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Perspectives in Education

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PART ONE

VOICES IN THE WIND:

MULTIPERSPECTIVAL RESEARCH

Introduction: Identity and Curriculum Revisited

Jonathan D. Jansen



***JONATHAN JANSEN** is currently Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Durban-Westville and Director of the Centre for Educational Research, Evaluation and Policy (CEREP). His research covers the areas of effective schools, policy and analysis, impact evaluation and the politics of transition.*

"Today it feels good to be an African.
It feels good that I can stand here as a South African ..." (Thabo Mbeki)[1]

In her sophisticated and provocative monograph, *Between Unity and Diversity,* Gitanjali Maharaj (1999) demonstrates through a series of *Essays on Nation-Building in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (sub-title) that, "To speak about nation-building means to speak about the calling-into-being of a whole range of political identities and projects which compete for recognition by the state" (6).

This second Issue of *Perspectives in Education* to emanate from the University of Durban Westville brings together a series of papers that collectively address the problem of competing political identities after *apartheid.* Now that the currency of *rainbowism* has been devalued in the unforgiving marketplace of politics, these papers provide a chilling reminder of the complexity of identity as a political phenomenon and the dangers of a transition teleology that assumed racial unity was both inevitable and irreversible. If nothing else, the *Tempe* Military Base disaster outside Bloemfontein, in which a black officer killed and wounded several white colleagues during a shooting spree, is a dramatic reminder of how far we have not come.

What is remarkable with this collection is that the papers included for publication form part of a general Issue; that is, there was no pre-determined editorial "theme" which consciously called-for and selected papers based on an organising focus. The fact, therefore, that several contributors sent unsolicited papers which cohere around the theme of *knowledge, identity and curriculum*[2] is itself testimony to an intellectual ferment around issues assumed settled in the euphoria of the early 1990s.

Paolo Valero (Colombia) and Renuka Vithal (South Africa) initiate the argument by posing North/South dilemmas in the "research methods" adopted by mathematics education

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[1] Statement by the then Deputy President, Thabo Mbeki on the occasion of the adoption by the Constitutional Assembly of the "Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill 1996" Cape Town, 8 May 1996. Excerpts from this Speech appear in Maharaj (1999: 11-15).

[2] This couplet of issues is first addressed in the edited book by Cloete, Muller, Ekong and Makgoba (1997) with the focus on knowledge production and change in the higher education landscape.

researchers on both sides of the international divide. Using concepts such as "stability" and "disruption", these two scholars argue that the unstable research ecology of countries in the South demand a different kind of methodological approach that takes account of changes and demands placed on researchers in local environments. Their concept of "disrupted research" is used to provide concrete examples from Colombia and South Africa of how research design and validation takes on different meanings in the unpredictable social and institutional contexts of developing countries. Kenneth Ruthven from the University of Cambridge deploys the metaphor of anti-colonial writing well in his "The North Writes Back" by arguing that perhaps educational development, rather than research, is the appropriate strategy to follow in the social ferment and upheaval described in developing countries. Ruthven concedes on the dilemmas of context but insists that "the methodological repertoire currently available to researchers is sufficiently robust and versatile" to address the kinds of concerns of Valero and Vithal, irrespective of context. In my view, the issue here is, on a transnational scale, whether all theories and methodologies can be reduced to a level of sameness given our different positions in the world system (Jansen, 1991). Here identity politics is represented (and contested) as a transnational problematic for knowledge production.

This North/South debate finds parallel expression in national and local dilemmas about identity and curriculum. In the context of South African schools, the most recent opening-up of such debates on identity, race and curriculum came as a result of the distressing findings of the recent *South African Human Rights Commission* (SAHRC, 1999) report on "Racial Integration and Desegregation in South African Public Secondary Schools." Sociologist Deevia Bhana launches an incisive critique of this report through the use of what she calls "the Same-Other heuristic device" to show the limitations of a race-reductionist argument in dealing with difference at the school level. This is an important point. While race clearly remains (and should remain) a significant category for political analysis – if only because of the unrelenting racialised experiences of black South Africans – using it as a singular lens for understanding schooling is limiting, even misleading. This is particularly the case given the intersections of gender, class, ethnicity, religion, language (and so on) in shaping racial identity and consciousness before and after *apartheid.* For Bhana, therefore, "The interconnections between the binary opposition of Same-Other provide a more adequate explanation of the way identity and difference is constructed in South Africa."

In this context, Relobohile Moletsane makes the case for going "beyond desegregation" in dealing with multicultural education in South African schools. In this insightful contribution, mixing theoretical insights with practical guidelines, Moletsane succeeds in combining her role as education theorist and teacher educator in addressing the challenges issued by Bhana. Moletsane seeks a holistic curriculum that is inclusive, not uniform, conscious of racialised identities and yet alert to its problematic features. The challenge set for teachers and curriculum workers is not going to be met easily:

> A holistic curriculum ... that validates all the identities, cultures and voices in our country ... may be found in a framework that is social reconstructionist and global in its approach on the macro level, as well as multicultural, multi-historical and multi-perspectival on the pedagogical level.

The relevance *and* illusion of Moletsane's advocacy is found in the hard political realities of transformation at the 107-year old *Vryburg High School.* A group of colleagues from the University of the North West, Odhav, Semuli and Ndandini, demonstrate the difficulties of

securing the accommodation of cultural and social differences under one school roof. *Vryburg* high school had become the *Little Rock, Arkansas* of South Africa. Intransigent about transformation; dismissive of the law; aggressive about its conservative, Afrikaner, monocultural identity. And yet, there can be no transformation at Vryburg without accommodation. The question is: how is such accommodation to be accomplished in a context where identity is both asserted and undermined in the political cauldron of rural Afrikanerdom? Odhav and his colleagues show the limits of legal intervention and, I would assert the need for ongoing political struggle that ignores identity politics at its peril.

