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An investigation into the kinds of innovative pedagogies involving apprenticeship learning groups and multiliteracies which support learning in culturally diverse classrooms in Johannesburg and the relationship between these pedagogies and the implementation of Curriculum 2005.

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response the previous experiences with poetry. I then reflected on the data thus collected and announced changes that should be made to the approach (i.e. that the approach should not be learner-centred). I then designed a new approach informed by the data collected in the pilot investigation (i.e. learners would analyse the poems in self-selected groups). This new approach represented the new practice I was to embark on from which I was to collect data for the beginning of the next spiral. The learners involved in the research were also given the opportunity through their journals and questionnaires to make suggestions on what changes should be made in order to enhance their learning in the following cycle.

According to Winter (1996:14) action research refers to 'ways of investigating professional experience which link practice and the analysis of practice into a single productive and continuously developing sequence, and which link researchers and research participants into a single community of interested colleagues.' The inclusion of my learners as collaborators in my research creates 'a single community of interested colleagues' where the learners are research subject but at the same time colleagues in that they were given opportunities to make suggestions for change. They can be described as 'interested' as the way in which they are taught impacts on their own education.

At the end of each cycle I took into account the responses of my learner/collaborators as well as information I gathered from the literature to make decisions about the changes to be made to improve my practice.

The way in which I have organised the Action Research, Data Collection and Analysis Spirals with my two Research Groups is as follows:

3.2. Description of Data Collection

3.2.1. Grade 11 Group.

3.2.1.1. Written pre-cycle data

Before compiling this activity the 3 'collaborators' were asked to write a few paragraphs reflecting on how they had been taught poetry in the past to be entered into their response journals which they would keep throughout the research project.

3.2.1.2 Description of Data collected during the cycles

- Photographs of the poetry posters.
- Journals from the collaborators tracing their journey through the project.
- Tape recording of a focus group discussion on the pros and cons of the approach used in this activity.
- Photographs of the collages.
- Poetry essays.
- Written suggestions from my learners on how to improve the pedagogy.

3.2.2. Grade 9 group.

3.2.2.1. Description of Data Collected

- Photocopies of the newspaper pages.
- Transcriptions of video recording of interviews with six learners who produced these two projects.
- Teacher's observations of group activity.
- Comparison between learners' first term mark and second term mark.
- Transcription of videotape of interview with the three groups whose learners improved the most.
- Teachers observations of group activity during the four weeks.
- Photographs of the models and posters presented.
- Answers to a questionnaire. This was designed to investigate why they either chose to work alone or in a group and why, as well as their response to the project.

3.3. Description of Data Analysis

In my research cycles the following data are analysed:

3.3.1. Learners' texts.

3.3.2. Learners' comments in their journals

3.3.3. Learners' responses to questionnaires

3.3.4. Transcriptions of learners' video interviews.

3.3.5. Teacher/Researcher's field notes and photos

3.3.1. Analysis of Learners' Texts

A selection of learners' texts was made and then described and commented on in relations to the performance and composition of the groups. Learners' multimodal texts are described and commented on using the Multiliteracies framework of the 'design' concept of 'the available design', 'the designing' and 'the redesigned'. Using this framework I have looked at how learners have shifted both modality and meaning in the process of design. However, as my focus is the contribution and arrangement of the Apprenticeship Learning Groups and due to constraints of space I was not able to carry out a detailed analysis of these texts

3.3.2. Analysis of Learners' Journals.

A selection of learners' responses has been made. These comments are analysed using forms of content analysis. Recurring themes, patterns and discontinuities are identified.

3.3.3. Analysis of Learners' Responses to questionnaires.

A selection of learners' responses has been made. These comments are analysed using forms of content analysis. Recurring themes, patterns and discontinuities are identified.

3.3.4. Analysis of Learners' Video interviews.

These interviews were transcribed and analysed using forms of content analysis identifying recurring themes, patterns and discontinuities.

3.3.5. Analysis of Teacher/Researcher's Field Notes

The teacher/researcher's field notes (my own) are analysed using forms of content analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I describe the way the apprentice groups were arranged in each of the six action research cycles and the data collected in the different group arrangements. I analyse the field notes, interviews and answers to questionnaires using a content analysis.

I use examples of learners' multiliteracies textual products produced in response to the multilteracies tasks to give the reader a more vivid sense of what learners produced. . I provide a brief description and comment on the learners' textual products using the Multiliteracies framework of 'the available design', 'the designing' and 'the redesigned'.

- Available Design is the range of available meaning-making resources
- The Designing is the process of shaping emergent meaning which involves re-presentation, recontextualisation, recombination and hybridisation. This never involves a repetition of Available Design. Every moment of meaning involves the transformation of the available resources of meaning.
- The Redesigned is the outcome of designing, something through which the meaning-maker has remade themselves, a new meaning-making resource which never simply replicates the Available Design. (Cope & Kalantzis: 1999)

I present the data for each of the cycles under the following headings:

- Description of the apprentice group model
- Transcripts of students' interviews
- Presentation and analysis of learners' comments written in journals
- Presentation and analysis of learners' answers to questionnaires
- Presentation and analysis of teacher/researcher's field notes
- Some examples with descriptions of learners' textual products
- General reflections on the data pertaining to apprentice learning model

4.2. Description of the Apprenticeship Model Groups used in the Study

I researched two classes concurrently, a grade 11 class and a grade 9 class.
There were six cycles to my research, each cycle using a different arrangement of groups based on what I learnt from the arrangement of the groups in the cycle before. The variation in group arrangement followed this pattern:

4.2.1. Self-selection groups with Grade 11.

4.2.2. Teacher selected apprentice groups with Grade 9 based on current performance.

4.2.3. Modified teacher selected apprentice groups with Grade 9's in which the teacher selected the language and gender of groups as well as ability.

