers and adults who look and think differently than themselves" (p. 5). Through their membership of ISASA, schools included in this study have committed to becoming diverse institutions. ISASA defines a diverse institution as "one that reflects societal demographics, provides equal opportunities, does not discriminate directly or indirectly, and is experienced similarly by all groups it includes" (ISASA, 2013, p. 6). My research aims to determine to what extent these schools incorporate their commitment to transformation and diversity through the decolonisation of the literature texts taught.

Fourth, in South Africa, the post-apartheid government's policies were intended to end

the profound social inequalities caused by apartheid. However, policy and legislation have limited power to transform education, in practice (Enslin & Pendlebury, 1998) and cannot be effective without the support and implementation of classroom teachers. While South African education policies “require that schools provide equal opportunities to all learners regardless of difference”, it is evident that new “racial discourses and practices” have emerged in South African schools (Meier & Hartnell, 2009, p. 184).

Fifth, the significance of this study is that it concentrates on the concept of decolonisation in two independent Johannesburg schools in the 21st century. Christie and McKinney (2017) define coloniality as the “persistent nature of the multiple and intertwined power relations of superiority and inferiority established under colonialism” (p. 41). As such, coloniality is the long-lasting effects felt after the end of colonial rule, but the significance of my research will be to contribute to the field of South African research by determining the impact of coloniality revealed through the selection of texts and to what extent schools are decolonising the English curriculum. As “power dynamics and power imbalances [in schools] can influence the equity-minded” reforms suggested in schools (Holme et al., 2014, p. 39), it is crucial to comprehend how the power relations influence school decisions about decolonisation.

Like Mamdani (2016), Briggs and Sharp (2004) emphasise the role of epistemology in the decolonisation process. Their intention, and the core of their argument, is to emphasise the significance of indigenous knowledge (IK) and the need to include “local voices and priorities”, and to consider the significance of “empowerment through process ownership” (Briggs & Sharp, 2004, p. 1). Mamdani (2016), and Briggs and Sharp (2004), all examine the ways in which the Western understanding of theory and knowledge “have dealt with alternative voices and different ways of knowing” (Briggs & Sharp, 2004, p. 2). The actuality, and part of the focus of this study, is to examine how Western knowledge is frequently viewed as “more advanced or refined than other positions” (Briggs & Sharp, 2004, p. 2), consequently influencing which texts are selected and which texts are set aside. The challenge or change to any curriculum is, therefore, seen as a challenge to the fabric of the culture of the institution and everything that it holds true and dear (Jansen & Walters, 2022).

Last, it is essential to note that the various student activist movements which swept across South African universities in 2015 and the Black Lives Matter (#BLM) movement of 2020 have placed this research in the foreground. The discontent that occurred globally because

of these movements highlight that the advent of decolonisation did not occur in isolation. While the focus of the protests was on the financial aspects and burdens on students (particularly #Feesmustfall), the identification and removal of "colonial iconography" spread rapidly (Hodes, 2016, p. 140), with reference to the statue of Cecil John Rhodes and the #Rhodesmustfall movement. There is a clear connection between the 2015 protests and the increase in the national "hankering for the fall of the old era and the birth of a new one" (Hodes, 2016, p. 148), where an urgent need and comprehension for the removal of colonial symbols is evident. The importance of these movements is reinforced by Johnson et al. (2024),

> The *decolonisation* debates – #Rhodesmustfall in 2015, the #FeesMustFall student campaigns in 2015/16 and #Outsourcingmustfall in 2015/16 – revitalised the transformation debates in public higher education in South Africa and in South African schools.

My research will contribute to future understanding of decolonisation within schools and the function of this understanding in leadership studies, since literature texts can be associated with colonial symbols.

1.9 Aims of the Study

This research has key aims, as follows:

- To ascertain how school leaders conceptualise, mediate, and manage their understanding of decolonisation.
- To investigate the processes and internal education policy by which English departments select their texts.
- To examine to what extent English departments, engage actively with the decolonisation of the curriculum.
- To consider the implications on current and future internal school policies.

1.10 Research Question

1.10.1 **Critical Research Questions**

In line with the above objectives, this research seeks to answer the following key research

questions:

- How do school leaders conceptualise, mediate, and manage the decolonisation of content in the English curriculum?
- What the tensions created by various stakeholders who influence the decolonisation of the English curriculum?
- How do participants understand the role of their internal policies in the selection of texts?
- How do participants understand their role in the decolonisation of the texts selected by their English departments?
- What role does education policy play in determining the selection of texts in the English curriculum?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Colonialism and Coloniality

When centring one's study on the decolonisation of the curriculum, it is important to understand how European expansionism transformed the world for nearly 500 years and the distinct imprint it had on the economy, politics, and cultures of Africa which continues to be felt in the 21st century (von Bismarck, 2012; wa Thiong'o, 1986). Smith (2008) reiterates this view and highlights the ways in which this imperialism was originally felt: economic expansion, subjugation of others as an idea or spirit with many forms of realisation and specifically within the field of knowledge (in its various forms). It is in that field of knowledge that colonisation was often thought of as "a system which drew everything back into the centre" (Smith, 2008, p. 58) but it is the identification of whose centre which draws the discussion into decolonisation. Tuck and Yang (2012) add to our understanding of colonisation by suggesting that it imposes sovereignty over "sexuality, legality, raciality, language, religion and property" (p. 21) while Smith (2008) emphasises how it "frames the indigenous experience" (p. 19). Consequently, the ultimate understanding of colonialism is that of the power dynamic.

As such, colonialism provided the framework, according to Higgs (2012), for the systematic and "organised subjugation of the cultural, scientific and economic life of many on the African continent" (p. 2) as a means to denote the relationship between the colonised nation and the motherland by means of occupation and control, whether politically, economically or, as indicated by Le Grange (2016), as the conquering of two specific areas: the first is the "physical spaces and bodies of the colonised" and the second, through the "colonisation of the mind through disciplines such as education, science, economics and law" (p. 4). Furthermore, part of this control over the mind was the way in which the colonised were to view the Western view of history (Smith, 2008, p. 33) expounded often through literature. Mahabeer (2020) also considers this to be an ongoing and pervasive process that entrenches various forms of colonialism through "class, gender, inequality, language and race, racism, sexism, ecocide, ethnocide and genocide" Lebeloane (2017, p.1). All of these (and more) forms of colonialism are both implicitly and explicitly explored in educational spaces today: through the theft of indigenous histories and the death of indigenous knowledge, and the languages taught (or not taught) can be considered effects of colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). This death of indigenous knowledge occurred primarily when Africa, during the periods of

colonialism, was “re- invented as the site of ‘darkness’ bereft of any knowledge beyond superstitions” (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 20). The reference to the killing of knowledge and knowledge systems as *epistemicide* is posited by Santos (Hall & Tandon, 2017; Le Grange, 2016). A common way of perpetuating this attitude was through literature which was subsequently taught in schools.

It is within the framework of colonialism that sites of education were established on the African continent to mirror the “Western forms of formal schools” and knowledge (Lebeloane, 2017, p. 2), and promoted the Western perception that, through colonialism, Africa could be considered “bastion of civilisation [which would be] a sign that a colony and its settlers had grown up” (Smith, 2008, p. 65). It is within this process that colonisation has marginalised African values in African education and that “education theory and practice in Africa and [consequently] educational research has not escaped this process” (Higg, 2011, p. 1). Kumar (2010) also focuses on this role of colonialism and its resultant impact on curriculum development. The colonial curriculum sought to bring about the “denigration and displacement of local knowledge and identities” (Kumar, 2010, p. 2) and it is from within this mindset that educationalists are trying to remove the “colonialist structures and practices, and the resultant contradictions and contestation in curriculum and pedagogy” (Asher, 2009, p. 71). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) paints a poignant image of the effects of colonialism and the loss of African knowledge. He states that it was in the “graveyard of African indigenous knowledges [that] colonialism planted European memory” (2018, p. 24). Within this study, one must take cognisance that through the literature texts being studied in South African classrooms, there is a reproduction of colonial views that represent the “colonized to themselves as inherently inferior beings” (Asher, 2009, p. 72) and it is from this understanding that a rallying cry for decolonisation of the English curriculum has emerged. Wa Thiong’o (1986) also brought to the fore for educationalists that one of the mechanisms through which colonialism was perpetuated was through the mental universe of the colonised and how they were controlled. As such, wa Thiong’o (1986) emphasised that one of the major impacts of colonialism was how the colonised “perceived themselves and their relationship to the world” (p. 16). Jansen and Walters (2022) reflect on this by highlighting a popular slogan that emerged during the movements in 2015: “Why is my curriculum white?” (p. 3). This question reiterates the perpetuation of the colonial-styled curriculum.

In addition, while not dealing specifically with literature texts, Kumar (2010) heightens the

argument that “colonialism and racism have been the key factors in sharing curriculum discourses in South Africa since colonial times” (p. 2) and that not much has changed, despite the monumental shifts in educational theory in the country. Mbembe (2015) also posits the view that, despite some changes in a post-apartheid era, there is “something profoundly wrong when syllabi designed to meet the needs of colonialism and apartheid” (p. 9) can continue unabated. Similarly, Asher (2009) focuses on the reality that various elements of the South African education system (educational systems, curriculum, and teaching, for instance) continue to be shaped in context-specific ways by colonial legacies. It is in this sense of education, similar to the view of wa Thiong’o (1986), that those who have been colonised, are “persuaded to think and feel that their ‘backward’ knowledge cannot make any meaningful contribution to the modern world and as such their knowledge should be discarded at the altar of ‘enlightened’ colonisers” (Hlatshwayo et al., 2020, p. 120). This Western domination of knowledge during colonialism was accompanied by those “misconceptions of [the colonised] understanding and perception of the world” (Hlatshwayo et al., 2020, p. 120).

Central to this view and to this research is the understanding that “English was the official vehicle and the magic formula for colonial elitedom” (wa Thiong’o, 1986, p. 12) and that the South African education system was robbed of the “ideas, skills, creativity, originality, talent and knowledge” (Mgqwashu, 2016, p. 2) of those marginalised during colonialism and apartheid. Mahabeer (2020) comments on this by reiterating that schooling systems during colonialism and apartheid were primarily “suppressive, abusive and inflicted generational damage” (p. 101) on indigenous people and that the Western monopoly of knowledge has distorted all definitions of knowledge (Hall & Tandon, 2017, p. 12). Jansen and Walters (2022) see this as the colonisers ensuring that all aspects of knowledge are still “mostly produced, engaged, and understood through the languages of the empire” (p. 5). As such, wa Thiong’o (1986) confirms that language is not merely a tool of communication, but a carrier of the empire’s culture, memory and identity. The implication of this is the loss of local indigenous identity and represents a deeper form of cultural domination: “the domination of the mental universe of the colonised” (wa Thiong’o, 1986, p.16).

2.2 Decolonisation and Decoloniality

Decolonisation as a term and construct dates to the 1960s (Chaka et al., 2017). The authors contextualise the term, proposing that it is about the consciousness and focuses

on the “rejection of values, norms, customs and world views imposed by the colonisers” (p. 89). Similarly, some academics frame and depict the role of decolonisation as “oppositional, conflictual and dialectical relationship with colonialism” (Chaka et al., 2017, p. 211) but the understanding has changed over time: it has moved from the political to the economic and settled on the epistemological (Mamdani, 2016, p.79). Decolonisation, as suggested by von Bismarck (2012), is fundamentally one of the most important historical developments of the 20th century and must be understood as part of the process of self-ownership as “the struggles of decolonisation are about the struggle to repossess, to take back” (Fanon, in Mbembe, 2015, p. 12).

The focus of decolonisation of the curriculum, therefore, must be understood within the context of the teachers’ perceptions as it is viewed that our current system or “traditional school curriculums teach knowledge, values, and beliefs that support colonisation” (Mahabeer, 2020, p. 98). Essentially, this term, decolonisation, cannot be seen as a once-off event, but rather “as [an] ongoing process of seeing ourselves clearly, emerging out of a state of either blindness or dizziness” (wa Thiong’o, in Mbembe, 2015, p. 15). One of the issues that arises from this study is that there is “open-ended” and, as a result, highly debated and contested understanding of what decolonisation is (Jansen & Walters, 2022). Asher (2009) focuses on Freire’s *process of conscientization,* which allows teachers and students to resist the impact of colonialism and “offers ways of (re)claiming self and voice, place and history, as we work to connect across differences of race, nation, and culture in the twenty-first century” (p. 69).

Similarly, Mbembe (2015) shows that the role of decolonisation is to “undo the racist legacies of the past” (p. 8), but Mahabeer (2020) proposes that the focus on schools is still to “mould learners for a Westernised way of life” (p. 97). Therefore, it is suggested that, before change can occur, educationalists need to understand the controlling forces. This process, according to Fanon, in Tuck and Yang (2012), will never take place “unnoticed [as] colonialism and its decolonisation implicates and unsettles everyone” (p. 7). Part of this research, therefore, was to determine to what extent the comment of Mgqwashu (2016) is correct that before the content can be replaced, the concept of decolonisation must be understood. Language (in this case, English), carries the culture to those who are taught it. It is, according to wa Thiong’o (1986), primarily through “orature and literature [and] the entire body of values” (p. 16) that infiltration of the mind takes places.

Accordingly, Mgqwashu (2016) focuses on the role of decolonisation as part of the process where academics (particularly in universities, which was the focus of his study) "are trying to rid South Africa's [educational spaces] of the procedures, values, norms, practices, thinking, beliefs and choices that mark anything non-European and not white as inferior" (p. 1). It is interesting to note, as such, that post-colonial studies suggest that the reform which took place post-independence in many countries developed in two specific waves: "the first wave was about access – Africanization – and the second about institutional reform" (Mamdani, 2016, p. 71); most of the focus "entails decentring European knowledge and recentring African knowledge" (Chaka et al., 2017, p. 211). Jansen (1998) agrees with this view and adds that, through this process of decentring and recentring, there will be a focus on the Africanisation of knowledge. This process of educational reform must involve the critical evaluation of not only *what* is taught but also *how* and in *what language* it is taught. The Africanisation of knowledge involves more than inserting African content into a Western framework, but rather it demands a transformation of the epistemological foundations of the curriculum itself (wa Thiong'o, 1986).

Similarly, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) reiterates the view that content which is not representative of diversity produces "Africans who are socialised into hating the Africa that produced them" (p. 11), and that "schools […] are sites for the reproduction of coloniality" (p. 11). The author focuses our attention on the three premises of decoloniality that apply to this research. Continued coloniality, through the content that is taught in the classroom, is a concept of *power*. He also defines this as an "epistemological and political movement" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 485). The two zones, one of being and the other of non-being, link directly to the theory of critical diversity literacy (CDL), where members of a society are given an assumed status according to their race and are either expected to be tolerated or to assimilate into the dominant culture. The second concept associated with coloniality is that of *knowledge*. The knowledge used to educate South Africans needs to be examined for its origins. The creator of knowledge ('who') and for what purpose ('why') is central to understanding how best to assist with the decoloniality of the South African curriculum. The third concept is the coloniality of *being*. The concept of whiteness, as coloniser, compared to the concept of blackness, as colonised, needs careful restructuring to ensure that knowledge and "African humanity [is questioned] as well as the processes that contributed towards 'objectification'/'thingification'/'commodification' of Africans" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 12). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) also highlights

Quijano's four levels of coloniality as control of: economy, authority, gender and sexuality, knowledge, and subjectivity (p. 487), all which link to the power dynamic. Higgs (2012) emphasises that decolonisation is about Africa asserting its sense of self by being able to establish its own identity within the context of the African continent.

Therefore, decoloniality as a process through which educators must pass, must involve a restructuring "of history [and] of humanity and knowledge" (Higgs, 2012, p. 15). Ultimately, Higgs (2012) postulates that, until this restructuring takes place and there is a power-sharing process, the continued Western "ideology of cultural superiority" (p. 1) will be perpetuated. This power-sharing process, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), can best be seen through the view of wa Thiong'o (1986) of "moving the centre" (p. 17) as a decolonised curriculum does not focus on the Westernised perception of knowledge, but rather recentres and "foregrounds African identities and world views" (Mgqwashu, 2016, p. 3).

The impact of decolonisation is best summarised by Johnson et al. (2024), as they distinguish between decolonisation and decoloniality in that

> the latter points to the importance of discovering the persistent presence of doubts in the humanity of Black people and colonial patterns of power, in that decolonisation "did not succeed in removing coloniality" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, pp.11–12) from society nor from the university. (p. 2)

Subsequently, the decolonisation of the curriculum must be understood within the context of perceptions. As such, Mgqwashu (2016) argues that, before the content of the curriculum can be decolonised, the concept itself must be understood. The author posits that decolonisation and transformation are often used interchangeably and that decolonisation is often viewed as "an attack on white academics by black academics" (Mgqwashu, 2016, p. 2) rather than as a foregrounding of "African identities and world views" (Mgqwashu, 2016, p. 3). Von Bismarck (2012) underpins this view and suggests metaphorically that true decolonisation is more than the raising of a national flag replacing the colonial one nor is it a total eradication of imperial symbols of domination. As such, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) explores the concept of decolonisation as "the withdrawal of direct colonialism from the colonies as well as the struggles raged against those empires" (p. 13) as the true African identity became "an inverted mirror or Western Eurocentric identity" (Higgs, 2012, p. 2). Similarly, Higgs (2012) argues that, through decolonisation

there needs to be the establishment of an “African identity in education theory and practice” (p. 3) where independence from colonial rule is about “people’s struggle to claim their own space, their right to name the world for themselves, rather than be named through the colour-tinted glass of the Europeans” (wa Thiong’o, in Higgs, 2012, p. 2). There is an acknowledgement that the original production of accepted knowledge is disproportionately represented between former colonial powers and their former colonies: the impact of this is that “indigenous knowledge is marginalised, ignored, and even suppressed” (Jansen & Walters, 2022, p. 5).

The aim, therefore, of decolonisation, is to undo the impact of colonialism and to reshape the previous imbalances. Lebeloane (2017) suggests that part of this is about reinstating “the dignity, equity and social justice in people whose norms and values as well as their nature, reasoning, sensing and views of life” (p. 2) were violently removed through colonialism and its agenda. Equally, Asher (2009) also adds to the understanding that decolonisation is not a sudden movement but rather an “ongoing, recursive, self-reflexive process” that Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) eloquently pins as “provincializing Europe [and] deprovincializing Africa [by means of] epistemological decolonisation” (p. 18). In comparison, Mamdani (2016) sees this epistemological dimension of decolonisation as focused on those areas which are used to *make* and *unmake* and “is intimately tied to our notions of what is human, what is particular and what is universal” (p. 79).

Subsequently, it must be noted that the decolonisation of a country (or, by extension, a school) does not remove coloniality. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) defines coloniality as a power structure and “colonial matrices of power that continue to exist in the minds, lives, languages, dreams, imaginations, and epistemologies of modern subjects in Africa and the entire global South” (p. 11). This leads to a focus on curriculum theory as part of this research as it is important to include the role of identity as part of decolonisation. As the proponent of curriculum theory, Pinar (2008) suggests that “identity [includes] investigations of what it means educationally to be conceived by others” (p. 29). The understanding of the ‘self’ compared to the ‘other’ is critical in showing the impact of content selection in the curriculum. Our own identities are directly linked to how we are in the world and, consequently, the way that we perceive ourselves can also be linked to the way content presents our identities, which is a foremost consideration when selecting literature texts (Pinar, 2008). Vitally, stemming from each institution is the embedded curriculum defined by the context and culture of the institutions (Jansen & Walters, 2022).

While some might view decolonisation as the total removal of Western thought and ideology from institutions such as schools, others might suggest that we need to consider how best to prepare ourselves on the African continent for global participation (albeit at the behest of global standards of participation) (Jansen & Walters, 2022). As a result, the historical inheritance of division between the rich West and the poor colonised regions continues to call into question the ability of the African continent to maintain economic and political relevance and viability. Babou (2010) suggests that part of this is the continued rise of nationalism and its removal of colonial influence but, there "can never be such a thing as a clean slate when it comes to decolonisation [as] history cannot be reversed, it can only evolve" (von Bismarck, 2012, p. 2). This evolution corresponds with the views proposed by Jansen and Walters (2022), who suggest that, for many activists, decolonisation is about radical changes to undo the colonial past and its inherited curriculum and a rejection of any sense of accommodation within the curriculum.

Jansen and Walters (2022), in their discussion on the definition of decolonisation, remind us of the difficulties experienced by academics during the 2015 movements across South Africa. They highlight that, in the South African context during this time, the call for decolonisation raised awareness and some alarm because there were no "clear and defined meanings for decolonization [but the academics tried] to take on the task of finding some anchors for the term" (Jansen & Walters, 2022, p. 93). The findings were grouped into the different threads across their research: *decolonisation as additive inclusive content* and *decolonisation as Africanisation*. These threads are consistent with the researcher's understanding of the term decolonisation and are reflected in this study. The decolonisation of the curriculum, according to wa Thiong'o, is a radical reorientation that involves challenging whose knowledge is validated, whose stories are told, and whose voices are heard. Wa Thiong'o (1986) insists that linguistic and cultural liberation must be central to any genuine transformation of the curriculum and educational leadership practice.

2.3 Transformation and Diversity

Hlatshwayo et al. (2020) argue that, after 1994, there was meant to be a movement of epistemological transformation that was a reorientation "away from the colonial and apartheid knowledge [where] curriculum was used as a tool of exclusion" (p. 121). This movement towards transformation and diversity was complicated by ambiguous levels of understanding. Enslin and Pendlebury (1998) suggest that it is an "open- textured

concepts, understood in different ways by different people" (p. 261). Webstock and Fisher (2016) suggest that, during early discussions on transformation and diversity, the idea of transformation was primarily associated with "demographic changes in student and staff complements" (p. 23) but there is now clearly a further dimension to the concepts. The ongoing divergence in understanding of what diversity means is linked to the notions of culture and tradition (Enslin & Pendlebury, 1998; Reygan & Steyn, 2017). Maringe (2017) suggests that transformation should imply a "complete and radical change, in which the original ideal or process becomes unrecognisable, and the new creation serves new purposes" (p. 2).

Carim, in Enslin and Pendlebury (1998), agrees and suggests that transformation would require a critical anti-racist approach towards education, while Meier and Hartnell (2009), show that there is still a lack of consciousness in terms of how schools are organised in terms of teaching and learning and that this lack of consciousness often has a direct impact on learners, identity and, ultimately, transformation. Vambe (2005) underpins this, indicating that the decisions made by educators might perpetuate the lack of openness and transformation. The belief that education is part of the empowerment process within South Africa is central to understanding that stakeholders can "absorb, organise, disseminate and evaluate educational programmes at the levels of both content and its forms" (Vambe, 2005, p. 286). Reygan and Steyn (2017), as part of this empowerment process, suggest that there needs to be a direct approach in preparing all stakeholders to "engage competently with issues of oppression, discrimination and diversity" (p. 69).

One of the main factors that form part of transformation and diversity is the need for new approaches to the idea of education that "engage in a nuanced way with issues of power, privilege and difference" (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 69). The reference to content is important because the selection of texts and the stakeholders' ability to engage with its selection is central to understanding how attitudes and values are perpetuated. The openness of education, as described by Vambe (2005), focuses on "whose knowledge gets delivered, legitimised and delegitimised" (p. 286) through the selection of content. In essence, the person selecting the content is said to have power in the relationship. Their development of the curriculum is influenced by their own understanding of what is acceptable and relevant and what is not. Vambe (2005) also posits that true transformation of education can be defined further "by the extent to which would-be learners are involved in conceiving and formulating new policies and injecting new content in the syllabi" (p.

290) This power dynamic is fundamental to understanding the role of assimilation and integration in schools. However, the formation of policy at national level and its implementation at institutional level is problematic. Historically, schools perpetuated the homogenous society in which they found themselves, especially during colonialism and apartheid, but they have suddenly "undergone a rapid demographic transformation" (Holme et al., 2014, p. 36). The differences that exist from the theory to the practice are integral in understanding how schools assimilate instead of integrating.

While curriculum theory, as proposed by Pinar (2008), suggests positively that content selection is indicative of "what we choose to remember about our past, what we believe about the present [and] what we hope for the future" (p. 20), any potential change is restricted by who is doing the selection. The decolonisation of the curriculum and its Africanisation, according to Vambe (2005), "within a context of openness in education has to do with empowerment through equity" (p. 289), while introducing a new way of doing things and "discarding discriminatory content" (p. 289).

Further to this, Meier and Hartnell (2009) concentrate their study on the role of culturally diverse schools in South Africa. The diversity of schools is a complex situation, as Meier and Hartnell (2009) propose that teachers need to "recognise the validity of differences of their [students and their] own personal and of institutional ideologies and perceptions" (p.180). Similarly, the institutional culture of South African schools is still in question. The content of the curriculum and the perception of knowledge (particularly whose knowledge is conveyed) is primarily part of the narrative of decolonisation. Jansen, in Meier and Hartnell (2009), asks us to question how learners (particularly those of colour) integrate into former white schools.

The test, according to Jansen, in Meier and Hartnell (2009), is to what extent "black and white learners feel at home within the institution" (p. 186). It is generally accepted that black learners in white schools are expected to "assimilate and adopt the existing ethos of the dominant culture" (Meier & Hartnell, 2009, p. 187). This would also apply to adopting the perceptions of oneself as identified in the literature texts read. One cannot underestimate the impact of feeling at home within the institution where one is expected to learn. Other than Grade 12, where the content to be taught is set externally and assessed by a final exit examination, the school governing bodies "dictate the pace, content and direction of change" (Meier & Hartnell, 2009, p. 184). The content to be taught will reflect the beliefs and values of the dominant voices in the schools. As such, the

content selected will reflect the biases, prejudices, and generalisations of the same voices since the “curriculum only provides educators with guidelines and outcomes [and does not] prescribe […] what content ought to be used nor the ways in which the lessons should be designed” (Meier & Hartnell, 2009, p. 186). Transformation and diversity are therefore constrained and complicated by issues such as “age, gender, ethnicity and class structures” (Vambe, 2005, 286) of the people selecting the content to be taught.

Vambe (2005) also links this to the understanding that true transformation in education could refer to “what choices are given to the learner in any system of education” (p. 285). The analysis of privileged versus disadvantaged schools could show a significant difference in how educators “cater for the rich cultural diversity in the classroom” (Vambe, 2005, p. 186) and to what extent the practice of content selection results in curriculum biases. Part of the issue is the lack of prescription which continues to create real challenges in attempting to diversify content in the classroom (Reygan & Steyn, 2017).

Consequently, Meier and Hartnell (2009) explore how one group (whether economic or ethnic) “is favoured over another and the bias becomes explicit when excluded groups are called on to respond as though they were included” (p. 186). The attitude towards the decolonisation of content is also based on perceptions and standards. While Jansen, in Meier and Hartnell (2009), comments on the perception of competence and incompetence between white and black teachers, it is suggested that the same perception can be extrapolated to the use of literature texts taught in schools. Vambe (2005) suggests, as part of the process, that there should be a clear communication and openness that focuses on the “adoption of measures to encourage widespread access to and participation in education” (p. 285). Meier and Hartnell (2009), however, call for a quick and steady transformation of the entire curriculum.

The primary issue that stems from this call, ironically, is identifying the “philosophical, epistemological and pedagogical underpinnings of diversity in education in South Africa” (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 68). While the keywords in the South African transformational educational space are suggested to be democracy and equality, “their deployment in apparently shared principles and slogans cannot guarantee consensus on the substance of policy” (Enslin & Pendlebury, 1998, p. 264).

2.4 Curriculum and Curriculum Theory

Education systems are influenced profoundly by legal frameworks, as shown in the South African example. The South African curriculum, influenced by the South African Constitution, foregrounds the principles of "social justice, human rights and inclusion which point generally to the importance of diversity but are not proscriptive in this regard" (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 72). Jansen and Walters (2022) reiterate the legal parameters and remind us that the "curriculum is made up of the laws, regulations, procedures, and assumptions that govern what is taught in [classrooms]" (p. 7). As such, Pinar's (2008) work on curriculum theory adds an additional theoretical underpinning to this research. He defines curriculum theory as the "study of education experience" (Pinar, 2008, p. 2) and, importantly, how this adds to the understanding of the teachers of the selection of texts chosen to be studied by their students.

Similarly, Mgqwashu (2016) defines the educational experience as something that "encompasses the attitudes, values, dispositions and world views that get learned, unlearned, re-learned, re-formed, deconstructed and reconstructed" (p. 1) in an educational space. It is important to note that, while Pinar's focuses primarily on the students' experiences, this research will question how the teachers' perceptions are accounted for. Understanding the role of the curriculum in the practical implementation stage of the classroom must start first with the attempt to understand the curriculum's "overall significance […] focusing on interdisciplinary themes – such as gender or multiculturalism […] as well as the relations among the curriculum, the individual, society, and history" (Pinar, 2008, p. 21). The significance of the development of the curriculum highlights our understanding of what Jansen and Walters (2022) refer to as the *settled curriculum*. There needs to be an understanding that the *settled curriculum* is reinforced in the sense that "long-established knowledge agreements are embedded in relations with powerful actors and processes in the name of compliance" (Jansen & Walters, 2022, p 9).

As such, the process of understanding curriculum theory will question to what extent "education [has] value for society and the 'self' and that education must engage and extend the interests of the students" (Pinar, 2008, p. 16). The primary dilemma that comes into play in the South African context is when the one group's interests are put ahead of the voices of other students. Kelly (2004), similarly, suggests that the "school curriculum has ceased to evolve [and that] the politicization of education" (p. xv) has implications for the designing of an effective curriculum. Pinar (2008) likens this to teachers losing control of the curriculum and being instructed by politicians "as domestic workers […] to clean up

the mess" (p. xi). The South African context is characterised by a history of conflict based on differences (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 79). In the process of understanding curriculum theory and its impact on schools, this study investigates the choices that each department makes, both collectively and individually, and the reasoning behind their decision-making processes.

This increased focus on understanding the choices behind the curriculum as well as an increased focus on diversity and social justice will mean that teachers are engaging with "habits of feeling and thinking that are determined by broad, discursive habits" (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 79); alternatively, they are choosing not to engage constructively. Reygan and Steyn (2017) also remind us that the process in South Africa "of Africanising, diversifying and removing white privilege from curricula, textbooks and teacher training is still unfolding" (p. 70) and is perhaps still in its stages of infancy. Mgqwashu (2016) shows us that there is a sense in which transformation, diversity, or the decolonisation of the curriculum has "come to mean replacing texts by scholars and writers who are white or European with work done by those who are neither" (p. 2). But Lebakeng et al. (2006) show an understanding that, while it may still be unfolding and deconstructing Eurocentric knowledge, "Africanisation should not be construed as an absolute rejection of the influence of European thinking on African scholarship but rather as a rejection of assumed European intellectual hegemony" (p. 77). Jansen and Walters (2022) highlight the notion of the *institutional curriculum* which goes beyond the mere content of subjects but rather reveals the inherent focus on the "laws, regulations, procedures, and assumptions that govern what is taught" (Jansen & Walters, 2022, p. 7). It is through this understanding that we must also acknowledge the impact of introducing changes to the status quo of the curriculum. Jansen and Walters (2022) refer to the introduction of changes as a disruptive idea as it threatens what is already in place in the *institutional and settled curriculum* – this is further developed and referred to as the *intruder curriculum.*

Johnson et al. (2024) posit that the *intruder curriculum,* in this instance, is an important contributor:

> Recentring Africa and developing an Afrocentric education in which Africa is not an extension of the West but pivots from its own culture, knowledge, and institutional form—a mindset that is humanising and deeply transformative against decolonisation and its pervasive and infused power patterns of superiority and inferiority hierarchy—derived from a political and

> economic period of the “colonial matrix of power” (Magnolol, 2009, quoted in Christie & McKinney 2017, 4). (p. 1)

Subsequently, Mahabeer (2020) suggests that addressing issues of marginalisation, socioeconomic inequities, and social injustices through decolonising the curriculum is not a new phenomenon. This will be discussed in further detail in relation to the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) and the decisions of the departments. Departments (or teachers) often lack the knowledge and confidence about curriculum development and diversity and, as a result, will often sidestep the issue (Rhamie et al., 2012), choosing to maintain the status quo or deferring the selection of texts to others, or alternatively, teaching the texts which were taught to them at school – often Eurocentric.

As such, it is important to note the distinction between the ideas associated with the term ‘curriculum’. Kelly (2004) in support of Pinar (2008), reminds us that the theorists use the term ‘curriculum’ for various understandings of the components of teaching and learning. He reinforces this idea by justifying ‘curriculum’ in *educational* terms. In a democratic society, like South Africa, Kelly (2004) states that “an educational curriculum […] should be concerned to provide liberating experiences [and should focus] on freedom and independence of thought” (p.3). In addition, educational curriculum is geared towards an understanding and “acceptance of opinion, and of the enrichment of the life of every individual in that society, regardless of class, race and creed” (p.3).

As a result of this, Kelly (2004) focuses our attention on the idea of the total curriculum’, which reduces people’s understanding of the term to a focus merely on the syllabus. This, in turn, “limits their planning to a consideration of the content or the body of knowledge they wish to transmit” (p.4), since teachers, or leaders, are not able to extend their thinking beyond this. This again does not equate with an adequate understanding of the curriculum and its impact on teaching and learning. Pinar (2008) adds that “information is not knowledge” (p. xiii). He infers, similarly to Kelly (2004), that schools should plan a curriculum in its entirety and that what is offered by the school and received by the students should “not simply be a collection of separate subjects” (Kelly, 2004, p. 4), but rather a well-thought out and designed plan. It is at this point that the leaders of schools should consider their understanding of decolonisation and consider how it affects all subjects collectively, because those “who produce knowledge are those with the social power to lend legitimacy to knowledge’ (Jansen & Walters, 2022, p. 4).

As such, the ‘hidden’ curriculum is closely linked with the ‘total’ and ‘educational’ curriculum. The ‘hidden’ curriculum, while discounted by some educationalists as secondary to the ‘content’, is suggested by Kelly (2004) as being equally important in the planning process. Kelly (2004) reminds us that in any pursuit of *knowledge* and its arrangements, there will be implicit “attitudes and values of those who create them, and these will be communicated to pupils” (2004, p.5). In this context, the teacher is an important part of the curriculum, particularly when it centres around decolonisation. This is keenly observable when considering the selection of literature texts. As a result, there is often a disjunct between the ‘planned’ and the ‘received’ curriculum and confirms the complexity of *praxis* in designing and implementing the curriculum.

Moreover, the ‘null’ curriculum interjects an interesting concept in the discussion about the decolonisation of the curriculum as it refers to the “options students are not afforded, the perspectives they may never know about, much less be able to use, the concepts and skills that are not part of their intellectual repertoire” (Chaka et al., 2017, p. 214). This concept reminds us that a curriculum can be used to control people, even by the content that they are not given. The application of this concept in the selection of literary texts is vital. If, as suggested by Hlatshwayo et al. (2020), the curriculum can free generations and can “invoke race without ever having to name it” (Meier & Hartnell, 2009, p. 184), then it is possible to use the curriculum to include or exclude. The curriculum is clearly a part of the social justice education process where the selection of texts can be interrogated regarding “issues of inclusion and exclusion […] as well as the manner in which inequalities, power and privilege are perpetuated in and through schooling” (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 70) and what students read as part of the syllabus. The curriculum, or *institutional curriculum* has its own set of rules and that which is considered acceptable as teachable knowledge (Jansen & Walters, 2022).

Consequently, Kelly (2004) attempts to isolate a central understanding of what a ‘curriculum’ is by suggesting four elements of educational planning and practice. The definition he suggests for curriculum is:

> the intentions of the planners, the procedures adopted for the implementation of those intentions, the actual experiences of the pupils resulting from the teachers’ direct attempts to carry out their or the planners’ intentions, and the ‘hidden’ learning that occurs as a by-product of the organization of the curriculum, and indeed, of the school (p. 8).

In summary, Kelly (2004) contends that 'curriculum' is the "totality of the experiences the pupil has as a result of the provision made" (p. 8). As such, it is suggested that three ideologies are prevalent when debating the curriculum and each will be discussed in detail. This is underpinned by the short answer of Pinar (2008) to the question of what the curriculum is: he describes curriculum theory as "the interdisciplinary study of educational experience [that is situated in] a unique history, a complex present, an uncertain future" (p. 2).

In the South African context, the selection of literature texts certainly reflects the ideas of history, the present and the future. Mgqwashu (2016) adds to this, suggesting that Pinar's (2008) educational experience implies "more than just the topics covered in a course" (p. 1) and can be inferred from the literature texts taught.

By contrast, there are some who still consider curriculum and syllabus to be synonymous, and that decisions about content selection to be the starting point of designing a curriculum, and that education is linked to developing a child's understanding of that content. Lebeloane (2017) suggests that, as a starting point for decolonisation in any country, the focus should be on the school curriculum. Pinar (2008) bases his thinking on the ideal that all involved in the educational process must "discover and articulate […] the educational significance of the school subjects for self and society in the ever-changing historical moment" (p. 16), while Kelly (2004) refers to this understanding of knowledge as "emancipatory".

This begins the interrogation of the first ideology associated with curriculum studies: curriculum as content and education as transmission. There is also an assumption that certain kinds of knowledge will "promote […] forms of development or that exposure to certain kinds of knowledge will do so for all pupils" (Kelly, 2004, p. 46). As a result, Kelly (2004) reminds us that the problem lies in the definition of *knowledge* and that "what is important is not merely *what* knowledge we present *via* our curricular but also, and more so, *how* we present it" (2008, p. 47). Smith (2008) also comments on the understanding of what knowledge is and suggests that, while in the process of indigenising colonial spaces, the concept of knowledge and what counts as knowledge, as language, as literature, and as curriculum, has been fraught, because knowledge is never impartial. The curriculum and the knowledge within have "origins, nature, purposes, and consequences" (Jansen & Walters, 2022, p. 4).

Within a democratic curriculum, as previously stipulated, it is essential that the base of the knowledge be *emancipatory knowledge*. Kelly (2004) highlights that this focus on knowledge is derived from a "desire to be free from those constraints on human reason – constraints of authority, ignorance, custom, tradition and the like – which impede the freedom of individuals to determine their purposes and actions on the basis of their own rational reflections" (p. 48). Kelly (2004) suggests that using this as the basis for curriculum planning, even in a democratic society, will lead to "the stratification of society, to elitism, to disaffection and alienation of those who find themselves in the lower strata" (p. 48), especially if this knowledge is used for "emphasis on test scores on standardized examinations" (Pinar, 2008, p. 16). Another cause for concern, especially in a multi-cultural educational environment, is the use of education practices for cultural transmission. This aspect of education focuses on the induction of children by means of "socialization or acculturation [towards a] common cultural heritage" (Kelly, 2004, p. 48).