Another aspect of the Same-Other complex that is under-theorised in education theory in South Africa and elsewhere is sexuality and sexual identity. In this context, Pippa Stein's "Drawing the Unsayable: Cannibals, Sexuality and Multimodality in a Johannesburg Classroom" is a welcome extension of the intellectual landscape in education theory and identity politics in South Africa. Stein foregrounds problems of representation. Some things (such as talk about sexual desire and sexual experience) cannot be talked about by boys and girls. But they can be represented in other kinds of texts – hence the powerful title: "Drawing the Unsayable." Yet neither form of representation is without its constraints, for:

> ... it is not only the choice of signifiers within the texts themselves which are motivated choices for representation, but the choice of semiotic modes themselves can be motivated by the constraints and possibilities for representation which exist and are maintained within the dominant culture.

While Stein uses semiotics and multimodality as innovative ways of dealing with identity politics, the contribution by Amanda Esterhuysen digs into completely uncharted territory in the curriculum theory landscape in South Africa. South Africa's only educational archeologist, Esterhuysen revisits Curriculum 2005 and, in particular, the Human and Social Sciences (HSS) Learning Area. I found this paper both powerful and subtle, in that it shows how the concepts of 'time' and 'space' can be used to compress or release multiple political identities on the archeological landscape. Consider, for example, how Esterhuysen illustrates this problem in her analysis of the HSS curriculum:

By compressing three million years of time in one category, the pre-colonial past is reduced to a blur of hominids, hunter-gatherers and African farmers, whose only apparent impetus for change are external stimuli, the environment or the influence of Europeans.

This rare analytical perspective on Curriculum 2005 also points to a problem in the scope and range of curriculum policy work in South Africa. Our fixation on policy claims and consequences, and our narrow focus on the mechanics of implementation, have displaced more sophisticated conceptual and philosophical analyses of the new curriculum, such as provided by Amanda Esterhuysen in this exciting contribution.

Queeneth Mkabela from the University of Zululand offers a short, descriptive paper that reminds us of the dilemma of women's representation in the leadership of higher education institutions. Even though young women for the first time form the majority of students enrolled in higher education in South Africa, most senior academics and administrators are still overwhelmingly men. To be sure, the Vice Chancellors of the Universities of Durban Westville, Cape Town and Natal are powerful and articulate women but they represent only three of the twenty one leaders of South African universities – and one of them is about to

leave for the World Bank! What is interesting in Mkabela's report on universities in KwaZulu-Natal is the observation that below the Vice Chancellor level (and also at the ceremonial level of Chancellor), almost all the appointees at the time of writing are men. This paper therefore raises some fundamental questions about the depth and future of transformation even in a province where two of the three University Vice Chancellors are women.

Perspectives in Education makes its mark through an innovative section called *Conversations about Research* in which we bring together reflections, inquiries and dialogues about the research endeavor in a style that is not weighed down by the conventions that circumscribe mainstream journal contributions. It is also a forum in which we encourage post-graduate students and practitioners to relate, in innovative ways, their experiences of doing and reading research.

Michael Samuel, the Guest Editor for this Issue, brings these contributions into conversation through his thoughtful Introduction, "Risking Ambiguity: Exploring Voice in Research." Samuel includes in the Conversations forum poetry, conference reports, book reviews and "reflections" on collaborative research by the Trinidadian scholar, June George and on research learning by Darryl David. I would be remiss in not acknowledging the contribution of University of Sussex scholar, Dr Janet Stuart, who after years of teaching and research in Africa, and on the eve of retirement, offers valuable insights into the practice and politics of "doing educational research in Southern Africa."

It should now be evident that the first and second sections of this Issue of Perspectives in Education draw intimate and uncomfortable lines between different kinds of identities: of teacher and researcher, of North and South, of race, sexuality and culture. To many South Africans, these lines are shifting, uncertain and contestable. For, as the raging debate between Max du Preez and Thobeka Mda continues to illustrate, few of us would be allowed to share President Mbeki's "feel good" experience about being African and South African at the same time, with the same audience, in the same place. It is at that problematic juncture, that the debate begins, and to which Perspectives in Education hopes to contribute through this collection of ideas on identity, diversity and curriculum.

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Research Methods of the "North" revisited from the "South"[3]

Paolo Valero and Renuka Vithal



PAOLO VALERO, a Columbian mathematics educator is currently writing her Ph.D. dissertation in mathematics education in Denmark. Being a Political Scientist and Linguist, her research work is interdisciplinary, focused on the political dimension of mathematics education and organisational approaches to reform in mathematics teaching in secondary schools.



RENUKA VITHAL is a lecturer in mathematics education and educational research in the School of Educational Studies at the University of Durban-Westville, South Africa. Her research interests include the social, cultural and political dimensions of mathematics education and mathematics teacher education.

Abstract

This paper explores issues arising in so-called "southern" or "developing" countries, such as Colombia and South Africa, where researchers in mathematics education attempt to use research methods that have been created mainly in the "northern" or "developed" world. These paper focuses on the inefficiency of those methods when applied to research in mathematics education in developing societies. We claim that the instability of these social contexts should prefigure a challenge of the assumption of stability that underlies scientific production in the developed world, and, therefore, to engender research methods that grasp the real complexity of the contextual realities of mathematics teaching and learning in developing countries. The knowledge produced by those means should also be considered as an important part of the international knowledge on mathematics education.