4.2.4. 'Management' groups of Grade 11's in which the manager was selected from weaker learners and then these managers selected their groups within certain parameters

4.2.5. 'Expert' groups of Grade 11's in which learners initially selected own 'home' groups. Within these home groups one member was allocated to each 'expert' group. These expert groups were therefore not learner selected and were always diverse in one way or another. In these expert groups the individuals became 'specialists' in their aspect of the task. This specialised information was to be brought back to the 'home' group and shared at the end of the exercise.

4.2.6. Grade 9 learners were given a free choice as to whether they should work in groups or not, and which groups they should work in.

CYCLE 1

4.3. Grade 11: Self-selection groups - Cycle 1

4.3.1. Description of first group arrangement : Self-selection.

I based my model of self-selection groups on Bruffee's (1993: 28) basic model for classroom collaboration. He calls this arrangement 'consensus or agreement groups'. He states that the teachers typically need to do the following when working with these consensus groups:

- They divide a large group - the class - into small groups.
- They provide a task, usually designed beforehand for the small groups to work on.
- They reconvene the larger groups into plenary session to hear reports from the small groups and negotiate agreement among the group as a whole.
- They evaluate the quality of student work.

To begin with I invited my Grade 11 class to divide themselves into ten groups of three to four learners. Thus the groups were self-selected. In accordance with Bruffee's model I allocated each group the task of studying one poem. I asked the learners in their groups to try to work out the meaning of their prescribed poem. Once the groups reconvened into the larger group the learners were to present the poster which had been prepared in the smaller group to the class. This poster would explain the poem in terms of its form, rhyme scheme, tone, mood, rhythm, images and themes. These concepts had been repeatedly taught from Grade 9 to the present. No other scaffolding was given. I wanted to use this cycle not only to establish the effectiveness of this type of group but also to make a baseline assessment of the learners' abilities at the beginning of the project.

I asked my research subjects to write a journal of their journey of discovery as they worked out the meaning of their poems focussing on their emotional responses as they progressed. All the groups were asked to present their posters to the class and to explain their understanding of the poem to their class. At the end of this research cycle the research subjects were asked to:

1) evaluate the extent to which the process of working on the poems in groups helped their understanding of the poems and

2) the extent to which the presentations helped their understanding of the poems.

They were encouraged to make suggestions as to how the poetry lessons could be improved and which elements of the cycle were useful. Information gleaned from this discussion was used to inform the method adopted for the second cycle of poetry lessons.

4.3.2. Analysis of learners' comments on working in self-selected groups.

With group 1, my Grade 11 learners, I selected three learners as case studies who provide as my research subjects. I refer to them as 'Research Subject One' (RS1), 'Research Subject Two' (RS2) and 'Research Subject Three' (RS3).

- (RS1) is a 17yrs old English speaking 'White' boy who lives in Mondeor and who usually performs on a less than average level in his school work and who does not perceive himself as academic.
- (RS2) is a 17yr old English speaking Indian girl who lives in Meredale and who works very hard and due to this hard work, achieves above average marks on assignments.
- (RS3) is 17yr old English speaking 'White' girl who lives in Walkerville and who is a top achiever in all areas.

4.3.2.1.Analysis of extracts from learners' journals

Learners were asked to keep journals in which they commented on the lessons each day in terms of how well the approach of the lesson worked or didn't work for them. I gathered generally from my research subjects' journals that they understood the poem that they had to analyse far better than if it had been 'taught' to them.

Research subject 1 (RS1) wrote:

> Poetry has always been here but has never really appealed to me. It was always the teacher who explained the poem and I found that very boring. Working in a group is definitely more fun and everything seems much easier to understand.

Research Subject 2 (RS2) wrote:

> In my school career no teacher has ever taught me how to understand poetry, but rather gives us an explanation to answer the questions.

(RS3) wrote:

> Poetry hasn't been my favourite section in English, but I can say that I certainly don't hate it. I just saw it as having to learn line by line, and definitely having to know figures of speech. I don't have any strong feelings for or against poetry.

4.3.2.2. Analysis of research subjects answers to questionnaire

Research subjects answered the following questionnaire given to them after the presentations:

1. Do you think that the learners were successful in analysing the poems?
2. How did the production of your poster assist your learning?
3. How successful were the other learners' presentations of their poster analyses to adding to your understanding of the poem?
4. What knowledge do you think the learners need in order to improve their understanding of poetry?
5. To what extent do you think that group help in your understanding of the poem?

Most learner-respondents agreed that they were more successful in analysing the poems when working in these self-selected groups and agreed that having to create the poster focussed their learning. However, most felt that the presentation of the posters to the class did not help the others in the class to understand the poems presented.

SR1: They weren't able to explain the poems clearly. Their speech, well most of them, was all mumbled because they couldn't explain properly. They rushed through it and we weren't able to understand.

SR2: Some of the pupils knew what was going on in their poem but couldn't explain it to the class. Most of them didn't prepare the actual lesson. Pupils who used transparencies didn't catch the other pupils' attention and therefore they got bored.

SR3: I do think that this way of learning poetry works, but after working on the poem You'll have to present it, because if you just were left to do it for yourself, I don't think

It would be done.

All research subjects said that they learnt from the process of presenting. They were able to refine their knowledge through the presentation. However, all learners felt that they learnt very little from listening to the presentations of other groups. They suggest that each group should do all the poems if they were to be learnt properly.

Those members of groups that successfully completed the task felt that the improvement in their performance was a result of the groups. RS3 wrote:

> Pupils teaching each other works well because teenagers are on the same level, speak the same lingo and are able to understand each other better. It also gives a sense of purpose, belonging, self-esteem, confidence and it boosts brain-activity and creativity.

They, however, still felt that teacher input was necessary as RS3 continues:

> Input from the teacher is of utmost importance as it gives a sense of support and back-up and pupils are able to interact better with their peers and teacher.