As such, the planning of the curriculum around the term 'culture' proves problematic when no single identification of the central culture is available or is "based on too narrow a concept of culture" (Kelly, 2004, p. 51). One of the major flaws in this debate is that it ignores the recipients of the curriculum, the children. Nor does it consider the teachers who are central to the process of transmission and selection of content: the impact of the content taught is not considered significantly. Pinar (2008) poignantly highlights the impact of this when he suggests that the "school curriculum communicates what we choose to remember about our past, what we believe about our present, what we hope for the future" (p. 20). This must be extrapolated to the selection of the literature texts taught. As such, Pinar (2008) states that the curriculum cannot be discussed in isolation as it needs to be "situated historically, socially and autobiographically" (p. 20). Often, within their understanding of the curriculum, educators attempt to implement equity-minded reform programmes, but they are often considered "superficial responses that fail to challenge patterns of privilege, resulting in inequitable and divisive school environments" (Holme et al., 2014, p. 38), and fail to re-position indigenous peoples adequately (Smith, 2008).

The second ideology critiqued by the studies of Kelly (2004), is the focus on the curriculum as product and education as instrumental. The intention in the development of this model focuses the design of the curriculum on the 'aims and objectives' as the starting point and tends to superimpose a "business metaphor [where] curriculum producers offer

something to curriculum consumers" (Pinar, 2008, p. 24). The conflict that arises out of this attempt to control the curriculum is that teachers are often excluded from the process of creating the curriculum. This results in their attempting to become "skilful implementers of others' objectives, something like an academic version of the postal service, delivering other people's mail" (Pinar, 2008, p. 210). The effective transmission of the curriculum was the primary role that teachers had – there was no professional buy-in, according to Pinar (2008, p. 210). Similarly, Kelly (2004) suggests that one of the issues was the reduction of education to a merely scientific process "analogous to the processes of industry" (p. 60).

Further to this, Kelly (2004) highlights the inadequacy of the aims and objectives model in that it views all processes within education as linear. The underlying problem with this view is that while it might be acceptable to break down "all learning into a step-by-step procedure, it is not suitable for most of the learning that goes on in schools [as] real learning is developmental rather than linear" (Kelly, 2004, p. 64). Kelly (2004) reiterates this by showing us that while we may suggest that the "transmission of knowledge-content may be linear processes; the development of understanding is not" (Kelly, 2004, p. 64), and that schools are tending to become a "school-and-knowledge factory (or corporation)" (Pinar, 2008, p. 3). Pinar (2008) continues his criticism as he suggests that, in a post-industrial economy, "intelligence is viewed as a means to an end; the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and attitudes utilizable in the corporate sector" (p. 28).

Ultimately, one of the proponents, according to Pinar (2008), and Kelly (2004), that stem from dissatisfaction in the centrality of curriculum development is the creation of school-based curriculum development programmes that give agency to members of the immediate community. While their respective research is based in the United States of America and the United Kingdom, the concepts will be of interest to this research as the field of study deals with Grades 8 to 11, which are not bound by external examinations. Equally, as part of the school-based curriculum development, Meier and Hartnell (2009) refer to the way in which the South African Schools Act (SASA) allows schools to define their community or corporate identity and "give[s] parents the rights to define and protect their own linguistic orientation" (p. 184). This, unfortunately, as Lebeloane (2017) rightly highlights that, unless the matters are addressed, schools will continue to serve as "laboratories in which social injustices such as class, gender, language and racial inequality [are] inculcated, tested, implemented and perpetuated" (p. 2). Mahabeer

(2020) counters this view, suggesting that, as formal sites of education, “school classrooms are ideally positioned to bring about social change” (p. 100) if properly guided and directed by school leaders who understand the changes that are required. Wa Thiong’o (1986) reminds us that, through this process, the physical violence that was once evident on the battlefield, was replaced by the psychological violence that now takes place in the classroom.

Kelly (2004) suggests that the notion of school-based curriculum development is underpinned by various principles that apply to this research. A primary condition for the successful implementation of school-based curriculum development is the acknowledgement of “a large measure of freedom for both teacher and learning [for the] curricular provision to be fully educational” (p. 115). In addition, Reygan and Steyn (2017) speculate that, for social justice education to be successful, it should be “contextual and premised on an understanding of issues of privilege and power” (p. 71). Pinar’s view (2008) that curriculum theory “articulates the educational experience of teachers and students as lived” (2008, p. 25) permeates in Kelly’s view (2004) that school-based curriculum development should consider schools “as a social institution which must be responsive to its own environment” (p. 115).

The final principle that is deemed essential in the successful implementation of school-based curriculum development is that teachers (individual or the staff as a whole) “should accept a research and development role in respect of the curriculum, modifying, adapting and developing it to suit the needs of individual pupils and a particular environment” (Kelly, 2004, p. 115) or the lived experience through an analysis of one’s “experience of the past and fantasies of the future in order to understand more fully, with more complexity and subtlety, one’s submergence in the present” (Pinar, 2004, p. 4). As such, for teachers to decolonise the curriculum it would imply that they understand the role of knowledge and are willing to “interrogate this knowledge and its relation to power” (Mahabeer, 2020, p. 98) in order to restore knowledge and dignity to indigenous people. This builds successfully one of the central concerns of the South African curriculum, according to Kumar (2010), which is to educate people to be democratic citizens who demonstrate the capacity to deliberate as free and equal citizens” (p. 13) and, as explored by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), this knowledge and epistemic freedom associated with it is primarily “about the right to think, theorise, interpret the world, develop own methodologies and write from where one is located and unencumbered by Eurocentrism” (p. 17).

Indeed, curriculum theory, as one of the conceptual elements of this research is vital in understanding the impact of content selection as part of the English curriculum in schools. While content selection is merely one aspect of the full curriculum, we need to understand that students' experiences are based on their interaction with the curriculum. The curriculum itself, as developed by educators, is symbolic of their own identities and backgrounds (Pinar, 2004). By understanding the impact of the lived experience in the development of the curriculum, Pinar (2004) suggests that it is potentially viable to "foster students' intellectual development, and students' capacities for critical thinking" (p. 21) by connecting their lived experiences to academic knowledge. A proponent of this process would include the unpacking of power, privilege and difference, as dictated by the curriculum, reinforced by learning materials, and constantly perpetuated by teacher training and the final impact on classroom pedagogy (Reygan & Steyn, 2017).

The changes in the South African curriculum since 1994 have been considered as exemplary. There is progression from Curriculum 2005 to the culmination of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which attempts to transform the "curriculum bequeathed to us by apartheid" (Foreword, Department of Basic Education, 2011). A central intention in the creation of the CAPS document is the replacement of "Subject Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines in Grade R-12" (DBE, 2011, p. 3). Primary to this research is the assumption that content specific guidelines are not provided to English departments other than at Grade 12 level. While reading and viewing are promoted as primary outcomes of the CAPS document, generic instructions to teachers exist in terms of the selection of literary texts and that learners should develop proficiency in an unspecified "wide range of literary and non-literary texts" (DBE, 2011, p. 10).

In addition, the CAPS document encourages the reading of literature texts to teach learners about the nuances associated with the Home Language (in this case, English). The CAPS document acknowledges that the "teaching of literature is never easy, but it is impossible without personal, thoughtful, and honest interpretations and comments from the learners themselves" (DBE, 2011, p. 12). Similarly, the role of the teacher is considered important in assisting the learner with the interpretation of the text. While the curriculum is affected by the political intention and vision of the government, it seems that the lack of clarity in the case of literature text selection continues to "reproduce social class divisions" (Harley & Wedekind, in Chisholm, 2004, p. 213). It seems that the

reproduction of the past is being perpetuated through the lack of development of the various policy documents (Lebeloane, 2017; Mahabeer, 2020). Lebeloane (2017) qualifies this by stating that the current curriculum prepares students for “leading western lives in a continent that is not western by nature” (p. 1).

Lebeloane (2017) also focuses on the view that current South African educational policies “do little or nothing to address decolonisation for equity and social justice” (p. 3). This damning view, unfortunately, is also highlighted by then National Minister of Education, Angie Motshekga, who suggested that the DBE had not settled on final definition of decolonisation, since it was more “than just changing content in the curriculum [as] it was a new way of thinking and doing things and must start with the decolonisation of the mind” (Maqhina, 2016, p. 1).

It has been suggested that content created through an African lens is often considered to be less significant or less revered than classical Western texts. Similarly, the use of academic standards within schools is considered a reasonable justification for the exclusion of certain texts from schools because those texts might be considered less academic than their Eurocentric counterparts. Jansen (1998) highlights the importance of the curriculum content selection as it implies choice, but the questions raised are about who, where and under what conditions this choice is made. Letseka (2013) shows that the call for Africanisation of knowledge is “neither an advocacy to be anti-West, nor is it discouragement to learn from the West [but] rather an encouragement to learn from the West, but in a selective and constructive manner” (p. 15).

One of the complexities that arise from this is that, when the identity of black learners is not reflected in the content that is taught, the learners “deny and reject their racial and cultural identities” (Meier & Hartnell, 2009, p. 187). This shift in their attitude towards assimilation within the white culture of the school leads them to “behaving and ridicul[ing] and reject[ing] that which they regard as black and therefore inferior” (Meier & Hartnell, 2009, p. 188). There are instances when schools force learners to abide by rules and regulations, which act as forms of discrimination, and this is done under the guise of assimilation because ‘they’ want to attend that specific school (Meier & Hartnell, 2009). There is a distinct complexity in identity negotiation within power relations based on race. The dominant identity makes the decisions associated with the selection of content. Kelly (2004) acknowledges that there need to be criteria associated with the selection of knowledge for inclusion in the curriculum. As such, Kelly (2004) posits that “values [are]

central to educational planning" (p. 28).

In addition, Rhamie et al. (2012) comment on the experiences of students from diverse backgrounds and focus on the various and complex issues associated with "identity, values and belonging in the school context" (p. 175) and how various groups perceived themselves and others through learning about other cultures. Their study, although British, can be generalised to the South African context. The focus on the diversity within the curriculum shows that teachers did not feel prepared to address issues of transformation through the content that they were asked to teach. Jansen and Walters (2022) also refer to this lack of understanding of decolonisation and refer to the first response from academics in their study: the academics' first response when asked about decolonisation was "what does this even mean?" (Jansen & Walters, 2022, p. 62). Often, according to Rhamie et al. (2012), the lack of confidence felt by teachers and the lack of knowledge about the content meant that teachers often ignored the issues and side-stepped them. Meier and Hartnell (2009), and Steyn and Vanyoro (2023), support this and remind us, that teachers in their respective subject fields, have been socialised by various factors including their own teacher training, experiences in and outside of the classroom, and their own personal responses to all the former – it is not a one-size-fits-all scenario, but rather an understanding of intersectionality before attempting to implement changes.

One of the focus elements of the curriculum studied show the importance of citizenship. Similarly, the South African curriculum offers the CAPS document as a means for learners to "express their identity" (DBE, 2011, p. 8) and participate as citizens in a free society. Ultimately, this is being done to undo the colonial context of the former educational objectives. Hinde (2004) cautions that many reform efforts are targeted at superficial elements associated with schooling. Unfortunately, these reform efforts "disregard the values, beliefs, behaviours, rules, products, signs and symbols which serve as the foundation of the school – the culture" (Hinde, 2004, p. 10). The problem with this view in the South African educational landscape is that the culture of the school is not easily identifiable and is often in conflict with the reform strategies. In the South African context, in many schools, the content taught is a "product of selection bias and the unequal distribution of knowledge and power" (Jansen & Walters, 2022, p. 6).

2.5 Zone of Mediation

Le Grange (2016) focuses on Chilisa's five phases of decolonisation of a curriculum

(rediscovery and recovery, mourning, dreaming, commitment, and action) but, in the view of the researcher, they need to be considered in conjunction with the zone of mediation concept, as theorised by Oakes et al. (2105), who found that, unless change strategies sought to "achieve parity in opportunity and achievement across diverse groups of students" (p. 1), their efforts would be incomplete.

The various zones of mediation set the parameters of "policy, behaviour, beliefs and actions in schools" (Oakes et al., 2005, p. 289). As such, these zones of mediation, as determined by this research, suggest that schools create zones of tolerance (zones of mediation) within which schools will allow change. The subordinate groups are only 'allowed' to make changes in these zones. One of the primary elements of equity-reform programmes is that "community support, resistance, or apathy play an important role in change" (Oakes et al., 2005, p. 282). Oakes et al. (2005) constructed the view that schools need to see themselves situated, obviously, as part of a larger zone of mediation. Schools as *mediating institutions* are situated within locally constructive zones of normative and political mediation (Oakes et al., 2005) and it has been seen that any equity-minded reform will be substantially affected by "global, societal, regional, local and individual norms and politics concerning race, gender, sexual orientation, language and socio-economic status" (Oakes et al., 2005, p. 284).

South African schools, therefore, as mediating institutions, need to be understood in terms of their location within society. Their location is constructed by "structures, ideologies and politics" (Oakes et al., 2005, p. 289). These forces can both impact and limit schools and are "perpetually active inside the school as well" (p. 289). The zone of mediation framework suggests that the best way to understand how these forces impact and operate in schools is to "view school systems as mediating institutions and individual schools as sites of interaction within their mediating institutions" (Oakes et al., 2005, p. 289). In their research, Holme et al. (2014) use this framework to consider "the technical dynamics (structures and practices), normative dynamics (beliefs and ideologies) and political dynamics (power and politics)" (p. 40) in relation to various equity-minded reforms.

The research referred to is fundamental to this study as it theorises to what extent schools (inclusive of all stakeholders: leaders, teachers, learners, parents, community) will 'allow' change to take place in the various areas that require transformation and diversity. These schools, as mediating institutions within a zone of mediation, "depend on the perception

or standpoint of different persons [and as a result] the one changes with time and with identity and place" (Oakes et al., 2005, p. 294). How willing to move out of their comfort zones, to allow for decolonisation of literature texts, are English departments? Forces shaping their decisions may not lie entirely within their direct realm of influence – the reality is that legislative and judicial forces may be evident.

In addition, interest groups, parents, and the educators themselves are forces that may impact the successful implementation of reforms (Holme et al., 2014, p. 39). The research done by Oakes et al. (2005) suggests that reforms which seek to advantage a particular group will not necessarily be successful. As part of this research the various zones of mediation in each school were identified and to what level or zone each school was willing to accept or allow change. As a result, mediating institutions within a zone of mediation might perpetuate and reproduce the "status quo of power and privilege among racial and social class groups" (Oakes et al., 2005, p. 292), especially when proposals for change or reforms (like decolonisation of the English curriculum) fall outside of the zone of mediation (Holme t al., 2014, p. 39). The relevance of the zone of mediation is highlighted by Johnson et al. (2024) in the context of transformation at tertiary institutions, in that

> change happens when those involved identify issues and express their demands for social justice. In other words, our inferred understanding of the change theory was that all stakeholders within the university had to drive social change, and our role was to support that process (p. 4)

The question that Hinde (2004) raises in this moment is how best to 're-culture' schools as it is clear that "the culture of schools either frustrates or facilitates changes" (p. 2). It is within this framework that the role of critical diversity literacy (CDL) was also examined in re-culturing, since schools, "can and do function as sites of social change by challenging the reproduction of inequality" (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 70).

2.6 Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL)

The view of critical diversity literacy (CDL), as defined by Steyn (2011), asks us to consider ways in which institutions perceive and respond to various social, political, and economic structures as elements of oppression. In addition, CDL encourages and offers "opportunities for conscious and active engagement with the process of decolonising classroom content and practice" (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 80). The focus of CDL in this

research highlights the principles of “intersectionality, social identities and positioning, historical awareness, diversity vocabulary, the coded nature of hegemonic power and personal engagement” (Steyn & Vanyoro, 2023, p. 1). These underpin this research and link directly with how institutions consider the impact of the actions from a social perspective.

Steyn’s (2011) work shows how understanding intersectionality acts as part of the conscientisation process. Part of this understanding is a discovery of the level or depth to which each institution understands and accepts the change that they are implementing. Like Freire, Reygan and Steyn (2017) suggest that the role of teachers and learners is vital to “interrupt the transmission of old, outdated and oppressive ideologies and forms of knowledge” (p. 71) with the intention that it can be replaced with “new, more egalitarian forms of knowledge” (p. 71). It is within this framework that CDL is important to understanding the role of both teachers and learners in decolonising the curriculum. Steyn and Vanyoro (2023), while highlighting the importance of all the stakeholders in developing a curriculum, also reiterate how each stakeholder’s lived experiences and realities are created not by a single, but rather by multiple axes of difference (Steyn & Vanyoro, 2023, p. 5). It is this intersectionality which impacts the choices made when developing the curriculum.

Interestingly, some of the issues that have arisen in the work associated with transformation and diversity in South African schools is the lack of understanding of the terms needed to make fully comprehensive changes. CDL, according to Reygan and Steyn (2017), attempts to address the various weaknesses in approaches to how schools diversify and transform. They suggest that part of the problem associated with former attempts at diversification is a “lack of critique of power and privilege, an overly reductive focus on one or two forms of diversity to the exclusion of others and the essentialising view of diversity” (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 75). As such, CDL focuses on multiple ways in which diversity can be understood in social settings. They suggest an approach to intersectionality, to power, privilege and difference that goes beyond race (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 74).

A framework offered by CDL asks us to look through various lenses to understand the role of power, privilege and difference including, but not limited to “race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, language and (dis)ability” (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 74). The use of this framework in understanding how to decolonise the curriculum will provide

educators, according to Reygan and Steyn (2017), with an analytical orientation. The analytical framework involves an engagement with what Reygan and Steyn (2017) refer to as thematic hooks. Like the zone of mediation framework, these hooks allow for educators to understand and locate themselves and their institutions in the discussions about decolonisation and to make effective and strategic changes.

The thematic hooks are summarised as: “understanding of the past, ideologies around change, apportioning of responsibility and the conception of difference” (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 1). An interrogation of these thematic hooks by educators, as suggested by the authors, will create a critical consciousness among educators that may result in their becoming socially just, as required by government policy (Reygan & Steyn, 2017). Mahabeer (2020) aligns with this view, in that schools require adaptive teachers who are capable change agents in being “connected with the realities of their learners and their contexts” (p. 102). Meier and Hartnell (2009), however, argue that educators have their own perceptions and attitudes, which are formed “by their personal experiences and professional education” (p. 187). This compounds the reasoning for engaging with CDL in school situations as the framework allows for schools to “identify, challenge and change hegemonic systems and processes of power that perpetuate oppression and dominion in social organisations [like schools]” (Steyn et al., 2018, p. 4).

In addition to the thematic hooks presented by Reygan and Steyn (2017), Steyn et al. (2018) reiterate the principles laid out by the CDL framework. These principles are vital for understanding how the framework is best used to confront the issues surrounding diversity in schools since they serve as important pillars for teachers to use for personal and professional development as they continue to “interrogate historical relationships of power, authenticate diversities in different contexts, and remain open to inconsistencies and confront tensions and pedagogies” (Mahabeer, 2020, p. 104). The principles associated with CDL, as discussed by Steyn et al. (2018) are:

> that power is the difference that makes a difference, social location matters, oppressive structures overlap and intersect, oppression exists in the present, social identities are learned, discursive choices matter, hegemonic structures must be decoded, culture has material effects (and vice versa), emotions are integral to difference hierarchies, and the result is social justice (p. 6).

By locating the CDL framework as part of the research into decolonisation of the curriculum, it is assumed that it will offer (for both educators and learners) an opportunity to "engage confidently with multiple forms of difference both in schools and in society more broadly" (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 75). By engaging in these discussions about these issues of diversity, Mahabeer (2020) suggests that it might be possible to address injustices of the past and seek "dignity for the indigenised [by creating] a cross pollination of ideas [through the encouragement of] a renegotiation between the Westernised and Eurocentric knowledge systems, and indigenous values and indigenous knowledge systems" (p. 103) and, ultimately, the decolonisation of the curriculum. This cannot be done, however, if there is not sufficient buy-in from the various educational stakeholders who make the primary decisions in the school space. While it is understood that these decisions are not made in a vacuum, decisions made by school leaders have long-lasting effects for all involved.

2.7 Leadership in Schools

The role of School Management Teams (SMTs), including principals, staff involved with Transformation and Diversity committees, and Heads of English, pre- and post-1994, is very different. Lewin et al. in November et al. (2003, p. 786), suggest that the role of pre-1994 principals was limited and that they acted as "state functionaries with limited autonomy" (2003, p. 786). The roles of the post-1994 school leaders contrast with this. They are expected to "expand their schools' capacities to learn democratic values by creating learning communities [where they] are expected to initiate, facilitate and implement change with regard to democratic school practices" (p. 786).

In addition, Vambe (2005) focuses on how teachers need to be trained and retrained "for new roles, transforming the content of education and encouraging the creation of the learner [and teacher] who is a critical thinker" (p. 291). There is often a disjunct between those who create policies and those who implement them: the educators are often left out of the process of creating the policy. It must be understood that "educator perceptions, attitudes and personal experiences [are more often than not] at odds with the experiences of their learners who come from a different background in class, religion, gender and culture" (Meier & Hartnell, 2009, p. 187) Unfortunately, while this view is central to equity-minded programmes like decolonisation of the curriculum, it is also evident that leadership structures in schools can either make or break the systems of change envisaged (Hinde, 2004). Hinde (2004), focusing on Fullan and Hargreaves, also

suggests that, in addition to “key staff [not being] committed” or perhaps “too controlling” (p. 8), there are also conflicts that arise and inhibit the change processes. It is felt by the researcher that, while these areas of conflict are important, they need to be managed and directed by the educational leaders within the schools. Fullan and Hargreaves, in Hinde (2004), suggest that, when change is poorly conceptualised or too broad, ambitious, fast, or too poorly resourced, it will not succeed. Similarly, if there is no long- term commitment to the change or it is opposed by key figures, such as parents, then it too will fail. Unfortunately, these issues surrounding change programmes in schools need to be understood within the framework of decolonisation of the English curriculum in schools, since the change cannot be pursued in isolation, or it is assumed that it will fail (Hinde, 2004).

Central to this research lies the psychosocial approach to school development, as proposed by Davidoff et al. (2014). Their seminal work suggests that the concepts of *leadership* and *management* are distinctive and that both leaders and managers can “push and direct, wait and listen, notice, move, contain, break through, sense the moment… and rest” (2014, p. 61). As such, the emphasis of this research is directed at how *change* is influenced by those in positions of authority. It is understood that, while South Africa has developed progressive educational policies since 1994, policy is not practice. Meier and Hartnell (2009) remind us that the country still has a long way “to go to make ideals concrete and achievable within educational institutions” (p. 180), which will be implemented by the educators in those institutions. Enslin and Pendlebury (1998) support this view and consider that, at times, even those policies that are well intentioned could inadvertently sabotage the willingness to change if they do not consider all aspects of the teacher’s interactions. In addition, this research attempts to define which aspects need to be addressed in the independent schools and how these school leaders *conceptualise, mediate,* and *manage* transformation and diversity through decolonisation, and ultimately, through their selection of literature texts. These independent schools need to acknowledge the sociopolitical “nature of the change process and the need to alter past assumptions and beliefs” (Oakes et al*.,* 2005, p. 282) if effective policies are to be created and implemented. Schools are certainly guided by national policy and, as such, the policies all call for “educators in all subject areas [to develop] schools that are safe, caring, supportive and non-discriminatory” (Reygan & Steyn, 2017, p. 79).

In order to decolonise the curriculum, leadership plays a crucial role in striking a balance between systemic and cultural change based on moral principles and visionary reform. The process of curricular decolonisation necessitates a rethinking of the educational purpose beyond administrative efficiency, which makes leadership essential (Bush-2008). The inherited colonial curriculum must give way to a paradigm that respects indigenous knowledge and restores epistemic dignity in order to achieve decolonisation, as previously mentioned (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Lebeloane, 2017). Bush's (2008) difference between management and leadership, according to which management upholds systems while leadership motivates change, captures the conflict between traditional methods and visionary aspirations that is evident in the South African setting (Meier & Hartnell, 2009; Jansen & Walters, 2022). However, vision needs to be backed up by logical frameworks (Bush, 2008, p. 2), which is similar to the necessity of systemic cultural change related to Zones of Mediation and Critical Diversity Literacy (Oakes et al., 2005; Steyn & Vanyoro, 2023). Furthermore, Bush's (2008) focus on moral and cultural leadership emphasises the need for ethically based change, which aligns with the larger claim that decolonisation is as much about reclaiming humanity and identity as it is about curriculum reform (wa Thiong'o, 1986; Mahabeer, 2020).

As mentioned above, leadership in curriculum decolonisation goes beyond selecting content and involves a fundamental rethinking of the relationships, institutions, and goals of education. English and Heilbronn (2024) contend that "educators are called upon to find ways to support the next generation, recognising that students today... are confronted in their daily lives with the damage caused by previous generations" (p. 156). This echoes the previous focus on destroying the epistemic violence as outlined by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) and wa Thiong'o (1986). However, in order to achieve genuine change, institutional underpinnings must be addressed; otherwise, "attention is paid to the institutional structures and processes which control the university, only superficial changes will be made" (English & Heilbronn, 2024, p. 160). In light of Zones of Mediation (Oakes et al., 2005), this emphasises the necessity for school administrators to address the underlying organisational and cultural structures that uphold colonialism in addition to curriculum reform at the surface level. Moreover, Mahabeer (2020) asserts that schools are crucial locations for opposing colonial narratives, and educational leaders must enable educators to "alter long-standing dehumanising practices" (p. 159). Encouraging students to "see themselves in the curriculum" (p. 159) is a key component of this leadership duty. This idea

is closely related to the arguments for Critical Diversity Literacy (Steyn & Vanyoro, 2023) and the necessity of an inclusive, affirming pedagogy.

Lastly, the claim made by English and Heilbronn (2024) that decolonisation is linked to "fostering imagination" (p. 156) strengthens the idea that leadership needs to encourage a positive rethinking of education by eschewing limited Eurocentric epistemologies in favour of "diverse cultural ways of knowing and theorising" (p. 157). A deliberate shift away from old colonial patterns towards epistemic justice and human dignity is therefore necessary for decolonisation leadership, which is profoundly moral, systematic, and creative.

Shahjahan et al. (2021) provide a useful comparative viewpoint that extends our knowledge of curriculum decolonisation outside of South Africa. Their assessment emphasises that decolonisation can occur in a variety of ways, ranging from the surface-level incorporation of diverse content to the more profound rupture of structural and epistemological underpinnings. The idea that leadership must spearhead both curricular reform and broader institutional transformation is further supported by this, as is the previous discussion of the contentious and dynamic nature of decolonisation (Jansen & Walters, 2022). Effective leadership, then, entails fostering epistemic disruption, questioning established norms, and establishing the frameworks that support change across time. According to Shahjahan et al. (2021), decolonisation forces people to face both intellectual and emotional challenges, which is consistent with the requirement for leadership that is morally sound and sensitive to the lived reality of employees and students (English & Heilbronn, 2024; Bush, 2008). According to their approach, leadership must foster a critical global consciousness that acknowledges the colonial legacies still present in educational institutions, even as decolonisation must be locally relevant.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Rallis (2018) reminds us that conceptual frameworks are centred around “the researcher’s personal experience and viewpoints, existing information and knowledge of the phenomenon under study and the relevant theoretical positions regarding the

phenomenon" (p. 2). These three elements, when combined, are developed into a conceptual framework that "functions as an integrated system that discloses these perspectives, illustrates interrelationships, and establishes boundaries" (Rallis, 2018, p. 2). My research encompasses the curriculum theory of Pinar (2008), critical diversity literacy (Steyn, 2011) and the zone of mediation of Oakes et al. (2005). Both curriculum theory and critical diversity theory are impacted by the zone of mediation that influences schools, and the importance of understanding the process of transformation and diversity when applied to the decolonisation of literature texts. The intention in this research is to consider, as its primary focus, the role that the zone of mediation plays in the decision-making processes of school leaders when decolonising. The process of developing this combined conceptual framework uses inductive and deductive reasoning. As such, this research will move from general observations to specific conclusions within the context of each school and, similarly, from specific observations to general explanations in relation to the focus of this study.

3.2 Zone of Mediation

Oakes et al. (2005) originally developed the zone of mediation framework to explore internal and external factors that affected education change. The framework suggested that schools were situations "within locally constructed 'zones' of normative and political mediation that embody larger cultural patterns" (p.283). They posited that, within these zones, external forces shape the interactions of the various stakeholders and the change policies that would be accepted. These external forces act as potential boundaries between the creation and implementation of policy, unless there are active attempts to shift the power hierarchies within the school's community. In addition, each school is situated within its own zone of mediation and is directly affected by technical, normative, and political elements.

In understanding this, Hopkins et al. (2021) highlight the importance of the technical elements as they include the structures and practices within each school. One aspect within the technical element is the adoption of a curriculum or changes therein. It is also important to draw attention to the normative and political elements of the framework. Oakes et al. (2005) include the influence of beliefs and ideologies within the normative element. It is within this element that many school leaders are influenced by socially constructed beliefs that might influence potential changes. Understanding the socially constructed beliefs of school leaders is pivotal in shifting the views of communities and

requires responsive leadership for change to occur. The final element is the political element within the zone of mediation framework. This element includes the "power relations and the extent to which those in power are able to facilitate change" (Oakes et al., 2005, p. 283). Power relationships in independent schools are complex and varied and, when considered, could reveal how schools succeed or fail when trying to implement change.

Building on prior work examining the zone of mediation framework, my research will consider how two schools consider the technical, normative, and political responses within their communities. In addition, I will consider the *zone of tolerance,* as posited by Oakes et al. (2005). This zone is vital to understanding changes to be made in any school community. The *zone of tolerance*, as defined by Oakes et al. (2005), is "the area within which a local community will allow policy to be changed and developed" (2005, p.287). Similarly, Charters, in Oakes et al. (2005), introduces us to the *margin of tolerance,* which consists of the values held in high regard by communities within boundaries. Should school leaders attempt to make changes that conflict with this zone of tolerance or the margin of tolerance, then the community might not be willing to engage or accept the change. The *zone of indifference,* as suggested by Barnard, in Oakes et al. (2005), reviews changes in policy that are accepted without question since they fall within the zone of tolerance.

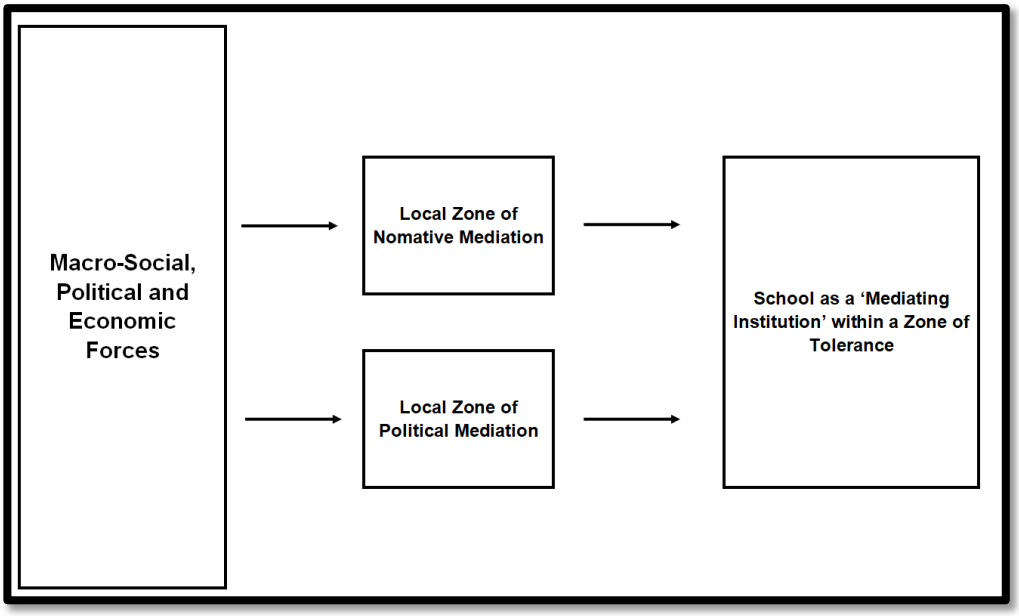


Figure 1: Zone of Mediation

(Adapted from Oakes et al., 2005)

3.3 Conclusion

The concepts mentioned in the conceptual framework, when combined, create a complete overview of my research. Each concept is important, but when linked to decolonisation, and the selection of literature texts as part of a transformation and diversity process, it creates a clearer understanding of the processes that schools undertake to implement effective change. The conceptual framework, when applied to the two schools in this study, will reveal how current conditions affect potential changes with regard to the selection of literature texts for the purpose of decolonisation.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This section will discuss the advantages of using a small-scale, case study-based, qualitative research design process. The range of data collected is limited to two collection sites and is based on a specific case study – all independent high schools in Johannesburg. The use of semi-structured interviews, involving Senior Management Team (SMT) members and Heads of English departments who are involved directly in the selection of texts at the schools allows for the investigation into the *conceptualising, mediating,* and *managing* of transformation and diversity in the selection of literature texts. The section closes with the consideration of ethical issues, which are particularly pertinent given the nature of the research. In addition, my study used a qualitative methodology through a postmodern paradigm which considered how school leaders considered decolonisation of literature texts taught in their respective schools. This study considered how each of the leaders, through their own narratives, interpreted the concept of decolonisation and the impact on their choices in defining internal school policies. There was cause to include a consideration of curriculum theory and critical diversity literacy; however, these aspects of the study were secondary to the impact of the zone of mediation. The data collected through the interviews and the analysis of each school's academic, and transformation and diversity policies were considered comparatively, to ascertain the impact of the policies on the leaders' choices of texts but also to what extent the policies were created intentionally to allow for decolonisation.

4.2 Research Paradigm

Mehta and Ninnes (2003) ask us to consider that research done through the lens of postmodernism is concerned with the inter-related aspects associated with truth, knowledge, and power. As such, it can be assumed that postmodernism is, in part, concerned with how individualism is constructed through identity and subjectivity. This implies that "postmodern thinkers are concerned with analysing the ways in which power and truth operate to constitute individuals as subjects" (Mehta & Ninnes, 2003, p. 248).

This is central to understanding how school leaders interpret decolonisation and the impact that their narratives have on their creation of internal school policies. Because this is the focus of this study, it was assumed that a postmodernist paradigm was the best to

utilise. This is particularly so because each narrative is unique, and each leader might have a different understanding of decolonisation and the best route for implementation.

4.3 Research Methodology

A qualitative approach, focusing on a small-scale case study, has been chosen for the purposes of this research study. Although the term *qualitative research* embraces several methodologies, the main understanding of this research design is focused on qualitative research as a methodology that is "concerned with understanding the processes and the social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns" (Maree, 2007, p. 51), with a particular focus on the *why* questions of research. What follows is an outline of the broad qualitative framework that includes the analysis of the perspective of structuralism which is fused with the understanding and contextualising of the proposed case study in question.

Structuralism has its focus on the systems (structures) within a particular society and the relationship between its parts (subsystems) in relation to the whole (Maree, 2007, p. 61). As part of this research into the selection of texts, an in-depth understanding of how policies form part of a structural perspective reveals how "parts relate to the larger whole [and that] no part in a particular system has any significance in and of itself – its identity is defined in terms of its relationship to all other parts in the system" (Maree, 2007, p. 61). The role of the decolonisation of literature texts policy, therefore, forms part of a greater structural system within independent schools. As a researcher of critical theory and postmodernism, I acknowledge that people can move beyond the confines of structure, but it is essential to observe that their ability is "constrained by various forms of social, cultural and political domination" (Maree, 2007, p. 62).

In addition to this approach, the second focus of this research design is that of the case study. Bromley, in Maree (2007), states that case study research is a "systematic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon within its real-life context" (Maree, 2007, p. 75). Maree (2007) also suggests that case studies include a multidimensional approach to the analysis required of data. The researcher considers all the voices involved in the specific situation and this allows for the researcher to obtain a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved. The focus of this study is one issue that is fundamental to understanding the whole environment without any manipulation of the situation being studied. Case study research, according

to Maree (2007), is “incapable of providing a generalising conclusion” (Maree, 2007, p. 76) and, while it is important to note that the findings of this single, case study-based research cannot be used to make generalisations about the functions of decolonisation of literature texts in other independent schools, one does need to consider that what might sound familiar, since a natural generalisation in a particular context could be relevant in other contexts.

4.4 Research Population and Sampling

According to Maree (2007, p. 79), sampling “refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for study”. Furthermore, the process of determining which sample group to use is done with the explicit purpose of “obtaining the richest possible source of information to answer the research questions” (Maree, 2007, p. 79). Maree (2007) suggests that the three commonly used methods of beginner researchers are *stratified purposive sampling*, *criterion sampling* and *snowball sampling.*

The sampling procedure used in this research is *stratified purposive sampling.* The sample is chosen according to pre-selected criteria that are relevant to the research question. In this research only those members of the SMT and English departments involved directly in the selection of texts were interviewed. The study took purposeful sampling from two independent schools in Johannesburg. Each school is an active member of ISASA, and each principal is a forerunner in understanding the role of transformation and diversity in the current South African school environment. These two independent schools were purposefully selected because they offered contrasting organisational cultures (e.g., religious versus non-religious orientation, single sex versus co-educational), leadership structures, and transformation approaches.

The two schools are discussed accordingly:

- School A is a girls-only school founded in 1888 by the Anglican Church, with approximately 600 students enrolled from Grade 000 to Grade 12. The school is deliberate about its connection to the Anglican Church and considers itself a Christian school. The English department consists of seven full-time teachers of whom one is male. Of the seven teachers, only one female member of the department is of colour. There is a full-time member of staff committed to the transformation and diversity portfolio at

the school. This member of staff does not teach in the English department.

- School B is a co-educational school with approximately 700 students from Grade 000 to Grade 12. Founded in 1907, the school was originally a girls-only school, but in 1968 School B became co-educational. The school does not align with any religion and is active in promoting itself with the IEB and another international curriculum. The English department consists of six full-time teachers of whom three are male. There are no members of colour in the department. There is a member of staff who runs the transformation and diversity portfolio within the school, but she is not an English teacher.

4.5 Data Generation Methods

Data were collected using three processes: interviews with members of the SMT and English departments, analysis of documentation (the transformation and diversity policy and academic policy of the schools), and an analysis of the texts taught by each school in 2022.

Ball (1994) suggests that leadership structures are always set within a framework "of possibilities and constraints derived from education policy and from the political and economic context of education" (p. 85). The selection of data from the SMT and English departments in question was done on the understanding that all stakeholders are bound by the schools' academic teaching policies. The order of the interviews was significant. The interviews started with the procedural and technical questions directed at the staff responsible for transformation and diversity and then followed by interviewing the Heads of English. All members were interviewed independently so that their responses were not limited or dictated by others in the interview process.