Introduction

Most of the papers presented in international journals in mathematics education e.g. Journal for Research in Mathematics Education or Educational Studies in Mathematics show exemplary pieces of research, carried out aseptically and whose clear methodology warrants validity, relevance and all other research criteria ascribed to quality findings. Although the methodological framework of these studies is stated as clearly as possible, few reflections,

[3] This paper appears in Olivier A and Newstead K (Eds.) *Proceedings of the 22nd Conference of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education, Volume 4.* Stellenbosch University, 12-17 July; and also in Gates P (Ed.) *Proceedings of the First International Mathematics Education and Society Conference,* Nottingham University, 6-11 Sept.

criticisms and actual discussion are devoted to methodological issues and the difficulties emerging from them in particular contexts, i.e. the socio-political circumstances, the history and the material conditions within which the research process has taken place. Our main purpose in this paper is to present reflections about this meta-level of research, by considering the methodological difficulties that researchers in mathematics education in social contexts, different from the developed world, may face when trying to carry out their studies.

This reflection comes to be relevant in the international community of mathematics education researchers for several reasons. First of all, the general current international discussion about what is research in mathematics education (e.g. Sierpinska and Kilpatrick, 1998; or Clements and Ellerton, 1996) does not only question the acceptance of the positivist research paradigm and its quality standards as the only way of approaching research in the discipline, but also regards the necessity and possibility of exploring diverse research perspectives that involve and consider the social, political and cultural needs for doing research in both developed (Cotton and Gates, 1996) and, mainly, developing societies. Second, as the community of mathematics education researchers becomes seriously international, its members should question whether the community's given or taken for granted view of research contributes to the inclusion of research that may not follow the "main-stream" format, but that constitutes relevant knowledge for the realities of under-represented countries and researchers. Third, facing the challenges of doing research in rapidly and constantly changing societies as those in developing nations, will also contribute to mathematics education research in all other contexts, including the places that currently dominate in the production and dissemination of it. This is because the former can bring into focus new relevant problems and insights that may remain hidden in "normal" research situations. This has implications also within the international community, in how relations between researchers, their research agendas and frameworks are defined in terms of their importance for well-represented and under-represented countries in the group. And finally, it is crucial to reflect on the implications of importing research methods and intending to use them without being aware of the very dynamic nature that the research processes acquire in developing societies. We should not keep on being blind to the challenges that the specificities of these societies impose on the act of researching and producing knowledge about the teaching and learning of mathematics.

The main thesis of this paper is that there is a need to question research methods in mathematics education, created in developed social contexts and applied in developing countries, because their importation can be shown to be inefficient in grasping the nature and complexity of research processes in those unstable, developing social contexts. We begin with a conceptual note on some of the terms used; then present two cases illustrating this inefficiency; we discuss assumptions built into research methods used in mathematics education; and finally highlight some challenges and key issues that face researchers in mathematics education, especially from developing countries.

Some conceptual considerations

The terms "research", "method" and "methodology" may be interpreted in different ways and, in fact, in the literature in mathematics education research they are sometimes used differently. Usually research in mathematics education is viewed as a systematic, disciplined inquiry, typically, on an issue related to the teaching and learning of mathematics (Kilpatrick, 1992). The systematism refers to the coherence, organisation and reflection that characterises the way of tackling the issue to be investigated; and the discipline also suggests that the

process is open to be examined and verified. These issues of systematism and discipline are achieved through a research method which groups together the definition of the research problem or selection of a research object; the general epistemological approach from which the object is viewed and which determines its nature and the nature of the very same act of studying it; and the methodology which states the stages followed to gain knowledge about the issue. This includes activities like formulating theoretical tools to approach a research question, designing a strategy to obtain information about it, selecting specific techniques and instruments, analysing the information, interpreting it, and drawing conclusions and findings in respect to the issue that was the centre of the whole process. And finally, the whole method guarantees the quality of both the process and its results.

Two cases of "disturbed" research in developing societies

Let us consider two cases of research that, for us, exemplify the keystone of our claim. These two projects fit into the category of mathematics teacher education and professional development.

A case in teachers and administrators' professional development in Colombia

The PRIME I Project was carried out by a research team from "una empresa docente" (Universidad de los Andes, Bogota – Colombia). It completed the second cycle of a long-term action research project exploring the issues of low quality in secondary mathematics education, from an institutional point of view (Perry et al., 1996a). In this study 15 schools participated from Bogota, represented by 2 administrators and 2 secondary mathematics teachers from each. It intended to involve teachers and administrators in action research activities concerning their practices in the school, as a way to promote their professional development (Perry et al., 1997, Valero et al., 1997a). The methodology to study their process of involvement in the professional development activities and its effect in the functioning of the teaching of mathematics in the school was previously planned. It included a series of qualitative and quantitative instruments to be applied at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the process, in order to find the possible changes happening in the schools.

The first set of data was collected as expected. While lots of efforts were made to collect the second and specially the third sets, towards the end of the project, more or less 40% of the participants had abandoned it (Perry et al., 1996b). Reasons for this related to the instability of staff in public schools; the internal fights and conflicts in the schools which created obstacles to their participation in the project (Valero et al., 1997b); and the impossibility of both teachers and administrators to manage their time due to their excessive academic and administrative charge. But also researchers were unable to collect some information as planned because some events like an unexpected general teacher strike that took place in the middle of the project and altered the possibilities for participation for some teachers. Because of this lack of information, the implementation of the initially designed methodology raised several questions about the validity of the comparisons that had to be established, the accuracy of the conclusions and the possibility of giving them a certain degree of generality.

Nevertheless, the very failure in the application of the previously planned methodological strategy and the disruptions in the data showed the existence of relevant problems that came to be more interesting in revealing the nature of the processes taking place in the teaching of mathematics in some Colombian schools. The problem that the research team faced then was

what meaning should be given to the data collected and how to re-articulate the whole experience in order to reveal the cornerstone of the disruptions and their effect in the teaching of mathematics.

A theory-practice study in initial teacher education in South Africa

This study attempted to investigate how and why primary school student teachers would implement a "social, cultural, political approach" to a mathematics curriculum during their teaching practice (Vithal, 1997). The research design was developed to allow the student teachers to jointly negotiate an opportunity to implement a radical new approach to the mathematics curriculum with the resident-teacher in the school and the researcher/teacher-educator. The initial teaching practice session would be followed by a period of curriculum design and, then, actual implementation of projects in schools would occur in the second teaching practice session. All this was to be captured as data through interviews, classroom observations, journals, students' work and so on.