RS2 was not as confident as RS3.

> When we started the project I was puzzled by the following questions: Where do I start? Why doesn't anything make sense? I got myself into a frenzy and created problems for myself. I finally realised that I was making the whole project more difficult than it was.

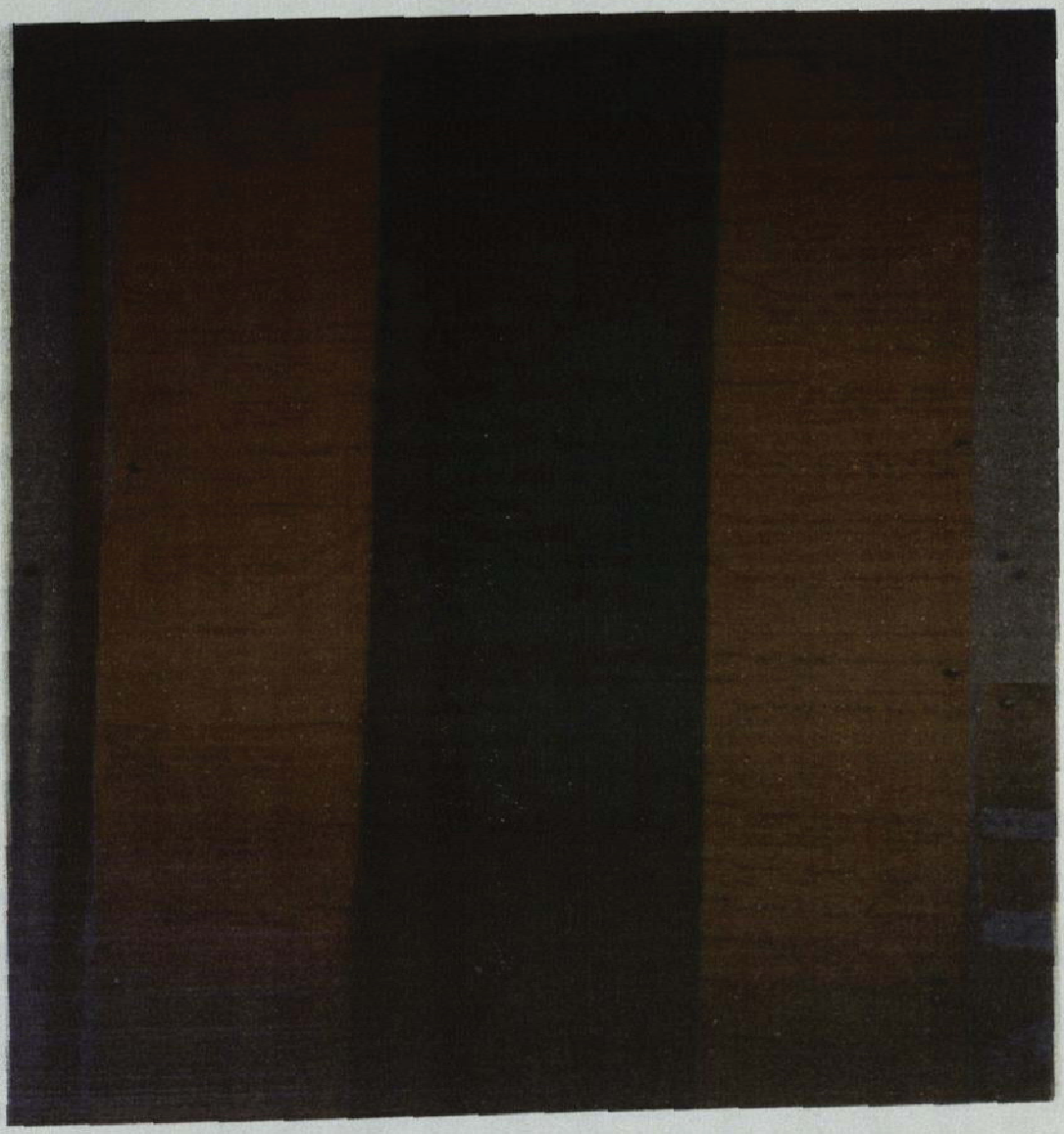
Her problem was that she wanted to analyse the poem by herself without discussing it with her group. She felt that as the 'leader' of the group it was her job to 'provide the answers' just as the teacher had done in the past.

RS1 didn't fall into this trap. He immediately consulted the group.

> As my friends and I sat down to our first meeting to discuss the poem we realised that some of the words used in the poem related to our South African history, so we did some research, which helped us immensely.

All the learners commented on the effectiveness of the group and pointed out that the groups containing the best performers had an advantage over the other groups.

4.3.3. Description of Learners' Textual Products.



It can be seen from the above poster that RS1's group's first attempt at multimodal design contained little cross modal transfer in that they stuck to the use of spatial and linguistic modes, which was largely how the material was presented to them. The poem was basically translated as the learners had previously been taught poetry. This is evident in that they had not attempted to actually translate the poem into visuals at all but had stuck to a line by line explanation which they had been used to receiving from their poetry teacher. On investigation, I discovered that the explanations in the

margins of the poster were copied directly from the Guidelines Study Guide and was therefore not an example of redesigning meaning but rather duplicating what was in the study guide. Visually this poster is simply an enlarged version of the work that appeared in their poetry books from the previous year.

In terms of the Multiliteracies framework of Design (The Available Design, the Designing and the Redesigned) the way in which this text was created may be described as follows:

The Available Design: the green and yellow cardboard, the text of the poem, the line by line explanation of the poem in the study guide and the learners poetry books with the design of previous 'analyses' of poems.
The Designing: the cardboard was cut and pasted so that the yellow cardboard formed a border to the green cardboard. One of the learners rewrote the text of the poem in his own handwriting onto the green cardboard. The line by line explanation of the poem taken from the study guide was written onto the yellow cardboard in the same way as the poems in the learners' poetry books had been arranged.
The Redesigned: the outcome of the 'designing' stage was that the text was 're-made' in that colour was used to distinguish between the text and the analyses. This was effective in emphasising this distinction. The enlargement of the text was the other evidence of 're-making' which was useful in the classroom for easy access for the learners who wanted to read the text.