4.5.1 Open-ended and Semi-structured Interviews

The process of interviewing the relevant participants was important. As previously mentioned, these interviews were done independently of other participants. The impact of interviewing (and recording them) was so that I could gain insight into the respective participants' attitudes and behaviours. In addition, their preferences for texts could also be interrogated as part of the process. My use of an open-ended interview was essential in gaining insightful comments from the participants. Nieuwenhuis, in Maree (2007), highlights the importance of the conversational aspect of the open-ended interview. The

focus was on this aspect of the interviews to ensure that the leaders being interviewed were comfortable and allowed for in-depth answers as clarity was sought on the points they made. Nieuwenhuis (2007) reminds us that the focus of this style of interview is important as it allows the interviewer to highlight the perceptions and views regarding the phenomenon being studied. The open-ended and semi-structured approach is preferable to the structured interview as overly structured interviews can inhibit probing for clarity, which is important for my understanding the views and perceptions of those being interviewed. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Scheduling was generally straightforward; however, minor delays were encountered due to participants' school-related commitments. Participants were generally open, although some expressed initial hesitation discussing sensitive topics such as transformation and race. Careful building of rapport and assurance of confidentiality facilitated honest and reflective discussions.

Open-ended and semi-structured interviews have the following strengths and weaknesses:

Open-ended queries permit participants to provide detailed responses, resulting in a wealth of information with a high level of detail. Similarly, it was possible to modify and adapt queries based on the participant's responses, resulting in a more targeted and pertinent interview. This method facilitated a conversational flow, which made participants feel more at ease and receptive. The format permitted spontaneous follow- up inquiries to seek clarification or to delve more deeply into a topic. It is also important to note that open-ended interviews yielded unanticipated insights and enabled participants to introduce new ideas or themes that had not previously been considered.

In contrast, both interviewing the participants and analysing the resulting data can be time-consuming and the success of this method is frequently dependent on the interviewer's capacity to steer the conversation productively and to ensure that all topics are covered. Another consideration was that the content and direction of different interviews can vary substantially, making it more difficult to compare and analyse responses across participants. There was an awareness of this as the thematic coding of the interviews was undertaken, taking into consideration that open-ended responses can be difficult to categorise and analyse, particularly when there is a large volume of data.

4.5.2 Document Analysis

The selected schools each have relevant academic policy documentation but, as is evidenced by many institutions, there is often a disjunct between the intention or meaning of the policy documentation and its actual implementation. It is this process that forms a particularly important part of the research. The focus on the transformation and diversity documentation and how it impacts on the choice of literature texts is fundamental. Document analysis involved a thematic coding process, identifying references to diversity, decolonisation, language inclusivity, and text selection criteria. Policies were compared against actual English text lists to assess alignment between stated transformation goals and implemented curricular choices. This approach enabled triangulation of leaders' perceptions with institutional policies and practices, directly addressing the study's research questions.

4.5.3 Analysis of Selected Texts

The final aspect of the data collection is a listing and analysis of the literature texts being studied in each school at each level. The point of this analysis is to determine the level of implementation of the policy documentation and the intentions of the school leaderships. The analysis of the literature texts are a true indication of the extent of transformation and diversity at each research site. Triangulation was used by comparing data collected through interviews, policy documents, and analysis of taught texts. This cross-validation of data sources enhanced the reliability and validity of findings by identifying consistencies and discrepancies between institutional policies, leadership narratives, and curricular practice. Additionally, reflexivity was maintained throughout the process, acknowledging the researcher's positionality as an English teacher within the independent school sector.

4.5.4 Data Analysis

The researcher recorded all interviews and then did a word-for-word transcription of the recordings. These transcriptions served as the premise for the data analysis, in which common themes were identified and coded across interviews. In addition to interviews, the published academic policies (if available) and the list of taught texts for 2022 were considered. Differences in opinion or interpretation between members of the SMT and Heads of English, as well as possible differences in opinion between the levels of participation in the selection of various texts, were noted. In addition, data consistencies and discrepancies between the interviews and published academic policies were analysed. As the researcher is himself an English teacher, he understood the processes and had a rapport of trust with all participants, which had been established prior to the

research process and accounted was for in the analysis of the interview transcripts.

In Maree (2007), Nieuwenhuis emphasises the significance of categorising various types of collected data by the assignment of a code or label to commonly held segments, as stated by him. These code identifiers serve as a guide for the researcher to interpret the meaning of the content within the context of the research. The investigation utilised a qualitative exploratory case study with inductive reasoning of two independent schools. (Vithal & Jansen, 2008) The purpose of an inductive data analysis was to comprehend the collected data through the interviews conducted.

In accordance with the work of Vithal and Jansen (2008), and Creswell and Creswell (2018), the data analysis procedure followed consisted of four primary stages, which included the following:

(i) Prepare and organise the data;

(ii) Initiate the coding process;

(iii) Formulate categories/themes as a result of coding; and

(iv) Represent the data according to categories/themes.

i) **Prepare and organise the data**

Interviews and document analysis were utilised to gather unprocessed data. This unprocessed data were then prepared for analysis by transcribing the interviews verbatim and sorting them by source. The subsequent step was to ensure that none of the transcripts contained “incomplete, inaccurate, inconsistent, and irrelevant data” (Vithal & Jansen, 2008, p.27). In addition, the data were evaluated for any apparent parallels.

ii) **Initiate the coding process**

The data were then coded, which entailed grouping singular and related concepts into categories (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997).

iii) **Formulate categories/themes because of coding**

These similarities, patterns, and apparent differences were grouped to form the main concepts of the data set (Vithal & Jansen, 2008). Subsequently, the focus shifted to the

main themes of the data, and this process was revised and redefined regularly.

iv) **Represent the data according to categories/themes**

The final aspect of the analysis consisted of representing the themes (and data) according to the descriptions and themes to produce “meaningful summaries of the large amounts of data” (Vithal & Jansen, 2008, p. 28).

4.6 Ethical Considerations

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997), ethical “principles [must] be considered throughout all phases of planning and data collection” (1993, p. 398). Ethical considerations, such as obtaining voluntary consent, protection from harm and assurance of privacy are discussed in the following sections.

4.6.1 Voluntary Informed Consent

Given that research conducted under the auspices of the University of the Witwatersrand needs to be both principled and professional, ethical clearance from the University Ethics Committee needed to be obtained prior to conducting the research. Consent Forms were sent out after written permission from the school principals was acquired. The School Management Team and Heads of Department consent forms were also distributed. It was stressed to all that participation in the research was completely voluntary and that, provided the researcher was told, withdrawal from the project could occur at any time without repercussions. Considering the small-scale aspect of the research, a 100% consent form return rate was expected and no research was conducted before all interested parties returned the participation form.

4.6.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality

To ensure and guarantee anonymity and confidentiality, participating members were given the option of using pseudonyms. The individual spelling of each chosen pseudonym was carefully checked with the participant upon return of the consent forms. Participants were reassured at the start of their interview that any identifying information relating either to themselves or to others, would be changed during the transcriptions process. If the name of a learner or staff member who was not participating in the research was mentioned, then these names were changed to generic terms such as ‘Learner A’ or ‘Teacher X’. Generic terms were chosen specifically, and were indicated on the transcripts as such, for

understanding of the conversation to be maintained successfully. Considering that no group interviews were scheduled, there was no concern about confidentiality in a group discussion scenario. Individual interviews ensure a greater level of confidentiality than that afforded by group discussions. The names of participants were also known only to the researcher.

4.6.3 Delimitations of the Study

There are various delimitations or characteristics that limited the scope and defined the boundaries of this study. The delimitations are those aspects that were under the control of the researcher. He, in conjunction with his supervisor, narrowed down the choice of objectives, the research questions, variables of interest, theoretical perspectives that were adopted and the sample group that was chose to be investigated. The primary delimitation was the chosen problem within the independent school sector as there were numerous aspects available to be studied. This was clearly defined in both the problem statement and the purpose and rationale of this proposal. The delimitations section is intended to show a detailed understanding of how the participants were chosen and their interest in participating in this study. The schools in question had all committed themselves to transform and diversify themselves through the creation of committees that oversee these aspects. The specific question is related to the selection of literature texts in high schools. As such, the various heads of the transformation and diversity committees and the heads of the various English departments were selected.

4.7 Limitations of the Study

There were numerous limitations (or potential weaknesses) to the study that needed to be overcome. These were, unfortunately, out of the control of the researcher. One of the obvious limitations is that the researcher is an English teacher and is known to the communities in the sample. As such, a deliberate decision was taken not to conduct research at his own school. Independent schools were chosen for convenience: they had been selected because the researcher was confident that he would be given permission to research their views. As such, this research could not be extrapolated or applied to a larger population of independent schools. Another limitation that certainly affected the study is time. The short duration of the study might have had different results if it had been conducted over a longer period notwithstanding the obvious delays caused by COVID-19 and the researcher’s continued school commitments. Similarly, the selection of texts

would have occurred before the study commenced and there might not have a true reflection of the process undergone by each department had the researcher not been able to observe the process. An additional limitation was that this study was not concerned with the learners' views on the selected texts. It is the belief of the researcher that this might be too cumbersome for the limits of this course and would, ideally, be an additional research topic. It is understood that these limitations were daunting, but the researcher felt confident that the findings of this research would act as an impetus for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

5.1 Introduction

Christie (2020) reminds us that the unravelling of the post-colonial schooling system does not have a blueprint. Despite this, an attempt was made to understand the main themes that have emerged from the semi-structured interview sessions with various leaders in School A and School B, as well as an analysis of both schools' policies which were accessed from their respective websites. The data were analysed in terms of the key themes drawn from the research aims and critical questions of the study: leaders' understandings of decolonisation, transformation, and diversity; curriculum, and content: text selection and literary merit; stakeholders' engagements and pressures; the impact of current events and movements; and training and expertise. This chapter is organised according to thematic analysis.

- Leaders' understandings of decolonisation, transformation, and diversity.
- Curriculum and content: text selection and literary merit.
- Stakeholders' engagement and pressures and the impact of current events and movements.
- Training and expertise.

The following people were interviewed in each school:

School A:

- Deputy Head of Academics (pseudonym, TO)
- Deputy Head of Transformation, Diversity and Pastoral Care (pseudonym, SI)
- Head of English department (pseudonym, TH)

School B:

- Head of Diversity (pseudonym, MU)

- Head of English department (pseudonym, CA)

In addition to these interviews, the literature taught (Appendix F) in each school and the following policies were reviewed:

School A:

- Anti-racism Policy.
- Christian Identity and Ethos Statement.
- Educational Philosophy.

School B:

- Curriculum and Philosophy for Children.

5.2 Leaders' Understandings of Decolonisation, Transformation and Diversity

Central to this study is an analysis of school leaders' understanding of decolonisation and, in addition, as suggested by Motala (2005). The definitions of transformation and diversity are also difficult to define without a specific reference point from which to work. Subsequently, Motala (2005) suggests that "transformation is called upon to evaluate post-apartheid progress in every realm of life and in areas on such varied subjects as […] institutional culture" (p8). The reflections of the school leaders on these terms proved valuable and varied as expected. It was clear in the interviews conducted that the teachers understood the context in which they were operating and aligned with the views of Dollie et al. (2020) that, without a deep knowledge of context, school curricula run the risk of veering off into a direction misunderstood.

School A is explicit in its commitment to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), citing its preamble as the starting point for School A's Educational Philosophy (Appendix C). As such, central to School A's philosophy, is its acknowledgement that the "institution [was] founded in a context which afford privilege" based on race. Similarly, School A acknowledges "the systematic impact of [their] colonial and apartheid past" and because of the apartheid policies many members of their community have been "hurt and marginalised". The leaders interviewed understood the enormity of defining decolonisation within the context of redefining the educational landscape in South Africa. As with the

theorists discussed previously, there was not one consistent definition, but it was evident that there are similarities in their understanding and perceptions. Each leader acknowledged that the term was not a simple, monolithic term but rather confirmed the multi-faceted nature of the concept that was subject to contextual interpretations and different understandings. The lack of consistent understanding of the vocabulary reiterates the call made by Steyn and Vanyoro (2023) for clarity of thought when addressing issues requiring transformation and change. What was revealed, however, was that the teachers in question wanted to be "autonomous thinkers and [wanted to] critically interrogate their own knowledge, beliefs and thinking" (Mahabeer, 2020, p. 115). TO was hyperbolic in her attempt to define decolonisation and suggested that "there are a million different interpretations of what decolonisation is", while MU described it as a "multivariate term and concept". MU was the most willing to commit to a definition of decolonisation. This was unsurprising to me as MU is the Head of Diversity at School B – her primary role at the school is creating training programmes for teachers in this field. MU declared that "decolonisation means changing the way you used to do things from the traditional and including people". She elaborated that this did not mean erasing Western or Eurocentric literature from the classroom, but rather including those authors who had previously been neglected based on race or gender. She suggested that this would include the changing of teaching methodologies. As with MU's view, SI suggested that decolonisation was about "looking at the literature from a different angle" and considering the future-child in the classroom, "how can we improve from what was there in the past?" TH was equally focused on the literature taught in her department and she suggested that leaders, when considering literature texts, should ask themselves, "who it was written by, how we interpret it today". When asked to give offer insight into why these questions were important, TH alluded to "institutionalised colonialism" which, she felt, is evident in South Africa and particularly in independent schools. When considering the importance of their understanding of decolonisation, TO and SI felt that any changes made in schools needed to be gradual and not a complete overhaul of the curriculum. TO referred to her school's consistent and annual reviewing of what is taught to ensure that change does occur. This response reflects the views advocated by Oakes et al. (2005) when they suggest that, for change to occur within any curriculum or policy, there needs to be compromise "between groups and individuals operating inside and outside a decentralized system of governing schools" (p. 290). Essentially, each teacher interviewed understood their roles as potential agents of change, as defined by Mahabeer

(2020), and they also understood that making “a case for a decolonised curriculum is not simply about discarding” [the old for the new] (p.103).

Unsurprisingly, all leaders interviewed felt the need to emphasise that an important part of decolonisation is the inclusion of marginalised voices. TO felt it proved particularly important to “look[ing] at the voices, that we have in our classrooms, and who’s heard, who’s read”. Equally passionately, MU proposed that “decolonisation […] means you keep what we have…but you then add what had been neglected”, alluding to allowing all voices to be included, especially marginalised perspectives. TO referenced this and believed that leaders needed to consider “who’s relegated to the margins” and therefore, excluded, instead of being given a platform in the curriculum. In addition, SI considered the inclusion of marginalised voices from a broader perspective in wanting to “improve from what was here in the past”. While TH did not explicitly refer to marginalised voices, she felt that teaching colonial texts (for instance, Shakespeare) needed to be done with caution to ensure that students understand how these texts might be “interpret[ted] today”. This comment hints at an understanding of marginalised voices being included in the classroom and understanding the context of the literature taught in schools. This understanding of curricular transformation requires a combined effort from entire school communities and can be “conceptualised concretely as a multidimensional project of inclusion” (Kessi et al., 2021, p. 6). This belief that whole-school communities are responsible for transformation and decolonisation shows teachers trying to understand what decolonisation means and how it can be implemented best in the classroom (Mahabeer, 2020).

When considering their perceptions of transformation, the leaders, much as in their discussion of diversity, were not unified in their definitions and understanding. It was interesting to note the similarities and differences in their responses.

All leaders understood the holistic approach required for transformation to take place in the education sector in South Africa. TO felt that transformation was about “looking at every aspect of – of what makes up your school”, suggesting that whole-school culture needed to be considered when schools were attempting to transform. MU reiterated this whole-school approach and suggested that “it involves, you know, changing not only the culture of an institution, but changing the rules, changing the policies”. Similarly, TH focused on “making sure that there is a space for everybody, and a space for everybody’s voice”. SI was the only leader to focus her attention on the curriculum and suggested that

engineering a specific curriculum that focused on transformation was key to success. She posited that transformation was “life of the school in general” and that part of that was looking at the curriculum. The theme of transformation being an ongoing process that needed regular attention was common across all interviews. All leaders felt the importance of reflecting regularly on policies and ensuring that all stakeholders were involved. It was interesting to note that race was not a consideration other than TO, who commented that the number of black students in schools does not truly reflect transformation. She suggested that leaders couldn’t say “we’re a transformed school because we’re now 70% black” but rather that true transformation was more nuanced than the demographics of the student body. It is interesting to note that, unlike School A, School B does not explicitly mention the Constitution of South Africa. Rather, many of its intentions in their Academic Curriculum – High School (Appendix D) allude to constitutional principles. School B makes it evident that their curricular focus is child-centred and “strives to provide excellent learning opportunities for all of [their] students”. School B focuses its attention on students’ mastery of subjects “but also aims to cultivate reflective students who have developed the skills to excel in all spheres, at school and beyond”. The Head of English from School B, CA focused his understanding of transformation around voice and commented that “transformation is about trying, wherever possible, an alternative view”. The researcher was interested in his use of the phrase “wherever possible” as it suggested that there were places in school where an “alternative view” would not be possible or, perhaps, welcomed. In contrast, TH did not limit the impact of transformation in the syllabus. She felt that transformation would be achieved when “the entire range of our – of our society and our community” is reflected. MU was the most optimistic in her reflection of the ongoing process of transformation as she felt that “we will one day reach a point where we do not even have to talk about these things”, suggesting that there would be an endpoint where transformation occurs naturally without consideration or thought. For transformation to occur in schools there needs to be a common approach and focus for school leaders. While the leaders interviewed were from two different schools, it was interesting to note that, even within schools, there were differences in approach. SI, TO and TH (School A) suggested differences in what they felt would be transformation in their respective school. TH urged the importance of marginalised voices and creating spaces for those who were previously marginalised by Eurocentric histories. TO was more specific in her analysis and suggested that the institutional culture was central to reframing schools. Her practical examples of the hymns

sung in chapel, the primary sports played in schools and who headed up the chapel band were examples of places where her school could transform. SI was focused on the broad aspects of transformation and suggested rethinking policies, the demographics of the student body, and teaching the curriculum. School A's Anti-racism Policy (Appendix A) reflected their views about marginalised voices as School A aims to be an institution where "individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted [and where] individuals empathise with each other and offer support". MU and CA (School B) also had different foci for their understanding of transformation in their school. CA (Head of English department) focused his attention on the teaching materials and the texts taught to move away from "the white, the old white male perspective" to ensure transformation. School B's academic philosophy (Appendix D) suggests that all members of their staff "are committed to improving their practice, [specifically] through carefully selected courses". The limitations of this comment are evident as it does not specify what the expectations are of teachers in terms of their selection of courses – merely an implied understanding of professionalism. School B does, however, mention that School B plays a "role in helping to develop local and international strategies to improve education". MU (Head of Diversity) rather interestingly described transformation as "diversity in action" and wanted a more focused approach on structural changes like the policies and rules – but there was no reflection on what these policies or rules were. Their perspectives and discussions about transformation and, by extension, decolonisation reflected the same thematic sentiments as expressed by Le Grange in Mahabeer (2020), who suggested that the decolonisation of the curriculum needed to be centred around four Rs: "relational accountability, respectful representation, reciprocal application and rights and regulations" (p. 104). It is interesting that each teacher interviewed understood a different aspect of Le Grange's views and, combined, they seemed to echo a desire for change. The teachers also reflected an understanding that "social power is largely maintained through such ideologies of 'us' versus 'them'" (Steyn & Vanyoro, 2023, p. 7) but there was no understanding of how to implement the changes.

It was interesting to note the similarities in the leaders' understanding of transformation and diversity. There was much repetition as they grappled to define diversity, having just defined transformation. Most of the leaders agreed that diversity was not only about race or gender, suggesting that it was more encompassing. TO focused on the idea of having a space for all: "it's about having a lot of different girls and a whole lot of different staff, and a whole lot of different parents". It was obvious that, while she was suggesting that

diversity was more than race and gender, her understanding of diversity was centred on race and gender, specifically. She also added that "just having the right faces on your website doesn't mean you're a transformed [or diverse] school". SI also suggested that it was more than merely race and gender and concluded that diversity was "in all directions". A common theme was the idea of dialogue to encourage diversity, again directly reinforcing School A's Anti-racism Policy (Appendix A). This policy is explicit in their school, that "awareness and education about racism and diversity will be integral to the teaching learning process", again highlighting the teachers' awareness of their school's policy and ensuring that it is implicit in their decision-making processes. While MU used the practical example of using school assemblies to bring diverse voices, CA focused on the use of literature and suggested that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's TED Talk, 'The Danger of a Single Story' (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg) was what drove his understanding of diversity. He felt that diversity was about ensuring that it was "not single stories being told in our classrooms". He did mention the student body's resistance to some attempts to introduce a different voice through a literary text. He felt that the students hated *The Dream House* by Craig Higginson, but it was interesting to consider their views on a white man writing a narrative that included a black character. They felt that Craig Higginson was not able to write from the black perspective. It is interesting to note School B's inclusion of *Master Harold and the Boys* by Athol Fugard in their Grade 11 scheme of work. Fugard's play has come under serious discussion among white English teachers in some schools. Because of Fugard's use of the 'k word' at the climax of the play, many teachers have refused to teach it out of fear of being labelled racist by their communities. This was also highlighted by TH (School A) who reflected on a teacher who "was tryna say how horrible the K word was. But by doing that, she used the K word" and faced significant backlash from their community.

CA continued to consider diversity and commented on his deliberate inclusion of LGBTQ+ texts to ensure that all voices were represented because his school has "got quite a large contingency of kids who are non-binary". In this instance, the selection of *The Song of Achilles* by Madeline Miller reflects CA's commitment to including LGBTQ+ texts. The plot of the novel centres around a love story featuring two men. This text is countered by the inclusion of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini, set in Afghanistan from the Soviet takeover in the 1980s to the Taliban control following 9/11. As an Anglican school focused on the "preservation and development of the Christian character [in the] Anglican tradition" (Appendix B), this text proved an interesting selection from a religious point of

view, but TH explained “and then Grade 9…um, we did Anne Frank, up until, last year but it also got a bit old and also, that’s – they started calling Grade 9 um, holocaust year”. This is an interesting dynamic within the student body, given that School A “seeks to encourage respect for an understanding of a rich and vibrant diversity within its community” (Appendix C). There was a clear reality check by the leaders, who revealed that focusing on diversity brought up difficult aspects for consideration. TH was foremost in her concerns and raised the idea of stereotyping that arose when discussing literature texts that represented different voices. She felt that “some of those girls feed into, the stereotypes, and then it’s, difficult for … for them, in that space”. This suggested that, while she and her department were approaching transformation and diversity actively, it was the student body that seemed to reject their attempts the most.

5.3 Curriculum and Content: Text Selection and Literary Merit

The curriculum, and the content therein, is vital to decolonisation of the syllabus. All leaders were asked to discuss the process associated with the selection of their literature texts and to give their understanding of the literary merit associated with these texts. Christie (2020) posits that, since 1994, some curriculum and assessment policies continue to emphasise “sameness over difference [as] they do not acknowledge the situatedness of the curriculum knowledge they propose and the partialities and exclusions” (p. 204) that they represent.

Both School A and School B are committed to the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) curriculum in Grade 12 and, as such, their texts are prescribed. While teachers and schools do have some say in the selection of the literature texts taught, the IEB has the final say. Both schools determine their own texts in Grade 8 to Grade 11 and it is in these grades that schools reveal their institutional culture. In assessing their responses, it was important to note the comments of Mahabeer (2020) that any effort to decolonise by teachers needed to be “practical and realistic and include diverse perspectives in knowledge building” (Mahabeer, 2020, p. 116).

It is necessary to critically examine the function of institutional frameworks like ISASA and the IEB when thinking about the decolonisation of literary curricula in independent schools. There is minimal official guidance or responsibility for the decolonisation of curricular content particularly, even as ISASA promotes broad transformation goals among its member schools. Schools' ability to innovate beyond conventional canons is also severely

limited by the IEB's Grade 12 literary recommendations, which are still primarily Eurocentric. In Grades 8 through 11, schools have more latitude, but in the end, the requirement to get students ready for IEB exams reinforces traditional text choices that follow Western literary traditions. School leaders are in a challenging position because of this structural limitation. Although they may personally support change, external assessment frameworks that value academic rigour as defined by Western epistemologies limit their ability to implement significant curriculum changes. The decolonisation of literature curricula runs the risk of becoming performative rather than substantive in the absence of more stringent ISASA policy leadership and IEB curriculum reform.

The Deputy Head of Academics at School A (TO) revealed her frustration with the curriculum as she felt that the expectations of the job did not allow her to focus fully on the development of the curriculum. Instead, she felt that she spent most of her time dealing with the day-to-day specifics of the school. She also suggested that part of her dilemma was that the student body and parents were also focused on the immediate concerns of the “here and now”, especially students who were in matric. While she wanted to focus on the “big picture”, she did not feel that she was doing so intentionally or adequately. The student voice reiterated this and TO revealed that they were focused on “what’s gonna affect us now and what’s gonna get us multiple A [symbols] so that we can go to UCT”. This attitude, it is believed, permeates both School A and School B who advertise superb academic results annually. The limitation of this attitude is that the development of the curriculum is secondary to academic achievements. In 2020, School A, like many other schools, faced criticism from existing or former students for its lack of transformation and diversity, but it seems that School A has lost the momentum of that moment. Despite this, TO reiterated that the curriculum and the desire to decolonise is not about “chucking everything out and rethinking our curriculum” but rather a systematic approach of reviewing the curriculum annually to “see what we’re doing” to ensure that School A is achieving its goals. The teachers’ comments about the students and, by extension the parental involvement, highlighted the importance of understanding each school as being part of a particular community with its own “cultural norms, rules, values, and power relations, and these forces promote either stability or change” (Oakes, et al., 2005, p. 289). As such, these forces are directed into schools where they impact not only the individuals within each school but also the decisions made by leaders (Holme et al., 2014).

Similarly, TH commented on the selection of texts in the curriculum through regular feedback from students. TH explained that students are asked: “How do you feel about the text? How’s the text influenced you?” to assess the influence that the text might have had on different age groups so that she and her department can “take a look at the rest of the curriculum”. Upon reviewing School A’s scheme of work, it is evident that TH is fully committed to hearing the students’ voices, but at the same time, in her view, building a selection of texts that follow a theme. In Grade 8, the poetry chosen, according to TH, is on “Decolonising Poetry and African Voices”, “Women’s Poetry” and then followed by “Modernism” (Appendix E). It is interesting to note that, in each grade, the poetry taught in the first term is always centred on Africa or on decolonisation. This is clearly an intentional decision by the Head of Department.

MU (School B), in discussing the curriculum, considered the differences between an Afrocentric and Africa centred approach. Her view considered “Afrocentric, I think is the other side of Eurocentric that means … But for me, Africa centred means that you are looking at the world and you are looking at Africa as the centre of this global sphere of influence…”. This view has implications for School B and its consideration of the curriculum. Similarly, the influence of this comment on the English department and its selection of literature texts cannot be understated.

Unfortunately, as with all educational sectors, the reality of resources is a consideration. It was interesting, however, for TO confirm that the resources for change are available. The implication of her comment regarding resources was obviously focused on financial resources and revealed a particular level of privilege. TO stated that “if you need, academic resources, they are also there for you”. Realistically, however, the availability of resources does not imply change, as was posited by MU, who suggested that if a shift in the curriculum were to occur, then it could not be a top-down approach but rather a more inclusive approach. MU felt that “changing the way things were done in the past to embrace this new modern world … the traditional way of teaching is very teacher centred, and it is very top-down, a top-down approach”. So, while the curriculum is a vital aspect of schools, it is evident that buy-in is important for success. School A clearly outlines their curriculum in their mission statement, and they declare that they offer “a wide and challenging curriculum to prepare [their] girls to be responsible members of society, able to pursue their chosen careers with success, to think and act independently and to be adaptable”. TO reaffirms this intention and commented that, as a school, they are

“constantly relooking at our curriculum or what we’re doing”. This reflection clearly indicates a positive intention focusing on improving the school’s curriculum to continue to be in line with national goals. This is further cemented in School A’s Statement on the Educational Philosophy, which links their desire to reflect South Africa’s diversity in the school through “a curriculum and institutional culture”. School A does present a proviso in their intention. While they align their curriculum with the NSC, they are clear to state that they will “depart from it wherever we consider it necessary to better achieve [their] philosophy”. Similarly, School B aligns themselves with the NSC and IEB expectations which “place[s] emphasis on the application of skills rather than rote learning”. They develop a further understanding of the curriculum and the content therein, suggesting that they are developing students beyond academic success. The school introduced *Philosophy for Children* by Matthew Lipman (1976) (P4C), which aims at encouraging students “to develop their own philosophical questions” and teachers move into the role of “supporting thinking, reasoning and questioning”. As such, School B states that “students are encouraged to be analytical and to think critically [and] this empowers them, making them FREE TO BUILD to their potential across all areas of school life”. CA (Head of English department at School B), when talking about the collaboration between the prep, middle and high school English departments mentioned that they “talk about trends and methodologies and scaffolding skills from matric all the way down through as much as possible”. This collaboration between the various departments at School B allow for a consistent implementation of the curriculum and the content taught throughout the school. Traditionally, Heads of Department are responsible for the planning and implementation of curricula in their schools. The Heads of Department in both School A (TH) and School B (CA) revealed their commitment to ensuring that the texts taught in their respective schools were truly representative of their student bodies. Their intentionality was evident in their interviews, and it was interesting to note their respective approaches and implied understanding of intersectionality, as offered by Steyn and Vanyoro (2023).

While TH focused on the importance of representation, she was quick to highlight the importance of texts being age appropriate. Many of the texts studied in School A (like many other schools) deal with complicated issues. Her example from Grade 8 was particularly surprising, considering the topic: “our Grade 8s do a novel called *Speak*, which is an American novel and it’s about – it deals with date rape,”. The fact that the novel is American was interesting, but TH noted that the reason for the selection of this text was the focus on the topic since School A is a girls’ school. She felt that the student body should

be given the opportunity to deal with the topic as some of their students might be subjected to date rape. She emphasises that, despite the controversial topic, “it’s still age appropriate”. TH reinforced this selection by stating the importance of gender-specific texts considering that School A is a girls’ school and, as such, there were difficulties in studying traditional texts (for instance, Shakespeare). TH’s teachers and students found that traditional texts often represented the contextual and historical attitudes towards women. In defence of the selection of an American text, TH made it clear that finding culturally appropriate texts that were of a high quality often proved problematic for her department. She claimed that “we’ve tried to find, um, a more Afrocentric text, that, is, good enough to not just be your standard young adult literature fare but, um, (sighs), struggle”. The concept of literary merit was evident in this comment and suggested the difficulty of finding texts on which the English department at School A could agree. The role of the entire English department in both School A and School B was evident. The collaboration evident allowed for teachers to air their views and raise concerns. In discussion about one of the proposed texts, TH emphasises that “[she] gave it to the Deputy Head in charge of Transformation and Diversity to read, and she found it offensive, because of the way that the black mother was represented as uneducated, um, and … So, we scrapped that”. This suggests that the entire department needed to agree before a text could be selected for teaching. It is interesting that TH felt she was unable to make this decision about this text and referred it to a more senior colleague who made the decision for her. In reflecting on this, one wonders whether TH felt duty bound or whether she felt uncomfortable making the decision considering the backlash that she might receive from students and parents. In this instance, it is believed that her handing the decision to a senior colleague was a defence mechanism to remove her from the responsibility. As with many literature texts, TH identified the need for a trigger warning before starting to teach the text. Trigger warnings are used when addressing sensitive topics (like the date rape example above) and the evidence of domestic violence in Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*. School A’s Educational Philosophy (Appendix E) does make an interesting point acknowledging that, while the school has a “duty to respect and nurture each child”, they are also mindful that “the interests of one child may not coincide with the interests of other children”. This proviso allows the school to make decisions in the best interests of the school. TH did not mention the involvement of students in the selection of texts but TO, (the Deputy Head of Academics at School A) did highlight that, while students, during 2020, emphasised the need for a more decolonised syllabus, the

students could not follow through with any ideas after being invited by the school to collaborate. This lack of follow-through by the students is an interesting observation. Despite their radical calling out of School A during 2020 for their perceived attitudes towards race and hair specifically, none of the students was willing to participate when invited to do so. This corresponds with the assessment of Jansen and Walters (2023) that “simply demanding change is not the same thing as achieving it” (p. 7), especially when one of the major stakeholders (the students) is not committed to being involved. This was also reflected in School B.

In School B, CA commented on the need to involve his department members in the selection of texts. He made it clear that the Head of Diversity (MU) was active in ensuring diversity in the texts taught. He also mentioned his attempts to involve the student body in the selection of texts: “We tried for two years to include the kids into that selection process. By asking them for suggestions, kids are often of the opinion that what they study at school is completely boring”. Similarly, CA aligned his views with TH’s that the students’ contributions were not suitable in terms of literary merit. When asked to expand on his understanding of literary merit, CA posited that literature texts that had literary merit were able to “provide a vehicle for good discussion about topical issues, about issues that face schools and about issues that face South Africans”. In addition, CA felt that the South African context also needed to be contextualised within the global context and that issues discussed from the South African perspective “must fit into a world context. It can’t only be, and I don’t believe it should only be South African issues”. This underpinned TH’s decision to include an American text in Grade 8. Each response aligned in part with the comment by Mahabeer (2020) that “pedagogical approaches should be culturally and socially sensitive to all learners’ experiences” (p.116).

The curriculum content itself provides significant insights into the practical reality of decolonisation attempts, even if school leaders' reflections have received a lot of attention. Despite the leaders' professed promises to change, a review of the texts taught in both School A and School B shows that Eurocentric narratives continue to predominate. While efforts have been made to incorporate disadvantaged and African voices—for example, School B's use of The Song of Achilles to examine LGBTQ+ identities and School A's usage of African poetry—these attempts are occasionally patchy rather than systematic. Prescribed texts continue to be heavily relied upon, especially in the senior years under the IEB, where they stifle creativity. Thematic units like "Decolonising Poetry" are a positive

step, but they frequently coexist with canonical writings without critically challenging their colonial presumptions. As a result, although leaders express a wish to change the curriculum, the content shows a cautious and incomplete approach, indicating that underlying structural norms continue to impede the operationalisation of decolonisation in the classroom.

5.4 Stakeholders' Engagement and the Impact of Current Events and Movements

The leaders interviewed focused much of their attention on the role of the parent and student voice in various school-related areas. The leaders were unanimous in their understanding of 2020 globally. During the rampage of COVID-19, the killing of George Floyd sparked a resurgence of the Black Lives Matter (#BLM) movement. South Africa was also affected by the global outrage at his death. Schools in South Africa became the focus of many former students who spoke against institutional racism that they had experienced in their time at their respective schools. School A and School B were no exceptions. Leaders from both schools highlighted the impact of #BLM.

One of the consequences of #BLM was an uptake of parental involvement in school matters. Both TH and TO noted that, during 2020, the formation at School A of "The Parents of Black Girls" was central to asking questions about what is being taught. TO mentioned that "they had a lot to say about curriculum". Despite the initial interest from this parent group, there is an element of trust between the management of the parents and the management of the school. There seems to have been a realisation that much of what the parents wanted from the school had already been implemented. It is worth noting that not all parents are concerned at School A, but #BLM highlighted concerns particularly for Black parents. TO reflected on a non-academic situation involving Tweets by an individual not associated with the school. Much of the focus of the independent Tweets claimed that schools have been captured and are teaching critical race theory (CRT). TO mentioned that this caused more concern for parents and that "lots of parents, [were] anxious, quite angry in some ways". It was not clear from her comments whether the parents were angry at the Tweets or at the thought of CRT influencing South African schools. School A's Anti-racism Policy was created as a response to the various movements and to responses from students and parents. The policy states that the school aims to "transform [their] communal and individual lives in order to heal the hurt

and divisions of [their] past, in order to embrace a future for South Africa shaped by all who live in it; especially the students within our care" (Appendix A).

MU also emphasised the impact of 2020 and considered the role of parents in the content being taught. Her example (from her teaching of history) indicated concerns from parents "who questioned why [School B] was not doing more African history". MU elaborated on her perception of the parents' understanding of decolonisation. She felt that "to them, decolonisation means just focusing on Africa". She continued by explaining the educational philosophy of School B to the parents and her own understanding as a history teacher and Head of Diversity. She explained that "the way [they] do things is twofold while we are trying to educate our young people about where they are in Africa and where Africa is in the global world…". It is interesting that the parents wanted the curriculum to reflect merely local or regional content, while School B, and MU particularly, felt it important to contextualise the content globally. MU's views linked significantly with the comments made by Dollie et al. (2020) about a transformative conception of education that "is rooted in the desire to empower and uplift our societies on a global, continental and local scale" (p. 275).

SI admitted not being involved directly in the selection process of texts, but it was clear from our interview that she had, on occasion, guided the English department as the need arose. The Head of Department at School A "used to share…that we are doing this…" and then SI would weigh in on the suitability of the text. It is important to note that SI is an isiZulu teacher and part of the interaction was asking her to translate any isiZulu in the text into English.

In addition, SI would comment on aspects of the Black characters reflected in the text. Her example of a character being from a township and that the Head of Department would need assistance in understanding the context of the character. SI confirmed that she was happy with the interactions with the English department and felt that the department "always choose the books that are going to actually, open minds and – and actually let out learners to be, more engaged with what is happening, ah – the things that they didn't know". She was adamant that learning was about considering "other cultures, other people, their lifestyles and all the things that are happening, um, that they are not familiar with". It was interesting to note SI's reflection on parental concerns raised about a text. She felt that, as a school, they "have to defend and say that is why, we are actually um, you know, choosing these type of books … we know that … the content might make the

learners also feel uncomfortable, but we need to do that because... there are some lessons that they need to learn … we need to expose them …I n those kind of situation … that they are not familiar with…". SI's understanding of the school's educational philosophy was explicit as she commented on the role of education to expose students to new situations. While there is agreement with the views of Dollie et al. (2020) that "teaching and learning […] glorifies Eurocentric actions and perspectives" (p 275), it was evident that School A and School B could be viewed as "schools as mediating institutions" (Holmes et al., 2014, p. 39).

CA also observed the importance of #BLM but was quick to note that concerns raised during that time were not specifically about the texts taught but rather about other institutional situations in School B. He commented that "parents very seldom give any kind of feedback on the text unless they don't like a text". Parental concerns, in this situation, were not based on race but rather on religious grounds. This is particularly interesting as School B is not aligned to any religious organisation, but rather considers itself secular. CA recalled two specific incidents where parents refused to let their children read texts on religious grounds. CA referred to the concerned parents as "being sort of fundamentally Christian, who have objected to a text that has looked at African spirituality, or has looked at a different religion, like Islam". This is despite the fact, according to CA, that there is "an understanding from parents that [School B] will be teaching texts that explore all kinds of opinions". In the instance considered by CA, the solution seems to have been accepted by the parents concerned: CA asked the parents to "provide a suitable alternative that has been evaluated by the teacher and then a separate topic for discussion or essay writing has been created for their child." The reality of this solution is concerning as it is not always possible to allow this exemption for all students. It is certainly not possible beyond Grades 8–11 into Grade 12. CA sees the fact that there have been very few situations like this as an indication that he and his department are selecting appropriate and relevant texts. CA answered that this "underscored the fact that we have very little feedback from parents about the text that the kids read in school". Despite his observation, the influence of the parents aligns with the zones of mediation and the impact of forces on what is acceptable in terms of content that is taught in the classroom (Oakes et al., 2005).