A series of disruptions and changes in important aspects of the context led to continual modifications in the research strategies (Vithal, 1998). Along the study, the notion of teaching practice itself was undergoing change in response to pressures within the faculty; as well as in response to new national policies, norms and standards in teacher education. The researcher/teacher educator had to simultaneously make research and curriculum decisions, which could potentially conflict. The first preparation phase in schools had to be replaced with campus-based sessions only, because the university closed as a result of student and staff protests. This meant that student teachers had to create the opportunity to implement their ideas on their own. The second phase where students actually implemented their projects was also disrupted when schools closed due to a teacher strike. The impact of such disruptions on the student teachers' attempt to implement their innovation differed from school to school and from student teacher to student teacher (Vithal et al., 1997).

Several questions emerged: How are the disruptions to be managed in the methodology? What should the researcher do with the disruptive data produced? How can it be taken seriously as contributing to the research endeavour instead of only as something negative that must be thrown out, or confessed to and apologised for as poor methodology? And finally, if brought into the focus of the study, what are its implications for the research question, analysis and the knowledge produced as well as for rigour and quality in research? Focussing on the disruptions themselves has meant that some other insights have emerged both relevant to the study and not, but still pertinent to the context. It has also meant that several aspects of the research methodology had to be reconsidered especially if the changes and disruptions are to be made visible and brought to the centre of the methodological debate (Vithal, 1998).

Problematizing research methods from the developing world

What is glaringly similar in these two cases is the changing and unstable nature of the context in which the research was conducted. We do not suggest that researchers in other conditions may not face similar difficulties; however, we argue that the scale of the problem is different. The chronic nature, depth and extensiveness of the instability, as well as their being beyond the control of the researcher, require us to fundamentally re-think and re-create research methods that allow relevant research to be undertaken in such situations, and that still preserve notions of rigor, scholarship and quality. The cases presented draw attention to issues

like what is the nature of the whole research process; which are the assumptions adopted when approaching a problem; what findings are eventually produced and how is the research to be evaluated.

Revisiting the assumptions of research in mathematics education

Generally, researchers in developing countries import and apply methods created in developed countries. Such methods have as a strong underlying assumption, the stability and "normality" of the setting in which research occurs. The functioning of a developed society is viewed as continuous, and this comes from the actual steady growth and relatively stable life conditions that modernity has built. The whole view of science in developed countries is based on this characteristic. And even though a "post-modern" world, with all its predicaments, begins to irrupt in science and research, stability is not yet questioned.

The stability assumption, then, is present in the components of the research method. Research objects and problems are viewed as stable, not in the sense that they may remain the same all along the research process, but in the sense that they are always meant to be available for the researcher to study or to interact with. The processes of teaching and learning of mathematics are therefore, considered to be stable and available to be researched. The approaches are also stable, as fundamental epistemological positions in respect to the object and the process of inquiry allows stating of the existence of the research issue and presupposes that it will be maintained as a part of the reality that can be studied. And methodologies are stable because, although understood as iterative processes, the changes to the original designs are minor in terms of their distance from the initial research focus. Besides, the researcher should make sure in previously designed methodological plans how to control the possible disturbing variables, and how to assure the collection of all the data needed. Even in the case where some data is missing in a later application of research instruments, the analytic methods allow a percentage of error (e.g., consider the case of statistical tools). This also implies that there is a relative stability and continuity assumed in the relations between the research objects, the procedures, the analysis and the eventual findings. Therefore, criteria for assessing the quality of the research process and its results, like validity, objectivity rigour and precision, predictability and reproducibility, among others (see Kilpatrick, 1993 or Sierpinska et al, 1998), are also associated with the stability assumption precisely because they look upon the steadiness and linearity of the research process.

But in contrast to this stability, developing societies are characterised by instability, given by the constant and abrupt reorganisation of political, social and economic forces. The big predicament in research arises when it tries to be conducted following methods that rely on this stability assumption and require stable conditions to produce the expected scientific results. When the research process is obstructed by uncontrollable disruptions emerging from the very same unstable nature of the social context and of the research objects that are considered, then the whole process of research has to be reconceived to allow the disruptions themselves to reveal key problems that should be addressed in order to understand, interpret or transform the real issues of the teaching and learning of mathematics in developing societies.

Challenging researchers in mathematics education

Questioning the stability assumption and being aware of it challenges researchers in mathematics education from both developed and, especially, developing societies. Rapidly

and constantly changing research environments force a problematising of the whole research method, because the smooth correspondence assumed between the research object, the methodology developed to investigate it and its outcomes cannot be taken for granted. In both the cases described, the researchers point to the instability raising other research questions that were not in the direct focus of the study but, nevertheless, are important and relevant to the context. This implies that researchers need to be open to the possibility of changes in the research process, but also to be more radically responsive and flexible in actually modifying their research objects, as disruptions in the context and, therefore, in the methodology, appear. The whole method itself also has to respond to the changes in the research focus. A more dynamic understanding of the relationship between the question, methodology, analysis and outcomes has to underpin the research process, where relevance to context becomes a crucial consideration in the research process. The analysis and findings should not discard or attempt to "correct" the disruptive data, but to focus on it as the "authentic" or "actual" data in the research process. The production of the data itself may need to take different forms and require researchers to re-examine criteria for quality research.