In terms of the design framework some change can be identified, however this change is limited.

4.3.4. Teacher/Researcher's field notes.

According to my field notes learners were not happy about having to analyse the poems in groups without the help of the teacher.

> I handed out poems to the groups and asked them to analyse them. At first there was shocked silence and then pandemonium ensued. All began exclaiming at once that they didn't know how, and couldn't!

Learners seemed to feel abandoned and couldn't believe that I was serious.

> It took a great deal of persuading to coerce the learners into trying to analyse the poems in their groups. Many protested that the teacher was 'supposed to

teach them.

Most of learners were used to the teacher providing the 'right' answers.

> They kept asking me if what they were doing was 'right' and were hesitant to continue when I was noncommittal.

There was a great difference in the response of the different groups to being asked to attempt this task. I wrote in my note that:

> The 'brighter' learners began working together once they realised that I wasn't going to give them the answers. Once they began other groups reluctantly followed suit. However, what was most disturbing was that the weak groups never seemed to get started and I had to keep redirecting them back to the task as they struggled to focus. They also argued about who should be the leader as none of them wanted the responsibility.

What I found significant was that the group work only seemed to benefit groups containing learners who were usually proficient performers. Groups made up of weak performers seemed to produce even weaker work than previously. They were disorganised and I struggled to get them to focus on the task.

> The weaker groups generally whined: 'we can't do this'. Without the input from the teacher they didn't seem to know where to start first and in many cases, they gave up altogether.

These groups had low self images. Their social identity as being members of the 'non-academic' society in the school made them negative about their ability to perform the task and as a result they were not motivated to try the task at all.

The result was that the gap between the top performers and the weakest performers increased. On the basis of what the learners responses and my field notes it seemed that one of the keys to improving performance was the appropriate composition of the groups. That is diverse groups which would provide stimulation for the weak performers, at the same time allowing them to contribute what they brought to the group, thereby providing a new perspective on the task for the more proficient learners.

4.3 5. Reflection of findings pertaining to Group 1-Grade 11

It was evident that most of the learners gained from having to solve the problem of analysing their poem. The groups, which supplied their members with the necessary support and collaboration, were successful in demonstrating a clearer understanding of the poem they had studied. However, when they shared the information by

presenting their projects to the class. The result was a reversion to transmission teaching because each group explained their poem to the class line by line and provided their interpretation of the poem, much like their teachers had done in the past. This was, I hypothesise, because this is what they believe is required by the school as it is the type of behaviour that has been modelled by the teachers in the past.

The weakness in the presentations was partly because they had not fully understood the poems but also because they had not had sufficient practice in transforming their thoughts about the meaning of the poem into words or images and the weak groups lacked any models or mediation. In other words, I suggest that they needed to be provided with more 'comprehensible input' as Krashen would describe it. This had to be provided by rearranging the group structure.

Groups that were well matched in terms of ability were more confident, had more resources and thus able to complete the task. This verifies Vygotski's notion of zones of proximal development in that those learners operating in a similar zone are able to help each other to the next zone of proximal development. Providing what Krashen refers to as 'comprehensible input' does this. RS3 refers to 'confidence' etc, as it is Krashen who poses the idea of the 'Affective Filter'. When learners are working in competent groups the affective filter is low because they are not threatened and as a result learning can take place.

Because of these shortcomings learners who did learn more about poetry only become familiar with the poem his or her group had analysed and remained in the dark about all the others. This I put down to the fact that they had not had the opportunity to design the meaning of the other poem into their own redesigned meaning through group discussion. Some groups produced nothing at all because they said no-one in the group knew how to start.

As far as the posters were concerned I suggest that posters were mainly examples of linguistic communication, because the groups who produced the posters were those who were achieving in the school system and this is the type of literacy that the system is geared towards. Those who failed to produce texts were those who did not display linguistic 'intelligence'. I hypothesise, however, that had they been with

learners with this intelligence to explain the poems to them, they would in turn have been able to redesign the linguistic meaning into other modes, depending on their particular intelligence.

It was therefore obvious groups should be composed of learners who posses diverse intelligences and that a method must involve *all* learners being involved in *problem solving exercises* pertaining to all poems.

CYCLE 2

4.4. Teacher selected apprentice groups : Grade 9 - Cycle 2.

Learners were placed in groups of three containing one less proficient learner, one average learner and one above average learner. I chose to structure my groups in this manner based on Rogoff's apprenticeship model (1990), where a less proficient performer is 'apprenticed' to a more proficient performer and works alongside this more proficient performer to facilitate their development.

Rogoff examined how individual thinking processes relate to the cultural context and the social interactions of children that provide guidance, support, direction, change, and impetus for development. She draws heavily on the theory of Vygotsky and refers also to that of Piaget in her discussion. She believes that 'shared problem solving - with learners participating in culturally organised activities with a more skilled partner - is central to the process of learning in apprenticeship' (1990:39).

The type of group structure I selected was also based of the work of Lave (1988:2) who states that 'apprentices learn to think, argue, act, and interact in increasingly knowledgeable ways with people who do something well, by doing it with them as legitimate, peripheral participants'. Rogoff quotes John-Steiner (1985) who argued that 'development of a specific language of thought is fostered more by interacting with a knowledgeable person than by studying books or attending classes and exhibits.'

Rogoff (1990) claims that children play a role as active participants in their own development. They need structure and even demand the assistance of those around them in learning how to solve problems of all kinds. She views the individual child, social partners, and the cultural milieu as inseparable contributors to the ongoing activities in which child development takes place. I explained to the learners why they were being put into the groups I chose for them and thought that the 'weaker' learners would be pleased to receive the assistance.