Consequently, all leaders interviewed alluded to some tension between the expectations of what parents and students want taught and what each school sees an important

content in the curriculum. The result of this tension seems to be that both schools grapple with the content being taught and ensure the buy-in from all stakeholders, something that is not always evident, since such reforms “run up against dynamics of power” (Holme et al., 2014, p. 39). These dynamics of power are significantly reiterated by Steyn and Vanyoro (2023), who suggest that it is important to educate people in their understanding of who has power in social relationships to “understanding self, other, and belonging” (p. 8).

5.5 Training and Expertise

Part of my research is focusing on the training and expertise of the staff involved in the decolonising of the curriculum. The leaders interviewed are all grappling with the selection of texts, and it was interesting to understand their training and expertise in this field. All the leaders accepted the importance of training and valued those opportunities that have been made available to them by their schools. In the context of this research and education, it was made increasingly obvious that education is not limited to what is taught in the classroom. The role of the teachers in the classroom is the focal point and it highlights that “knowledge is socially constructed as it is based on teachers’ specific experiences and diverse contexts” (Mahabeer, 2020, p.105). The teachers’ experiences through their own training and expertise are vital.

As a leader at School A, SI highlighted the expertise of the English department at School A and felt that they have “got a very strong…English department…really the people who are leading…you know are people who…I will say they…actually went an extra mile in terms of getting the information”. She felt that any workshops offered by the school were an opportunity to “connect with others” indicating her willingness to engage with others, whether internal or external speakers. She did indicate, however, in her concluding comments that “we need more” formal training of staff in dealing with these issues. TH focused on the various workshops held by an external consultant following the concerns raised in 2020. She mentioned that it was “intensive training” and presented workshops to staff, parents, and students. This aligned with School A’s assertion that they have a “responsibility for the continued professional development of teachers to ensure a dynamic learning environment”. The professional development under discussion here suggests an academic focus. Understanding that all levels of professional development have an impact on the classroom environment, it is interesting to note that School A does not specify the types of professional development offered. It is suggested that the

professional development is based on a needs assessment – the school will include courses or training as the need arises, as suggested previously by TH following the hashtag movements of 2020.

Similarly, in School B, CA confirmed that he had not had any formal training in dealing with these issues. He commented about training that he had "nothing formal, and a lot of experience, working in diversity workshops, which we do once a week, every week, for two years already". While he does not have formal training, his involvement at School B has resulted in weekly workshops on various topics, including decolonisation, transformation, and diversity. This points to the school's commitment to understanding the complex issues that arise in South African schools. MU, however, brought in a different perspective which was particularly concerning given her role as Head of Diversity. She felt concerned and "very sceptical of those things because [she finds] that diversity and inclusion has become like…it is all about the certificate now…[and] therefore I should do diversity". She highlighted the differences between formal qualifications and the expertise and empathy that teachers have from years of experience. She also raised concerns about external consultants "implementing it in a very dangerous way", especially if they do not have a vested interest in the school in which they are working. This spoke to the involvement of school management in the implementation of decolonisation, transformation, and diversity. The process of decolonisation of literature texts is centred on the involvement of school leaders, teachers, student bodies and entire school communities. Kessi et al. (2021) allow us to consider alternatives to the usual way of doing things and highlight the importance of "reflective practices, horizontal dialogue, student engagement, and creative experimentation" (Odora-Hoppers, 2021, p. 5). It is through their collaborative efforts that schools may start the process of decolonisation and undo the colonisation of information "including that of god, knowledge, life and death." (Odora-Hoppers, 2017, p. 8).

5.6 Conclusion

The research garnered data from various sources: five interviews of leaders from two different schools, consideration of both schools' academic policies and a reflection on the literature taught in Grades 8–11. The research was undertaken to ascertain the understanding of decolonisation by school leaders and its impact on education policy.

As is clear from the data collected, these two independent schools appear to have

similarities in their understanding of decolonisation at their core. Their understandings are similar in theme to those of Jansen and Walters (2022): threads of decolonisation as inclusion and decolonisation as Africanisation. The same can be applied to their understanding of transformation and diversity. The commitment of the leaders interviewed was clear but was often juxtaposed with the pressures by stakeholders and the impact of societal movements of the time. There is evidence that contrasting factors affected the leaders negatively in their respective schools and there was a fear of rocking the proverbial boat if perceived by stakeholders as either being too conservative or too liberal in their selection of texts. As part of the shift from a post-colonial world to a decolonised curriculum, schools need to move away from the idealism and consider a "critical analysis of inclusive education policies that have broader goal statements and implementation strategies" (Engelbrecht et al., 2015, p. 532).

Considering the responses from the leaders were insightful: four thematic ideas emerged. First, schools need to define decolonisation in their own contexts and thereby consider a concrete understanding of what they are hoping to achieve through decolonisation. Second, leaders need to show a unified commitment to training stakeholders in transformation and diversity. Third, schools need to formalise their policies to reflect their understanding of decolonisation and its practical implementation in all departments. Fourth, schools need to consult with ISASA and the IEB to ensure that a common understanding and commitment is evident across all member schools.

Through the lens of Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL) and the Zone of Mediation, the results of this study can be better understood. School leaders work in a limited space that indicates the limits of what may be changed in the curriculum due to pressures from stakeholders, especially institutional inertia and parental expectations. Both institutions have made efforts to broaden their curricula, although they frequently stay within the bounds of tolerance, where slight adjustments are permitted but drastic deviations are not. A further indication of varying levels of Critical Diversity Literacy is the leaders' diverse participation with decolonisation. Leaders who prioritised systemic marginalisation and structural transformation showed higher CDL, acknowledging the power-laden and historical aspects of curriculum design. As opposed to a fundamental rethinking of knowledge systems, others opted towards superficial interpretations, seeing diversity as the simple addition of diverse voices. In the absence of a strong critical literacy and a wider zone of mediation, decolonisation efforts will continue to be incomplete and susceptible to

reversal at the urging of stakeholders.

Through these actions, decolonisation will move from the zone of tolerance by which “local community will allow policy to be changed and developed in the zone of mediation” (Oakes et al., 2005, p. 287). In addition, understanding of power becomes essential. Steyn and Vanyoro (2023) reflect that the systems of power are not always obvious and at times “power never names itself as such” (p. 11). It is only when we begin to examine and understand the various role players and their intentions, that power becomes more obvious.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATION FOR POLICY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Implications for Education Policy

As previously mentioned, the decolonised curriculum is not about discarding the old and replacing it with the new. Instead, it should be regarded as a nuanced approach to education in the South African context, considering its history and the legacy of apartheid. As such, Mahabeer (2020) claims that school leaders and teachers wanting to be agents of educational change and reform must consider the imperatives that extend both locally and internationally. This consideration would allow for a flexible approach to the crafting of education policies that reflect the diverse interpretations of decolonisation, allowing for more comprehensive and adaptable policies. This would allow for curriculum changes to embrace and value the "diversity and multiple experiences of people" (Mahabeer, 2020, p. 99). The focus on these changes required in education policy should include an understanding incorporating CDL, where "rights of belonging are understood broadly and are substantively realised regardless of factors such as place of birth, nationality, age, gender, sexuality, race, class, and disability" (Steyn & Vanyoro, 2023, p. 3).

In addition, as a reference point for the concepts of coloniality and decoloniality, the various power dynamics concerned in school culture affect and impact transformative change. School leaders and teachers should continue to focus on these power dynamics to understand their own roles in the situation. Mahabeer (2020) suggests that teachers need to "remain open to inconsistencies and confront tensions and pedagogies" (p. 104). In understanding the decolonisation process as practice, we need to understand the "praxis that links theory and action [and moving from being] a one-time event" but rather a continuum that does not end (Kessi et al., 2021, p. 6). Part of this process will require school leaders and teachers to show an understanding of the Eurocentric knowledge base previously hailed as the only knowledge required, while focusing their attention on rebuilding education policies to be more inclusive (Odora-Hoppers, 2017), at the same time also understanding their own intersectional identities (Steyn & Vanyoro, 2023).

While considering these approaches to education policies, we must take into consideration the various forces within the zone of mediation, as suggested by the societal and global forces. The processes exist, not only within countries, but within individual schools as "people mediate among themselves" (Oakes et al., 2005, p. 289), allowing various forces

to interplay in the writing and implementation of education policies – both national and specific to each school. Mahabeer (2020) makes it clear that in many South African schools "the curriculum has not changed [and it] continues to mould learners for a Westernised way of life" (p. 97). The changes required in South Africa must include demands that are not limited to "institutional cultures (seen as too exclusive), complexions (seen as too white), and curriculum (seen as too European)" (Mahabeer, 2020, p. 1) but rather, a focused approach on decolonising knowledge – in this instance, the selection of literature. At the same time, educators may need to consider how some texts may "be part of marking inclusion, exclusion, belonging, or alienation" (Steyn & Vanyoro, 2023, p. 13). Jansen and Walters (2022) highlight that a radical curriculum change (or decolonisation) can only occur within an environment that has a comprehensive understanding of what they want to achieve and, added to this, the institutions need a long-term plan that is supported by leadership. Their comments add to the inclusion of an ongoing process that highlights and understands the emotional impact of the need for change and the change itself. They also indicate a desire to deal with knowledge itself and the unequal access to it, given the historical inequalities of the South African context (Jansen & Walters, 2022). While their research is university focused, it is believed that the same comments can be applied to schools. Johnson et al. (2024) sum it up best with the understanding that transformation of any kind **"**is unpredictable and requires flexibility, agility, and intuitive thinking not prescribed in a written manual for transformation" (p. 18).

Considering the comment made by Johnson et al. (2024), it is imperative that comment is made on their work which deals with the creation of transformative practices from the bottom-up. Although centred on tertiary institutions (specifically the University of Witwatersrand), their work can be applied to this research. Much like the school leaders interviewed, Johnson and her colleagues acknowledge that "transformation is a risky activity, often involving a clash of cultures" (Johnson et al., 2024, p. 13). This clash of cultures can be likened to the interests of the stakeholders in schools – all competing for their own beliefs and values to be the focus. They refer to their strategies to achieve transformation as "cyclical and driven by the needs and aspirations of [their] stakeholders" (Johnson et al., 2024, p. 5) and again, like the leaders interviewed in this research, Johnson and her colleagues felt it was "not always easy to manage, as there were always competing interests" (Johnson et al., 2024, p. 5). Johnson et al. (2024) created a four-part cyclical approach to transformational change. This cyclical approach begins with a hot spot of

cultural warfare, moving towards the creation of transformational policies and norms, the practice of these policies, and then learning from the experiences and adapting for future implementation by feeding back to the starting point. By considering this research, it is possible to apply it to both School A and School B and their understanding of decolonisation, transformation and diversity and the impact these have on text selections. In each case, both schools responded to the hashtag movements that erupted in 2020 and applied the rhizome-like approach to change management.

Johnson et al. (2024) consider their approach as:

> an open system that has no identifiable starting or ending points and is concerned with the process that is embedded in the principles and practices of decoloniality, social justice, restorative justice, empathy, compassion, and a bottom-up approach. (p. 18)

As such, each school showed that “change happens in practice or in the doing of transformation—hence, drawing a distinction from the theory of change or anticipated change” (Johnson et al., 2024, p. 16.). Johnson et al. (2024) show that, through this continued approach with no starting or ending point and the continuous opening up of spaces and having of conversations, “the more issues, reflections, and learning sparkling nuggets emerge” (p. 16). This decentralised, rhizome-like approach shows that, as schools continue to apply change management programmes, despite being unpredictable, they will be applied differently in different contexts or environments. A change programme focused on decolonisation of literature texts in School A might not be the same programme that is used in School B.

This study set out to investigate how school leaders in two independent South African schools conceptualise, mediate, and manage the decolonisation of literature curricula, particularly through their choice of texts. Using a qualitative, postmodern, small-scale case study approach, the study explored leadership narratives, policy documents, and literature selections to understand the processes of transformation and diversity. The findings contribute to the discourse around leadership, curriculum decolonisation, and educational change in independent schools, drawing particularly on the theoretical frames of the Zone of Mediation (Oakes et al., 2005) and Critical Diversity Literacy (Steyn & Vanyoro, 2023).

This chapter concludes the research by revisiting the key research questions, summarising

the major findings, linking these to theory, and offering specific recommendations for leadership practice and policy development.

- How do school leaders conceptualise, mediate, and manage the decolonisation of content in the English curriculum?

School leaders demonstrated an evolving but fragmented understanding of decolonisation. While leaders expressed a commitment to inclusion and the amplification of marginalised voices, there was inconsistency in defining decolonisation beyond the additive inclusion of non-Western texts. Leadership mediation was influenced by the Zone of Mediation — where leaders balanced transformation goals against parental expectations, historical school cultures, and examination board expectations.

Importantly, leaders operated within complex environments shaped by power dynamics, often cautious not to disrupt established stakeholder relations. While agents of change in principle, their mediation reflected Steyn and Vanyoro's (2023) observation that systemic power often remains unnamed and unchallenged without deliberate critical engagement.

- What tensions are created by various stakeholders who influence the decolonisation of the English curriculum?

The study confirmed that parental expectations, student resistance, and external socio-political movements (such as #BLM) exert powerful influence on curriculum choices. Some leaders faced overt tensions from parents questioning texts on racial or religious grounds. Others noted that students themselves sometimes rejected attempts at curricular transformation, viewing alternative texts as either politically charged or insufficiently familiar. These tensions reinforced the concept of a tightly negotiated Zone of Mediation where transformation efforts are constantly vulnerable to pushback.

- How do participants understand the role of internal policies in the selection of texts?

Internal policies such as Anti-Racism Statements and Academic Philosophies were aspirational, signalling an intention towards inclusivity. However, the findings revealed a gap between policy rhetoric and practice. Leaders acknowledged that while policies create a framework, real curricular change relies on departmental collaboration, teacher buy-in, and cautious negotiation of community sensitivities. The concept of Critical Diversity Literacy was inconsistently embedded across policies, often remaining at a surface level.

- How do participants understand their role in the decolonisation of texts selected by their English departments?

Heads of English Departments played a pivotal role, acting as translators of institutional commitments into specific text choices. Yet, individual leaders often felt constrained by limitations of literary merit, availability of appropriate resources, and pressure for academic performance. This aligns with Mahabeer's (2020) assertion that decolonising the curriculum requires realistic engagement with complexity rather than rhetorical commitment alone.

- What role does education policy play in determining the selection of texts in the English curriculum?

The Independent Examinations Board (IEB) framework provided structure for Grade 12, but limited flexibility for deep curricular change. In earlier grades, schools had more autonomy, but there was little evidence of proactive collaboration with ISASA or the IEB to embed decolonisation principles systemically. Curriculum reform was largely reactive — a school-level rather than a sector-wide initiative — underscoring the need for stronger, systemic policy support for transformation.

6.2 Recommendations

It is important to note the various recommendations that have arisen as a result of this research.

- Schools and educational organisation (such as the IEB and ISASA) need to align their views with relevant educational theorists and give their member schools clear definitions and guidelines for transformation, diversity and decolonisation.
- Resulting from these guidelines, ISASA needs to establish a clear decolonisation policy that needs to be implemented by their member schools. In addition, these policies need to be reviewed regularly to align with national guidelines.
- Independent schools should move towards crafting clear, school-specific definitions of decolonisation that go beyond the inclusion of diverse authors. Policies must articulate the philosophical, pedagogical, and structural commitments needed for authentic change, rooted in Critical Diversity Literacy principles.
- Schools, within their own zones of mediation, need to design inclusive curricula for

Grade 8–11. This should be done in consultation with all members of the community and using the ISASA policy as a starting point.

- Schools should design structured, ongoing engagement processes (forums, feedback surveys, joint workshops) to educate and consult with parents and students about curriculum change, contextualising transformation goals and addressing misconceptions proactively.
- School leaders are responsible for holistic transformation beyond the curriculum. This should be achieved by considering the school culture, rules and demographic of the student and teaching body.
- Open dialogue continues to be an important aspect of transformation, creating safe spaces for all members of the community to share their experiences and diverse viewpoints.
- Schools and their organisational bodies (IEB and ISASA) need to consider the role of professional development. By prioritising teacher training, schools can ensure that all teachers have the same understanding of what is required of them as part of the decolonisation process when designing the curriculum.
- Professional development should extend beyond ad-hoc workshops and involve sustained engagements, reflection processes, and accountability measures.
- Monitoring and regular evaluation of the progress made is an important yardstick by which schools can measure their impact.
- ISASA and the IEB need to hold schools accountable for not following the ISASA and the IEB guidelines.
- Top-down vs bottom-up approach. It is important for the success of decolonisation for there to be buy-in from all members of the school community. While I believe that school leaders should lead the way, it is equally important for teachers to be at the forefront of the change.
- Collaboration between schools and within schools between various subject departments will go a long way towards understanding the role of decolonisation in the various subject areas.
- Trust will continue to be the most important part of the transformation of education in South Africa. The trust that parents have in schools, the trust that schools have with organisational bodies, the trust that teachers have in leaders, and so on. It is imperative that the process of decolonisation is achieved based on trust with a

unified commitment to achieving equality in education. This would certainly involve a framework for educational engagement between teachers, parents and students.

- Consideration of how best to apply the bottom-up approach while encouraging leaders to approach transformation from the top-down: The intersection of these approaches will link to the rhizome-like change approach suggested by Johnson et al. (2024). It will be during these moments that transformational change will occur – according to the stages inferred by Johnson et al. (2024).

6.3 Conclusions

- Decolonisation in these schools is an ongoing and situation-dependent process and is best determined by the approach of the Head of Department. The process of decolonising the curriculum involves adopting a nuanced approach that considers South Africa's history and diversity, rather than simply rejecting the previous structures. It necessitates ongoing involvement and adjustment rather than a single comprehensive redesign. This method must consider both local and global imperatives, emphasising the necessity for adaptability in formulating education policies. In addition, the context of each school determines the success of the proposed changes – as defined in the zone of mediation.
- Addressing power dynamics in education continues to be a crucial concern in all schools. Successful reform in educational institutions relies on a comprehensive understanding of the power dynamics that exist within school cultures. It is crucial for leaders to recognise their responsibility in either maintaining or questioning these patterns. This consciousness aids in establishing education practices and policies that are more inclusive and equal. While the leaders were aware of the power dynamics, there was an element of fear, particularly at backlash from parents and students.
- There is a need for the integration of intersectional and inclusive approaches. In order to achieve a successful decolonisation of education, it is imperative that policies include intersectional perspectives that consider a range of identities and experiences, including but not limited to race, class, gender, nationality, and other factors. A comprehensive approach that appreciates diverse viewpoints is essential for genuinely revolutionary education. This was evident in the school leaders interviewed as they were particularly aware of the need to involve all members of their communities.

- Schools seem to be adopting a decentralised, grassroots approach to transformation. The research highlights the efficacy of a decentralised and rhizomatic approach to transformation. This change approach entails the establishment of a flexible and inclusive system in which change is motivated by the desires and goals of everyone involved, rather than being imposed by a higher authority. This strategy enables the implementation of decolonisation strategies in various schools, catering to distinct demands and addressing specific issues in a customised manner.
- The importance of explicit guidelines and ongoing communication from ISASA and IEB, as educational institutions, who have a vital responsibility to establish precise definitions and comprehensive rules for decolonisation, diversity, and transformation: The research shows that the approach to decolonisation is driven by contextual or situational experiences like the hashtag movements. Periodic evaluation and adherence to national criteria are necessary to ensure the continued evaluation of these policies and adapting them as necessary. Facilitating open communication among all parties involved, including educators, pupils, parents, and school senior leaders, is crucial for cultivating trust and establishing common understanding. These elements serve as the basis for any significant and impactful change. It is clear that the schools researched were open to hearing from members of their communities, but these interactions were mostly driven by national and international calls for decolonisation.
- The importance of professional development and accountability is vital to the successful implementation of change policies. The effectiveness of decolonisation initiatives depends on the implementation of professional development programmes and the establishment of accountability measures. Teacher training should be prioritised in schools to guarantee uniform comprehension of decolonisation procedures and objectives. Ensuring close observation of development and enforcing adherence to rules are essential for attaining and maintaining significant transformation.
- There is a need to achieve a balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches. The research shows the significance of incorporating both top-down leadership-driven efforts and bottom-up grassroots-driven methods. Successful decolonisation necessitates the active participation and support of all individuals within the school community, with leaders and teachers working together in a

cooperative manner to initiate and promote change. While neither school explicitly referred to decolonisation in their policies, the mid-level leaders (Heads of Department) were both committed to decolonising the texts taught.

- There is a continued need for trust to be a fundamental element of transformative change. Establishing and upholding trust is recognised as a crucial element for achieving successful decolonisation in the field of education. Establishing trust among parents, teachers, school officials, and other organisational entities is crucial in fostering a collective dedication to attaining educational equity. The schools researched allowed the Head of Department to make the suggestions and changes as they deemed appropriate. This level of trust works in professional settings where leaders are committed to change – the converse might be true in schools where leaders do not see a need for decolonisation.
- There needs to be a clear and focused approach to decolonisation strategies. Approaches to decolonisation will certainly vary across schools, depending on their specific circumstances and the requirements of their stakeholders. The adaptation of policies and procedures to various situations is vital for their efficacy.
- There is a need for strategic planning and consideration of emotional responses to decolonisation. It is important to recognise the emotional effects of both the desire for change and the process of change. Schools need to develop comprehensive strategies, backed by strong leadership, to address both the emotional and practical dimensions of transition effectively.

This research highlights the complexity of leading decolonisation within elite, independent school contexts. Leadership occurs within powerful zones of mediation where competing interests — educational, social, historical, and political — intersect. Achieving meaningful curriculum transformation requires courageous, reflective leadership grounded in a deep understanding of power, diversity, and educational justice. Without systemic support, isolated efforts risk becoming superficial. Future research should continue to interrogate how leadership practices can dismantle colonial legacies in schooling — not only by changing texts, but by fundamentally reshaping educational purpose and culture.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: School A: Anti-Racism Policy

ANTI-RACISM POLICY

In 2016, the Chief Justice in a unanimous judgement of the Constitutional Court wrote about non-racialism, human dignity, and freedom as being values foundational to our constitutional democracy and about the need to make a decisive break from the ills of the past. He called for all of us to engage in an earnest and ongoing dialogue in pursuit of strategies for a lasting solution to the bane of our peaceful co-existence that racism has continued to be. He wrote: *Nothing that threatens to take us back to our racist past should be glossed over, accommodated, or excused.*

School A accepts the charge of the Bishop of Johannesburg at the Diocesan Synod in 2017 for intentional ministry in dealing with *the naked sin of racism*.

We acknowledge that:

- as an institution we were founded in a context which privileged individuals and communities on the basis of their race;
- apartheid, as a crime against humanity was and is legally, morally and theologically indefensible; and
- the systemic impact of our colonial and apartheid past has hurt and marginalized individuals within the School A community

Consequently, we seek to transform our communal and individual lives in order to heal the hurt and divisions of our past, in order to embrace a future for South Africa shaped by all who live in it; especially the students within our care.

School A aims to provide a safe, secure and supportive environment where:

- individual differences are appreciated, understood and accepted
- individuals empathise with each other and offer each other support
- racism is reported and the necessary steps are taken to eliminate such behaviour
- awareness and education about racism and diversity will be integral to the teaching and learning process
- racist behaviour, intentional or otherwise, will not be tolerated.

Appendix B: School A: Christian Identity and Ethos Statement

School A, [Suburb Name] Statement
on
the Christian identity and ethos of School A

Lord Jesus, Child of Bethlehem, bless our school and all its members, past and present.
Be with us in our worship, in our work and in our play.
Inspire the hearts of those who teach and those who learn.
Train those who rule, and those who obey, that all may offer Thee the perfect service which is worthy of Thy Love.
Who livest and reignest, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

AMEN

The mission of School A

School A is an independent Anglican school for girls. We believe that each girl is important, and we provide a balanced education in a caring, friendly environment. School A offers a wide and challenging curriculum to prepare our girls to be responsible members of society, able to pursue their chosen careers with success, to think and act independently and to be adaptable. We endeavour to instil in them a sense of self-worth and responsibility, encourage the development of their talents and help them to achieve their full potential as individuals.

Our history establishes a spiritual foundation

School A was founded in 1888 by the Reverend John Darragh at the request of Bishop Bousfield, the first Anglican Bishop of Pretoria, with the express intention of providing a Christian education for girls. Originally in Jeppestown and then Belgravia, the school moved to [Suburb Name] in 1934. From the very beginning there was a close connection between church and school. At the time of its incorporation as an association not for profit in 1924, the school was under the management of the Sisters of St Margaret (East Grinstead). From 1946 to 1963, the Sisters of the Community of St Mary the Virgin (the Wantage Sisters) took over the running of the school. School A's identity as an Anglican church school carries through to the present day.

A Christian and Anglican community

The chapel stands physically at the heart of the school. Worship will always be at the heart of School A. There will be a daily time of worship and the Eucharist will be celebrated regularly. It is in this corporate worship that the school's foundational principles, values and ethos are expressed.

Because this is a time and place where the school gathers from time to time as a body to express its foundational principles, values and ethos, attendance is compulsory for all girls.

At School A, education is not restricted to the classroom. The essence of the school, expressed in corporate worship, imbues every aspect of the educational offering at School A. Thus, it is through consistent immersion in the School A community in its every aspect that the School A aim of holistic formation of each pupil may be realised. Immersion in the School A community includes attendance at school assemblies, chapel assemblies and Eucharists, observance of the daily Angelus bell and prayers, and commitment to and involvement in both the curricular and co-curricular programmes.
Parents or guardians and their girls who choose to seek an education at School A, do so freely and, despite other choices which they could make, in the belief, common to the rest of the community, that the faith-based nature of the education offered by the school, and its foundational principles, values and ethos, is what they wish for their daughters. Accordingly, they must uphold and respect the Christian and Anglican faith as being at the heart of the character and life of the school. They must accept that a child is admitted to the total school programme, which includes curricular, co-curricular and extra–mural programmes and activities of the school, and not some of them only.

Members of staff who choose to work at School A will be required, whatever their faith, to acknowledge and respect the Christian faith, to uphold the foundational principles, values, and ethos of the school and, according to their consciences, to contribute professionally and personally to the spiritual life of the school.

It is acknowledged that not all staff or pupils will be of the Christian or Anglican faith. Whilst being committed to its identity as a Christian and Anglican school, the school will seek to value diversity by ensuring that other views, denominations, and faiths are respected among staff as well as pupils. Care will be taken to ensure that no pressure is brought to bear on those who do not identify as Christian or Anglican, nor will any attempt be made to convert them or to influence them in any way to abandon their own faiths.

The school will not allow or provide for the formal practice of other faiths at School A. However, permission will be given for girls to take time off to celebrate their especially important or special official religious festivals.

School A is both an educational and a gospel community. As such, the school is committed to living out as well as teaching the Christian faith.

A revelatory faith and education at School A

All that is said and done in the school will seek to represent -

- the God who reveals the truth about God's self and humanity through creation, the giving of the law, God's action in history and through the prophets
- the God who reveals God's self in Jesus, God's Son, living among us and
- dying and rising for us
- the God who reveals God's self in God's Spirit working in the living faith of
- the Church experienced through scripture, tradition, reason and context.

At School A, the girls are encouraged to fulfil their potential through participation in all the curricular, co-curricular and extra-mural programmes of the school. Through all such programmes, the school seeks to contribute implicitly and explicitly to the girls' spiritual development.

The overall development of each girl will be based on the values and virtues of the school's Christian tradition, summed up in the first two Biblical commandments: to love God and to love one's neighbour. These commandments encompass the values of truth and justice, service and duty, respect, trust, and forgiveness.

Girls are exposed to powerful secular and material influences. As an Anglican church school, School A will seek to provide a coherent, alternative world view which will enable each girl to make courageous and principled decisions about her lifestyle and values, encouraging service to the community. Each girl will be encouraged to discover her capacity to be a leader and, especially, an ethical and moral leader in the world in which she lives.

Christ's ministry consistently illustrates Christ's preferential option for the poor and the marginalised. Jesus' example in this regard underpins School A's striving to increase the ease of access to education at the school via its bursary and scholarship programmes, the school's commitment to its community affairs programmes, its relationship with neighbouring schools and with the broader community.

The school is committed to embodying Jesus' love for all and his refusal to treat as "other" those whom the society of his day marginalised. Thus, and in line with the school's commitment to be a South African school, School A seeks to encourage respect for and understanding of a rich and vibrant diversity within its community, on the part of girls, parents and staff.

The role of the school chaplain

For many years, the rector of St Luke's Anglican Church, Orchards, served as part-time chaplain to School A. In 1992, when the Anglican Church in South Africa allowed women to be put forward for ordination, members of the teaching staff at the school were ordained and served as assistant chaplains. In 2010, the school appointed its first full-time chaplain, an ordained priest of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

The chaplain is employed by the school and is appointed by the head of the school in consultation with the Board and with the approval of the Bishop of Johannesburg, who licenses the chaplain to the school. The appointment of the chaplain may only be terminated by the head after consultation with the Bishop.

Within the overall structure of the school and working in partnership with the head, the chaplain has special responsibility for:

- the oversight of the spiritual identity and ethos of the school;
- the pastoral care of all members of the school community, the girls, and the staff;
- the liturgical and devotional life of the school;
- Christian nurture and formation within the school;
- development, implementation and supervision of teaching programmes in the Christian life and faith;
- service to the surrounding community.

Governance structures

School A recognises the authority of the Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg in all matters relating to its Christian identity and ethos.

The Board of Directors of the school, led by the chairperson, has the responsibility to ensure that the mission and purpose for which School A was established is implemented and developed. The preservation and development of the Christian character of the school in the Anglican tradition is a responsibility of the Board as custodians of the foundational principles, values and ethos of School A.

The Bishop is a member of the Board of Directors of the school and the "Visitor" to the school. The Bishop must be consulted by the Board if or when the necessity arises for the appointment of a head of the school. The Bishop's ruling as to the character of the religious instruction to be given in the school and in all matters spiritual and pastoral is final. The head is installed in this position by the Bishop at a formal ceremony at the beginning of the head's tenure.

The head of School A is the spiritual head of the school and, with the chaplain, is responsible for leading and upholding the ethos and Christian values of the school.

The heads of school will be practising Christians. Before appointment, they will be expected to show how they would be able to contribute to the protection and promotion of the foundational principles, values, and ethos of School A.

The Christian faith is central to the life of the school. It is a fundamental and guiding principle and not an additional or incidental feature. It will, therefore, be expressed in all aspects of the school, its character and mission statements, in the school prospectus, its aims and objectives and its policies.

As the school is a diocesan institution, declared as such by the Bishop under the Rules of the Diocese of Johannesburg, the school is summoned to elect a lay representative to attend Diocesan Synods. The chaplain, holding the Bishop's licence, is also summoned to attend Diocesan Synods. The school is part of the wider Anglican community in the Johannesburg Diocese.

The teaching of Divinity

Every girl in the Junior School is required to attend Divinity lessons on a weekly basis. The focus of these lessons will be to teach the Christian faith and morality. The lessons are based on the Bible as the Word of God. Lessons will be conducted in such a way that respect is shown to the diversity of beliefs and backgrounds of the pupils. Divinity lessons will be taken by the chaplain or other suitable members of staff under the chaplain's supervision.

In the Senior School there are no Divinity lessons. Life Orientation lessons will be grounded in the Christian faith. Various religions will be studied. The chaplain will contribute to the content of these lessons.

In the school's teaching on the Christian faith, care will be taken to educate girls about other faiths and to teach respect for the values and principles of those faiths.

Worship in the school chapel

The school is subject to the rules of the Anglican Diocese of Johannesburg, and the Canons of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA) as to how worship is conducted and sacraments are administered. Services are, therefore, presided over by an Anglican priest licensed under the Diocese of Johannesburg or with the permission of the Bishop of the Diocese of Johannesburg. As an Anglican school, School A seeks to maintain relationships of respect and mutual understanding with the surrounding Anglican parishes.

The school chapel is not merely a meeting place or venue. It is an Anglican chapel and the chaplain a licensed priest in the Diocese of Johannesburg. The chapel is not a parish, but a school chapel functioning within a community, the primary function of which is the education of the School A girls.

School A upholds the sacraments of the Anglican Church: baptism, confirmation, Holy Communion, ordination, marriage, reconciliation and anointing of the sick. Sacraments administered in the chapel will be administered according to the Anglican order of service, facilitated by the chaplain or, with the permission of the chaplain and the head, by another Anglican priest.

The administration of sacraments occurs in the context of a worshiping community (such as a parish) of which the person receiving the sacrament is a committed member. All girls currently enrolled as pupils at School A are expected to attend and respect all religious observances within the school (chapel assemblies, Eucharists, Divinity lessons and the daily ringing of the Angelus). For these girls, School A serves as a worshiping community. Should girls and their parents or caregivers so choose, and following appropriate preparation under the supervision of the chaplain, girls may receive the sacraments available to them within this community.

As an educational institution, School A does not serve as a worshiping community for Old Girls or for family members of pupils. Thus:

- Where appropriate, the baptism of children of staff members or of Old Girls may take place after a period of instruction and in the context of a school Eucharist. However, baptism of such persons should ordinarily take place within the context of their primary worshiping community.
- Weddings of Old Girls, staff members or family members of girls should ordinarily take place within the couple's home church, or in a wedding venue that caters for wedding functions.
- The school chapel may be used by Old Girls, members of staff and pupils or parents for funerals or memorial services, only after consultation with the head and the chaplain and with their permission. Such services must be according to the Anglican order of service, facilitated by the chaplain or, with the permission of the chaplain and the head, by another Anglican priest. Funerals or memorial services should take place in the parish in which one is a member.

Conclusion

Throughout its long history, School A has retained its close ties with the Anglican Church. Its Christian ethos and values undergird all that is said and done. The chapel is central to

the life of all who work or study at the school.

REVISED AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SCHOOL AT JOHANNESBURG ON 13 NOVEMBER 2018

Appendix C: School A: Educational Philosophy

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ORIGINALLY ADOPTED BY THE BOARD ON 29 JULY 2015, REVISED ON 14 NOVEMBER 2017, AND FURTHER REVIEWED ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2018, AMENDED 1 OCTOBER 2019

SCHOOL A SCHOOL

STATEMENT ON THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SCHOOL A

Preamble to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

We, the people of South Africa,
Recognise the injustices of our past;
Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land; Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and
Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.
We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to—
Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights;
Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law; Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person; and
Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.
May God protect our people.
Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika. Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso. God seën Suid-Afrika. God bless South Africa.
Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afurika. Hosi katekisa Afrika.

Position statement

It would be difficult to deny that a Nation's most important buildings are not Palaces or even Parliaments but Houses and Schools, for therein are formed, for good or ill, the characters of her citizens, and character, as we all know, is the key to the future as it is to the present.
The Countess of Clarendon
Fundamentally our aim in education is the same as it was in our early days: to teach striving after perfection rather than satisfaction with mediocrity: to educate for the future, for social responsibility, and total commitment to ideals.
Dodo Pitt, Headmistress (1974 to 1988)

Church schools are as concerned as any other school to equip pupils for lives marked by rapid change, global competition and insecurity. But Church schools know in their viscera that this is not just about acquiring skills and good examination results. It is about forming people who have the moral strength and spiritual depth to hold to a course and weather ups and downs.

It is about forming people who know:

- *that economic competition is not more important than family life and love of neighbour,*
- *and that technical innovation is not more important than reverence for the beauty of creation.*

It is about forming people who, however academically and technically skilful, are not reduced to inarticulate embarrassment by the great questions of life and death, meaning and truth. Church schools themselves embody the truth that a context of firm principles suffused by faith and love is the best and right basis for learning and growing.'

Rowan Williams as the Archbishop of Canterbury

School A is an independent, Anglican School for girls, located in, and connected to, its home city, Johannesburg. It seeks to offer a world class education, relevant to South Africa and to the wider world.

The Educational Philosophy of School A is at all times informed by the principles, values and ethos described in the Statement on the Christian Identity and Ethos of School A adopted by the Board of Directors on 4 February 2014.

We acknowledge that:

- as an institution we were founded in a context which afforded privilege to individuals and communities on the basis of their race;
- apartheid, as a crime against humanity was and is legally, morally and theologically indefensible; and
- the systemic impact of our colonial and apartheid past has hurt and marginalized individuals within the School A community.

Consequently, we seek to continue to transform our communal and individual lives in order to heal the hurt and divisions of our past, and in order to embrace a future for South Africa shaped by all who live in it, especially the students within our care.

As a South African school, we acknowledge and subscribe to the values expressed in section 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:

- *The Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values:*
- *Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms.*
- *Non-racialism and non-sexism.*
- *Supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law.*
- *Universal adult suffrage, a national common voters roll, regular elections and a multi-party system of democratic government, to ensure accountability, responsiveness and openness*

We further acknowledge the rights and duties conferred by section 29(3) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996:

- *Everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that –*
- *do not discriminate on the basis of race;*
- *are registered with the state; and*
- *maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions.*

We acknowledge and will always be mindful of the following:

- We have a duty to respect and nurture each child and to acknowledge that a child's best interest is of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child[4], while always being mindful of the fact that the interests of one child may not coincide with the interest of other children.
- We affirm our desire to be a South African school that seeks to reflect the diversity of our country, that seeks to provide an education that is enhanced through a curriculum and institutional culture which reflects our country, and that demonstrates our belief in non-racialism, non-sexism and diversity. We will not tolerate racism or bigotry.
- We will inculcate a spirit of kindness, compassion and respect for diversity.

School A does not have unlimited resources, financial or otherwise. Its sole source of income is the fees and development levy which parents pay. We are therefore conscious of the sacrifices which many parents make to send their daughters to this school, and we welcome that fact.

Our duty, as good citizens, to ensure access to girls from previously disadvantaged backgrounds whose circumstances are such that they would not be able to enter School A without financial and other assistance, recognizing also the educational value of diversity for girls, teachers and parents;

Our duty to share our facilities and resources with disadvantaged schools and their pupils so that they too may grow into contributing members of our society able to take responsibility in the world of possibilities and opportunities that will open to them.

Our responsibility for the continued professional development of teachers to ensure a dynamic learning environment;

The School serves a parent constituency, the expectations and requirements of most of whom are that while their daughters will gain entry primarily to South African tertiary educational institutions, they will also be well prepared towards entry into international tertiary institutions;

Most of the girls leaving School A will seek employment or follow their chosen occupations and live their lives in South Africa, and their education must prepare them for this, but they must also be prepared to be global citizens.