For instance, the concept of validity (see e.g. Kilpatrick, 1993) should be carefully reconceived. In the second case described, student teachers had to be relied on for data collection. This had implications for the kind of data collected and the relationships set up between the researcher and the participants in the process; and this could be considered a problem for the internal validity of the study. Therefore, it may be necessary to argue for stronger involvement of research participants in unstable situations, not only on ethical but also on methodological grounds. This could mean that different criteria, e.g. "a democratic-participatory validity" may need to be developed to indicate the nature and extent of research participants' involvement in a study (Vithal, 1998). Instead of evaluating a study only in terms of its generalisability, which is connected to external validity, we may consider its generative capacity as an important criterion (Vithal, 1998). Generativity can be taken as the extent to which a study originates new research objects for study and alternative research methodologies, as well as produces new outcomes. In other words, a generative study "unseat[s] conventional thought and thereby opens new and desirable alternatives for thought and action" (Kvale, 1996, p.234). In the first case mentioned, the research team had to abandon the idea of describing the possible changes happening in the schools as a consequence of the impact of the professional development strategy implemented. Instead, they had to direct their attention, for example, to the analysis of the structural conditions that promote or constrain the establishment of relationships between the administrators and the group of mathematics teachers, for building the relationships needed for professional interaction and development (Valero et al., 1997b). In this sense, the study had a generative capacity.

All the above implies that a creative attitude toward research methods in mathematics education needs to be encouraged, especially in developing world contexts where the prevailing culture is one of being consumers of theories and practices produced elsewhere, rather than of viewing themselves as producers. Recent challenges to research methods, such as the provocative question of whether research epistemologies, which are largely a product of the developed world, may be racially biased (Scheurich and Young 1997), should inspire researchers to critique and suggest new directions in mathematics education research that are more relevant and authentic to their contexts, however tentative. Such an approach must surely enhance our overall research endeavours in mathematics education. Unless

researchers in these situations begin to challenge "mainstream" mathematics education research and face the dominant contexts in which mathematics education occurs in their countries, they could continue to be trapped in a double bind. That is, they do "good quality" research, in carefully chosen, less problematic research environments, about marginally relevant topics to the general status of mathematics education in their country; or risk having their research considered methodologically poor, but nevertheless relevant to the situation of the majority of mathematics learners in their context.

Issues in importation of research: equilibrating relationships

Questions of what and how importation in research in mathematics education occurs are as important as who is doing the importation and for what purposes. Much of the importation of research is from the "north" to the "south" through the complex network of international literature, agencies that fund research, Ph.D. students from developing countries who study in "northern" institutions, and other mechanisms. Perhaps the most overt and predominant form of importation is that of research findings in mathematics education. How children learn or should learn mathematics, how teachers teach or should teach, etc. are ideas imported by researchers who live and work in developing world contexts. Those who have particular expertise and may be funded also bring these ideas to work there. It is not surprising, therefore, that research questions explored in developing countries are often closely related to those same findings and are investigated within their corresponding research frameworks as theory, methodology and practice (in this sense, our case descriptions show how we too are implicated in this importation). It is not a coincidence, for example, that research related to technology in mathematics education dominate in international conferences and journals, rather than issues such as teaching and learning mathematics in large, under-resourced multilingual classrooms, which are relevant concerns in developing countries.

With these types of research come particular ways of posing research questions and their corresponding ways of investigating them. Research objects are constructed within particular research processes based on particular kinds of research relationships. The criteria for quality and relevance that emerged and are applied in the original context in which these questions and methods arose, also come to be applied in all other contexts. The point in this is not in completely neglecting importation, but mainly in problematising it and seeking ways of building more equitable reciprocal relations.

Can there also be exportation? First, the question is not only what countries with strong and dominant research traditions could and actually do offer countries struggling to develop their research capacities; but equally, what these developed countries can gain and learn about the phenomena in mathematics education in the developing world. For instance, what relevant insights can be gained by investigating "socio-constructivist approaches" to mathematics education in large multi-lingual, multi-grade classrooms found in the poorest parts of poorer countries, and how these insights could produce advances in theory and practice for all contexts. Secondly, and this is the main thesis of this paper, there is a need for developing-world contexts to raise new questions and focus on new research objects, develop different methods and produce a more relevant knowledge base to their world, but also with other corresponding criteria for rigour, scholarship and quality. The tension that must be kept in check is how we do live in the global mathematics education village in which our research and understanding of all mathematics education learners is enhanced.

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The North writes back: North-South Dialogue

Kenneth Ruthven

KENNETH RUTHVEN taught in schools in Scotland and England before joining the University of Cambridge, where he is now Reader in Education. There, he contributes to the formation of educational researchers, teacher educators and classroom teachers from many countries, and researches the development of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, particularly in the light of technological change. He has a special interest in mathematics education, advising national agencies and curriculum projects in the UK and US, and acting as editor of the journal, Educational Studies in Mathematics.

Research under disruption

The 'main thesis' of the paper by Valero & Vithal is that:

> there is a need to question research methods in mathematics education, created in developed social contexts and applied in developing countries, because their importation can be shown to be inefficient in grasping the nature and complexity of research processes in those unstable, developing social contexts.

They exemplify this claim through two cases where research plans were disrupted by factors such as instability of school staffing, internal conflicts in schools, and competing demands on practitioners; and by ongoing systemic reform and the contestation associated with it, including student protests and teacher strikes. They conclude that 'what is glaringly similar in these two cases is the changing and unstable nature of the context in which the research was conducted'. This leads Valero & Vithal to pose some very pertinent questions:

How are the disruptions to be managed in the methodology? What should the researcher do with the disruptive data produced? How can it be taken seriously as contributing to the research endeavour instead of only as something negative that must be thrown out, or confessed to and apologised for as poor methodology? And finally, if brought into the focus of the study, what are its implications for the research question, analysis and the knowledge produced as well as for rigor and quality in research?