Learners had all read 'The Pearl' by John Steinbeck as part of their literature syllabus. In this Multiliteracies Project, learners were required to create the front page of a

newspaper which might have appeared in La Paz on any day in the story of 'The Pearl'. The front page of the newspaper had to be produced on cardboard and had to include at least one main news report and two other shorter reports, a cartoon and an advertisement.

4.4.1. Researcher's Field Notes on Apprentice Group Grade 9 Cycle 2

The first problem I had to deal with was a social one. I wrote the following in my field notes:

> After the lesson a group of the 'brighter' learners hovered at my desk to speak to me. They were very upset about the group arrangements. They felt that working with 'weaker' learners was going to jeopardise their marks. I couldn't speak to them for long as the bell had rung, but appealed to them to co-operate and give the experiment a chance.
>
> Another deputation of learners came to see me after school and said that they were not good at English and they didn't want to work with the 'Boffins' as the latter would make them feel stupid.

Krashen maintains that when learners are anxious, what he calls their affective filters are high, and when they are calm, the affective filters are low. Learning takes place most effectively when the affective filters are low. It would seem that I had considerably raised my learners' affective filters through the arrangement of the groups.

I had not foreseen this problem so I called a class meeting the next day and allowed a free and open discussion on the composition of the groups. Apart from the mark issue, the main problems were the following:

> The 'brighter' learners were also concerned that they would not be able to get together after school as members of the group lived far away from each other. When I pointed out that many of the members of previous groups had also lived far away from each other, they pointed out that many of the learners from Soweto and other more disadvantaged areas did not have computers at home. They could, therefore, not share disks and send home disks for these members to add their work to the file as they had done previously with members of the group.

When I was open and said that I didn't have all the answers to these questions and explained what it was that I wanted to achieve, the attitudes of the brighter learners changed, but the weaker learners were still apprehensive.

> The 'weaker' group were concerned about looking stupid. The most concerned was Martin from group 1, a first language learner who is weak at English and who had been placed with the two additional language learners. He was concerned that these two girls would speak Sotho and exclude him. I met later with this group privately and it turned out that Martin was the only member of the group that owned a computer. He was delighted that he had something to offer and invited the two girls to his house to do the project.

I suggest that as far as Martin was concerned, he was very uncomfortable about working with girls, particularly because they were 'black' girls. Although Martin had never been overtly racist, I believe that he nevertheless had problems with how to relate to these two people who were different to him in so many ways. A reticence on the part of a number of the other learners was also, I suggest, linked to a deep seated prejudice towards learners of other races, no necessarily aggressive racism, but simply wanting to remain in the comfort zone of people they knew and understood.

Once I had the groups working together, and all the affective filters were lowered, I was fascinated to see them working in class. I had set aside periods for them to prepare the project and designate each other tasks. Some very interesting interactions occurred:

> The learners who never usually asked me questions were the most talkative in many of the groups, asking the brighter learners questions that they had been too shy to ask me. Often the other learners were able to help them, but they were most delighted when these learners did not know the answers and had to ask me. This was a type of mediation I had not expected. The learners who had been concerned about attaining lower marks, such as Tarryn, had spent a lot of time guiding the other two members of their group in how to go about the project. Learners like Jon and Martin, who had previously struggled with such tasks in the past, did not know how to go about the task. Once Jon realised that one must actually *read* the setwork in order to create newspaper stories he become quite proficient at it. Hearing the other members of the group talk about events in the novel helped Jon *into* the novel. Tarryn and Sibongile spent considerable time editing the other two learners' articles.

Every group succeeded in transforming the information they had found in the novel into a newspaper report.

4.4.2.Description and comments of learners' textual products.



The quality of all the projects was better than anything I had previously received. The interesting thing about the above project was that the girls had discovered that Martin was good at drawing and they had let him create the cartoon.

He was so proud of his creation that he put his name to it so that it would be recognised as his. The group made some interesting transformations in their newspaper. They transformed the events in the novel into newspaper articles, newspaper pictures, cartoons and advertisements. They thus transformed the novel genre into four different other genres.

They had not only drawn ideas from available design but had taken available design and re-contextualised it changing its meaning in the redesigned. The group made use of a mixture of colours in their banner. They chose a mixture of green and shades of blue. This supports the point made by the New London Group that 're-production and re-contextualisation is never simply a repetition' as was to a large extent seen in cycle 1.

Transformation is always new use of old material, a re-articulation and recombination of the given resources of available design (New London Group:1996). The redesigned is unique and in the case of these projects one can easily see Steinbeck's novel and the newspaper gaining a new 'voice' as this material was put to new use.

For example the newspaper poster contains a report of the incident involving the doctor who refused to treat Coyotito because he was an Indian. They have transformed this into a headline story entitled: 'Baby's Life at Risk due to Racist Doctor'. Although the news report is based on the events in the novel it takes on the interpretation of the group. Nowhere in the novel is it explicitly stated that the doctor is a racist, but this is how the group has interpreted the behaviour of the doctor.

The description of the process of design taking place in this text according to the Multiliteracies framework for design is as follows:

Available Design: the available meaning-making resources were newspapers, the text of the novel, pictures from newspapers and magazines, and drawing material.
The Designing: learners cut out pictures and placed them in new contexts which transformed the meaning, they drew pictures transforming the description of the pearl buyers in the novel into a metaphorical vulture, they transformed episodes from the story into newspaper reports and adverts.
The Redesigned: the outcome of the designing phase is a new meaning-making resource in the form of a page of a newspaper which could have appeared on any day in the novel. Events in the novel have been remade in the form of newspaper reports, cartoons, adverts etc. and the newspaper has been remade into a newspaper which reflects events in the novel. The meaning of the available design has also been changed in the process of, for example, re-contextualising the picture of the man from whoever he was in the original text to the doctor in 'The Pearl'. In this textual product there is transformation and not the amount of replication seen in 4.3.3.