Accordingly, we should align our curriculum to the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12, but depart from it whenever we consider it necessary to better achieve our philosophy.

Reason for being

Our reason for being is that when girls leave School A, –

- They will seek opportunities to fulfil their God-given potential
- They will be imbued with spiritual and moral values and will have the courage, discernment and determination to live according to those values in all that they say or do;
- They will respect and believe in themselves as women, and, informed by their moral and spiritual values, will define 'success' in accordance with those moral and spiritual values;
- They will be open-minded, conscientious, self-driven and flexible
- They will be motivated by freedom, challenge and purpose more than by external reward;
- They will have the knowledge and skills necessary to follow their chosen path in life and, if so desired, to enter into the universities and tertiary institutions of their choice;
- They will acknowledge and appreciate their privilege and will generously embrace and discharge the responsibilities that go with that privilege, and be committed to engaged citizenship;
- They will acknowledge the times of immense change in which we live, and be equipped for constant change and a future world that is very different from the one they were born into;
- They will seek to be healthy in body, mind and soul;
- They will respect others and respect and celebrate their differences;
- They will live purposeful and significant adult lives and be valuable citizens of South Africa and of the world; and
- They will know, and be able to find, peace and contentment in their inner selves.

Educational philosophy

The School A educational philosophy is premised on a relationship between parents, girls and the School. Ours is a learning community which values its girls, their parents, their teachers and all who work in the School.

Our relationship with parents requires full co-operation and mutual support and an acknowledgement that there are aspects of the child's education which are the responsibility of parents and family and are not the business of the School.

Girls will be required to recognise and embrace their responsibility to develop their full potential by participating actively in the education process at School

The School will provide a stimulating experience where each girl will be guided and supported in the process of questioning, understanding, thinking, creating, collaboration and building self-esteem. We will actively search out and develop new and innovative ways to facilitate deep learning.

Teaching and learning at School A will be directed to:

- The acquisition of knowledge and skills. The girls will learn and be taught to understand, analyse and discern the meaning and value of that knowledge and the use of multiple approaches to acquiring knowledge and skills.
- The development of confidence and ability to construct and communicate argument which is accurate, valid, fair and persuasive, and to present and express themselves, orally and in writing, in an informed, reasoned, ethical and accurate way.
- The identification of a problem and the application of knowledge, creativity, technology and learnt processes to solve the problem.
- Participation in physical and cultural activities for the purpose of enjoyment and learning to work in a team or group for a common goal, whether winning or losing, and about the satisfaction of participation, performance and physical fitness.
- An understanding and awareness of justice, diversity, inequality, racism and the individual's place in the world in relation to others.
- Self-belief and courage to take well-informed and calculated risks while remaining true to their values, and about having the resilience, persistence and determination to pick themselves up after failure.
- Instilling self-discipline, self-sufficiency and conscientiousness.

For these purposes, we will attract and retain staff who are committed to this philosophy of the School and are able, through their contribution in the classroom and beyond, to achieve its objects. We will provide opportunities and will support development, self- improvement and continuing learning.

https://www.schoola.co.za/schools/senior-school

Appendix D: School B: Academic Curriculum – High School

School B High School strives to provide excellent learning opportunities for all our students. Our aim is to guide, to foster, and to inspire the pursuit of knowledge and the development of skills, resulting in students who are confident, passionate and driven to succeed.

The highly qualified teaching staff possess exceptional subject knowledge and are passionate about their work, engaging students beyond the constraints of assessment objectives and specifications. We believe that education gives a framework for teachers to engage students in developing mastery of subjects, but also aims to cultivate reflective students who have developed the skills excel in all spheres, at school and beyond.

Learning at School B occurs not just in the classroom, but also through a variety of academic excursions and tours. We believe that informal learning has untapped potential to give meaning, relevance and context to the ideas that school and the curriculum offer. School B School has a proven track record of academic success, but also seeks to promote the emotional development of our students. At all ages, our aim is to provide the necessary support for students to respond to challenges and exceed expectations.

Teaching staff are committed to improving their practice, whether through carefully selected courses, working towards new qualifications, or engaging with the wider educational community as examiners, moderators, sub-examiners and textbook authors. A number of our staff are members of the National Subject Forums. Whilst this aids the teaching and learning at School B School, it also plays a role in helping to develop local and international strategies to improve education. To this end, the School will hold its inaugural #Hack_Ed conference during 2017.

Our Grade 8 and 9 programme is largely skills-based, providing classroom environments where independence, thinking skills, collaboration and active learning are developed at the same time as knowledge. Grades 10, 11 and 12 focus on preparing students for the internationally recognised IEB (Independent Examination Board) National Senior Certification Examination which places emphasis on the application of skills rather than rote learning.

Thus, at School B School, we aim to prepare students for far more than academic success. Although this is a given, we also focus our attention on developing life-long learners, who are curious and creative, collaborative and caring. Citizens of tomorrow.

Philosophy for Children (P4C), a methodology of teaching and learning, was created by Matthew Lipman over 35 years ago and has been developed and practised in 60 countries. At School B School, it is introduced to children at various levels and in various ways, from 3 years old to matric. The most revolutionary pedagogical shift in P4C is teaching children to develop their own philosophical questions (e.g. “Is Charlie, in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory lucky?”, “Is Macbeth subject to ambition or fate?”) rather than being focused on the answers of ‘ordinary school’. Once questions have been developed the students are led through philosophical enquiries or dialogues. The teacher’s role moves from ‘knower-of-answers’ to guide, where supporting thinking, reasoning and questioning are the focus, as well as finding links to a deepened understanding of the curriculum. After an enquiry, reflection is encouraged, so that the individual and the group can examine their thinking (e.g. “Has my thinking changed?”. “How was my quality of thinking, reasoning and

participation?", "What have I learnt through the dialogue?"). The cognitive, metacognitive, social and emotional development and benefits are remarkable. P4C's main objective is to create independent thinkers, who can communicate complex and well-reasoned arguments.

Our History

School B School strives to maximise the potential of young people. We offer our students the widest exposure to positive life experiences while assisting them to develop strong academic, cultural, sporting and leadership skills.

Celebrating 110 years of quality education, School B School, a secular, co-educational school offers the internationally recognised IEB (Independent Examinations Board) curriculum. Students are encouraged to be analytical and to think critically; this empowers them, making them "Free to Build" to their potential across all areas of school life.

One of the pillars of School B School is a future-focused approach which aims to incorporate relevant technologies in the classroom. Our Future Focus Centre is a zone of self-directed student learning. Here, our students are encouraged to take control of the learning process as they select, manage and assess their learning. Exciting programmes include Robotics, Coding and 3D printing. This creative use of technology has enabled our students and teachers to move beyond traditional classrooms, transforming education through innovative, unique ways of learning.

Our History

Origins: St Winifred's Schools for Girls (1907–1941)

School B's roots date back to 1907 when St Winifred's School for Girls was founded, occupying a small, double storey building in Yeoville, Johannesburg. Even during these early stages and during turbulent times, innovation and modernisation were at the core of the school's ethos. At the beginning of 1924, the school was relocated to Parkview where a new, 'modernised' building was erected, quickly transforming the school into a very successful and highly regarded educational establishment for girls.

The headmistress at the time, Mrs Burton-Hall, placed great emphasis on a well-rounded education for young ladies that included subjects such as music, drama, art, domestic science, elocution, botany, biology and travel in the curriculum. In 1930, the school consisted of 130 pupils with only four teachers on the permanent staff.

Rebirth: School B School (1941–1949)

In 1941, Catherine Hill became the Headmistress with a bold vision to completely transform and revitalise the school's image, both physically and in the name. "St Winifred's School for Girls" became "School B School", named for the Headmistress and the vibrant colour of the new uniforms. It was here that the "School B Family" as we know, it with the new "Free to Build" motto, was born.

The 'new' school had a total of 68 pupils, 34 in each of the junior and high schools, later rising to 129 with the support of Director, Mr L Guittard, staff, parents and pupils. Catherine Hill's recipe for success was embodied in the only school rule School B had – "Do your best

to make others happy". The warm and caring attitude that has been one of the most enduring elements of School B School's ethos were thus firmly established under the new Headmistress.

Towards the end of 1941, when many young mothers went to work during the war effort, School B opened a Nursery School, which was soon to become the first independent nursery school that was up to government standards in those days.

As a result of financial difficulties, Catherine Hill sought out more affordable premises for the school, finally settling on a group of rondavels in Morningside. In order to raise funds, School B School was registered as a company on 6 April 1946, and it was at this time that many parents agreed to serve on the Board of Directors.

Dorothy Thompson at the Helm (1949–1968)

Amidst crippling financial troubles, Catherine Hill (who had remarried to become Catherine Rodda) handed over the reins of leadership to Deputy Principal, Dorothy Thompson. Despite these difficulties, this was also a time of optimism for the school as pupil numbers continued to increase and educational standards improved vastly.

Elements of the curriculum could be seen as almost revolutionary, given the times and the conservative nature of education under the National Party. Despite the restricted quota system on pupils of colour, to qualify for a government grant, the school was not prepared to impose this quota and claimed to be an "undenominational school… that endeavours to build religious tolerance and mutual respect among individuals and groups with differing points of view".

The Damelin Years (1968–1979)

As financial difficulties continued, the governors approached Dr Isaac Kriel, the principal and majority shareholder of the Damelin Group, to take over the ownership and management of the school, and in 1968, School B School officially came under the guidance of the Damelin Group in a widely publicised deal worth R300 000.

From that point, School B underwent fundamental changes under the leadership of these dedicated educationists. From a girls' school of 150 pupils, the numbers would increase over the next ten years to 630, including boys. Major progress would be made towards achieving academic excellence through a more traditional and rigorous approach to education. Dr Kriel and Mr Witt brought some excellent new teachers to School B from Damelin.

Change was constant at School B during this time, and while stricter, more formal policies were put into place, many of the core values would remain deeply entrenched. In 1969, Margaret Landers became the new Headmistress and brought with her some much-needed stability to the changing school dynamic with a stricter and more formal approach to education. During this time, Dr Kriel and Mr Witt recognised that co-education was "in keeping with modern educational principles, and enjoyed worldwide acceptance", and so in 1974, the first boys entered the Primary School.

In January 1975, the school year opened under the leadership of William Harrison, who was the first Headmaster in the school's history. Throughout the dramatic changes of the

1970s, however, one constant remained in the lives of the pupils: the caring and dedicated teachers that helped to build the School B Family. They were always prepared to put in many hours in the classroom and at home marking, preparing lessons and doing extra murals without seeking recognition.

Towards a Progressive Ideal (1979–1989)

Following a decision by Dr Kriel and Mr Witt to depart from School B, the school came under the care of a Trust, which was registered in July 1979, and a Board of Trustees under the Chairmanship of Mr PB Oertel came into being.

During this time, continuity in leadership created problems for the school until Jeremy Barnes was appointed as Headmaster in 1984 and the school came under the control of a truly dedicated and forward-thinking educationist. Roger Briggs was appointed in 1983 as the Principal of the Preparatory School and Jenny Stead took on the leadership of the nursery school. This core of dedicated leaders was well placed to take School B through the next decade of change.

During the course of the 1980s, a number of black students were admitted into School B and a scholarship scheme was established to provide scholarships for them despite laws restricting black children from attending what was considered by the government as a 'whites only' school. Another crucial cornerstone of School B's progressive educational philosophy was the notion of religious tolerance.

"Free to Build": Modernising the Campus (1991–2003)

After the departure of Roger Briggs and Jeremy Barnes, Ben Brooks was appointed as the new Headmaster, with Brian Mitchell taking over as the Principal of the Preparatory school, inheriting School B at a time when the country was about to enter the most significant period of change in its history.

As a result of a period of sustained stability, over the next decade, the school would be significantly remodelled in the most extensive and sustained building programme in its history. Despite the difficult task of finding high quality and experienced teaching staff, School B's ability to produce an innovative and excellent academic programme continued to be a feature of the 1990s. One of the key decisions made under Ben Brooks was to replace the state exam with the new IEB exam.

Towards the Future (2004–present)

After a challenging century, School B has weathered many storms and grown to become one of the leading educational institutions in South Africa. It has overcome times of economic and financial hardship to grow from modest beginnings to a financially stable, innovative and progressive school. Yet, during both difficult and prosperous times, it has always attracted dedicated teachers and educational leaders who were prepared to take risks and challenge the ordinary. Given the pace of technological and societal change, the need to embrace change as a constant and provide pupils with the skills to cope with it is vital. The promise of new growth and development and the willingness of the school's new leadership to embrace change suggest that the next century of School B School will be even better than the first.

Mr [Name of Headmaster] was appointed Executive Head of the Campus in 2015, leading School B into a future-focused educational environment.

The current Heads of School B are: [Name of Headmaster] (Executive Head and High School), [Name of Headmaster](Preparatory) and [Name of Headmistress] (Pre-Prep).

https://www.School B.co.za/curriculum/academiccurriculum/high-school

Appendix E: School A – Selected Literature taught

Grade 11		
Term 1	**Term 2**	**Term 3**
African/ Diaspora poetry (4) The Crucible Othello	Women's poetry (2) Matric poetry (3) Independent Reading Project The Tempest	Matric poetry (4) The evolution of the feminine identity in film (Birds of Prey & Promising Young Woman)

Poetry:

- Circumcision (Rafat)
- In vain I migrate (Laati)
- Love after Love (Walcott)
- Souvenir (Shire)
- If thou must love me (Barrett-Browning)
- Prayer (Duffy)
- To me, fair friend (Shakespeare)
- The Sun Rising (Donne)
- Go, lovely Rose (Waller)
- The Tenant (Ngulube)
- Ozymandias (Shelley)
- Touch (Lewin)
- Will it be so again? (Day)

Grade 10		
Term 1	**Term 2**	**Term 3**
African poetry (3) Purple Hibiscus	War poetry & Blake (4) Macbeth	Environmental poetry (3) Tsotsi

Poetry:

- The Zulu Girl (Campbell)
- An African Elegy (Okri)
- How not to stop (Baderoon)
- Dulce et Decorum Est (Owen)
- Flights In (Dawson)
- Assassination (Lee)
- The Tyger (Blake)
- West London (Arnold)
- Penguin on the beach (Miller)
- Binsey Poplars (Hopkins)

Grade 9		
Term 1	**Term 2**	**Term 3**
Decolonising Poetry & African Voices (3) Animal Farm	Women's poetry (3) Short stories (anthology)	Modernism Sonnet form in R&J Romeo and Juliet (play) Romeo and Juliet (film trailers)

Poetry:

- My Name (wa Selepe)
- De Souza Prabhu (De Souza)
- Da Same Da Same (Sepamla)
- Sisters (Clifton)
- Hope is the thing with feathers (Dickinson)
- The right word (Dharker)
- Sonnets from Romeo & Juliet
- Nobody loses all the time (cummings)
- This is just to say (Williams)

Grade 8		
Term 1	**Term 2**	**Term 3**
African poetry Speak	Women's poetry Shakespeare (Much Ado About Nothing)	Romantic haiku poetry & slam poetry (3) Film Study (Mwansa The Great)

Poetry:

- Tomorrow's Daughters (Mashile)
- a young man's thoughts before June 16th (Johennesse)
- Just Because (Dema)
- Poem for my mother (Davids)
- How poems are made (Walker)
- Phenomenal Woman (Angelou)
- I'm Nobody (Dickinson)
- Ode to Autumn (Keats)
- Haiku selection x 3
- My Shakespeare (Tempest)

Appendix F: School B – Literature taught (Grade 8 and Grade 9 were not supplied)

Grade 11

- Antony and Cleopatra
- Master Harold and the Boys
- The Matric Prescribed Poetry

Grade 10

- Othello
- The Song of Achilles
- A Thousand Splendid Suns
- W. H Auden selection
- Wilfred Owen Selection
- Carol-Ann Duffy Selection
- The Joker
- The Batman

Appendix G: Ethics Clearance Certificate



UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Research Office

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)
R14/49 Emant

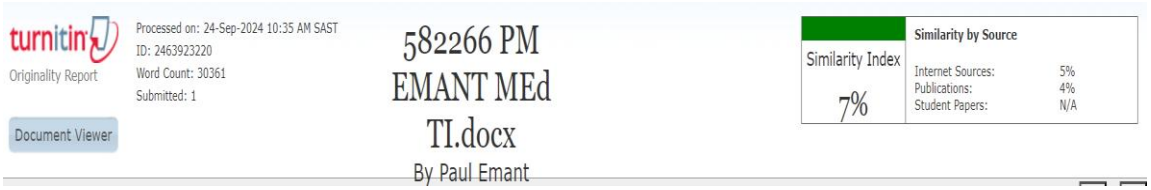
CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: H20/04/07**
PROJECT TITLE	An investigation into how school leaders interpret the concept of decolonisation in the English Syllabus and its impact on education policy: A case study of two independent schools in Johannesburg
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr P Emant
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Education/
DATE CONSIDERED	24 April 2020
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Permission letters required before data collection can commence Risk Level: Minimal
EXPIRY DATE	24 January 2024

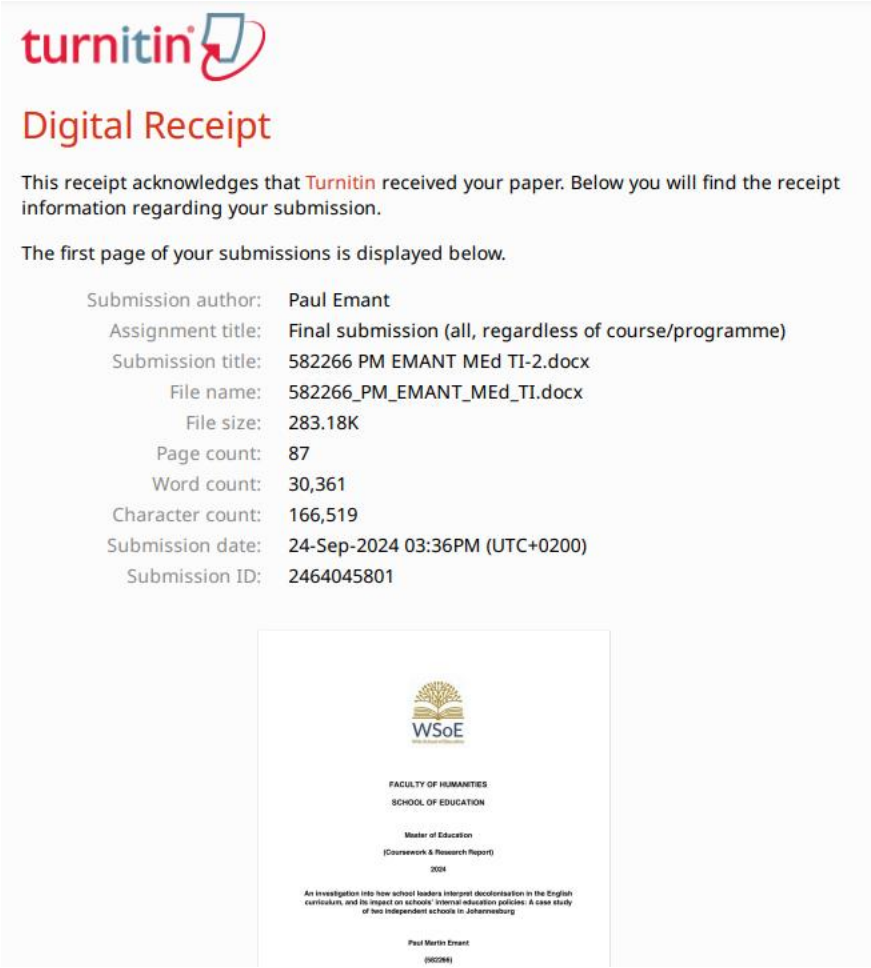
DATE 25 January 2021 **CHAIRPERSON** J. Knight

(Professor J Knight)

cc: Supervisor : Dr B Johnson

Appendix H: Turnitin Similarity Report





turnitin

Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

Submission author:	Paul Emant
Assignment title:	Final submission (all, regardless of course/programme)
Submission title:	582266 PM EMANT MEd TI-2.docx
File name:	582266_PM_EMANT_MEd_TI.docx
File size:	283.18K
Page count:	87
Word count:	30,361
Character count:	166,519
Submission date:	24-Sep-2024 03:36PM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID:	2464045801

WSoE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Master of Education
(Coursework & Research Report)
2024

An investigation into how school leaders interpret decolonisation in the English curriculum, and its impact on schools' internal education policies: A case study of two independent schools in Johannesburg

Paul Martin Emant
(582266)

Appendix I: Organisational Information Sheets (for each different sample group and/or instrument used).

FOR THE PRINCIPALS:

4 January 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Paul Emant and I am in my final, part-time year of a Master's in Education degree. I am specialising in transformation and diversity, focusing on decolonisation of literature texts through the School of Education at the University of Witwatersrand. Part of my university course involves conducting research on how members of the school's leadership team approach the decolonisation of literature texts in English.

My research involves interviewing your Deputy Head: Academics, Deputy Head: Transformation and Diversity and your Head of Department: English in an attempt to understand the measures that you as an independent school have put into place to decolonise the English literature texts.

I would like to invite your school to participate in this research as I believe that your school is a pivotal member of the ISASA community.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study and the participants will not be paid for their involvement.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and no research information and data will be disseminated.

Your individual privacy and that of your school will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. Further anonymity will be guaranteed through the use of assigned pseudonyms to be used in all written reports and transcripts. All raw data will be kept in a secure location, accessible only to me and not shared with anyone, throughout the duration of the study and then destroyed 3-5 years after the project has been completed.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Emant

Appendix J: Participant's Information Sheet

FOR THE ACADEMIC DEPUTY HEAD:

4 January 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Paul Emant and I am in my final, part-time year of a Master's in Education degree. I am specialising in transformation and diversity focusing on decolonisation of literature texts through the School of Education at the University of Witwatersrand. Part of my university course involves conducting research on how members of the school's leadership team approach the decolonisation of literature texts in English.

I have been given permission by your principal, Mr/Ms XXX to interview members of the school's leadership team, including Deputy Principals and Heads of Departments in an attempt to understand the impact of decolonisation on the texts taught in English.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research as I believe that your role within your school is pivotal to understanding the impact of decolonisation.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. You will be able to withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study and you will not be paid for their involvement.

Your name and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and no research information and data will be disseminated. Your individual privacy and that of your school will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. Further anonymity will be guaranteed through the use of assigned pseudonyms to be used in all written reports and transcripts. All raw data will be kept in a secure location, accessible only to me and not shared with anyone, throughout the duration of the study and then destroyed 3-5 years after the project has been completed.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response at your earliest convenience.

Appendix K: Participant's Information Sheet

FOR THE TRANSFORMATION AND DIVERSITY DEPUTY HEAD:

4 January 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Paul Emant and I am in my final, part-time year of a Master's in Education degree. I am specialising in transformation and diversity focusing on decolonisation of literature texts through the School of Education at the University of Witwatersrand. Part of my university course involves conducting research on how members of the school's leadership team approach the decolonisation of literature texts in English.

I have been given permission by your principal, Mr/Ms XXX to interview members of the school's leadership team, including Deputy Principals and Heads of Departments in an attempt to understand the impact of decolonisation on the texts taught in English.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research as I believe that your role within your school is pivotal to understanding the impact of decolonisation.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. You will be able to withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study and you will not be paid for their involvement.

Your name and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and no research information and data will be disseminated. Your individual privacy and that of your school will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. Further anonymity will be guaranteed through the use of assigned pseudonyms to be used in all written reports and transcripts. All raw data will be kept in a secure location, accessible only to me and not shared with anyone, throughout the duration of the study and then destroyed 3-5 years after the project has been completed.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response at your earliest convenience.

Appendix L: Participant's Information Sheet

FOR THE HEAD OF ENGLISH:

4 January 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Paul Emant and I am in my final, part-time year of a Master's in Education degree. I am specialising in transformation and diversity focusing on decolonisation of literature texts through the School of Education at the University of Witwatersrand. Part of my university course involves conducting research on how members of the school's leadership team approach the decolonisation of literature texts in English.

I have been given permission by your principal Mr/Ms XXX to interview members of the school's leadership team, including Deputy Principals and Heads of Departments in an attempt to understand the impact of decolonisation on the texts taught in English.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research as I believe that your role within your school is pivotal to understanding the impact of decolonisation.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. You will be able to withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study and you will not be paid for their involvement.

Your name and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and no research information and data will be disseminated. Your individual privacy and that of your school will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. Further anonymity will be guaranteed through the use of assigned pseudonyms to be used in all written reports and transcripts. All raw data will be kept in a secure location, accessible only to me and not shared with anyone, throughout the duration of the study and then destroyed 3-5 years after the project has been completed.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response at your earliest convenience.

Appendix M: Informed Consent:

Principal

4 January 2020

Decolonisation of the English Syllabus.

This letter serves to confirm that I have been informed of the abovementioned research project. I understand that the research project is a requirement of the Master of Education programme.

Further, I have seen evidence of the above project having received ethical clearance from the University of Witwatersrand (Protocol number XXX) and copies of the information sheets and consent forms.

It is understood that the participants' and institutions' identity will remain anonymous in all written reports and transcripts.

I hereby confirm that Paul Emant, Student Number (582266), may conduct research at this institution.

Signed:_____- Principal

Appendix N: Informed Consent:

Deputy Principal: ACADEMIC

4 January 2020

Decolonisation of the English Syllabus.

This letter serves to confirm that I have been informed of the abovementioned research project. I understand that the research project is a requirement of the Master of Education programme.

Further, I have seen evidence of the above project having received ethical clearance from the University of Witwatersrand (Protocol number XXX) and copies of the information sheets and consent forms.

It is understood that the participants' and institutions' identity will remain anonymous in all written reports and transcripts.

I hereby confirm that Paul Emant, Student Number (582266), may conduct research at this institution.

Signed:_____- Deputy Principal

Appendix O: Informed Consent:

Deputy Principal: Transformation and Diversity

4 January 2020

Decolonisation of the English Syllabus.

This letter serves to confirm that I have been informed of the abovementioned research project. I understand that the research project is a requirement of the Master of Education programme.

Further, I have seen evidence of the above project having received ethical clearance from the University of Witwatersrand (Protocol number XXX) and copies of the information sheets and consent forms.

It is understood that the participants' and institutions' identity will remain anonymous in all written reports and transcripts.

I hereby confirm that Paul Emant, Student Number (582266), may conduct research at this institution.

Signed:_____- Deputy Principal

Appendix P: Informed Consent:

Head of Department

4 January 2020

Decolonisation of the English Syllabus.

This letter serves to confirm that I have been informed of the abovementioned research project. I understand that the research project is a requirement of the Master of Education programme.

Further, I have seen evidence of the above project having received ethical clearance from the University of Witwatersrand (Protocol number XXX) and copies of the information sheets and consent forms.

It is understood that the participants' and institutions' identity will remain anonymous in all written reports and transcripts.

I hereby confirm that Paul Emant, Student Number (582266), may conduct research at this institution.

Signed:_____- Head of Department

Appendix Q: Reply

PRINCIPAL

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

An investigation into how school leaders interpret the concept of decolonisation in the English Syllabus and its impact for education policy: A case study of two independent schools in Johannesburg.

I, ____, holding the following position, __ give my consent for the following:

Permission to review/collect documents/artefacts	Circle one
I agree that the school's academic policy can be used for this study.	YES/NO
I agree that the schools' lists of taught texts can be used for this study.	YES/NO
Permission to be audiotaped	
I agree to be audiotaped during the interview.	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only.	YES/NO
Permission to be interviewed	
I would like to be interviewed for this study.	YES/NO
I know that I can stop the interview at any time.	YES/NO
I know that I don't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO

Informed consent:

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped.
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of the project

Appendix R: Reply

Deputy Head: Academics

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

An investigation into how school leaders interpret the concept of decolonisation in the English Syllabus and its impact for education policy: A case study of two independent schools in Johannesburg.

I, ____, holding the following position, __ give my consent for the following:

Permission to review/collect documents/artefacts	Circle one
I agree that the school's academic policy can be used for this study.	YES/NO
I agree that the schools' lists of taught texts can be used for this study.	YES/NO
Permission to be audiotaped	
I agree to be audiotaped during the interview.	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only.	YES/NO
Permission to be interviewed	
I would like to be interviewed for this study.	YES/NO
I know that I can stop the interview at any time.	YES/NO
I know that I don't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO

Informed consent:

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped.
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of the project

Appendix S: Reply

Deputy Head: Transformation and Diversity

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

An investigation into how school leaders interpret the concept of decolonisation in the English Syllabus and its impact for education policy: A case study of two independent schools in Johannesburg.

I, ____, holding the following position, __ give my consent for the following:

Permission to review/collect documents/artefacts	Circle one
I agree that the school's academic policy can be used for this study.	YES/NO
I agree that the schools' lists of taught texts can be used for this study.	YES/NO
Permission to be audiotaped	
I agree to be audiotaped during the interview.	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only.	YES/NO
Permission to be interviewed	
I would like to be interviewed for this study.	YES/NO
I know that I can stop the interview at any time.	YES/NO
I know that I don't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO

Informed consent:

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped.
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of the project

Appendix T: Reply

HOD: English

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to be a participant in my voluntary research project called:

An investigation into how school leaders interpret the concept of decolonisation in the English Syllabus and its impact for education policy: A case study of two independent schools in Johannesburg.

I, ____, holding the following position, __ give my consent for the following:

Permission to review/collect documents/artefacts	Circle one
I agree that the school's academic policy can be used for this study.	YES/NO
I agree that the schools' lists of taught texts can be used for this study.	YES/NO
Permission to be audiotaped	
I agree to be audiotaped during the interview.	YES/NO
I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only.	YES/NO
Permission to be interviewed	
I would like to be interviewed for this study.	YES/NO
I know that I can stop the interview at any time.	YES/NO
I know that I don't have to answer all the questions asked.	YES/NO

Informed consent:

I understand that:

- My name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my school will not be revealed.
- I do not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- I can ask not to be audiotaped.
- All the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Appendix U: Copy of Proposed Research Instruments

(e.g. questionnaires/interview schedules).

Interview questions:

Some suggested semi-structured questions to ask the participants being interviewed. The questions asked will act as prompts and are determined by the initial responses of the person being interviewed.

A: Background/operational prompts

- How long have you been involved in education?
- Can you explain your role in the structure of the school's leadership team?
- Describe your schools' involvement in transformation, diversity, and decolonisation. How would you define each term?
- Explain your understanding of decolonisation.
- Have you received any training from your school/ISASA in terms of transformation and diversity or decolonisation?

B: Viewpoint/specific to theme

- Describe your dept/school's approach to decolonisation of the English Syllabus.
- How does your department select taught texts? Explain the process of selection of texts.
- Do the texts taught represent the demographics of your school? How would you describe the demographics of your school?
- What support do you receive from your school in terms of understanding decolonisation?
- How has decolonisation been embedded into your English department's selection of texts?
- How has decolonisation been embedded into your school's academic policy?
- Has there been any pressure from your students/staff either in support/against decolonisation of texts?
- Can you explain how various texts taught reflect decolonisation? (Or not?)
- How would you describe the role of your English department in decolonising?

Appendix V: Academic Deputy – School A

PE: Hello.
TO: Hi, PE
PE: How are you?
TO: I'm ok. How are you?
PE: Ja. I'm good. How's your week been?
TO: Um, endlessly sitting in my office while girls write prelims.
PE: Aww, my word. I can't believe you do it now.
TO: So we started on Monday. So the only good thing is that I'm finished marking my section of English paper 1, because I've just been sitting here marking, every day. So ja, we started on Monday with English paper 1, and, ja, today's geography, which is why I'm here till four, because the extra time is, you know, add like hours on. Um, and ja, we write Friday Saturday, and, for another three weeks after that.
PE: That's amazing. So you guys obviously have finished the syllabus.
TO: Most subjects have. Um, science, never finishes the syllabus, (laughter), and, maths um, sometimes has a little bit to do but the other subjects are all finished.
PE: That's amazing, TO. That's absolutely amazing. Ja. Ja.
TO: Oh please. Um…oh, um, it is, uh, k—it's got one chapter to go and, I don't—I haven't, spoken to [MT] for I dunno how long. 2020 just absolutely derailed it. Combination of Covid//
PE: //Hmm.
TO: //and, new job, and, uh, you know, all the stuff. And I had this, lovely tiny little package about, I can't even remember some aspect of ethical leadership and managing diversity. And literally, I couldn't even go back to it//
PE: Hmm.
TO: //the way that it is. It's, like it was so upended by everything that happened in independent schools. And I actually don't even know if I want to go back to it and the ironic thing was, I was doing it, because I didn't think I was qualified, to move up. (laughter) And I got the deputy, using a whole lot of stuff from my M actually in all the writing (laughter) that I had to do. And now I got the job, that I

thought I wanted, without the M. So I dunno. I, like the idea of studying, but I'm not sure I'd ever actually go back to, writing about, managing diversity.

PE: Ja. I//

TO: //It's the last thing I want to do, quite (laughter) frankly.

PE: No. I get you. I absolutely, get//

TO: //And it//

PE: //get you. And—and, the only reason I'm, doing this is I, actually want the qualification. And I want it done. But, 2020, derailed me as well. And then, 2021, I got back into it in the April holidays, thinking, I'll be able to finish the last bit in the August holidays. And of course Covid hit again//

TO: //Ja. No//

PE: // and then, we extended our prelims into the August holidays and we marked throughout. And then, it was just chaos and then this year with my new job, I thought, April I'll be able to—April, what a pleasure. Do it April. I was flattened, flattened. And I—I actually sent, [BJ] an email, about a month ago saying, "I'm still here. I haven't forgotten". And she then during the holidays sent me a message saying, "Howzit going?" And my—my new deputy who I appointed at the beginning of the second term is busy with her PhD, and she sat me down and she said, "You actually have to do this."

TO: Mm.

PE: And so, I'm determined. I'm absolutely determined//

TO: //I haven't, I mean, we've got very different supervisors I haven't heard from my supervisor, since 2020.

PE: Ja.

TO: I sent some emails, and said, he's just—I don't even know if he's still at [Wits]. Maybe he is (laughter). I—uh—ja. So I dunno. I need to, just, uh for me 2021 was much worse than 2020. It was the most, terrible year.

PE: But that was your first year in the job, wasn't it?

TO: No my first year was 2020//

PE://Oh. Ok.

TO: But 2021 at [our school] was a very bad year. And, I mean ja at the end of last year I was like, "I don't think I'm going back. Um, I think I'm just gonna go and find a nice English post somewhere." (laughter).//

PE://(laughter)

TO: //And then I came back. Um, but I'm, just surviving term by term.
PE: No. I get you and I'm sorry//
TO: //And//
PE: //I'm sorry you're surviving term by term because you're amazing.
TO: It's ja. I—I think things s—are better this year? Um, you know [Headmistress], we were looking for a head last year and we couldn't find a head and [Headmistress] was also, struggling last year. So, we'll see.
PE: Ja.
TO: But, I mean I've survived two terms, and, I will survive the third term and, I have a daughter in Matric next year.
PE: Wow.
TO: Um//
PE://Wow//
TO: //You saw her at the dance.
PE: Yes, I did. I chatted to her. I said, "Where your parents?" and she was horrified, she was like, "They're busy."//
TO: //There you go. Uh, eh, well, you see "Everybody was more concerned about you than me." So I was like, "Just relax [S]//
PE:///(laughter)//
TO: Um, but she had fun. And, ja so we'll—we'll see how it goes but my youngest, has chosen not to do [Our school].
PE: Oh really?
TO: So, um. She wants to go t—to [another school], which I totally support. But it's also gonna be some changes for me next year…having a child at another school and having to organise that. Um, so we'll just see.
PE: Ja. And you know what we've got the luxury of time, I think.
TO: Yes. And, ja. I will, just, and, ja. I, put my s—[Headmistress] forbade me to mark but I'm marking anyway. But I haven't told her yet.
PE: (laughter). I'm glad you marking it means you can—you can continue being an expert and—and a senior, senior at the end of the year.
TO: Well I just—she—cause—uh—um, she said to me "No you know it takes too much of my holiday" and whatever but, I love marking and I—you know, last year when I wasn't even sure I was coming back to [Our school], actually the little bit that I got in February was quite nice.

PE: Ja.
TO: So I said, “You know I need to do it for my peace of mind and my, kind of…my reassurance that I’m still an English person.”
PE: Yes.
TO: It’s our passion//
PE://You know, that’s//
TO: //That’s our passion//
PE://Ja//
TO: And not just a, you know…IEB administrator, which is what I do a lot of the time.
PE: (laughter)
TO: So, she said “Ok but don’t do it again.” So I said “Well, we’ll see.” And//
PE://(laughter)//
TO: //I’m not gonna… anyway. What can I do for you?
PE: Listen, TO, I mean as with yours, I’m gonna ask you a whole bunch of questions, um, feel free to mention names and school and I will, delete that appropriately//
TO: //Ja. ok//
PE: So that’s not a problem. Um, and I’ve deliberately not sent the questions out, because I want them off-the-cuff, and then we can always circle back, if that’s what you want to do//
TO: //Ja. Sure//
PE://Or, afterwards if you think there things I should’ve asked you or things you want to say you welcome, to do that, as well.
TO: Perfect. Perfect//
PE://Ok. Cool. So, i—in—in terms of questions I’d like you to explain for me, the process of the creation of your academic policy. So tell me about your academic policy and—and the processing which it—or the process it went through in terms of its creation.
TO: K so ours is, a little different in fact it’s interesting because we’re having, um, uh—I think you are as well I saw [another deputy]...the new iteration of, ISASA, s—um, they used to be IQAA.
PE: Ja, ah—OEISESA.

TO: What a—yes, so, they're coming to see us, in, like a week's time. Um so I've been looking—I've been thinking about all these documents. They haven't told us what they want yet. S—probably we have training and then, but we don't, actually have, an academic policy.

What we have more, and I'm happy to share it with you because it's a public document. We have, uh—it's, k—a philosophy…of…where we see ourselves as an academic institution. And so, it was actually, it was drawn up in collaboration, by the board, and by, some members of staff. And I was one of those members of staff. Quite a few years ago, it must be, ah…it's definitely more than five years old and it—it is looked at, but what it really is is it's—it's kind of—it's a statement, of what we see our role as, as a South African school, as an independent school, as an Anglican school as a girl's school. And it speaks to all the, the values that we have. Um, and, sort of, what our intentions are. Uh—I mean they—they're very, um, kind of lofty ideals. But it's more about ideals then about, kind of the day-to-day running of academics in the school. And as I say it's—it's a document that's on our website we share it with all our parents. And interestingly enough, I had to write a lot to it, when I applied for the deputy post. Um, they asked me to, to look at, which principles I thought were really important, um, in terms of being the head of academics at the school. Um and, I—I looked at things, um, in terms of like —sort of, critical thinking and opening our girls', minds up to, things outside of the [Our school] bubble. Um, and, also the role of teachers, uh—in terms of the institution, and how teachers need to be supported because no academics happens without teachers being at the centre of things I really believe that. Um, so…that's how it came—then what happens is, is that every time we do our strategic planning, so the board does a five year strategic planning, process, they relook—we've got two central policies. It's the religious, sort of…um, uh—I can't remember tha—their official name, but it's something like the um, kind of the religious standing of [Our school] and then, the, educational standing of [Our school] and those two documents are looked at, whenever we do, the, whole five year strategic planning cycle.