However, Valero & Vithal do not proceed to review a range of responses to such questions in relation to their chosen cases. Rather, they seem eager to draw the radical conclusion that '[t]he chronic nature, depth and extensiveness of the instability... require us to fundamentally re-think and re-create research methods.' Perhaps they have been caught up in the impassioned ferment implied by their claim that 'developing societies are characterised by instability, given by the constant and abrupt reorganisation of political, social and economic

forces'. But their original questions are good ones that deserve a more measured discussion. Although the information offered about each study is necessarily limited within their short paper, let me propose some possible reactive tactics in the face of unattended disruption, and proactive strategies in expectation of it, recognising that these might need to be reframed, or further options considered, in the light of fuller information.

The Colombian study, investigating the evolution and impact of a professional development intervention, experienced sample attrition of the order of 40%. Very rightly, the researchers were concerned that this might introduce bias into findings derived simply from the residual sample. The data corpus already available to them would permit at least two forms of triangulation of such findings. Using the baseline data, which appears to have been available for all participants, the researchers could examine how the original characteristics of the residual sample may have differed from those of the lost sample, hence identifying factors potentially linked to dropout. Similarly, using the qualitative data which appears to have been gathered from the residual sample at the start, middle and close of the project, themes linked to these factors could be tracked, pointing to the kinds of pressures experienced by the residual sample but resisted by them, pressures which may have precipitated withdrawal by the lost sample. This line of enquiry could be further strengthened if mid-project qualitative data were available for some participants lost by the close of the project. In this way, the character of sample attrition could be clarified. Moreover, if such instability is indeed endemic, and attrition of this order might be expected, then such a study could profitably be designed so as to deliberately incorporate the gathering of qualitative information about pressures making continued participation in the project difficult. Equally, samples could be drawn so as to reflect what was already known, or could reasonably be anticipated, about patterns of attrition.

The South African study, investigating student teachers' implementation of a particular type of curriculum approach, confronted disruption which not only appears to have been more complex and prolonged, but to have taken different forms, varying in import, across participants. Clearly, in a system where chaos is endemic, productive use of strongly quantitative research designs is likely to be limited. And there are limits to the degree of disruption which any study can withstand. However, research designs built around primarily qualitative case studies would be both more robust under such circumstances, and better able to capture their complexity and ambiguity. Again, careful use of appropriate forms of triangulation would strengthen interpretation of the evidence-base available.

These proposals seem to be in sympathy with the suggestion by Valero & Vithal that 'analysis and findings should not discard or attempt to "correct" the disruptive data, but to focus on it as the "authentic" or "actual" data in the research process'. There is, however, a danger that research conducted under such difficult circumstances turns into a celebration of disruption. Valero & Vithal may be in danger of taking this road when they propose a recuperative rewriting of their researches to centre on disruption.

> Nevertheless, the very failure... and the disruptions... showed the existence of relevant problems that came to be more interesting in revealing the nature of the processes taking place in the teaching of mathematics... the problem that the research team faced then was... how to re-articulate the whole experience in order to reveal the cornerstone of the disruptions and their effect in the teaching of mathematics.

Research within the double bind

Valero & Vithal see researchers in developing countries as:

> trapped in a double bind. That is they do "good quality" research, in carefully chosen, less problematic research environments, about marginally relevant topics to the general status of mathematics education in their country; or risk having their research considered methodologically poor, but nevertheless relevant to the situation of the majority of mathematics learners in their context.

Here, we can find echoes of Schön's critique of 'technical rationality'. There, however, the double bind is seen as endemic to professional practice, regardless of its situation, rather than as a prerogative of the developing world:

> In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground overlooking a swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solution through the application of research-based theory and technique. In the swampy lowland, messy, confusing problems defy technical solution. The irony of the situation is that the problems of the high ground tend to be relatively unimportant to individuals or society at large, however great their technical interest may be, while in the swamp lie the problems of greatest human concern. The practitioner must choose. Shall he remain on the high ground where he can solve relatively unimportant problems according to prevailing standards of rigor, or shall he descend to the swamp of important problems and non-rigorous enquiry? (Schön, 1987, 3)

But is the choice as stark as these presentations imply? Must the knot be cut to form a knot in which one -usually suitably demonised- side of the double bind is denied or rejected? Or might it prove wiser to be ready to work within the double bind (Ruthven, 1999a, Willis, 1977)? Some researchers see a combination of work in contrived and naturalistic settings, using research methods adapted to each, as the basis for a highly productive synthesis. Discussing just such a combination of laboratory and classroom studies, Brown points to a:

> trade-off between experimental control and richness and reality My laboratory experiences enable me to see a developmental pattern emerging in classroom dialogues similar to that found in laboratory problem solving... Trends discovered in spontaneous classroom discussions can be tested in the laboratory under more controlled conditions... [O]ur routine procedure is to set up controlled laboratory studies to evaluate whether the developmental trend can be reproduced under experimental control. Similarly, faced with an experimental finding in the laboratory, we are sensitised to watch for its occurrence in the morass of classroom discourse. (Brown, 1992, 36-37)

Brown sees this as calling for a long-term programme, involving progressive cycles in which theories of teaching and learning are successively operationalised, researched and refined, through this alternance between laboratory and classroom settings. Although the examples cited by Valero & Vithal have similar concerns to transform teaching and learning, and appeal to a similar action research model, they could be considered 'impatient' studies, typical of 'reforming' research, eager to achieve ambitious -but loosely defined- change in professional practice, and optimistic that this can be achieved directly through collaborating with ordinary

practitioners in typical school settings. These same qualities of impatience, ambition and optimism typify much educational research and reform in developed countries, not least Britain (Askew & Wiliam, 1995, 43; Ruthven, 1998, 1999b).

One can sympathise with such impatience, which again is surely encouraged by a climate of social ferment. And one can anticipate the riposte that carrying out research and development programmes broken down into more sharply defined and focused cycles simply makes for more intensive demands on resources and ignores issues of instability. But impatience risks squandering scarce resources on well-intentioned projects, which prove unable to deliver what they promise, only, confirming obstacles and heightening frustration in the face of them.