4.4.3. Transcriptions of the interview with the two groups pertaining to their responses to the apprenticeship group experience.

What I present below are transcriptions of the interviews with these two groups pertaining to their experiences in their respective ALGs because they reveal interesting things about the social dynamics of the groups.

GROUP A (Sibongile Journeyman 1; Sylvia Journeyman 2; Martin Apprentice 1)

(T = Teacher. J1 = Sibongile. J2 = Sylvia)

T: You were put into these groups. Was this the group you would have chosen?

J2: Sibongile, but I'm not so sure about Martin. I was not sure how he would work.

T: How did you find Martin worked?

J2: He was a bit stubborn at first, but as time went by he got used to the idea that we had to work together.

T: Okay. Martin, why were you stubborn at first?

A1: Well, I don't think I was stubborn but ...that's her opinion. I just had different ideas to the rest of the group.

T: In what ways were your ideas different?

A1: Just in the way it should be written and things like that.

T: Okay. And did you get your own way?

A1: No. we came to a compromise.

T: How did you reach a compromise?

A1: By discussing it....and like working it out as a group.

T: Would you have chosen these two girls to work with?

A1: I'm not sure...because I normally like to work with people that I know and I've never worked with them before....so.....probably not.

T: How long have you been in class together?

A1: Two years.

T: And you've never worked with these two girls?

A1: No.

T: Sibongile, how did you feel about being lumped with these two?

J1: I was pleased to work with Sylvia because she's new and I'd like to get to know her ...Martin as well, because I didn't know him. It was interesting because its two different people.

T: What was interesting?

J1: Their personalities totally differ - you get from stubborn to understanding . Sylvia was determined to work from the beginning ... but Martin ... he was kinda reluctant at first, but then at the end ... he worked very well.

T: Do you think that he was reluctant because he's a boy and you are girls?

J1+2: Ja!

T: Who was the leader in this group?

A+J2: Sibongile!'

T: How did that happen?

All: It just happened>

T: So no-one said: "Sibongile, you are the leader"?

SILENCE.

T: So, how did it happen, Sibongile?

J1: It ended up that I took home the rough work and edited it.

T: In what way did you edit it?

J1: I just read over it and checked it and then we each did some printing at Martin's house.

T: What do you think that you gained from working in this group?

J1: I now know Martin and Sylvia better.

T: And in terms of your English?

J1: Um... my English mark went up!

T: Why do you think that is?

J1: We worked as a team.

T: Martin, what did you gain from the group?

A1: Now I know them better and I work easier with them.

T: And in terms of your English?

A1: In terms of my English?!

T: Did you teach them or did they teach you?

A1: They taught me ..like.. some English comprehension, like where I was making mistakes.

T: And Sylvia?

J2: When Sibongile took the work home she corrected some of my mistakes and I learned ...like...prepositions, correct grammar and spelling and she taught me some new words.

GROUP B Tarryn (J3); Angie (J4); Jon (A2)

T: Have you three ever worked together before?

All: No

T: Did you want to be put into this particular group?

J4: I wanted to work with Tarryn.

T: Why did you want to work with Tarryn?

J4: Because she's clever!

T: And you Jon?

A2: Working with Tarryn you can say was maar okay.

T: When you chose groups earlier why didn't you chose to work with Tarryn?

A2: I don't know ...because it was with my friends ...but I was planning to chose someone that was smart!

T: So why didn't you chose someone smart?

A2: I don't know ... it's because I'm used to working with them (his friends)

T: Alright, so when you got into this group what would you say was different about working with Angie and Tarryn?

A2: You can say it was maar better working with them because they knew what was happening and they explained to me what to do and how I must do it and what has to be in there (the newspaper).

But it was also maar better with my friends because we understand each other ... but you can also maar say its worse because they like to fool aroun ... but there is sometimes they really work.

T: And in this group, who was the leader?

Both: Tarryn!

A2: She took control.

T: Did you vote for a group leader?

A4: No she just like took over.

T: And did you let her take over?

Both: It was fine.

T: Tarryn, how did you find working with these two?

J3: Oh, it was fine ... they brought their work. I thought it would be worse.

T: How did you get them to bring your work?

J3: I just basically told them, 'if you don't bring the work you'll get 0!'

T: Did you get higher or lower marks than before, Tarryn?

J3: About the same.

T: Angie?

J4: Higher marks.

T: And do you think you deserve higher marks?

J4: Yes!

T; Why?

J4: I don't know... I just put a lot of work into this project.

T: And Jon, did you get higher marks?

A2: Yes.

T: Why do you think you got higher marks?

A2: I understood better because they knew what was happening and they told me what to do.

4.4.4. Analysis of Transcribed Interviews

These two interviews provide insight into how the social processes of negotiation, mediation and manipulation in the learning situation took place so that each learner navigated what he/she wanted or didn't want from the group.

4.4.4.1. Development of Social Relations.

Group A

It was revealed in the first interview that one of the main interests was gain in terms of social relations. When asked how they feel about working with Martin both Sylvia and Sibongile were cautious:

> Sylvia: I was not sure how he would work. He was a bit stubborn at first but as time went by he got used to the idea that we must work together.
> Sibongile: But Martin ... he was kinda reluctant at first, but then in the end he worked very well.

Their main concern seemed to be how he would work. They interpreted his initial reluctance to conform as 'stubborn'. Martin dismisses this label as 'her opinion'. He explains that his reluctance was because

> I had different ideas to the rest of the group ...in the way it should be written and things like that.