PE: Ok. So you mentioned the board and the staff. Did the kids have any input into the academic policy?

TO: No. It was just board and staff. To be perfectly honest I don't even know if the, kids know that it exists. I mean they have access to it.

TO: Um, but, their...the—they—they give a lot of input, on academics. But they—with them it tends to be very much like the here and now. So they will tell us about assessment, at SRC for examples. I'm, one of the teacher reps at SRC for my sins. Um, or they will—with them it—it's…they, it's quite sad to say this but um, they don't do a lot of big picture. They do a lot of 'what affects us, right here and right now'. Um, in 2020, they, some of the girls did a lot of 'we need to decolonise', um and they brought that to the fore um in the, surveys that they filled in and the feedback that they gave us. Um, but, that was almost like a momentary thing, and now it's kind of, disappeared. Not that we not constantly relooking at our curriculum or what we're doing. But that was the only time I've seen the girls do big picture, was actually 2020. Otherwise it's kind of 'what's gonna affect us now and what's gonna get us multiple As so that we can go to [UCT]'.

PE: Ja. Absolutely. A—in terms of their comments around decolonisation, what were they picking up on in the academic policy?

TO: Um. So, they felt that…and it was only…it was the older girls. It was uh, um, definitely the girls who were in, Form four, in 2020. Because I—we [Headmistress] and I had a lot of interaction with the SRC. And, um, they were, invited. We had a big survey that was done by [an external consultant], and they did a big survey of parents, and of the girls, and of the staff, around all sorts of issues to do with diversity, um, sort of, the climate at the school. And the—from four girls, said that they felt we needed um, a more decolonised curriculum, we were still a colonial institution, we needed to, look at setworks, we needed to look at all sorts of things. And, I wasn't defensive about it but when I said to them "Look at what you doing in drama, look at what you doing in art, look at what you doing in English, um, and tell us, what more you want"...//

PE://Hm//

TO: //…They, all they could really talk about—who took that on board was, looking perhaps at what was happening in Form one, in terms of setworks. Because, um we were still doing kind of A Midsummer Night's Dream, we were doing Speak as a novel, which I think was, interesting and relevant. It wasn't South African but it really it—it dealt with interesting issues. But I think they just felt that, we, put a lot of en—like sort of energy, into Form three four and five, and

TO: Form one and two needed some attention. So, that's what we did// Ok//
TO: //and, things have changed quite a bit there. But when they reflected on what they were actually doing in Form three four and five, they, were actually, ended up being quite happy with what they were doing.
PE: Hmm.
TO: And I think that—that's—that's not—I'm—I'm not sort of basking in [Our school] glory there. I think that the IEB isn't a perfect institution…but, it has addressed that sort of quite consciously I think.
PE: Mmm//
TO: //cause I—I get to, check the prelim papers. And I mean I see what they're doing, you know in art, and, um, you know if you look at a subject like geography I've just handed out the geography prelim. It really is a South African centred Africa centred, paper. But it doesn't neglect the fact that, they need to have knowledge, of the outside world as well//
PE://Hmm. Hmm//
TO: //But, ja I—I'm…I think…I—I think that, they had some interesting things to say about, languages—oh, something else that's interesting is um…there was, in terms of decolonisation we do have a certain group of our girls, who don't even—and it sounds quite dramatic but they can't understand why Afrikaans exists at [Our school]...Um, and that's something that, we need to explain. I think that we have a very very good, head of Afrikaans who doesn't get defensive about it at all and is happy to have these conversations, and we, brought some new teachers on board. And…there's a much better attitude towards Afrikaans than there was, a while ago. Cause we did have girls making statements like "It's the language of oppression. Why do we even have it at [Our school]". Um, but, I—I think Afrikaans, i—in its own way can be quite a progressive subject as well. And, our HODs, is working with that. So that was really what came up around the decolonisation.
PE: Ok. Um, do—obviously you offer African, languages.
TO: Yes.
PE: So how//
TO: //isiZulu and Sesotho.
PE: Ok. But that's quite progressive in terms of Sesotho.

TO: It is and, um, it's, a tiny subject and to be perfectly honest and I don't think [Headmistress] would mind saying this—me saying to you. Because if you just—if you look at the size of the classes, um, it's not an economically, sound idea…but, we regard it as an ethically, sound choice. So, I mean, our, matric, Sesotho class is seven…Um…but we don't say, because of the numbers, we shutting the subject down.//

PE://Hmm

TO: We, have always offered Sesotho, um we have excellent Sesotho teachers. We have two Sesotho teachers, um for the—um [Sepati] the one teacher also teaches some French. Um, and…it's a tou—uh— I mean there only I think eight schools in the IEB that do Sesotho//

PE://Hmm

TO: It's, a tiny subject. Um, it's not always an easy subject to manage because there's so few schools doing it. But we've done it, for as long as I've been at [Our school]. I think we've been offering Sesotho for 20 years probably.

PE: Oh, wow. Mkay//

TO: //And, then, isiZulu for even longer than that because it—Sesotho was established, we had a matric class when I came 16 years ago. So, it must have been going for 20 years//

PE://Ja. Ok. Good. So, as the—as the academic head, how do you, enforce the academic policy? And—and what I mean by that and— and enforce perhaps is a strong word, but—but how do you then liaise with your HODs around decolonisation?

TO: So, I think that…probably, what I've been told (laughter) by [Headmistress]. My strength—look—my strength as—as an academic head does not

TO: lie in my Excel spreadsheets. Um, that was the previous, deputy who was, amazing when it came to that sort of thing. Um, what I have managed to do I think because I was an HOD for so many years, is that I—I can say, confidently that, on the whole I have good relationships, with my—my HODs. Um, they were very, shaken by 2020. They really were. Um, I think a lot of—it's not just [Our school]. They were—I had—we had teachers and—and HODs who were, feeling very vulnerable, who were, very scared, um, and, what we did is, I've been giving—it's been lead—it was lead originally by the English department. The idea of, demystifying, decolonisation.

Because actually, it's a word. And, there are a million different interpretations of what decolonisation is, um, and so the English department, oh it's, probably…I have to think…more than five years ago, six years ago seven years ago. We started looking at it in terms of, decolonisation, being—looking at the voices, that we, have in our classrooms and, who's heard, who's read, who's listened to, and who's relegated to the margins, and so we started trying to model that, in the English department, in terms of just, and it wasn't this, I—I'm a very incremental person you know me, um, I'm cautious and, I like processes. So it wasn't like we are chucking everything out and rethinking our curriculum. It was every year, it's kind of like let's see what we're doing. What can we do in terms of comprehension passages? What can we do in terms of our setworks? Um, rethinking the same poetry in Form four for a long time. What can we do about our Form four poetry? Um, and so it was never for, the sake of doing it. It was always, this is, in the girls' interests, this is gonna give us a better curriculum, but this is also gonna work, to rethink the canon. And, then we started speaking to other departments, and, we presented to other departments and we kind of showed them what was going on. Um [a teacher] did a lot of amazing work, and then she and I—before I became academic head, we started the conversation going, um, and actually, um, there were a lot of HODs, who were very open to it. Even before I became academic head. And then, what we re—we—we speak all the time and—and we have meetings and some of my HOD meetings that I lead are, very administrative. These are the deadlines, this is what's gotta come in here, it's—and sometimes they more about, what are we doing in terms of our c—our curriculum? What would we like to change? And, I meet—HODs are very happy to come and sit on my couch in my office, and to say, "I'm thinking about doing this next year. What do you think about it? I'd like to send my staff on this course, to do this." And I ma—one, really good thing about [Our school] is…if you need, academic resources, they are always there for you. So when

TO: people wanna read things, when people wanna go on courses, um, when people wanna bring materials into the classroom for the girls, [Headmistress] will always sign off on it. Um, so, I've never had to enforce. Um—I'm—I think we lucky//

PE://Mm//

TO: //We…I mean, even…like our maths—ok—eh—uh—you've got subjects like maths and science that you would say, there's not much we can do. But the science department—even the science department for example, will, look at, perhaps not the content but the methodology…and will say "How can we change things slightly here so that, maybe we have something that's more collaborative." Or, for life sciences "We're looking at something that is, South African-based or, we're, visiting somewhere." And so, there very few departments, who actually aren't open to, experimenting and changing things. And then, I have a conversation, with at least every HOD every year, and we talk about next year and what do they need and what are they doing. Um, and it's actually, there lots of things that are stressful at [Our school] but, working, on innovating curriculum, is not one of them//

PE://Mm. Hmm. I think you very lucky in that regard.

TO: I think I am. I think, um I mean when I think of, every single department um…I can't tell you that there's one department, that, fight back and, you know, who aren't open to doing things. They'll fight with you about other things. Like the science department is, I've never met a department that protects its time to such an extent.

They will literally fight you on five minutes. When we went from a six day cycle—from a five day cycle to a six day cycle…um, [a teacher] who does—who works on the timetable with me, [a teacher] had to work out for them, how much time they would have for their entire year, and had to show them that they would actually gain time. But then they worked out that although they gained time in 2021, they were gonna lose time in 2022. We actually went back to the five day cycle and said, "What's it worth, having that fight with them?" Um, so they will fight you on time…um, but, would have actually very exciting discussions around curriculum. I mean we've just decided we, looking at what we doing with art music and um, drama in form one, um, kind of like modules and things and, people are just, excited to try it.//

PE://Mm

TO: So, that's a positive//

PE://Mm//

TO: //about the [Our school] staff.

PE://Hm. Um, TO you mentioned, 2020, uh I'm assuming you're—you're referring to, Black Lives Matter and sort of the fallist movements, before that or around that time. Um, what kind of pressures did that give in terms of curriculum, and were the pressures only from the girls or were they from parents and the board and old girls?

TO: So, ja um, so where they—they were, as I said more from the—in fact from the parents than the girls because the girls, um, so—so what happened at [Our school], uh, you pro—I mean, it was very similar to (INAUDIBLE 25:40) Girls is that we were all off campus. Um, Covid hit, everybody was, on social media and online and then, um it started with the [Natal schools] and then [a CT school], the—the boys brought out that petition, and then, our—our head girl of 2018, did an Instagram Live, with, a friend of hers and, slammed the school. And that, picked off everything at [Our school], because then she wrote the school and [Headmistress], made the letter public to the whole community. And, while, that was happening, un…benownst to, me or [Headmistress], um with the support of, the member of staff who's, a deputy who's, not with us she—she was—she chose to go somewhere else, she encouraged the girls to start, a Google form, and they anonymously made all sorts of accusations. And, um…on that Google form were a few things about, curriculum. It was more accusations against staff but once that happened, um, it blew everything up and then, we had um, a group that was formed called The Parents of Black Girls, and, they, had a lot to say about curriculum and in fact, one of the more, terrifying moments of 2020 was when, they wanted a—a panel discussion, from web…inar, and, [Headmistress] said that I should represent the school, and, with [a teacher] who was the junior school academic head. Um, we were terrified, because I mean that was the stage where girls were naming teachers and, um, that twisted our arm, and they had, um, they— they brought in academics and all sorts of people. Um…but it actually worked surprisingly well, and we got, a lot of really positive reinforcement from parents after it. There were about—there were hundreds of them on the webinar, it was quite terrifying. Um, and

TO: so, I think that there's always room, to look at curriculum, but also, and this is, um, I, really believe this, a lot of the parents didn't know, what we were actually doing. So they were saying things like "And you're still teaching Shakespeare!". And we're like "Yes we do teach Shakespeare, but we also do

[this] and we do [this] and we do [that]" and, I wasn't angry or aggressive with them but I was saying "But if you look at—this is what we're doing" and they're like "Oh." Um, because the girls, tell them a little bit but not everything and, until 2020 they weren't actually concerned about curriculum. So it was, a matter of, looking at the curriculum but also a matter of informing parents. And so we've been, much better about that. We even have an evening where our grade 6 parents, in the third term, come to the senior school, and I chat to them, about what the curriculum looks like in the high school, which we never used to do, but it's come like—yes it's an IEB curriculum, but we have certain flexibility and so we do this and, and this is our self-esteem course and this is how that works and, some of the things that we look at there, um, and, we just, we need to keep telling what we're doing, and we feature a lot more things in the newsletter now. Um, and, we've—we actually haven't had, complaints or, um, sort of demands that we change//

PE://(cough)//

TO: //the curriculum, at all, this year. Um, but I don't think we were communicating well enough, and they had a very, set idea of what we were doing, um, and it was, very very important, that we actually, communicated better.

PE: Hmm. Ok.

TO: I think we got a bit complacent.

PE: Uh, could I ask you to, define for me transformation, diversity, and decolonisation?

TO: Huh! Ok. I'll go—I'll go backwards. Ok so decolonisation and this is just, this is my perspective, it's really about, changing the narrative. So, in the past there was a narrative and it was, a white, male, Christian, straight, narrative, uh—with a whole lot of adjectives added to it, and it's about saying, not to disregard, those forces, but also to open up the narrative so that what happens in our classroom, we've got multiple voices, we're centering different people and different voices and, we're not replacing one narrative with another

TO: narrative. It's about opening it up. So, um, in terms of, the poetry that we study or—we look at for example I'm just using (INAUDIBLE 21:00) as an example, but we look at form one, to form five. And we've got very little control over what happens in form five, but until the third term of form four, we can

choose. And so, if you look at what we're doing ten years ago and you look at what we're doing now, there are a whole lot of different voices being heard and, I think that's important. So then, that's, your, um…your tra—your decolonisation…Um…diversity…I don't think diversity is a numbers game…It's easy to say that diversity is a numbers game. You've got so many, girls of this colour and so many girls of, um, this culture and so many girls of this religion we're diverse. It's not about that it's about, I think diversity, is about…(sighs), having a school, in which girls who are very different in many ways, can feel comfortable, and feel acknowledged. Um, and it's much harder than it sounds. But, we, in the past—I mean here's a, true story for you. [my daughter]—[said to my other daughter] said to [my daughter] so my little, my younger child said to my older child "What is the [Our school] motto…mean?" And, [my daughter] was, like in grade, 6 or 7, and she said, "Tall blonde and sporty." But [my daughter] is not tall, she's not blonde and she's not sporty. And, that's just one way a—of, looking at what [Our school] used to be. There was a very model [Our school] girl, and now it's about having a whole lot of different girls and a whole lot of different staff, and a whole lot of different parents, and, making space for all of them, so that [Our school] is their school as well. I think that's real diversity. And then, transformation…(heavy sigh) it's…it's change. But I don't think you ever get to the end of it…I don't think you can say oh we're a transformed school because we're now 70 percent black, or—or whatever the story is. Um that's—it's—it's a very crude way of doing things. Um, you can, transform all you want but, um, just having the right, faces on, your website doesn't mean you're a transformed school. I—uh—transformation is about change and it's about changing, it's looking, you see because I'm me, like, it's looking calmly and slowly and thoughtfully…at everything that makes up a school. So, um, I like the fact, bringing it back (laughter) to my children again, I like that fact that my child in grade 7, is the only Jewish child in her grade, but she is head of the chapel band. So, because, she loves music, and she's a very good organiser, um, and it's the first time we've ever had a head of chapel band who, isn't Christian. But, I think it's a tiny little bit of transformation that happens every Tuesday morning, when the junior school goes to chapel, with [my daughter] that, is heading the chapel band. It's looking at um, it's not just curriculum and it's not just, how diverse your staff

TO: and your kids are. It's about, um, your institutional culture. It's about what is sung in chapel, and what languages are used in chapel. Um if I compare a chapel service now to a chapel service 15 years ago//

PE://Hmm//

TO: // it is completely different. Um, it's about, uh, we—we—you know what we looking at now—this might sound ridiculous, we had a, long discussion, um, about the honour's boards, in our hall…and about the fact that for many many many years, hockey, tennis and swimming, were the only captains that were on the walls. And, now we've got, you know all sorts of other thin—we've got netball which we introduced to the school about, 20 years ago. Um, we've got, athletics we've got basketball, but it's—what are we saying if we've got, 90 years of those three sports being displayed all over the place, and only 10 years of another sport. Do we need to have all those sports? We don't wanna—we're not saying we gonna burn the boards or hide the boards. But, let's think about the boards that are in the hall. So to me transformation is, looking at, every aspect of— of what makes up your school, and just, kind of saying, what has changed and what needs to change? Sorry very long answer.

PE: No, stunning//

TO: //You give me such hard words to define//

PE: No. Stunning answer. Thank you. So, y—you know I liked your comment around, sort of the narrative and the culture, of the school, and, you're a girls only school, with a, you know, multiplicity of students from different backgrounds and, you know some who identify as girls and some who identify as non-binary and all of those sort of things. So how do we create a school, that includes all of those narratives?

TO: So, well we start with a policy of course. Cause don't schools always start with policies? (laughter) So we have, a gender policy. Um, and, here we've been different to other schools in that, we…still see ourselves as, a girls' school. Interestingly enough, we haven't changed our language. Um, we still use she and her, unless we are requested not to. In which case, we are happy to change pronouns, um, we're very open to it. But this, must be requested—come from the girls and the parents in terms of official documents. Um, we, have said that we are there to support, students, no matter what

TO: journey they find themselves on. Um, we are, open to discussions um, we will help them navigate, sort of whatever path they find themselves on. But, we are, a girls' school. We—ha—are doing things like we've moved uniform, we've moved to the pants for winter, and we looking at the summer uniform. Um, not that we gonna make a change next term, but, we wanna be ready, when we need to be. Um, we…ah—it's quite—exciting—our gender policy which we devised a few years ago, was one of the first gender policies the—that actually came out and then we were consulted by schools all over the place. But it's—it's—it's just a kind of—it's quite a broad document. It says that we remain a girls' school…but…people—everybody's welcome…and we will provide the support and guidance that people need. We'll, consult, but, know that you are coming, to a girls' school because actually, there's still a lot of work to be done, in terms of girls, and what they need as well. Um, so, uh—but we get, it—it's become—it's really interesting PE how, this year especially…um, the questions that we're getting from grade 7 parents. They've been, um…you won't use this in your…(laughter) in your, um, dissertation but, [another Johannesburg school], has spooked parents. And [Richard Wilkinson], who I'm sure you follow, has spooked parents. And, um, parents want to know. Um I dunno what they think's gonna happen in the bathrooms, you know? But um, lots and lots of parents, anxious, quite angry in some ways. Um, they want reassurance that this is a girls' school, but they do—they—even aspects of our policy that, they're not quite comfortable with. And we're kind of like, "Well, this is who we are. And we're not shutting anyone out."

PE: Mm.

TO: And we will deal with—also, it's a matter of dealing with things on a case-to-case basis, because…you know we can, we—we have students who, will definitely decide, that, no, they—they really are not, a girl they are a boy and, they gonna take very serious steps in the future. But we also have a whole lot of girls, who are—will tell you one day, that they're this, and their pronoun is that and literally a week later, will tell you something else. And we're just—for them we're like "Ok. That's fine. That's great." But, there's also a whole continuum. Um, we—they raised the issue the girls—interesting they wanted pronoun badges…So, we were like "Ok. We're—we're open to pronoun badges." Um, we have a new deputy [name redacted], who came from [another school], and she

said they had name badges at [another school], and, they found them very very useful, and she said

TO: that they had—each grade, had a colour, and so that you knew what form the child was in, you knew the name. Um, it was a much bigger school than [Our school] so she said, “Why don’t we do name and pronoun?.” And, the girls interestingly enough didn’t want names, they just wanted the pronouns and we were like “Ok. Um, you realise that this is something then that, your parents would also need to sign off on?” And they were like, “Oh.”...And then we said also, “You must—you’ll have to make a decision.” And they were like “But, can’t we just change?” And we’re like, “No, this is more serious than this.” And then, that was it and they were like “Ok, we gonna go away and think about this.” So we said “Ok. We’ll have the discussion with you but we’re also—we still have to, the school needs to run in some ways.”//

PE://Hm//

TO: So, we just navigate these things all the time.

PE: Hm. There’s definitely a flexibility in terms of your role. Yes// //And then adaptability and a resilience.

TO: Uh well, I—d—I’m, not the most flexible person on the planet, um, as you know. But um…we—I mean we’ve also got good people on management.

PE: Hm//

TO: //Um, and I don’t have to do it all. Um, I—I’m…I’m really interested in…I say—in—in the curriculum I get very excited when, we doing new and interesting things. Um, and then, I just help other people, with things that they, need to do. And ultimately I mean, you’re interviewing me, but…uh—you—what the boss has to deal with is on, another level//

PE://Mm.

TO: It really is. Mm.

TO: Um, because ultimately…I can still go to her. (laughter) She doesn’t have anyone to go to//

PE://Ja. Sure. Um, TO those are the—the—the end of—or that is the end of my list of questions. Is there anything else you want to add in terms of the topic around decolonisation, the academic policy staff.//

TO: //Mmm. Um…so…ud—I’m just thinking. I think that what’s interesting is that, what I find useful, um and it’s quite interesting is the Jewish deputy, but, I find

that, what really, helps me to root myself…is, when I look at our religious policy strangely enough in that, our core values at [Our school], are love community integrity. And so much of what we do academically, and, I…hope I'm not sounding ridiculously sentimental cause I'm the least sentimental person on the plant but, so much of what we do academically…actually, if I think about…is this something, that I can see as being, good for the community? Is this done, not always in the spirit of love but in a—a positive way and a kind way? And, I'm always very concerned about, am I doing the right thing? Is there integrity in terms of the decisions that we're making? That actually guides, a lot of the things that have to happen around academics, as well. And, so often we've like—were sitting around the ma—by ye— management and we're but, debating things and getting crosser and crosser and then, we come back to the values, and that actually helps us, make a lot of decisions. For example like keeping Sesotho, is not, in any way a practical thing to do. Um, one English teacher in one class teaches more students than the whole of the Sesotho department put together. But I think that it's good for the community. And I think that it's, something that is kind of morally right. So there, an academic decision is actually rooted in, the [Our school] values.

PE: Mm//

TO: //So that's, an interesting perspective which, I don't—you know maybe it's because we're an Anglican school. Um…and I think also, what we do at [Our school], all our policies are reviewed annually, and that includes what happens in academics. Um, and something that we're finding more and more and more of a headache academically and which I spend far too much time policing, is around, academic integrity…Um…it's actually shocking, the—the lengths our girls will go to, um, to avoid doing work. So we have, it sounds, it's—it's,

TO: insane. It's like, a criminal investigation rather than it being a, you know, an intellectual being. I spend my life tightening up on plagiarism policies, (laughter) punishments for cheating, um, doctor's letters if you're absent…because, we are, it's actually horrifying, what is going on in schools at the moment. And that goes against all our values. So I spend an, extraordinarily large amount of time, inserting those sort of things into our policies now.//

PE://Mm//

TO: //Um I've just rewritten, our, 'What happens if you are absent for a test or exam', because…um, we spent, Covid upended all of that so the girls, realised that it was so much better just to be absent and take, and take an absent rather than…um, coming to school and writing because, the previous policy under the, previous deputy was, 'If you are, absent, for, an exam or test'—well, not exam as such but tests—for tests, 'you get an absent. You don't rewrite another time you just get an absent'. But they realised that that was actually great. If they'd written one test that term and got 85 much better to get an absent for the second one. So then I instituted that no you need to bring, a doctor's letter, if you are absent for a test. That worked quite well, until, they realised that there are doctors who will just backdate things. So they will miss and three weeks later the doctor will write it and say, "I was informed that she was ill." So now I would have to put an end to those. Because, we saw, the pictures of the child in Cape Town, when she—posedly she was on her deathbed, um and missed, her IT exam. So…it's that sort of thing as well which is, that's the stuff that drives me mad.//

PE://Hm//

TO: // Because it's not to do with, ideas, it's to do with being sick and//

PE://Mm//

TO: //…a large part of being an academic deputy is policing, which is sad. Mm.

PE: Absolutely. Absolutely//

TO: //Yeah, so I should be thinking about decolonisation and transformation, and I'm thinking about, how to get the girls to school to write their tests.

PE: Mm. Sound like the—the academic head needs a deputy to help with the admin.

(sigh) Yes. I do. And my, lovely assistant has just left. Oh no.

TO: The person who used to, [name of teacher], who was my right-hand person who, actually taught at [another school]. She was a maths teacher, but nothing made [name of teacher] happier, then, admin. And nothing made her sadder than dealing with human beings. So she, had asked [name of teacher] before [name of teacher] ever left could she start working on the timetable, um and she was [name of teacher] assistant so then when [name of teacher] left she became, the mechanical timetable person and I'm the person who goes to HODs and says, "Actually no [so-and-so] needs to teach more," or whatever.

Um she was brilliant at that sort of thing. And, um she just, things we—just got too much for her. The kind of just, the atmosphere here, and she's pregnant and she said she's not coming back after having the baby. So I have lost my right-hand person.

PE: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Um, does—does your school have a, transformation and diversity deputy?

TO: We do…Um [name of teacher]. So actually it's um, it's Diversity and Pastoral Care. Um, she was appointed the same time as me. The two of us//

PE://Oh, ok.//

TO: //were appointed together.

PE: So I've missed that. So, i—in my research I said to [Headmistress], so it was, the Head of English, the academic head and the Head of Transformation and Diversity. TO would you mind sending me her email address?

TO: No, of course.

PE: Um, and then perhaps just, if you wouldn't mind also just having a conversation with her to say I will be in contact.

TO: I will.

PE: Um, so I don't come out of the blue. Um, and then I'll make contact with her if that's ok.

TO: Ja she's got um, so she has a Diversity Committee. Um, a lot of the staff are on that. It's—it's the, coolest committee to be on. It's much more fun than being on the getting girls to write tests committee. (laughter) There isn't actually a committee that does that. Um, so she's got a lot of staff, who are on the Diversity Committee and then she can also talk to you about um we have, the Girls' Diversity Committee as well//

PE://Ok stunning//

TO: //which form fours are, um, form four's serve on that committee and then, they elect, a head and a deputy from, when they get to form five. So she can tell you about, all that sort of thing.

PE: Ok. Thank you. I appreciate that. TO, anything else from you? Anything else you want to add?

TO: Um…I don't think so um…I just hope I haven't rambled on//

PE://No//

TO: //you know//

PE: //No I mean you know the process so—so the rambling's good because it actually gives us a chance to—to you know do a decoding of what's been said and put, strings together from different academic deputies, and//

TO: //Mm. And you know I think the thing to bear in mind is um…that schools, I mean you know this you're at [name of school] so, independent schools, have, pressures and state schools have pressures, um, and they're different pressures and…state schools have their issues to deal with. Our issues, are…around…parents, who have expectations. Um, and it's walk—walking that tightrope between…dealing with the ideological change and this—the pressure's coming from, politics and from, society and—we're a very stressed society in economic pressures and social pressures and political pressures. But, as academic, deputy, also having to hold the line, on things like, these girls need to write exams,

PE: Mm//

PE: //and they need to complete portfolios//

TO: //and…at the end of the day…it's amazing how, the ideological stuff sometimes seems to vanish, in the light of matric results…So…um, the gir—some of the girls, who when they were in form four, were screaming most, vociferously about decolonisation are now the girls, who I've spent the holiday writing recommendations for (laughter)// American universities. (laughter)//So it's kind of like…you're always, walking that tightrope between…all the other things that happen and then as the academic deputy, there's just stuff that I've gotta get done//

TO: And I've just gotta bear in mind that…the girl who made the Instagram Live…and slammed the school, asked me to write her a [Rhodes], scholarship recommendation a month ago.

TO: //So it's about…a—you know also just keep your things in perspective.

PE: Thank you for that. I do—I appreciate that.

TO: Not that I'm very good at it, but sometimes I try and do it (laughter).

PE: Listen, strengths for the rest of your day and the rest of the week.

TO: Thank you. If I think of things um, I will let you know. And also, anything, documents or anything you want from me, just email me//

TO: //and I will, send them to you. There is—if you go onto our website, you will find our—the religious policy which I actually think does help academics and

you'll find the—it's called the Educational Philosophy of [Our school]. They're there, and they for everybody to use, so//
PE: //Great//
TO: //check them with pleasure//
PE: Perfect. TO, thank you so much. Please send my love to [Headmistress]. Please send her my//
TO: //I will//
PE://absolute warmest regards. We'll chat soon//
TO: //I will. I will go and collect Geography papers and, I will see you at marking if not before.
PE: Ja, probably before, cause I think we gonna need to find time just to, debrief after the years we've had (laughter).
TO: (laughter)//Tell me about it//
PE: (laughter)//Ok.
TO: //Oh good luck. I actually think you are amazing that you're actually finishing this.
PE: Thank you. Will you remember to email [name of teacher]?
TO: I will do that. I'll—a—I'll send it to you now literally before I leave my office cause otherwise I will forget.

Appendix W: Transformation and Diversity Deputy – School B

PE: So, I am going to, I am going to start if you are comfortable, just to ask you to tell me what your official title is of the school and then to explain your role in the functioning of the school itself.

MU: Okay, it is a bit confusing. I am. I was employed as a history teacher and Faculty Head of Humanities, which means that I oversee history, geography, and they have added LO to that. So, I oversee the HODs and the entire humanities faculty. But then, it was towards the end of 2017, my first year here, the executive head asked me to take over the diversity portfolio. So now I am Head of Diversity. So, I started as Head of Diversity for the senior school, and then he changed that title to campus. Head of Diversity. So, I am now part of the senior management team, and Head of Diversity for the entire school. So if we look at responsibilities with regards to history, obviously, it involves the teaching of history both IEB and IB. Yeah, although this, I don't have an IB class, but I did have last year, obviously in the department in terms of conducting meetings, making sure that the minutes of those meetings are shared with all the members of the faculty looking at the timetabling issues within the faculty and the department that the issue of deadlines, assessments, the marking... of looking at marks and tracking the learner or student achievements and just looking at growing the subject as such. So that is what being a history teacher and Faculty Head of Humanities entails. And then in terms of diversity, I must look at diversity issues around the school, and that means promoting and educating the school community... and by the school community. I mean, all the stakeholders, not only the staff and the students, but we include the parent body as well, and educating them and making them aware of issues around diversity. And we do that through assemblies that we host. And we also have focus groups. And we have started because last year, there was the centre of the new centre that was developed, but it started functioning this year and I am the head of that centre. It's called the Centre for dialogue and conflict and conflict resolution and the aim of that centre is obviously to carry on with the diversity work but in a more structured and formal way in terms of developing, you know, academic work for the students through the LO classes or helping teachers like with help the English department, for instance, in grade nine and grade six, we had setworks that

were centred around issues of racism, genocide, and so on. So, we worked closely with the Johannesburg Holocaust and genocide centre. We had visitors from the centre coming to our school. We also had their exhibition at our centre, and we are working with other organisations and institutions like the apartheid museum freedom Park, the Institute for Global Dialogue, and the whole aim is to empower young people not only in terms of understanding diversity, but also leadership skills, so that if they are ever involved in conflict, they engage in dialogue instead of fighting because we know that at the moment, what is happening in the world is it is something called cancel culture. Where people do not talk, they do not engage in dialogue. And, for a lot of people engaging in dialogue means there must be a winner and a loser. And that is what we are teaching them that when you are engaging in dialogue, it does not involve having a winner and a loser. You can agree to disagree and move on. And you do not have to post things on social media or go to the media to report them, but the centre is there to help resolve those issues. And the centre works closely with the student leadership because our student leadership is also structured in a very modern way. It's structured in a way that sort of mirrors the country's government, obviously at a school level where we don't have the traditional prefects and head girl and head boy anymore, but we have the student president and the student vice president, and then we have the judiciary so that the judiciary works under the centre so that if there are those students who...or even staff members who are not comfortable, to go straight to the centre, or to any member of the centre to report something that has happened, then they can go to the judiciary and have the issues dealt with. So, the whole point, I think is to encourage student voice. I know we're not always successful in doing that, but that is what we're striving towards, to allow the students to have a voice through various platforms because they already have the SRC, they have the grade heads and they have the student leadership, but also they know that if you're not comfortable with those structures, there are other structures in place. I hope that has answered your question.

PE: I want to know how many hours you have in the day to do all of that. That is the most incredible job description. And I cannot believe you still teach.

MU: Yes, do you know what? We had a discussion with. Executive Headmaster the headmaster he wanted me to give up teaching and just focus on this

because it is a lot of work. But I said to him, No, I do not want to give up teaching because my... to be honest with you. My first love is history. And I do not think it would be it would be possible for me to do this work without having my foot in the history teaching. Because, you know, history is about such issues, you know, promoting tolerance... of teaching diversity, you know, teaching about the atrocities, teaching about, and promoting dialogue and all those things. So, I felt that I could not really do it... Without being in the classroom and carrying on with my history teaching. And I do agree with you. It is a lot of work, but I have a group of people that I work with. Sometimes it is not always easy to delegate things to them, but we are working as a team and I know that from what I have described, it sounds like everything is working perfectly. There are lots of things we have not been able to do. You know, like we wanted to introduce a leadership program, for instance, which would be part of the course that students sign up for. And that has not really happened partly because of the lack of expertise but also the timetabling issues. And the fact that you know this is an academic institution so we cannot keep taking away from teaching time to do all these other things that are perceived as extras but they not extras because teaching is not only about teaching the subjects. We must teach our students in a holistic manner. So, to be honest with you, I do not have I do not have a life but on the other hand, I do have a team of amazing people that I work with, but it does involve putting in a lot of hours. A lot of work goes into it. I have been very, very lucky that the people I have approached to work with, and the organisations have been very, very supportive because you know, when I first approached them, they were like wow, this is amazing. You know, we have never heard of a school during this. We...we are happy to come on board. But it does involve coordinating all that and finding, you know, the dates and the budget and you know, holding meetings and all that. So that is what happens, but my teaching load was reduced when I refuse to give up teaching because I just thought that would be career suicide. Because what if I move to another school that does not have a centre or does not have the same diversity portfolio, but also, I never ever want to give up history teaching. As I said that is my first love.

PE: That is amazing. MU, I am going to I am going to ask you, you know, you have mentioned diversity. So, I am going to ask you to in your own words to define for me transformation, diversity, and decolonisation.

MU: From my understanding, diversity means recognising the uniqueness of people from different backgrounds. They can be cultural, sexual, religious, and so on. So that is diversity. Whereas transformation, the way I look at transformation, it is more structural. It involves, you know, changing not only the culture of an institution, but changing the rules, changing the policies. So that in other words, it becomes diversity in action. Because what happens with diversity is that it must be a lived experience. In other words, it must be embedded in the culture of the school. We are hoping that not only as a school but as a country... We will one day reach a point where we do not even have to talk about these things. We do not have to think about it. It will just happen naturally. It will be second nature. So, to me, that is what diversity would be about. So, I think it would bring in other terms that you did not ask me to describe like inclusion and all those things, which are very much part of diversity. So transformation for me, as much as it will obviously trickle down into the culture of the school or that at the moments but in this country, I think it starts with structural changes, changing the policy, you know, changing the way you know... the school does things to show in order to be able to show that we are transforming and then that will be lived through the inclusion that you can see as a result of that. So that is how I see it. Decolonisation is a term that has been misunderstood. A lot of people think that decolonisation means taking away everything that is western or European. But decolonisation as I think is a multivariate term and concept, because for me, decolonisation means changing the way you used to do things from the traditional and including people if I couldn't give you an example, that I know we often think we often speak of decolonising the curriculum and the people who are fighting for decolonising the curriculum with, obviously fighting for the inclusion of African centred... African centred topics in the curriculum and then doing away with the European or Western focused topics. And for me that is not what decolonisation is about. decolonisation to me means you keep what we have, because it is very, very important, and it is part of our history, but you then add what had been neglected. So, in other words, if you look at the history of Africa, for instance, which was not the focus in the old system, but now you do include it. So, when you are talking about World War One or the Cold War, you always must put Africa at the centre of that. So, in other words, it is not an afro-centric approach, but it is not Africa-centred, because there is a difference

between those two. And decolonisation can also mean as I said, it is changing the way things were done in the past to embrace this new modern world. It can also mean as I say, changing the way things adapt. So, if you look at teaching, for instance, the traditional way of teaching is very teacher-centred, and it is very top-down a top- down approach. So, when you are decolonising education, which is when you are allowing your students to be part of the learning process of you as a teacher, holding all the knowledge and information and just passing it down to them. So instead of the students becoming, consumers of knowledge, you want them to become producers of knowledge. So that is how I personally understand decolonisation and that is how I strive to implement it in my small areas of influence.

PE: Your comment around, Afrocentric versus Africa centric. Can you define those for me?

MU: Okay, Afrocentric, I think is the other side of Eurocentric that means. So, if a curriculum is Afrocentric, that means it cuts out everything that is not African. Whereas as I explained, before, that if it is an Africa centred curriculum, that means that we are looking at the world, but we are putting Africa at the centre of the topic that we are discussing. So, if I can give you let us say, the Cold War, for instance, yes, we will discuss the Cold War. How it started, look at Germany, the Berlin crisis, and then look at it globally as well... how the world was affected by the Cold War. But the most important focus then should be how was Africa affected by the Cold War? How do we centre Africa with that? Cold War? As I said before, you are not taking away the things that we have done in the past that were focused on Europe, however, you put Africa at the centre of that, whereas if it is, if it is afro centric, that means it is only focused on Africa. But for me, Africa centred means that you are looking at the world and you are looking at Africa as the centre of this global sphere of influence, but everything because we are rooted in Africa. So, it must be the Africa Centre. And not Afrocentric.

PE: Thank you. I loved your example, in the history context. So obviously, in your role, as Head of Diversity, do you have these sorts of discussions with all the HODs and how does that impact on the content that is taught?