Priorities in research

Perhaps, indeed, given the chaotic conditions described by Valero & Vithal, the very issue of how to create some form of stable school environment is more pressing and fundamental than any research specifically focusing on teaching and learning mathematics.

> When schools function well, they provide an organisational environment for systematic, formalised teaching and learning. Time provides one constitutive framework for schooling, space another... Boundary maintenance, in time and space, is critical to a well-functioning school. Dysfunctional schools in South Africa transgress both sets of boundaries: timetables are confused, days go by with no formal classes, absentee rates are high, a problem from local communities' spill over into schools, violence is rife. (Christie, 1998; as summarised by Enslin & Pendlebury, 1998, 262)

Moreover, it may be positively unhelpful to construe such issues in terms specific to mathematics education. This raises one form of importation from developed countries which Valero & Vithal do not caution against: the academic balkanisation through which rival specialities compete for ownership of problems by seeking to define them in their own terms.

This, then, should be added to the uncritical borrowing of research problematic, pedagogical models, theoretical positions, and methodological commitments which Valero & Vithal rightly single out. But these matters are not peculiar to the trade in ideas between developed and developing countries; uncritical adoptions are no less of an issue within developed countries. Indeed, Valero & Vithal themselves note a general aversion to situated discussion of method and reflection on the internal logic of studies:

> Although the methodological framework of these studies is stated as clearly as possible, few reflections, criticisms and actual discussion [are] devoted... to methodological issues and the difficulties emerging from them in particular contexts.

This points to a final undesirable importation: a value system within research in which academic publication takes priority over educational development. Although the two are not necessarily incompatible, Valero & Vithal allude to a number of unproductive consequences where they are perceived to come into conflict. An over-riding concern for publication may push researchers towards marginal but safe projects and a defensive attitude towards method. Or it may encourage a freebooting iconoclasm in which academic sensation takes precedence over educational substance.

The idea of 'appropriate technology' asserts the importance of taking account of culture and context in the selection of tools and the design of artefacts. On similar grounds, I have been sympathetic to what I take to be the appeal by Valero & Vithal to a corresponding ideal: what might be termed 'appropriate methodology' in educational research. But I have sought to argue that -critically and flexibly employed- the methodological repertoire currently available to researchers is sufficiently robust and versatile to address the complex and challenging situations which research aimed at educational improvement encounters -both in developed and developing countries. Researchers must certainly acknowledge instability in education, but they should be wary of needlessly destabilising their own working methods.

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Education, Race and Human Rights in South Africa

Deevia Bhana



Deevia Bhana *is a lecturer at the School of Educational Studies, at the University of Durban-Westville. Her interests are in race, gender and post-modern theory in education. She is currently involved in a four-school research project to evaluate gender transformation in education.*

Abstract

In March 1999, in response to the call for protection of fundamental human rights, the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) released a report on school racism. The report characterised schools as sites of racial intolerance and discriminatory practices. The racial rancour and the exclusionary practices suggest that those who were most marginalised under apartheid education continue to be excluded.

In this paper I argue that the SAHRC study privileges race as a category of analysis and sublimates other categories of oppression. The SAHRC is a state institution supporting constitutional democracy. I argue that the SAHRC exacerbates the very conditions that it tries to critique and therefore question its efficacy as a state institution supporting democracy. I utilise the Same-Other heuristic device to elaborate and to contest difference based on stereotypes. Binary oppositions based upon a particular kind of Reason are disabling. I argue that the notion of the Other becomes an enabling philosophical tool to explore marginalisation, not constrained by a race reductionist argument. This is not to deny or recognise race as a significant category of difference. Nor does it assume that recognising race as a significant category of analysis has been achieved. In fact race cannot be taken for granted and is discursively constructed. However, race is simply one aspect of difference (though nonetheless crucial) that is implicated in the notion of the Other. The interconnections between the binary opposition of Same-Other provide a more adequate explanation of the way identity and difference is constructed in South Africa.

Introduction

Democracy, freedom and equality are the immanent foundations upon which South Africa's Constitution is based. After the human rights violations of the apartheid era, social justice is profoundly embedded within the Constitution. The South African Human Rights Commission provides the support for social justice in promoting and supporting a human rights culture. The trilogy of its functions is to firstly promote respect for human rights and a culture of human rights; second to promote the protection, development and attainment of human rights; and third to monitor and assess the observance of human rights in the Republic (Constitution, 1996).

The practice of human rights, it is hoped would permeate every aspect of South African life. The difference between the hope and the happening in schools prompted the SAHRC to investigate racial disharmony in 90 South African schools. The dominance of this particular issue in a country where racial cleavage has been a potently divisive issue is clear. The explosive and even destructive racial outburst in several schools in the country particularly, Vryburg High School[4] sketches racial intolerance. In its attempt to support, promote and to assess social justice in schools, the SAHRC has in fact, exacerbated the very conditions it attempts to critique by hegemonising racism and failing to adequately analyse its intertwining and relational intersection with issues of gender, religion, class, spatiality. Without an intersectionist analysis of the multifaceted nature of everyday schooling, human rights becomes chimerical.

This chimera underpins the many controversies that mark South Africa's attempt to transform education. These controversies are racial, sexual, political, ethical, economical and social. However much these controversies shape the South African educational terrain the sombre realities of the modern world are impossible to ignore. Social discord ranging from gender, ethnic, class and racial conflict is epidemic. The modern world is based upon the ideals of democracy, freedom, justice and liberty. These ideals with noble intent is one that, to this point in history has not been determined conclusively as real. Modern society faces a crisis of social cohesion, if its social justice contract is ineffective and democracy rhetorical. Post-apartheid South Africa embedded within an immature yet potent democracy is no different. The promise of a free and equal country fails to read plausibly among those most disadvantaged in the past and exacerbates the chimerical nature of human rights in South Africa.