Martin states that he is used to working with his friends and the idea of working with two girls he doesn't know makes him feel uncomfortable. He is resistant to forming new social relations with these two girls. However the girls manage to coerce him into the group as he eventually reaches a compromise by discussing it. Negotiation politics in terms of coming to an agreement about the sharing of power in the group obvious occurred here through talk.

On the other hand Sibongile's interest in the group is in forming new social relations. When asked if she was happy to be in the group she states:

> I was pleased to work with Sylvia because she's new and I'd like to get to know her ...Martin as well, because I didn't know him. It was interesting because it's two different people.

When asked what she had gained from working with the group she needed to be prompted to mention the improvement in her English, but spontaneously answered :

> I now know Martin and Sylvia better.

It is interesting that she mentioned Martin first here because in the beginning of the interview she mentioned her response to Sylvia first and added Martin as an afterthought. Her understanding of and attitude towards Martin underwent the greatest change and this is underlined by the fact that he is now prominent in her thoughts. She also mentions that they did some of the work at Martin's house. The fact that he invited these girls to his home indicates that a significant working relationship had developed amongst the group as it is rare for teenage boys to invite

girls to their homes. I suspect that this happened because they had established a mutual respect and a good working relationship based on this mutual respect.

Although Sibongile became the natural leader, this seemed to be silently negotiated. The others gave her the work to edit. They recognised her skill in this area. However, when it came to production she says:

> We each did some printing at Martin's house.

They worked together at Martin's house and shared his technical resources. This group shared resources as Sibongile brought her language, organisational and interpersonal skills to the group, while Sylvia worked hard collecting the information and Martin provided the drawing skills and the technical resources.

In this group all members were not only interested in getting the job done, but getting it done in the way they were used to doing it. This revealed by Sylvia's concern about how Martin would work. Martin shows concern about the way it should be written. It was this concern about producing a good assignment which motivated all members to enter negotiation in order to work together for a common end.

By the end of the assignment the production of the assignment becomes simply a by-product of the social relations established among the members of the group. Martin recognises that in order for the group to work they need to know each other. When asked what he gained from the group he says:

> Now I know them better and I work easier with them.

Good social relations in this group lead to improved knowledge production. The successful team work lead to a richer product than I suggest any single member of the group could have produced on their own.
All members of this group need to be prompted to comment on how the group benefited their English. They discover that the establishing of new social relations is more important and that although all their marks improved, this takes second place when asked about the benefits of working with new people.
Group B
This group was far less interested in forging new social relations. When asked if they wanted to work in the group both Jon and Angie ignored each others existence but

mentioned that they wanted to work with Tarryn because she is clever. Jon was the one to mention regret at not being able to work with his friends. When asked why he seemed to prefer working with his friends he said:

> It's because I'm used to working with them....it was maar better with my friends because we understand each other...

Like Martin, Jon felt more comfortable working with people he knew even if it meant that they didn't perform so well.

> ...but you can also say is was maar worse because they like to fool around..

Even though he recognises the advantages of working with Tarryn he misses working with people that he understands. It seems that this group made little effort to understand each other, like Group A, but Angie and Jon allow themselves to be controlled by Tarryn.

> She just like took over.

Neither of them objected to her taking over. What was happening here was that instead of the group integrating like Group A, Tarryn gave the orders and the others complied. Little negotiation was entered into. Tarryn came across as very domineering and made no effort to socialise with her group.

> I just told them, 'if you don't bring the work you'll get 0!'

It would seem that in terms of developing social relations involving mutual respect or even a form of friendship in this group was a failure. Apart from Tarryn giving the other two instructions about the work they were to do there was very little talk in this group. According to Webb (1989) pupils' use of elaboration and sensitivity may not be natural in all groups and training in these skills improve their use within the group. Elaboration and sensitivity allow the discussion and participation necessary for successful group work and autonomy from teacher dependence. It would seem that in this group training would be necessary in these areas.

As far as power relations is concerned the other two *allowed* Tarryn to think that she had the power, but in fact they were using her to gain the grades they wanted in this project and to an extent to work for them. So that in a 'subversive' kind of way the other two members of the group were exercising power over Tarryn.

In contrast to Group A, Group B is only interested in gaining better marks from the group project. Jon and Angie are prepared to put up with Tarryn's bossing them around and taking over because she knows what to do and they do as she says in order

to produce a better product. All members of the group contributed to the extent that Tarryn dictated. Angie is less passive than Jon as far as accepting Tarryn's position. When asked if they voted for Tarryn as a leader Angie says:

> *No, she just like took over.*

Her tone is rather annoyed but she accepts it. Possibly because she knows Jon won't do the job and she doesn't want it but she does want to succeed and believes that she can learn from Tarryn who traditionally does well at school. She takes the opportunity to do just that. She says:

> I just put a lot of work into this project.

Jon's passive approach is illustrated in his response to the question as to why he thinks his marks went up.

> *I understood* better because they knew what was happening and they told me what to do.

I didn't feel that this group was a success because the gap in ability between Tarryn and the other two members was too great, to the extent that they didn't 'speak the same language'. Tarryn was obvious annoyed at having to work with the other two but tolerated it:

> Oh, it was fine ... they brought their work. I thought it would be worse.

Nevertheless, her grudging admission that it was not as bad as she expected indicates that she had preconceived ideas about her group which were unfounded. She still didn't recognise any positive contribution on the part of the other members as her overriding aim when working with the group was to sustain her high grade.

4.4.5. Teacher/researcher's reflections on the findings pertaining to grade 9 apprentice groups - Cycle 2.

This cycle confirms the New London Group's statement that 'cultural and linguistic diversity is a classroom resource'. It also supports what Arlene Fingeret (1983) quoted by Breier (1996:105) meant when she argued the following: 'literacy practices are not often performed by individuals, but within social networks. These are characterised by the exchange of resources: those with highly developed literacy skill will take responsibility for complex literacy tasks while others will share, for example, their technical expertise with members of the social network.'