MU: We do... but you know, what, when it comes to the senior school is very, very difficult because what gets taught is prescribed by the government and the IEB. I mean, at the end of the day, from the FET phase from the beginning of

the FET phase, that phase that is grade ten it is very much rigid. We do try, especially in the IB program, like when it within the IB program, we have an opportunity, especially for history. I do not know about the other subjects, to choose the topics that you want to teach your kids because the questions they give you an exam are generic and then you can use whatever case study you have taught or studied. So, my choice of topics was very much you know, the global south. So, we are looking at Cuba, we looked at Cambodia, we look at Africa. You know, countries like Kenya, Ghana, Senegal, and Zimbabwe and so on. But the theme is a global theme and when you also do make those global connections, so to answer your question, as I said before, in the senior school, we are very much you know, prescribed by the government and the IEB because we have to then follow the CASI curriculum, the SAGs document that the documents that come from the IEB because at the end of the day, that is that grade twelve exam that they are going to write. So however, that does not mean that you we cannot play outside the classroom. So, in terms of what happens in the classroom, in the FET phase that that is what happens, but in the middle school, which is grade six to grade nine and even the primary school and the junior school we have time to create our own curricula. We have time to play and do things that are very, very meaningful to us. Like if I can give you an example. We in grade nine in history, we look at that as a year of human rights. So, we look at human rights globally. So, we start by taking a Germany looking at the Holocaust, and they move on looking at the genocide in Rwanda. And now we are moving on to apartheid in South Africa because we are looking at human rights issues or abuses in the 20th and 21st centuries. So, it is very, very important to do that. But as I said to you, it is not always easy, but history obviously lends itself to that but other subjects you know, like, you know, your maths and IT and all those it is not as easy and I do not think they are there yet, but we are slowly having those conversations. It is going to take time, to be honest with you, so it is happening more in a subject like English, where we also push the English department to choose more Africa centred literature, in terms of their setworks. But obviously, there must be a combination, that does not mean they have to throw away Shakespeare or anything western. So, they do those Western texts but then there must be at least, you know, two or three, Africa and by Africa. I am not only referring to South Africa, so if it comes from

the continent, then it is fine. So, we do that. So, it is history, English and LO that are doing it on like a daily basis. And then you do occasionally get other subjects doing it as well like biology they will have maybe business studies, but it's very, very on an occasional basis like a question where an example that we will be given or a source that will be used, then will have to be a source that is African centred instead of a European or a Western source.

PE: Thank you. So, if we can focus in on English just for a moment, you mentioned guiding the English department in terms of choosing African texts alongside the Western texts. What sort of involvement do you have with that? So does the Head of English come to you on a regular basis as they are uploading or getting the schemes of work ready. How does that discussion take place?

MU: Unfortunately, that discussion happens or takes place when they decide... so like now this term when they are looking at curriculum planning for next year. What are they going to do next year? So, it is a once off thing and then obviously, on an ongoing basis, then we look at the type of assessments, but it is not like, you know, it is me checking up on them as such. Sometimes it can be very informal discussions that we have with them. But my trust in them is because I have seen the scheme of work for the year because curriculum planning happens in this last term of the year. So, they have shown what they were doing the entire year, but then as the year progresses, there are other things we did collaborate as I said to you that what we did with the grade six and grade nine teachers was they for the fall term in the first term, they worked through the centre. That is how they taught. All their work was done through this new centre for dialogue and conflict resolution where they were working closely with the Johannesburg Holocaust and genocide centre. And they even...the members of the centre even came to school to give a workshop to the students. It was two days...if I am not mistaken... or three-day workshop with the kids. So that is how it happens... so now I do rely heavily on the schemes of work that are there...But that does not involve me... You know, checking up on them on a regular basis like every month or every week going to check if they are doing what they said into to know once those things are done. They are done. But also, they are not done. As I said to you, it is not always done formally. So Head of Department and I just have, you know, very informal meetings, like at the end of last year,

we had an issue where we were we went to a meeting with Executive Headmaster where Executive Headmaster said...I don't see a lot of these African or African centred texts in the English schemes of work that were submitted, and then Head of Department and I actually argued that no it's not actually only in this just look at the poetry as well, you know, because sometimes we'll just look at the titles of the prescribed work that the kids are doing, but you also need to go beyond that. Look at individual poems that have been chosen. Look at the Comprehension Exercises that have been chosen. Because, as I said, it must be inclusive. It cannot just be Africa alone, because Africa does not stand alone. Africa is part of the global world.

PE: Thank you. You mentioned Executive Headmaster's involvement, his discussion with you and Head of Department and you know, you argued the point Have you experienced any other pressures around T/D and decolonisation? You know, from other stakeholders. So, you mentioned the kids, the faculty, the parents, the old boys, and girls, what kind of pressures have you experienced in that space and particularly, how have you dealt with those pressures?

MU: I have experienced recently it was sometime last term. Questions from I would not say...it was not a lot of parents. It was just one or two, who questioned why we are not doing more African history. Because to them, decolonisation means just focusing on Africa. And my explanation to them was the way we do things is twofold while we are trying to educate our young people about where they are in Africa and where Africa is in the global world, we also scaffold... So, if you look at what they must study in grade twelve, I am just talking about history now. If you look at what they must do in grade twelve, so we say okay, if they must study the Cold War in grade 12, and they must look at the coming of democracies of Africa and they must look at independent Africa, and they must look at globalisation. What sort of topics do they need to do lower down in the lower grades as building blocks so that when they get to those topics in the FET phase, they do understand them, so that is how I explained it to the parents that you need to understand that our role is to two-fold here. We cannot just throw the baby with the bathwater and say, We just, you know, doing Africa centred text and material and we are going to throw everything else out. No, we need to look at that as well because at the end of the day, our responsibility is to equip

the students with skills to be global citizens, not only African citizens, yes, they are rooted in Africa. They must be proud of being African. But on the other hand, it should be proud of exporting them to other countries where they can highlight the Africanness. It is not just about them staying in Africa. So that is how then I got around it. And I do not know if the parent was satisfied. But another very, I think very, very big issue is when we do these things, because some parents know that the kids will not be exposed to let us say subject like history in the senior phase. So, then their argument is like, why don't we teach the things that we teach in this senior phase, teach them in the junior phases? And again, it is the same explanation that I give that, you know, you need to look at the age of the children you need to scaffold accordingly... you cannot just provide kids with things just because you are decolonising, or you watch this Africa centred curriculum. There are ways of doing it. And I think another thing that I should have mentioned when we started is that my approach to things is to take baby steps as well, because we do not just want to be seen to be doing things but there must be meaning, we must be very intentional in doing these things. So, for me, even if you have like the say in the English department, or the one prescribed to text, which is around Africa, which is a step in the right direction. Because Rome was not built in a day. I am not expecting a situation where, then suddenly people are just going to do everything on Africa and throw out everything else. Because to me, that is not intentional. It is not done with a good heart and people do not find joy in doing things when they are coerced to do them. You know that you must find that happy medium where, Yes, we are transforming. We are decolonising but we also keeping some of the old things because it does not mean that the old things that we used to do or are or that it just means that in our pursuit of this inclusivity and embracing diversity. We do not leave anyone out because we do not want twenty years down the line to have a situation where there is another group of people that are now let out and they need to be included.

PE: So how do you include everyone? I mean, your school is a co- educational school. It is you know there are multiple intersectionalities of students in terms of gender, identity, and race. How do you include everybody in everything? Is it being it not implied that someone is going to be let out?

MU: That is in a way, but we do try not to for instance, you know when you have like this is the only school, I know that celebrates Africa Day, when we celebrate Africa Day, we are not celebrating a culture or language we are in celebrating African people. So, everyone is included in that. You know, when we celebrate human rights day, we all have human rights because we all human, so we do recognise that and then we also as a school try to highlight all because we are in multifaith, we are not a Christian school. So, we highlight all the major religious holidays. So, you know there will be something posted on Facebook and in our newsletter and other forms of communication. We wish all you know the Hindu students or members of the Our school community, you know, Happy Diwali and then for the Muslim community Eid and so on. So, we do try and remember these things. But it is so it is so interesting because there was a complaint from one of the teachers if it was early in the year, I cannot remember. Yes, it was during Lent, we she said, Oh, no, there was... she's Catholic. And then there was overlooked that was Catholic, and together with a marketing... because I work closely with a marketing department as well. We said to her but as a multifaith school, we decided that we are only going to highlight the major ones we cannot highlight everything. I mean, if you look at the Jewish holidays, Christian holidays Hindu holidays, Muslim holidays, which means we will never ever teach...we will celebrate every day, every day. So that is why we focus on those major ones.

PE: Did the teacher understand that approach?

MU: She did but do you know what, people...I think we all like those as human beings. We do want to have our own thing highlighted. Because we feel that if it is just one thing that is not highlighted, then I am neglected as a person, you know, people do not care that I exist. So, she did understand the explanation that was given but I would not say she was satisfied because, she needs to... I mean, every Catholic holiday... religious holiday must be acknowledged and then we said okay, do you know what, it should be Oh, I yes...that is what the marketing lady and myself said to her. Well, in future because there is no way you can know all these if you want if you would like that then you come through and tell us. In other words, do not expect us to be the ones doing all the research and putting all these holidays in because we are focusing on the major ones to

make sure that everyone is included, but if there is another one that is very, very important to you in your religion, then come to us.

PE: Yes, that is clever. That is a very clever approach. Yes. I am asking everyone this question. So just bear with me...the question is around training that you have had, in terms of T/D and decolonisation. You know, you are clearly very experienced in what you do. But what is the official training you have done? Do you know anything through ISASA or IEB? Or IB?

MU: To be honest with you, I have not done any training like that way. I have a certificate that I can show for it. As I said to you, for me. My training has come through history. I have done a lot of work facilitating teacher training workshops. For the apartheid Museum, the Holocaust centre, and those involved conflict resolution, dialogue, you know, promoting diversity. So that is where my training comes from, but I am not... I am not a diverse specialist. I am always very clear and honest. To say that to people when they asked me because if you look at other schools, they employ people who have specialised in diversity, or they have done a course or a degree or anything like that. I have not done that at all. I am not being arrogant about it. I know that I still have a lot to learn, and I do attend... I do attend workshops given by people and I do listen to people as well. And...you know... I do rely on other organisations like the Holocaust centre and the apartheid museum to teach me so my I would say my training has been I do not know if it is informal in a sense... that I do not have certificates.

PE: It sounds like you should be running training for people.

MU: Oh, my goodness. I do not know. For me, I'm also very sceptical of those things because I find that diversity and inclusion has become like what I don't know if you remember when computers came to South African and everybody wants you to have a computer certificate not going to do IT, IT, IT and you think but people don't their hearts or not. They just looking for anything that is going to make them employable. And it is the new trend now that, you know, if you have diversity then especially amongst private schools, you will get a job in any private school through this course. That is transformation and from my experience a lot of those people that implemented it in a very dangerous way, because their hearts actually not in it. It is all about the certificate now done this course. Therefore, I should do diversity? I honestly, I mean, I am an academic I do believe in education, but diversity is one of those things we obviously must

learn. But you also must have the love for it. And because of my love for history, in that you have love for diversity and inclusion. I do a lot of online courses as well through I do not know if you know this organisation is based in the US Facing History and Ourselves. And it is amazing. So, you can self-teach a lot of these things. That is why I felt, you know as I say that I am not being arrogant about it. But I have never felt the need to be certified. I am a lifelong learner. And I will learn in different ways. Like for instance, I do a lot of mediation with the kids and the tools that I gained from doing that mediation teaching the TRC just from teaching the truth and reconciliation commission. I equipped myself with the skills to do mediation and it has been so amazing how those mediation sessions have been going and a lot of the kids have come back to say, Wow, ma'am that really helped... that mediation worked. But I am not saying that there is no room or need for formal training. That is very important, especially when you are dealing with people's emotions. But if you are if you already have empathy, and you are a person who is inclined to be always aware of people's emotions, I think you can do it. That is how I feel.

PE: Thank you. MU. That's the end of my list of questions. Is there anything that you think I should have asked you or anything else that you would like to say?

MU: Ah, I would just conclude by saying that. My belief is, as I said before, that there are lots of these diversity and inclusion specialists and they all have their two cents worth of whatever to say, and, you know, guidelines to give and all that, from my experience and my belief is there's no blueprint. No, I do not there are two cases are ever the same. Like if you look at the end what happened in 2020 in South Africa, with the Black Lives Matter, the eruption of the Black Lives Matter movement after the killing of George Floyd in the United States, and then the alumni of all the different private schools coming forward to say, to ask them to do this and the way Our school responded to that was very, very different to how other schools differ from in responding because the contexts are not only ever the same, but it is why I get very worried about as you asked me before that it is changing where people sort of try to give very rigid guidelines and a blueprint of how to deal with these issues. Because I have also noticed that even through the mediation work, I do, there is no two mediation processes that I do the same. It all depends on who the people are what their issue is. So, you meet people where they are. So, it is very, very important when you are dealing with

these issues of diversity, inclusion, and transformation, to actually look at context to have a feel for the people as well. You cannot have a one size fits all. That would be my conclusion.	

Appendix X: Transformation and Diversity Deputy – School A

PE: Hello.

SI: Hi PE.

PE: Ah, SI, it is so lovely to meet you.

SI: (laughter) Yoh, I'm so sorry we kept missing each other and ja.

PE: No, I so appreciate your time. Thank you so much for making the time. We are both very very busy people.

SI: Yes, you know I'm just trying to, um, ja, my…ja. I can hear you now nicely.

PE: Great.//

SI: //My um, tol—eh—speaker was low.

PE: Oh I see. SI thank you so much. How has your term been?

SI: Yoh yoh, hectic start, you know. So, the last few weeks with matrics trying to finish this and, yoh it's just like so busy.

PE: SI, thank you again. I'm gonna ask you, a couple of questions if I may, um,//

SI: //Yes.//

PE: //so, my research is around, decolonisation of the English curriculum,

SI: //Yes.//

PE: //in, IEB schools, between grade 8 and grade 11. So obviously the IEB, sets the setworks that we teach in grade 12. So I'm looking very specifically at grades 8 through to 11 and how, leadership and management, understands decolonisation and so on. So, I'm going to, ask you a couple of questions. Please feel free to on—a—to—um, respond honestly. If there's anything that you say that you think of, can I put that, off the record, then please just let me know and I can very happily, exclude that.

SI: //Ok.//

PE: //So that's not a problem. And then after I've answered the questions if there's anything you think I should've said, you welcome to say, have you thought about this? What about that? Is that ok?

SI: OK. Absolutely. Yes.//

PE: //Perfect. Thank you ma'am. So, the first question I have is can you explain your role, in the functioning of the school? What is your position what is it that you do within the school?

SI: Yoh, I've got quite a few ums, but the main thing I'm on um, a pastoral care and diversity and transformation…um that's my role. I'm still a teacher, teaching matrics and, isiZulu, and matrics. But my role is, um, I'm actually working with…everyone. Um, you know from the, mentor teachers, ehm, and also I'm—I'm also a—a—a head of a—a scholarship recipient, committee I'm also heading that. I'm also in the equity. Um, yes of course I—I—I am a deputy headmistress, um, and, yes. So, equity also working with the policies and there is a committee also on that one, and I am also in the management and executive of the school.

PE: //Sho. It—do you have enough hours in the day?

SI: To be honest with you, no (laughter), because, you know everything that I'm doing, it's actually keeping me busy,//

PE: //Good.//

SI: //and um, and I've got commi—other committees like I've got a student body, eh, diversity committee, and I've got this eh— teachers, or so we call ourself, eh TLC which is Transformation an— and Learning Community, and also we are trying, you know um so, I'm also involved equality professional learning and growth. I'm also in that eh committee. I've got youngsters that I'm working with—it's teachers. Um, it's about professional development but, also there is an element of—of diversity and transformation, some discussions and also there is um, IT learning, you know, all the things that we are trying to do to develop ourselves. So ja I'm also working with the support staff on the side of support staff. Um, so ja.

PE: Very busy. Ca—can I ask you based on your role, can you define for me, transformation, and diversity?

SI: (Sighs) Ehm, for me, transformation and diversity it means, we have to look at the life of the school, in all spheres. Um, when we talk about transformation we don't maybe look at one, you know, um, you know one thing like in isolation. But we look at from, um from what we do, in the classroom, ehm, you know in terms of ehm, making sure that ehm our teaching and learning, is also, ehm, you know, going that direction, you know, and the—and also, some new ways, of—of trying, you know to meet, um, the demands of the—of the life, the society, all the changes that are happening around us. It's not—yes, in the past maybe we are focusing, you know on one, aspect, maybe race, talking about those issues but now no we are talking about almost everything, and looking at the

student body, looking at the teaching, uh body as well, trying to make sure that the school is actually, um, you know we are transforming, you know in all directions. And also looking at our policies—our policies, you know. Are we improving in terms of, what do we want to, achieve? And, what is it that we need to look at, you know so we look at the gender policy and all other things. So, I will say, for me, transformation is just the life of the school in general—looking, everything from the curriculum, you know the—the material that we are using, the, you know um, workshops, everything that is happening and also, what are we doing in the classroom, um, with the kids? Yes.//

PE: //Ok. Thank you. So that leads quite nicely—can you define, decolonisation?

SI: Yoh um, ah—let me try I'm not sure whether I'm going to give you um, a—a specifics. For me, I will say, um, it's looking at the literature, from a different angle. You know looking at, you know, ehm, I will say maybe yes the literature but, ah maybe, in a—in a broader, you know—eh perspective. Looking at, everything that we are doing in terms of teaching and learning, you know. Um, you know, how can we improve from what was there in the past, and try to, use it, um, you know in order for us to be, you know um—eh abreast with the changes, you know? Um, from, everything as I said that, you know, what we are reading, um, the books, that we are using, um, are we now shifting, from what was, there in the past? And trying to accommodate, even, you know and—and be able to talk about eh topics or issues that were not covered in the past. Is our literature actually meeting, um, the changes, um, in our society?

PE: Mm. Thank you. So, in your role as deputy, what—how do you define your role in terms of the content taught in various subjects, other than your own?

SI: Ehm, I will say um, what we are doing currently, um as I said that I'm working with different people. I'm working with the LO, um on the LO, we are looking at so many topics now, you know? Um, like this this year they've added, hashtag, they've added FeesMustFall they've added, um, um, sexuality and all those types of eh—eh topics. In divinity we are talking about, mental health, issues and mental—eh—ee—eh health issues, and, we are working with a psychologist on the other side. So, another way round, we are trying, um, to say, let's go beyond maybe the subject content, and look at other, things that are actually forming part, of—of—of—of—eh our—our—our student.

PE: Mm. Thank you.//

SI: //So there, when we are having, for example we—we used to meet with all different, eh—eh people in these portfolios, and then they will say “Ok fine. This time, this is our focus. We would like, you know to focus on this.” And then, um we’ll have a discussion—as I said that we are introducing, some new topics. Um, but some of the things are actually the student—ehm, we’ve got also um what we call QSA, which is Queer Society, um, you know the student body, um is running their—it’s a sub-committee of the diversity. And again there—there are some readings, that they are doing and some discussions as well you know. So, we try to say, it mustn’t be only to say, um we’ll have topics around, diversity and transformation but, we are trying to be in every, sphere, of the school in terms of, you know the information that we think, um, currently our learners they need to know about these things. They need to be, engage and have discuss—an—e—discussion like robust discussion, and be able to, um, actually voice, and—and ask questions, you know. So, ja.

PE: Thank you. Do you have any involvement with the English department in terms of the literature texts that they select, and their focus on decolonisation?

SI: Even though I wouldn’t say um, I’m directly involved but, eh, [Felicia] used to share, um, that we are doing this, eh, literature for example if it’s a prescribed book “SI it’s about this.” Um, maybe s—looking at the life eh—um around the township or, anything, that is, you know in that particular—and also there are some, um, isiZulu language in that book. Um, and also, she will need some help. So, even though I’m not involved in terms of—eh choosing, but they always choose the books that are going to actually, open minds and—and actually let our learners to be, more engaged with what is happening, ah— the things that they didn’t now, um, you know, um. And also, learning more about other cultures other people, their lifestyles and all the things that are happening, um, that they are not familiar with. So always she used to share and say, “You know, this time or this— next year we will be doing [this] book, and this book is talking about [this], and these are the things that, you know w—why maybe we actually chose this book.” Um, because I remember at one point, there was, um, you know, something from the parents, asking “Why did you choose this book?” And we have to defend and say that is why, we are actually um, you know choosing these types of books. We know that—that—they—they maybe, the, the content might make the learners also feel uncomfortable, but we need to do that,

because the—e—there are some lessons that they need to learn, um, and we need to expose them, um, in those kind of situation, um, that they are not familiar with.//

PE: //Mm. Thank you. That's very interesting cause the next question is have you ever experienced any pressures, around, transformation diversity and decolonisation and you mentioned a parent, or emails, where—where parents are not quite understanding.

SI: Yes. Um, because in—it—un—one point, maybe we are reading a book, and the book may be s—touching, um issues of um, you know classism. Um, ta—eh—touching maybe issues of um, you know— uh—or may be targeting a certain group of people, talking about issues that they experience, you know? And then, they—the parents also, you know um, the—there is where they were like so—sort of like, "Why did you choose this book?" And the reason behind was, yes, we want to talk about these issues in our classroom. And again as teachers that is where we need also to work, c—closely, and very hard, to share certain things so that when you go to the classroom, um, you did maybe do some research around, certain things that might come, ehm, in the classroom, you know during the discussion. And that is where we need to help, each other. Because there were certain things—because I remember at one point, um, there was something about the ad, on the newspaper saying that, um—uh—it wasn't an ad but it was a newspaper or something came from a newspaper, but within the English um, um English eh—eh—eh— eh—eh—lesson, that certain newspapers are targeting certain groups of people. And, um something also around like um certain shops, you know like Woollies, eh—Woolworth—other, you know like Black people maybe are, are unable, to actually use those type of—you know or those shops because of you know, the ehm—eh difficulties unemployment, um lifestyle and whatnot. Um, so those things actually—because you can't actually, um, prevent those things to come, during the discussion. But that is where as teachers, we need to talk about these things that are going to come to say how do I handle this? Um, because sometimes even though the literature, or the—the reading is focusing with this, but you don't know, what are other things that might come, that resulted in the parents saying, "Why did you choose this?" um, you know, "Why are you talking about this?" you know. Another way round the focus is on Black people or, you know white people

or still looking at, you know um, the groups differently. And that's the reason behind that we have to, make sure that we are talking about these things and exposing, um, our learners in these things.//

PE: //Mm. Thank you. Thank you. So, a—a lot of the, a lot of the schools that I've been speaking to one of the questions I asked was, "To what extent did, MeToo, uh BLM, FeesMustFall affect, the school, in terms of, the way we deal with literature that we teach?" and, I think you've got to that to some extent. Can you elaborate a bit more?

SI: Yes, because ja, um. Ok currently the—the LO is actually focusing on this which is quite nice you know because, I think that, actually came strongly um, around 2020. Um, because that is where we—we thought, you know um, I think we need to do more, you know around these, um, you know especially, when we were dealing with the issues ehm, after the BlackLivesMatter, you know. And there was—actually also, after that, the student was saying, "We are not actually um, being exposed enough in the reading, around these issues." And that is why we—we—we had to do something on that because, um those are not easy topics, and again, um we have to create a space um, which we can call it a brave space because sometimes safe space is not safe for everyone, but we have to create this space where, the learners will be able to question certain things, question the information that they know before, um, and see what, you know, what a—are new things that are coming. So, I have to say, uh—um—what I can say on that matter ehm, ehm, around the— the—the, you know li—lives—eh—uh—BlackLivesMatter and hashtag and MeToo, they are still dealing, with it. I will get their—the—uh feedback, from the LO teachers, because I need—you know we always work together, so that I can know because when I'm having a fe—focus groups, also on diversity committee, um we run some fec—focus groups with eh, with each grade. Um, and those topics, they used to come, um, and sometimes, the learners will say, "But the teachers don't want to answer certain questions around, you know, [this] issues." Um, and that is where, you know, also, you know um, one of it was the, eh—FeesMustFall also was part of the, um, the—ther—the things that they are doing in LO with the grade 10s and 11. So basically I—I—what I can say now is that, I am going to get more feedback on that one, ehm, in terms of how are they handling, you know, in the—in the—in the discussion. Um, but also, I think what helped us a lot, it was

what um, last year we did as a school, after the 2020. We did have some intervention. Eh, people who were actually helping us how do we go about, having this difficult conversation in a classroom space? So, I'm finding the learners man—eh—the—eh—recently, much better, being able to listen, and accommodate different opinions. Whereas in the past, it was, no, it's only us, you know? Uh, when it comes to, um, hashtag— uh—BlackLivesMatter, it's—it's—it's—it's just about certain group of people, you know other people who cannot comment or say anything. But there is a shift now, in terms of actually allowing other people, to voice ehm, their opinion, openly um, and, you know allow the other people also to challenge, and also to put ehm, some opinion forward. Um whereas in the past it was not like that.//

PE: //Mm.//

SI: //So I'm waiting, um to hear the feedback, from the LO, and hear how far are they going and, what are the things that they still have to, um have discussion but I've seen a lot—a lot of change, in terms of the growth, um, there is, you know, um, you know that—that we are seeing on our—on our eh student, in terms of having this discussions.//

PE: //Mm. I liked what you said, where—where you described it not as a safe space but as a brave space.//

SI: //Yes.//

PE: //I—I think that is—that is incredible and I'm going to use that//

SI: //(laughter)//

PE: //um, in our own discussions, here. Because I think, you know you can't always feel safe,//

SI: //Exactly.//

PE: //But you certainly do need to feel brave.

SI: Yes, to say what, I would like to share I wou—I would like to say, without actually being scared of other people, you know. Um, and that is what, is actually making, um this discussion or maybe, if we are talking about decolonising, because there are eh—eh—eh topics or issues or certain, um things that are going to come up that, are going to make us, um little bit uncomfortable. But that is where, we need to say let's talk about it. Um, let's not take it outside the classroom. Let's talk about it, and—and come up with something that we'll all,

you know um, sort of, eh be able to listen to each other. We might not change everything, but let's have this conversation um, yes.//

PE: //Mm. Thank you. Uh, SI my—my last question is, what training do any of us have in—in this particular space? What—what training do you have for T and D and decolonisation?

SI: Ehm, at the moment I think that one—you know because I—I have to be honest, we've got a very very strong um English department, um, and really the people who are leading um, you know are people who, actually, um, I will say they—they—they, you know they actually went an extra mile in terms of getting the information. So, I know that [name of Academic Deputy] is involve and [name of Head of Department] also is involved and they do actually um, connect with others and go for, um, for some workshops. Um, and also, they invite people also to come, um, you know and share certain things with us, and also, um, you know an— an also like um, you know—I remembered recently we had another lady um, who wrote a book. Um, I think it was, I can't remember the title but, it—it's a very interesting book, because it's talking about, you know um, a life of an old—actually it's eh—eh—her mum, who grew up in KZN. Um, it's sugar cane, can't remember the, you know but, it's quite interesting, because it's actually talking about experiences, and the difficulties, you know. So, what I'm trying to say is that, um, we do—and we need more, you know. Um, we need more, but we are actually, they are attending certain workshops, and we do invite people to come and share, um, and ja. So, I will say at the moment um, there are some, workshops that they are attending, and also inviting some guest speakers, and people who, will come and share around, um, eh—the—this topic of decolonising.

PE: Thank you. P—SI—ma'am those are the questions I have to ask. Are there any comments you'd like to add? Or anything you think I should've asked?

SI: Eh, no (laughter), actually. It's just that I'm sorry that you know um, I wasn't sure exactly—uh, you know, what types of question that, you are going to ask me because I was like, "Yoh. I'm not an English teacher and, you know, how is my, um, role or what I'm doing maybe going to fit, um, you know, an—in what you are maybe looking for?" Um, but no to be honest with you, um, I'm—I'm hoping that you know I—I might not, you know I don't think I've answered all the questions the way you wanted them.//

PE: //No, you have.//

SI: //But,//

PE: //Ma—ma'am, no, thank you. Can I—can I just say that actually, your—your honest response is what I—is what I'm looking for.//

SI: //Yes.//

PE: // And—and it's you're understanding which is important to me. So there—there's absolutely no right answer in any of my questions. It's merely getting an impression, from a leader in a school, how they deal with the situations and—and your answers were brilliant. So, thank you.

SI: Ok, no thank you thank you thank you thank you also to, you know, um, to give me this session and—as I said sometimes, we are doing these things not aware that, it's contributing to all what we are actually hoping to achieve. Um, but ja so I think I—all what I can say to you it's just working together as a team, and actually knowing, all different parts of the school. What are—what are they doing, um, in contributing to, um, actually—eh—eh—eh changing, ehm, and actually trying to speed up with all the changes that are around us.//

PE: //Mm. SI, thank you again for your time I really appreciate it.

SI: Thank you so much.//

Appendix Y: Head of Department – School B

PE: Please describe your department. In terms of number of members, age range, demographics, experience, so just give me a sense of that.

CA: So, it is quite complicated, because we are now split into a middle school and a high school. So, as the faculty head of English, I must look after or oversee the prep school, the middle school and high school. But the other two schools have their separate heads of English. So, there's a head of English for the middle school, and there's a head of English for the prep school, but we talk about trends and methodologies and scaffolding skills from matric all the way down through as much as possible. So, in the high school, there are four primary teachers in the high school. No one under the age of 48. So, experience levels high... very high. The middle school, much more the testing ground for newer staff, we've got a much younger staff, their experience, mainly sort of the 15-to-20-year range. And then a couple of two or three new teachers in the sort of five-to-10-year bracket.

PE: In terms of the demographics any staff of colour?

CA: In the English department? No, mostly women. Four men, the rest women.

PE: And in terms of your department, and we're looking specifically grades eight through to eleven obviously, I know you do the middle school. So, if you want to talk nine through eleven, that's also fine. How do you select your texts?

CA: So, we've tried a few different methods, from traditional ones of teachers submitting works, and getting works read by all teachers and then deciding on what has literary merit or doesn't. We tried for two years, to include the kids into that selection process. By asking them for suggestions, kids are often of the opinion that what they study at school is completely boring. And have you thought about this… And so, we did that for two years. And were severely disappointed with the suggestions that we were given.

PE: How do you define literary merit?

CA: Does it provide a vehicle for good discussion about topical issues, about issues that face schools and about issues that face South Africans? Always on the proviso that South Africa must fit into a world context. It can't only be, and I don't believe it should only be South African issues. So, for example, if we are consciously having a look at racial stereotyping and racial tensions, to start in

South Africa is one place to start. But to have a look at racial tensions in other countries, is also a good place to go.

PE: In terms of the selection of texts, does management above you as faculty head or your academic director or the head, do they have any input in term of this?

CA: The head of academics has got no input at all. But the head of transformation MU does have input and for the last two years, the proposed lists of texts that we're going to be having a look at and that would include films and Shakespeares and all the rest of it. She does have a look at that and go, I think that there is diversity represented on that list.

PE: Okay. Good. Thank you. So, do you do you aim them to try and get your texts to represent the demographics of your students? I mean, you're in a co-educational school. They are various types of students for, for lack of a better word, different genders and sexes and identities. And how do you get your texts to represent?

CA: So, it's a very diverse school, we are under 50% white now. And the other 50% Simplistically would be called, you know, children of colour, that we also 1/3, Christian 1/3, Jewish 1/3 Muslin slash Hindu I know that the slash can be offensive. But that is another diversity that we must consider. We are over 50% female, although that will also split and diversify, because we've got quite a large contingency of kids who are non-binary. And the school encourages that. So, we have cis-gender male, cis-gender female, and identity gender in the school. So, that's an incredible range to try and get your head around. So, we must try and nod to as much of that as we possibly can. So, in grade 10, for example, we're including 'A Thousand Splendid Suns' to make conscious links through to a stronger Muslim reading audience who will have an inherent understanding of what's going on the and we brought it back, six months before the American withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the text took off at school. They were reading it as a supplementary text, it was not escalated that into the primary text of grade 10, we introduce next year, 'The Love Song of Achilles', in grade 10, also to give our lesbian, LGBTQ+ kids a text where they can experience and read a world that they understand. So, we're going. We've tried 'Coconut', and we've tried. Okay, now the ones speaking something about the voices, let them hear our voices, I'll get that… I'll get the proper name at some point… as primary South

African texts, black South African texts. They were not popular at all, with any of the kids in any of the different areas, they found the text quite offensive, they found the texts too explicit. And for an Our school kid. That's… that's quite a… that's quite a statement to make. They've hated 'The Dream House'. We moved it from grade twelve to grade ten as a supplementary read, and they've hated it. And they're not grappling with the issues well, at all.

PE: Is there any sense of why they weren't grappling with those issues?

CA: I think the style of writing… while the issue itself about land and the owner, the ownership of land and the transformation of land ownership is a relevant issue, and they can engage to a certain extent on that issue. It's too far away from them. Because the ownership of land is not a big issue for the expression of cultural identity is a big thing for them and being listened to is a big issue. But how that translates into what is the power base of the economy does not translate, and they didn't care. And so, they found that quite heavy. I found that quite heavy symbolism for a great ten learning just too difficult, although must be said for grade twelve learner. And I was struggling with that, too.

PE: At what age do you start to formalise as the faculty head that students need to be learning about issues? You know, what are the kinds of issues that you're doing in grade eight versus grade nine versus grade ten versus obviously what we teach in grade twelve seems to be more far more serious.

CA: Yeah. I believe it comes from way down. I think that you can do issues-based teaching in the prep school. In the same way that you would that you would take, maybe it's not a good example of that. But I'm going to go with it anyway, in the same way that you would take grammar, and you would break it down into its smallest component parts, you can take issues and break them down into the smallest component parts. And you can deal with very simplistic stereotypes and the danger of a simplistic stereotype in a prep school with prep school in prep school class, using the kinds of simplistic stereotypes that they use themselves. And the kinds of issues that we have experienced at Our school with, for example, kids Nazi saluting some of the Jewish kids, and then unpacking that issue. So, it is issues based, but it's in a simplistic form. And it's talking about that, that bumping of cultures against each other, and races and gender identities and sexual orientations, which in Our school are spoken about in the prep school. And it opens the door to be able to explore that kind of

material already in, in prep school. So, but what we have found is that to find a setwork text that deals with it in their kind of simplistic form is very difficult…or we have found it to be very difficult. They're going for very, very traditional simplistic texts, but then they are bringing in articles. And they're bringing in supplementary material and visual material, to work with, with issues in more simplistic forms Has they've been successful. To an extent, I think they're at the beginning of that journey. I think that for prep school teachers, it's a little overwhelming to get into issues based. And it's been it's helped by the sort of move towards the more baccalaureate idea of teaching to teaching to a descriptor, rather than teaching to a syllabus.

PE: You know, you mentioned teachers being involved and kids being involved in your transformation, diversity, deputy in general Have you ever experienced any sort of pressures around transformation, diversity, decolonization from any of those stakeholders, perhaps parents or the executive head? What are the kinds of pressures you deal with in terms of your vision of text selection?

CA: And it's never come through any kind of formal structure. And that has been a little disappointing. I think that a formal discussion with labelled folk would be very constructive. And not just with the faculty, but with the department. The executive head is very good at constantly bringing up are you looking at diversity in your selection of texts? But I do think it's going to go beyond that? It's a little bit like saying, you know, Eskom must deliver power. That's fine. It's a great statement, but how you've been speaking in declaratives is all well and good. And it ticks the boxes. But it doesn't get down to the nitty gritty of the implementation. The transformation person MU has never rejected a setwork. And I believe that she could, and that perhaps she should. So, it has it has, although I don't know, maybe, maybe it's an outside acknowledgment that there is diversity in the selection of texts. But I wouldn't mind somebody going, I don't think you should do that text.

PE: Have you ever pulled the text because you're not happy with it? For whatever reason,

CA: I've bunted a lot of suggestions. But before it gets to… before it gets to the point of this is the official list there is a lot of debate, and there's a lot of there's a lot of I don't think that this is appropriate. I think that this creates too, too strong a perspective in one direction. And I still think that selection of texts is entirely

Western… And in most cases, white. So, while the issues that come out of those texts are very rich and have led to fantastic discussions in class and that will continue. They are still from the gaze of the Caucasian and I'm not sure how to get around it. I don't have enough reading experience and experience in international texts to be able to do it. To be able to go this is a fantastic text that comes from a non-Caucasian male perspective, so that the issue itself is already encoded through a different gender and through a different racial and class experience. Because it's still dominated by Western perspectives of these issues.

PE: And give me an example or just elaborate on that bit.

CA: So, we're having a quite lengthy discussion, we've reached the end of our film texts for grade 12, that comparative film study. So, we've done quite a journey, there I like the comparative thing I like doing two film texts I like to butt those two texts off each other. So, when I arrived, at [another private boys' school] we did Katherine Bigelow films, because Kathryn Bigelow is a female director, and she's I think the only one to win an Oscar as director. So, we did Zero Dark Thirty and The Hurt Locker. I could not do that now, post Black Lives Matter. And the consciousness that has raised among our Muslim kids because this is an American perspective. And both films are set in the Middle East. Both films present American heroes. And I could not do that again. So, we switched it. And we did. We did the musical and the biopic, so we did. Queens one....what is called again...Bohemian Rhapsody And we did it with A Star Is Born. So, then you looked at a fictional presentation, using music. And we looked at a biopic also using music. when I wrote it, rocket man wasn't available yet. But that would be I think, the perfect match. Yeah. But they it just unanimous white perspectives on both of those on any of the rich issues that are coming out of either one of those texts. So, we've reached the end of that cycle, we're moving into the next one. And it was a long and quite thorny discussion, I've wanted to move into depiction of stereotype based on race and class and culture. And we really struggled with the texts to be able to, to find stuff that teachers felt safe enough to be able to do without being threatened and cancelled, and all those things have gone with it. And we've settled on Crash, the 2004 picture, the Paul Haggis, and the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel to work together. But the one is an incredibly safe option. Marigold Hotel is, it's a feel good movie about, you know, retirees

in in India and India's presented in the most mythologized, romantic, beautiful John Madden imagery that you can possibly imagine, and never gets into the social issues that that lie underneath a whole bunch of old English people coming into what used to be their previous colony and encountering the most helpful group of, of Indian folk you'll ever find. And the film is, I'm not sure if it's going to provide enough of a vehicle to be able to critique that, but one of the things is that I want the teachers to do that. I want them to go into what is the presentation of Indian culture in this film, other than this is incredibly helpful to a whole bunch of old English folk, doesn't matter how beautifully they act

PE: And the interpretation, in use of 'Crash'?

CA: So Crash is a much meatier text, except that it also never gets into what are the underlying problems that sit in, in Los Angeles were much like South Africa and it's one of the reasons that I wanted to look at that text, the inequality between the upper class and the lower working class is as disparate there as it is in South Africa. And that is, of course, sitting at the heart of so many of the issues that are explored in that film. It doesn't matter that it's black and white and Hispanic, and Muslim and Persian, and Chinese and Cambodian and whatever. It never really gets into those issues it provides a vehicle to be able to go into those issues. And I think that that might be the value of both of those choices, as a film text is that they give you any impression. What are they not telling us?

PE: You mentioned earlier the idea of teachers feeling Safe and feeling comfortable teaching. Just elaborate on this?

CA: We had… we had a rough Black Lives Matter campaign at the school. Several of us were, were trolled on social media. And it was a very difficult period it has been has left scars, on the staff to the point where certain staff have said I will not discuss race in my classroom because it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter what I say, I will be called out. And they wouldn't go get called out for because they're white. Yeah… We had a teacher at the school, who said to a class I cannot understand…And I'm paraphrasing, I'm not quoting… I cannot understand your worldview. I grew up in apartheid in a white only school. And she was cancelled. And she was called out all over social media for making a statement like that, which is simply a biographical or...yes... a biographical statement. So, teachers don't want to talk about race. In class, they don't want

to talk about racial tension. They don't want to talk about a stereotype and what lies at the heart of stereotype. They don't want to have a text in class that uses the n-word or the k-word. Because they don't know how to handle it. Because they don't think that any way of handling it is going to be appropriate to a militant black child sitting in a class. And they they're very open about that I just will not go there will not talk about

PE: What does the militant black child want to read? What does the militant black child want to study as a literature text?

CA: Don't know…the militant black child is not telling us what they want to read and what they want to talk about in class. They are not.

PE: Can you define for me, in your view, transformation, diversity, decolonisation for you? And because the next question is going to be how you then take that understanding of those concepts and apply it in your role as faculty head.

CA: So, I do think there's a difference between my understanding of those three terms and how those three terms play out inside of a school environment. So, I'll put that out there. Transformation for me is about having a look at and for me, what is fundamental, the basis of that of that that concept is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's concept of the danger of a single story. So, for me transformation is about ensuring that they are not single stories being told in our classrooms. So, I want to challenge the idea of the white, the old white male perspective. Which is very hard. Because you're still dealing with Shakespeare being taught in every single grade throughout because otherwise, they don't know what they're doing when they get to grade 12. And they get a Shakespearean text. So, you build in a Shakespeare component throughout, you build in the classic English poets so that they know what they're doing when they get in grade 12. And they've got a Wordsworth that they must deal with, or they've got Ulysses that they have to deal with or whatever. And so, they've got some historical context. So, you're really coming off a very strong, old white, male perspective. So, for me, transformation is about trying to bring wherever possible, an alternative view. Diversity is about where does the voice come from? Who is the voice? And what is the context of that voice? Then decolonizing decolonization for me is about is about challenging our, our colonial history, Dutch slash English. So White, European.

PE: So how does that play out?

CA: So how it plays out is incredibly difficult and incredibly complicated. When...so, the whole department is white... the whole department was educated without those sorts of views about colonisation and transformation. We all most of us went through university without the awareness of the danger of that... if in our university careers, it was challenged at any point, it was challenged in modules and option blocks. Because we were doing degrees, and we were reading degrees in English literature, by its very nature, English literature. And it's so very hard for teachers to be able to, to go back to that very first comment about academic merit in the classroom to see a text is having academic merit. If it doesn't come in some form or fashion from Canon of English literature. That's the difficulty is being able to break that with teachers going, I can't teach this, I won't teach this. This text has no value.

PE: Has there been any involvement from parents in terms of text selection?

CA: No, no, the short answer is no, there has not. And that's an area to explore what would you suggest? we have very little contact with parents in terms of text selection. Parents very seldom give any kind of feedback on the text unless they don't like a text. And in the years that I've been at Our school, both those expressions of dissatisfaction around the text have usually been based in a religious concept.

PE: Can you give an example?

CA: Yes. So, we've had one or two periods over the years who have been sort of fundamentally Christian, who have objected to a text that has looked at African spirituality, or has looked at a different religion, like Islam, and has said that this is problematic because this goes against the principles and tenets of my own religion.

PE: Your school is not faith based,

CA: We're a secular school. So, is there an understanding from parents that you will be teaching texts that explore all kinds of options?

PE: Yes. So, I'm surprised by that resistance.

CA: I don't want to misrepresent the resistance because it's been one or two. It's been one or two complaints over five years. And they've been quite absurd complex. Where a parent has said, you know, I was speaking to God last night. And God told me that. And I don't know what to do that because I don't know what God's voice sounds like. So, I don't know how to work with a comment like

that. And we've usually, you know, kind of diverted that, that issue to the head of student well-being who was then had a nightmare to, to deal with. Because we are a secular school, and it has provided us with an outlet to be able to say, at Our school, it doesn't matter what religion you come from, you will be respected. And in those two cases, where we parents have said, My child will not read this novel, we have said, Please provide a suitable alternative that has been evaluated by the teacher and then a separate topic for discussion or essay writing has been created for their child. In a sense, they've been exempted from the setwork, but it is few and far between. to underscore the fact that we have very little feedback from parents about the text that the kids read in school.

PE: The fallist movement a couple of years ago, BLM obviously had an impact on Our school, have you noticed anything in terms of literature, in any impact on what students are saying?

CA: Understand that they're not necessarily commenting on text? So, when they do comment, it's thin.

PE: But what are they? What are the comments around those sorts of events?

CA: it is a greater awareness, especially from black students, about the voice telling the story. So, this year was a very rich discussion, when we did Master Harold and the boys with lots of pre framing that you're going to see the k word being used here, teachers having to make calls about whether they would allow the Word to be read or whether they would read the word or not. And I allowed the teachers to interpret that and implement that in whatever way they were comfortable doing. And the same of the kids. And the kids were also provided with that option.

And we I found that the discussions that I was encountering and in some of the feedback coming from different teachers that there was a much greater awareness this time I'm round, that this is still a story being told by a white man, regardless of the route it gave into discussing South Africa's racial past and South Africa's racial present, and that it was still told by a white man. And as I recall, having taught it 10 years ago, that issue wasn't in the classroom. And so, I think there is a greater awareness about when these stories come from who's telling the story and therefore evaluating it, I think a lot of the black kids said, this story is valid, it doesn't matter that it's a white man telling it and I thought

that that nuanced position was sophisticated. To be to say the story still has merit.

PE: So, a decolonize text can still be told from a white perspective? It doesn't have to be from a black voice. Just elaborate a bit?

CA: So, one of the boys said to me, I find it... I find this amazing that this is a white man, writing this black character in such an accurate way. So, we got into Athol Fugard's workshop process with Winston Ntshona and John Kani playing with that dynamic that these may not only be his words, because this is a workshop to production. Their voices may be coming through here is that maybe where you're finding the accuracy in the representation, that the child saying, you know, I don't know anything about the workshop process. I'm not a drama student. I don't care. On the front cover of this text that I'm looking at it says by Athol Fugard. This is a white, Afrikaans male, right, who grew up in apartheid. And this might be a semi-autobiographical work, etc, but this character this black men is accurate. And I found that to be sophisticated and nuanced. I thought that if that if the fall movement led to anything other than just that nuanced appreciation that a text can still be valid. No matter the race of the author, that is a good thing. But I think that the flip side of the coin is just as dangerous. And that is that a valid text because it is written by a white male being thrown out the window is just as possible. It just hasn't happened in my classroom...it hasn't happened. Yet.

PE: Any other thoughts or comments or things you'd like to say?

CA: I often wonder whether the distinction of transformation and decolonization are, in a sense, false constructs. And I think that over the last couple of years, this whole idea of the perspective from which the story is told. Acknowledging the credibility of the text, that it can be written, that a female author can write an accurate male character that a Christian character can write an accurate Muslim character needs to come into the discussion. And I'm not sure that if that fits under the sort of, in a sense, quite rigid definitions that hold on transformation and postcolonial and decolonizing.

PE: There, in fact, have been quite a few authors that have been cancelled, because they've written from a perspective that's not theirs. What are your thoughts on that? Where the narrator, is, is a black man, but it is an A pure narration. Is this African but it's white author?

CA: I find the concept of cancelling? Hugely problematic. Because I don't know maybe that is my...I don't know... Am I a baby boomer? I probably am. I don't know. The whole idea of cancelling people's views. is enormously problematic to me. That the whole idea of freedom of speech is exactly that. You have the freedom to speak. We all have the right not to be offended. But I believe that offense is something personally managed and that public speech is not and that it should not be censored, and people should not be censored, and I believe that cancelling is censorship in its most extreme form. I have a huge problem with hit. In the same way that history is history, and you can't rewrite it...acknowledging that yes, you can retell it. And that there are always different perspectives from which to, to have a look at an issue. But it happened and it is there. So, tell it in its many different forms, but don't remove the event.

PE: So, I think you and I would have been taught history from a very white perspective. And they lots of interesting readings around retelling history, from what the article is refer to as the truth. How do we apply that to literature? Because can we decolonize Shakespeare?

CA: in the sense that, I think that Shakespeare, in the modern world is always problematic. Because you've got to spend a lot of time pulling the relevance of what you're reading, and what you're experiencing into the modern world and go, Okay, so how can this think that is 400 years old? How can this inform who I am today? How can that…how can this inform the choices that I have to make today? In that sense, I think that Shakespeare can be decolonized by having a look at okay, well, what is the essence that he's getting to here? At the same time? I don't think there's anything wrong with going okay, well, he's a man of his time. We can't call him a feminist because he's not. But he had no understanding of the word and of the concept that lay behind it. We can't call him a revolutionary, we can't call him socialist, because he had no understanding of the word. And so, to have a look at his values, as they, as they reflect in his work is a valuable exercise. Is it too an intellectual exercise to apply to school? I don't know. Kids are surprising what they can ask them what they can get their hands around.

PE: Have you had any training around transformation, diversity decolonisation?

CA: Nothing formal, and a lot of experience at school, working in diversity workshops, which we do once a week, every week, for two years already. And that's going to continue

PE: Elaborate a bit.

CA: So, we run a professional development. It's called professional development. But that doesn't do justice to what it is. So, you, you're running two courses during the year. So, it's timetabled for you. It is it is one lesson in every single six-day cycle. And for one, half of those sessions, you're going through methodology and cognition, theories, and all that, which is quite dry. But it can, it can lead to some experimentation in class, which is always a good thing. And the other half of it is diversity training. And it is working, it's talking about people and talking about differences in people. And it's quite a safe space so far, to be able to vocalize issues around diversity and diversity training and the threats that happen there. When we first started the first three months are always about why am I being attacked? And it's progressed over those two years into understanding who people are and the context in which they function. And understanding that black teaching staff at Our school have much greater logistical challenges and life challenges. Than the white who lives next door, in three- bedroom flats.

Appendix Z: Head of Department – School A

PE: //I am going to ask a lot of questions. I just wanna get this, up and running…So, my—my research is looking at, decolonisation, of, English, literature texts.
TH: Ok cool.
PE: Specifically from grades 8 through to 11,//
TH: //Mm//
PE: //because obviously grade 12 is prescribed.
TH: //Mm.
PE: So, I've got a—a couple of questions and then at the end if you//
TH: //Fabulous//
PE: //have any more questions you'd like to add//
TH: //Mhm//
PE: //or things or any other comments you welcome. So the first thing I'm gonna do is ask you just to describe your department, describe in terms of the number of members you've got, age range, demographics, experience. Any, mention of names will obviously be edited out//
TH: //Sure. So, we are 10 in the department. Um, eight, including me. Um, seven full time, English posts and three, part time. So three of them, teach—one of them teaches, LO, and English. One teaches history and English, and then there's [Felicia] who's academic head so she just has one class. Um, in terms of age there's a range. Um, I think our youngest person is…twenty…eight, and our oldest person is sixty…six. Um, demographics. We've got [Nthabiseng] who's our only person of colour and, do Jewish people count? (laughter).Two Jewish people. I've got [name of teacher] and I've got [name of teacher]. Um…got one male teacher…um, which in a girls' school is pretty, standard, um, he's our token white male. That's what we call him. Um, ja.
PE: Ok. Good. Can you, describe for me how you choose your literature texts? So just//
TH: //Yes//
PE: //a—discuss a process around that//
TH: //Um, so, it—it's like a—it's a group thing and we look at—we do look at representation and we do look at um, um, issues that are, kind of pertinent.

Um…so, our grade 8s do a novel called Speak, which is an American novel and it's about—it deals with date rape. Um, a—uh—it but it's still age-appropriate cause it's—it's in the—the protagonist is…just uh out of middle school into high school so it's an American text. We've tried to find, um, a more Afrocentric text, that, is, good enough to not just be your standard young adult literature fare but, um, (sighs), struggle. Um, I—d—found a book that I thought I was going to like. It was called, When the Ground is Hard, and it's written, um, by a woman who, was born in and lived in—in Swaziland which is nice for [Teenie]. Um, and so it describes the experience of, um, a girl whose father is white and her mother is Black, and she's at a private school in—in Swaziland. And I thought it—it kind of spoke to, um, a girl's experience I thought it would—it would work nicely. Um, it's set in the late sixties. But I was, worried because I'm a white, person and I'm not quite sure if I would pick up on nuances. So, I gave it to [name of teacher] to read, and she found it offensive, because of the way that the Black mother was represented is uneducated, um, and…So, we scrapped that. So, until we can find a text that works, we, are sticking with Speak, because it works for now. So that was the grade 8s…um, rationale. Um, then also cause it's a girls' school we take into account kind of feminist issues. So our, the Shakespeare that they did, up until last year was Midsummer Night's Dream…which I find a little problematic cause there's that whole scene where they, where, n—I—mean the whole—the whole reason why um, Oberon and Titania are angry with each other is because…he, took her little Indian boy, which, you know so, I thought that was problematic so we wanted to do, Twelfth Night which we were very excited about, and then it transpired that the junior school had decided to do, Twelfth Night. Anyway. So…we looked at texts um, and we thought Taming of the Shrew but, that's, got a lot of gender-based violence in it so we scrapped that, and so we've gone back to Midsummer Night's Dream but we only doing selected pieces. Mmm, for their film study, um, I took inspiration from [Mike], and we are doing Monter the Great, which is, Zambian, female, director. Beautiful story beautifully done so, and that works beautifully so that's our, that's how we kind of, got to our texts for grade 8. Um…and then grade 9…um, we did Anne Frank, up until, last year but it also got a bit old and also, that's—they started calling grade 9 um, holocaust year cause that's when they do holocaust in history as well. So, just took a little bit of—so we've changed it to Animal Farm. Um,

and…although it's—it's not an Afrocentric text at all it does look at, really cool issues that we can investigate and interrogate. So that works nicely, um…Just tryna think…um…With, film, um [Linda] started this thing this year so like, people always come up with ideas and we discuss and we go "Yes it will work, no it will work—won't or let's try it." So, we are doing a, episode from Black Mirror, um, which, takes a look at, African American experience. So that's, pretty cool. Um, and then they do Romeo and Juliet. And then grade 10 we do Tsotsi, um and we look at it from a very—again it's not, we love Tsotsi because it's not—it doesn't…(sighs), specifically racialise anything you've got like middle class, black, upper middle class black family you've got, the, shanty town, you've got all of these, um aspects and it—we look at it—we do look at it from—through a—through a—a post-apartheid lens, the HIV AIDS, the, um…inherited poverty, the institutionalised racism et cetera et cetera et cetera. Um, so, we look at it, through all those lenses. Um, Macbeth cause we wanna—eh—a—still like keep, um our Shakespeare going. Um, and…um d—um…Purple Hibiscus. Again, because it's representational, because it's Afric—it's an African text it's a good text. Um, and we look at that. Our girls are very sensitive. So, um, when we, taught—when I taught Purple Hibiscus, last year, there was an issue because, girls felt that they weren't given a trigger warning, about the—the violence, the, domestic violence in the text so, we've adjusted that. Um, grade 11s, we do…um, Othello, and we look at it, though, so I—I teach Othello so, uh—we do it through two specific lenses one is feminist and one is, race, and so we look at, the, theme is the—the identity of the other, uh, and otherisation, um, in—in texts. And we look at how Shakespeare treats it and we look at text and we look at sub-text um…which I think is great and the girls love. And, we don't do a novel in grade 11 we do that and we do The Crucible…Um, and again we look at, we always, look at—at—at both, um, fenim—feminism, and—and racism so with—with race, uh, Tituba the—the slave character and we look how that is, kind of, in—um, hugely, um, what's the word I'm looking for?...You know what I mean. K. Influential…in—in that. Then, our, films—study this year we've chosen to look at the evolution of the feminine identity that's my baby I was very, very proud of that. So, we doing, uhm, a fun text, fun-ish. N—I mean that's still—so we are doing um, Birds of Prey, which is Harley Quinn, and her band of, multicultural, sidekicks. Um, and we also do Promising Young Woman, and, w—we spoke

about—we were aware of the fact that there's no single character of colour, in Promising Young Woman, but it's—I think still an important text and we look at diff—from different points of view and we also look at the fact that, um ar—even though, Birds of Prey is a very fun, movie, it has very deep undertones of, gender-based violence, um, toxic relationships et cetera, and then we take a look at how that fun-ness is transposed into—into Promising Young Woman because Promising Young Woman as harrowing as it is, hasn used—the director and the—the script writer, has made very sure that she's taken scenes— none of the scenes in the movie, has not been portrayed, in a—in a comedy, before. Um and then just, putting that—that lens over it.

PE: So—so if you want to change a text,//

TH: //Ja?

PE: //what do you do as a department?

TH: Um someone, comes up—someone, will raise it, we—and we discuss at the end of every, year—or you know just before we have to see— send out the textbook lists. Um, and we discuss "This works. This doesn't work. Does this—does this have enough representation? Does it not? Are children, affected by it? Do they feel excluded? Did they feel included?" So, with Anne Frank one of the things was, um, and we'd, have like, sometimes these little, not interview—we have little, questionnaires, that are anonymous. How do you feel about the text? How's the text influenced you? Do you feel, in any way—so with Anne Frank, the handful of Jewish students we had, said they felt…like there was a spotlight on them, like they had to explain themselves, it was uncomfortable for them. And so, we had a discussion as a department and we said, "Ok well—it's—they, we are doing the holocaust in—they do it in history so let's take a look at the rest of the curriculum." Um, and so we decided to change it.//

PE: //Mkay. So, in—in that instance, the kids have got, some input.//

TH: //Yes.

PE: Ok. Do parents have input?

TH: Um, not really, no. Um…they…I mean I suppose they could if they wanted but they don't really want to. So, two, last year? Um, we've got a—an association Parents of Black Children, Association. And, they tried to—they wanted to like push a whole post c—ah, ja, post- colonial, reading circle. Um, and we did have a little collaboration with them, and then they realised that we already teaching

a lot of the text that they wanted to be taught so, we were fine and that's, petered out.
TH: Okay// Mm//
PE: //Well that's very interesting//
TH: //Mm.
PE: Is it—is it possible to teach, a Shakespear for instance through a decolonisation lens?
TH: Definitely. Without a doubt.//
PE: Talk to me through it.
TH: Um, because—so we speak it—so, teachers—they go that—teach The Tempest definitely through that, um, because we talk about, um, contexts so it's Shakespeare's context, and we talk about our context today, cause we are reading it as—as um, contemporary readers. We not reading it as an Elizabethan audience. And we take a—uh—k—n I'm very, keen about Shakespeare, become, more and more keen the older I get. But I thi—I really feel like Shakespeare's a—he was a postmodernist way before his time. So, we look at what's, presented in the text, and what, we, take away from the text. So, like the, what really brought it home to me that's—that idea and that I've built on, with my teaching of like a post-colonial lens for Shakespeare, is when we did The Merchant of Venice, here, with the grade 8s. And we spoke about how, you know Shylock is punished, everybody, else is like happily ever after and sweet and nice but i—and—and you look at what the characters say, and then we look at what the characters do, and our judgement of it. So the fact that, these, um, Christian people get to live happily ever after, how the court case, uh works, the injustices, is shown to us, by Shakespeare, not in what the characters, tell us, but in what we see. So, we take a look at that. So with Othello, when I teach Othello when I teach The Tempest, we spend, a, solid chunk looking at historical context. So we look at, um…wh—who the Moors are, where they come from, um, what their position was politically in Europe at the time. Um, we look at, that, and then obviously The Tempest cause it was the beginning of colonisation and the, um, the kind of different as—the way that Caliban, is, presented by the other characters to us and how Shakespeare presents him to us—two different, it's two different levels. So, ja.

PE: Okay, for sure. Good. You—you spoke about tryna find texts, that, balance representation.//

TH: //Mm.

PE: So, you're in a—a girls' school,//

TH: //Yes.

PE: //um, how does that work in terms of, sort of different intersectionality? So you've got, girls of colour girls, who are white, girls of different religions, um, girls who don't identify as girls non- binary students,//

TH: //Yes//

PE: //how do you, talk about//

TH: //Um//

PE: //representation in texts, in that sort//

TH: //In that, ja//

PE: //environment?

TH: So, um, that's a difficulty, because you can only teach so many, texts. Um, but we do, I have reading lists, for the—for the girls and—and in those reading lists, there's, a wide range of—of every kind of, representation and intersectionality. And then in um, in grade 11, they do a reading project, and it's, kind of like the one we did at [St John's]—do at [St John's], but it's kind of structured little bit differently so—so they are…they have to choose a theme, and then they have t—they are forced to choose, an African text, a text that has some sort of representation um, a film text, um, n—and they have to discuss that—ah the influence of the director um…whether the dir—n whether the director is, uh cis-gender, non-binary, white black coloured Muslim Christian whatever. Um, and so they have to interrogate that so, um, to kind of, make up for the fact that our texts can only be so many, we do that for them in—in grade 11. And then, of course, so—so we've got that, and then, uh, we have a fabulous timetable. So, our grade 8s and 9s have their normal six lessons a week, but then they also have something for the, reading lesson. So, each class, has one reading lesson a week. And so, we've taken that reading lesson, from, I think it was just like a library homework lesson. So, we've taken that, so, and we've made it a kind of, pre AP kind of lesson? So in grade 8, the, focus is on critical literacy, and so we interrogates texts, um, ah, what's her name? Is it Hillary Janks? You know when she did that whole thing of—of how— so we use, that

as a kind of a—a baseline, to do it. So we—so then we don't look at, literature specifically but we look at visual texts. We look at, um…um…s—little excerpts from—from—from literature week. Our poet—oh, poetry. Um so. Our poetry for each grade i— is—is divided up. So term one, um, is African voices, and we don't call it African poetry because it's limiting, cause then it's African poetry then, you kind of associate with specifically political poetry or specifically struggle poetry. So we take a look at the whole kind of African diaspora. Um, um, so we look at Caribbean, poets, we look at, um, North African poets, we look at, people um, from, yo—e— anybody from Africa, and in Africa, and South Africa. So we take a look at African voices. Um, and then term two is, dedicated specifically to, female voices in poetry. Um, and, then, the final term we do kind of classics, the classics. So we'd—so, every, grade has, um, so…the grade 8s do, contemporary poetry and slam poetry. So they do queer, poetry and slam poetry. The grade 9s do, um, the…just think quickly— they do sonnets and the Victorians, and again we look at it through a lens of class. The, grade 10s do romantics and postmodernists and then, by the time we get to grade 11, we start, matric poems.

PE: Okay. Can I ask you to define three terms for me? Transformation, diversity, and decolonisation.

TH: Ok. Transformation, is basically, making sure that there is I think, a space for everybody, and a space for everybody's voice. And of course, it has to be transformed because spaces are, traditionally and historically, um, especially in private schools, very Eurocentric, and very white. And, even in girls'—so—and in girls' schools we—we focus on a lot more—on—on feminine and feminist voices, because, even though it's girls' schools, up until very recently, writers have all been, old white men. They've been Shakespeare, they've been Dickens they've been, um, Craig Higginson (laughter) So, we transforming, the syllabus to, reflect uh—um, the—the entire range of our—of our society and our community. I think that, um, if you are a head of transformation for example, I think that you can't just focus on transformation in your own school you gotta—you've gotta take it into your wider community specifically because, private schools are such, isolated entities. Um, and so, I think that's, um, so we have [name of academy school] which is like your academy school but it's co-ed. Um, and to make sure that while it's not patronising, that it becomes part of our

transformation it becomes part of our school because—because it's instrumental in transforming our society and transforming the community that will feed, our schools and that will also, um, inform what our, matriculants do, outside of school. So.

PE: Cool.

TH: That's my transformation vibe. Uh, what's the other one? Diversity//

PE: //Diversity.

TH: Um, so again, uh—it's similar so diversity is literally just representation, I think. Um, and of course representation is necessary on all levels. So, um, it's, I think it's—it's, necessary and important for every kind of child, to, feel…um, represented in, all kind of structures of authority. So…um…I—we try to do that in our department which is very difficult specifically cause we teach English and English teachers of colour, good English teachers, in general, are very hard to find. Um, and so [Nthabiseng] really is our—our most precious, possession. And I've tried to, so here's the thing so, when I f—identified very talented, teachers of colour, they, I can't hire them, because they always get super high positions elsewhere, because they are sought after. Um, ja. So it's difficult to do that and at the same time not compromise the integrity of the department. Um, so to counteract that, we have lots of other little organisations and structures in place. So, we have a QSA like you guys do, a Queer Student Alliance and we have—so in the—in the kind of teacher, involvement aspect, we have teachers who are queer, who are there and part of the conversation. Um, and, we have, um, like, little societies like there's a, current affairs society that has s—some other name, um and, so in each one of those societies and meetings and clubs, uh, the representation there is very very, firm, um and, visible and clear, so that, children feel, that they have sounding boards, of people who understand them. Um, and you know eh—I think our— our student population is—is…more diverse than most. Um…like, our grade, 8s and 9s this year are like half white half black, which is…you know, quite, I think quite amazing. Um, I think the difficulty comes in, having, um, scholarship, children, because…for, the most part it works out beautifully but every now and then a lot—some of those girls feed into, the stereotypes, and then it's, difficult for…for them, in that space, um, and it's—it's, ja, it's a—it's a—it's a sensitive thing to manage. Um, mm…what's the last one?

PE: Decolonisation.//

TH: //Decolonisation. So decolonisation, I think is the easiest one to—to look at from an English teacher's perspective and an English department because we look at our texts, um, in the context of, um, when it was written, who it was written by, how we interpret it today, and we always, um, so I did this, interview with um, Siphiwe, um, Ndlovu and she was—you know we spoke about that whole idea that the—the author is dead, long live the reader. Um, and so we talk about that um, and I also, a—and the choice, the—the choice of Theory of Flight is very deliberate, because, it's um…it's a, post-colonial text on, s—many more levels than just it's—it's—a—it's not, specifically anti-colonialist. So we look at—at the difference between anti-colonialist texts and post-colonialist texts, so that we, that you— that you taking it one step after, protest and struggle, and, not negating the—the—um…the influence of the past, and the influence of colonialism, but looking at—at the people specifically rather than just the political structures. So, post-colonisation of texts of curriculum of syllabus, has much to do with identifying, our, current, um community, our context and, it very much takes into account, the, historical, um, effects, as well as um institutionalised, um, colonialism cause colonialism—and we look at you know colonialism of the mind. So, we look at different scholars and different um…um, like uh, Steve Biko for example with his whole black consciousness thing. So, we—we, um, always infuse our teaching, with that um, in mind, regardless of what the text is.

PE: Okay. Um…in terms of, pressures around, transformation//

TH: //Mm, mm.//

PE: //diversity and decolonisation, have you experienced any pressure, or support? Wha—what's your feel from the different stakeholders whether it's from, current students, former students, staff, senior management, academic deputy?

TH: Um, so, the feedback from the students themselves is—is usually quiet, they want more. Um, and so, a—and, w—we work with that. Um, it's important to also remember that the persons whose voice— people whose voices are the loudest are the politicised people and— and you have, voices who are, quietly in descent but won't, speak so we try it very much to—with anonymous questionnaires and things like to kind of just gauge where the children are. Um, there's a lot of, um…communication between parents, who will in—you know kind of, ask questions um, which is—which is nice. I feel a lot of support, from,

my own kid, who is, of the same mind, about what we teach. Um, and, I feel supported by my department because we, teach, with the same, um, understanding. Um…with the students sometimes, um, and with the staff so here's where it becomes, difficult, is you have—you have, a specific, section of the staff who's feeling very, defensive, and threatened. Um, and so they will…it's amazing how many, old people cry (laughter). You know they like they feel like they going to lose their jobs or they gonna get fired if they get accused of racism. Um, and so for, a specific, section of teachers, they find, the whole process of transformation threatening. Um, and they feel insecure in their jobs, quite unnecessarily so. Um, so there's that—there's that element. Um, and then there's—so, I'll give you an example, right. So, someone, said something about…I dunno, she— she said a child's hair was, untidy. Um, then…a, black teacher went and spoke to her and said, "This child feels, attacked because of her race because you said her—her hair was untidy," and she said, uh— you know so in her, defence, she explained that, she wasn't wearing the right, whatever hair accessories, but then spent the week in tears thinking that she was going to get, fired or, disciplined which of course she wasn't. Um, another teacher, so teachers and—and— and, girls will—will accuse, of racism. We've had, a couple of parents, come in and, accuse teachers—so for example my [James], who's the wokest child I know, um, was accused of racism because, uh, her child's project was late and she got into trouble….So there's that to deal with. But on the other hand, I think that if, teachers remember A that they the adults in the room and B that it's a conversation that's—that's needs to be held. So, I was accused of racism. I have to tell you this. So, um, and I think it's—I mean it wasn't petrified or terrified or anything, um…we had a conversation, we had a meeting, it was obviously, like through the right channels there were ever—all the, relevant stakeholders were there and it was a conversation, and it's a—it's an ongoing conversation, because it's—it's such a, it's, so fraught, that, we going to offend, someone at some point and then the—the idea is just to keep the conversation open, I think. And I think that, children…the older children, are a lot more aware of intention, than the younger children. I have this though. I have, um [Linda], who, used the K word, um…almost two years ago, in an AP lesson, and she was trying to explain, um, what racism was. And so she'd—obviously didn't use it from her own, um, point of view or to call another

child that what she did was she quoted a judge. Not really quite pertinent in the example that she used, but she felt that it was, important to use and to explain how horrible, um, she was tryna say how horrible the K word was. But by, doing that, she used the K word and made

children feel uncomfortable. And there was a whole, fallout from that and, the, upshot from that was that she couldn't teach matrics. Because it was felt that she didn't have the necessary, understanding or sensitivity. Mm, she asked, so she saw it as a punishment, uh—we—which I suppose it was, and she's asked for the matrics back. Went to [Headmistress], [Headmistress] said absolutely not. And, [Headmistress's] reasoning was this, is that, when she apologised… she apologised for the wrong thing. Like she really, didn't hear what the children were saying. So this is where, um, it's not necessarily age, I think it's a—it's a refusal to let go. A lot of—a lot of, our teachers in—in private school spaces are, liberals. Um, and [name of teacher] for example, fought hard against apartheid, you know and in her mind, that's where she is and that's who she is, and a lot of teachers don't understand the, evolution, like apartheid is no longer, uh…a regime, but there are effects of it, and in the same way that, the struggle against apartheid was a s—very specific kind of struggle, it's evolved. And, I think it's important for teachers to, keep up with that evolution and not get, stuck.

PE: So, yo—you talking about, student voice. Um, to what extent was your school, affected by the fallist movement from two years ago, and BLM? And specifically in terms of English department if anything.

TH: Ok so I came in at my school at a, kind of awkward time, because it was…kind of just feeling the after effects, of that. Um, and, from what I could tell, there was a, white teachers felt very hurt and betrayed in many ways and black teachers felt very hurt and betrayed in many ways and so there was, really a schism, I think. Um…which is, and I think what it was is it—it's…(sigh), there was, someone before my time who was—she was a—a tutor which is the equivalent of a house master. And, she was, doing a, whole parents evening thing, in the hall and she had to, um, introduce the, deputies. And she did, by name and surname, and when she got to, the one black deputy she'd forgotten her surname, and so just introduced her as [first name]. [The deputy] was very hurt and so, the tutor was, then, forced to resign her role as tutor but kept

everything else. Um, the white staff perceived this as a huge injustice I think and they felt persecuted. Then another teacher, um, s—called a—a bunch of girls were making a noise outside her classroom, she—s—um s—called them chattering monkeys…Did not understand why th—that was offensive. You know so it was that kind of, like a—like a—not a lack of communication but like a, distorted communication. Anyway. She was past retirement age, so that was easy. She resigned and—and let. Um, we had a thing called the list, which is—so the girls made this big Google doc where, people could just, um…bring up their grievances against teachers where they felt that teachers were, racist or homophobic. Um, and the greatest irony was the, very openly gay teacher got accused of homophobe—(laughter). It was cute. Anyway. So, this is what was happening. Black staff felt marginalised and not heard, and— and what happened a lot was—white staff were like "Don't you agree, [name of teacher]?" You know, and then they were put in a—in a difficult situation. So, th—u…I came in the middle of that so d—kind of, the—or the end of it rather. So we had [Lovelyn], who worked beautifully, at our school. She was amazing. Um, and, it opened up a lot of conversations, thought it was very helpful, teachers felt the same way. Um, so that was, so the teachers there—that was that thing. Then the students, and I think again cause they teenagers and they young and they passionate you know? So BLM to them was huge. Um…but, they struggled to, bring it to a South African context. So they stayed in the American context and it—and it was, um, because it was such a big social media thing, so it was hard for them to, an I think a lot of teachers took umbrage at the fact that they, were, unable to identify with it as, South Africans in a uniquely South African context, um, cause that would've taken a lot more work and energy and effort. Um, so, for example when, they were, um, when the girls g—got quite…loud, um, and, they then st—the girls started accusing the black staff and c—called them, the N word version of house servants…No they were hectic, (laughter), and I think girls are—are a lot more, politicised than boys and a lot, more passionate about these things but also a lot more jumping on bandwagons. So, that was, but then—so we had, se—sessions—teacher sessions with [Lovelyn] and children's sessions with [Lovelynn] and I think it, and—and—be—so—we had someone who was quite, rational and reasonable, and that helped, um, a lot. So, it's kind of, not died down, but it's no longer, as huge an issue as it was. It was very, just

interesting, is, they had to write argumentative essays, um, and, the vast majority of my girls wrote on, Roe versus Wade. But as in—as if they were Americans and it was affecting them personally in Amer— so, you know, had to—they have to learn to kind of, contextualise, I suppose. Um, then however um, I think the school is, and the school leadership is very, um open to cooperation with the girls. So for example, um, the h—hair rules, were completely transformed and changed, and so it takes, um…into account all different kinds of hair types et cetera um, and that's, not an issue at all anymore. Two Black teachers, felt, themselves felt because—because white teachers would—wouldn't go near, the hair issue. Like if there was, someone was wearing a—a neon pink scarf in her hair you just, kept quiet because—But the black teachers said, that they were accused of racism themselves, if they, of internalised racism, if they took—there was a child who—whose, um, black child whose hair was—she had like a fringe like—but like, covering her eyes, and, um [name of teacher] a black teacher said to her "That's unacceptable," and then sh—she, was, accused of racism. But again, I think the leadership, in the school is calm enough, and rational enough to, um, accept a child's um, version of events but also accept the teacher's and—and open a conversation. Another thing that's changing is we are changing our uniform, to—because a lot of the black girls, have, um, brought up the point that, the uniform is made for a—a white body, rather than a black body and they feel uncomfortable. So, uh in conjunction with the SRC, had different designs of school uniforms presented and a— a consensus was reached, on a new uniform which will be introduced soon. Um, on the other hand, a lot of the girls have sent um SRC delegations to [Felicia] s—asking that, they all have badges with their pronouns, on it, so that everybody can identify them by their correct pronoun, which is hilarious cause there are like three theys (laughter). But anyway, so [Felicia] said "That's a great idea. Why don't we add names? Then you can have your name and your preferred pronoun and that would be—I mean that would be so amazing." And then, because there's also that issue with, mispronunciation of names et cetera. Uh, and the girls, refused. They said "That's an invasion of privacy." So, n they children, so you've gotta, you know, th—you have to have a conversation so then [name of academic deputy] said "Well ok that's fine but, understand that a badge, is a change of uniform and your parents will have to be consulted." And

they immediately withdrew, their request, which was also funny. So, the conversations happen, and I think the—the girls, as angry and militant as they can be at times know that those channels of communication are always open. And of course, it's not perfect and it's not ideal and we have, people, in leadership that…are dumb…but that's just, ja. So overall, I have a very positive view of the way that, um…[Headmistress] specifically has dealt, with, the fallout from Black Lives Matter, for example. Um, and a lot, teachers who felt, that they couldn't move forward, didn't. That was two of them, who resigned, and that was that.

PE: Have you had any training in terms of T and D and, decolonisation? Whether from ISASA or the IEB or internally?

TH: [Name of external consultant]. Um, sh—I think she made a kak tonne of money from us,

(laughter), yes. Um, so we had like a—it was a year and a half's intensive training. So, um, she spoke, to, the staff had workshops with her. Um, the parents had workshops with her. Then the parents and staff together had workshops with her. The children act—n—she had age-appropriate workshops so she had workshops specifically focus group with the grade 8s the 9s the 10s the 11s the 12s. Um, and that was incorporated into our school, timetable, um, so that there was an extensive—at least a day—full day's workshop for each person, uh, associated with the school, at least once a term, for a year and a half, um, with lots of reading and homework and—an— you know discussion. So it wasn't just like talks it was, actual workshops. Yes. So.//

PE: //Mkay. Tho—those are the end of my sort of formal questions.//

TH: //Ok//

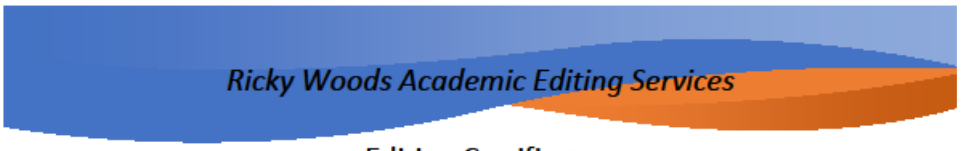
PE: //Are there any other points you'd like to raise specifically,//

TH: //Mm//

PE: //around, decolonisation, or T and D?

TH: I think I've said it all.

Appendix AA: Editing Certificate



Editing Certificate

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To Whom It May Concern

Wits School of Education

Editing of a Master's Dissertation

I, Marietjie Alfreda Woods, hereby certify that I have completed the editing and correction of the mini dissertation **An investigation into how school leaders interpret decolonisation in the English curriculum, and its impact on schools' internal education policies: A case study of two independent schools in Johannesburg** by **Paul Martin Emant** in fufilment of the requirements for the **Master of Education** degree. I believe that the dissertation meets with the grammatical and linguistic requirements for a document of this nature. The following aspects were covered in the process of the editing:

- A full language edit was completed, including grammar, spelling, concord, clumsy expression;
- Reference formatting was checked according to the APA7 style stipulated by the Wits School of Education and used by the student, as were in-text citations;
- Heading styles were standardised;
- Formatting and pagination was checked;
- Table of Contents and Lists of Figures and Tables were checked.

Name of Editor: Marietjie Alfreda Woods

Qualifications: BA (Hons) (Wits); Copy-editing and Proofreading (UCT); Editing Principles and Practice (UP); Accredited Text Editor (English) (PEG)

(Mrs) M.A. (Ricky) Woods

17 September 2024