Once they had established the power relations in the group and set up a working relationship, Group A pooled their intellectual, technical and economic resources and came up with some excellent work. At the same time they learnt a great deal from each other and about each other.

Martin was delighted that he had taught Sibongile how to use Microsoft Word and was amazed that someone so clever did not know to do something so easy. By employing the Multimodalities approach I seem to have succeeded in sourcing the learners' Multiple intelligences (Gardner: 1983) which allowed them to succeed. According to Spady (1996) 'success leads to success' and this is possibly why, once Martin found he could succeed and that the girls valued him as a member of the group, he approached the task with more enthusiasm which led to more success. At the time I thought that Martin had also got over his gender prejudice of not wanting to work with girls, but I discovered in the next cycle that I was being too optimistic.

Group B was less successful because the gap in their performance meant that Tarryn was not working in the same zone of proximal development as the other two and what was happening in the group resembled teacher fronted teaching than peer mediation. Instead of the journeyman mediating for the apprentice she was dictating. This is not how apprenticeship learning occurs. Angie and Jon were prepared to simply do as they were told as they didn't have the academic ability or inclination to oppose Tarryn. They also saw working with 'someone smart' as an opportunity to boost their marks and so they used Tarryn to do just that.

CYCLE 3

4.5. Modified Teacher-Selected Grade 9 Apprentice Groups Shifting Language and Gender Diversity.

4.5.1. Method for selection of group arrangement.

Having seen such encouraging results from The Pearl projects in terms of group work, I decided that I should arrange this class into 'apprenticeship groups' for the remainder of the second term. I did not necessarily use the same groups. I made some minor changes to try to avoid the situation where one learner dominated but arranged groups so that two learners would be working with one less proficient learner. I also took into account language and gender.

This group arrangement was still based on the Rogoff model but with the above mentioned modifications. I was aiming for peer tutoring to take place over the period remaining in the term within the groups. Goodlad (1990) suggests two models of peer tutoring: same age tutoring and cross age tutoring. She defines peer tutoring as any arrangement where 'competent' students act as a teaching resource for less 'competent' classmates. My model therefore, was a modification of Rogoff's apprenticeship model and Goodlad's same age tutoring model.

I moved Thokozani into a group with Sibongile and Mpho because both the girls were excellent at English, but at the same time, shared Zulu as their main language with Thokozani. I wanted to see if code switching occurred. Martin and Sylvia worked with a different journeyman. I placed Leigh who continued to come bottom of the class, with two boys who were not in his circle of friends but who came from Eldorado Park, as he did.

I explained to learners what had happened during the project on The Pearl. I spent some time explaining how apprenticeship learning occurs. This included a lesson on Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development. We also discussed the advantages of the apprenticeship system to all members of the group. Most of the learners were positive about the project. Nevertheless, in order to facilitate co-operation in the group I followed Slavin's (1983) advice concerning group reward for

co-operative effort. I promised to buy the group, whose apprentice's mark improved the most, lunch.

My classroom is arranged in two horse shoes, one inside the other. This allowed each apprentice to sit between his/her two journeymen. One of the immediate effects was that the apprentices, who had previously sat together, did not distract each other with irrelevant chatter. The apprentices were kept focused on whatever the task the class was busy with. Another interesting discovery was that many of the journeymen pointed out to me that not only did these apprentices not write their homework in their diaries, they didn't own diaries! This was quickly remedied.

Some of the journeymen needed guidance, as they seemed to think that they had now become their apprentice's 'nanny' or 'mother'. I received complaints that they were too bossy, or that they didn't give the apprentice a chance to do things for her/himself. This had to receive immediate attention. I had to explain to the learners that this was not the idea and that no interference should take place unless the apprentice required it. I stressed that the idea was that the apprentice was simply to be put into an environment where help was at hand if required, and to be given examples of how to do particular tasks was available. Once this was understood the project seemed proceeded reasonably unhampered, although I later found out from the interviews following that some of the journeymen were still bullying their apprentices although they did not seem to realise it.

4.5.2.. Analysis of Data for Modified Apprenticeship grade 9 Groups -Cycle 3

4.5.2.1. Transcription of interviews with three apprentice groups whose apprentices improved most on the term two examination compared to their marks in the term one examination.

I have chosen to present transcriptions of these interviews in order to see what was happening in the ALGs which produced the most improvements in terms of marks when the ALG arrangements were sustained over a period of three months.

GROUP 1: THOKOZANI (A3); SIBONGILE (J5) MPHO (J6)

(THOKOZANI IMPROVED BY 27%)

T: Can you tell me, Thokozani, why you are sitting with these girls?

A3: Basically, I didn't do well in the first term exam in English. There was a decision made that those who didn't do well should be put with the pupils that did do well and I was put with these girls.

T: Were you happy about that?

A3: At first, no! I wanted to be on my own and I wanted to prove myself.

T: What changed your mind?

A3: I haven't changed!

T: So you still don't like being with these girls?

A3: Yes

T: Did they contribute to your improvement?

A3: Yeh... they made sure that I did my work. They were always checking on me, checking on me ... whatever I did they were checking on me!

T: Sibongile, do you agree?

J5: Ja, but he was always complaining that we were treating him like a baby ... but we were just like asking if he had done his homework and if he was doing his work during classes.

T: And if he hadn't done his work?

J5+6: He always did it.

T: And Mpho, in what way do you think you helped him? ...apart from checking his homework?

J6: Okay, when he needed help... like this time when we were doing poetry ... at first he didn't want to ask us anything, but as time went by he saw he could rely on us for some things. Some things he didn't understand and we explained them to him the best we could.

T: Were you doing this during class - while you were being taught?

J6: Yes - it was during classwork.

T: Did you at any stage change languages?

A3: All the time! We are bilingual.

T: Yes. So can you give me some examples?

A3: We used English and Zulu.