The piety of social justice contracts might have been a good part of engendering democracy in 1994 but its survival may require thinking and action far deeper than that. It is within this context that the debate over the meaning and purpose of education in post apartheid South Africa becomes central. The triumph of democracy has been an insufficient necessity to ensure a social justice for all. The contours of the debate about education have begun to demand that schools take seriously the imperatives of a non-racial democracy. This argument is important not simply because it makes visible the contested and contradictory nature of schooling, but it is within this debate that the notion of democracy heralded in 1994 and the practice of human rights is being questioned and re-defined. The SAHRC Report on human rights violations in schools released in March 1999 is a case in point. The SAHRC investigation of school racism was fuelled by flagrant violations of the Constitution and of human rights. Dr. Barney Pityana, chairperson of the SAHRC reports that despite having a Constitution that protects the rights of all its citizens, racism still permeates the lives of the majority of the people. Pityana argues, that "education could create a better human rights culture" (Daily News, 1999). This raises several questions about the potential or dis-potential of education as a vehicle for democracy and human rights. Indeed how does the SAHRC constitute itself around the issue of race? What is the relationship between human rights, race and education? The Human Rights Commission has the power to investigate and report on the observance of human rights that have been violated, to carry out research and to educate (Devenish, G.E., 1998). A critical question that emerges is how race and racism become more of a human rights issue than other socio-economic rights? No one can deny the enormous task

[4] See Odhav, Semuli and Ndandi's paper titled "Vryburg Revisited: Education, Politics and the Law after Apartheid," in this edition.

that the South African government and the SAHRC have in ensuring rights to housing, health care, food, water, social security and even access to education. In the context of debilitating poverty, limited health care (especially for those with Aids), insufficient housing, insufficient schools (particularly in the rural areas of South Africa), why does race feature so prominently? Indeed why does the SAHRC allow race and racism to emerge with such a powerful authority in analysing human rights abuses? In this context, the vision and the hope of a human rights culture in South Africa becomes blurred because the social justice contract is tarnished as other human rights issues become sublimated to race and racism.

The SAHRC report on school racism captures, in part the uneven and unpredictable nature of transformation. For those who see education as a potentially transformative vehicle to attain social justice, the further marginalisation of those who suffered most under apartheid becomes a paradox.

Apartheid education meant that the majority of people were suppressed through an educational system that was designed to emphasise racial difference and to generate and (re) produce inequalities. Democratisation and the advancement of a human rights culture was premised upon the belief that society will be transformed and that inequalities will be addressed through a democratic and representative form of education. The struggle to democratise education is most evident in policy initiatives, enshrined within the social justice contract. In allegiance to this democratic faith as espoused in the Constitution, a range of policy and policy frameworks were adopted by the government to transform education. These include the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in 1995, the South African Schools Act in 1996, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in 1996, the Gender Equity Task Team and the National Commission on Special needs in Education and Training (1998). The South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 makes democratisation of education and alleviation of all forms of unfair discrimination explicit. Democracy meant a "break with a past associated with racial discrimination and created a heightened expectation of far reaching change in all spheres of life" (Naidoo, R, 1998, 369). Indeed, at the near end of the twentieth century, the promises of the modern ideals of democracy, equality and freedom are no longer tenable because there is evidence that for the vast majority of people in South Africa there is no realistic reason to hope in the democratic ideal that the world is good and getting better. Modernity's answer to this caveat is to refer to those who suffer to hope but hope is not what was originally promised (Lemert, 1997).

The SAHRC report on school racism constructs schools in the study as sites of racial intolerance and discriminatory practices. In particular, the report suggests that despite democracy and despite educational policy changes both overt and covert forms of discrimination continue to mark schools in South Africa. The report indicates that the "Stygian gloom" (Report of the SAHRC, 1999) of apartheid is perpetuated. The report strongly recommends a development of school policy to confront racism, and anti-discrimination training amongst others, as if to imply that these strategies will capture, resist and placate racial tendencies. Race, as a category of difference is de-contextualised. Implicit in any anti-discrimination training is the assumption that it is something to be acquired and hence external. These ideas are based on the assumption that racial ideology can be demystified. Ideological demystification assumes that the key players of the school constituency can be targeted for change and in fact are willing to change and transform their racist or discriminatory tendencies. Rather than focusing on what schools should be, this paper attempts to explore how identity is constructed. In particular, the SAHRC as a

constructor of race and racial identity is explored. I argue that a post-modern understanding provides greater possibilities in interpreting change as it unfolds in South Africa. The critique against a post-modern understanding of education in South Africa is clear. Blade Nzimande (1997) argues that in South Africa this discourse cannot embrace the social forces that are necessary for transformation. In this context postmodernism is understood as an abandonment of class based analysis of education.

The process through which change is occurring in education is premised upon modernist values. The most salient is the belief in the need to break down the Apartheid pathology that created bounded identities (Bhana, D. 1994). This is of course, a noble goal. However, this paper argues that this is a mis-recognised goal. Education in a changing South Africa is affirmed to be about "nationhood" (Report by the SAHRC, 1999) and has become an official state doctrine but for the majority of people it is more about the incoherence of togetherness. The report of the SAHRC on school racism makes clear that race is a major part of the social justice project. In post-apartheid South Africa although the white hegemony rule has been ousted from the closet, it functions nonetheless. But it is also clear that focusing on race alone will not capture the realities of difference. Education in South Africa is fragmentary, ironic, indeterminate and uncertain. The SAHRC report yields a straightforward meaning about race. A focus on race precludes the possibilities of other forms of oppression. The privileging of racial oppression is ontologically limiting.

Identity construction

The challenge of education in South Africa is to begin to understand the complexity of forces in the construction of identity. Post-modern theories have challenged the 'master narratives' of Western thought and claims to truth in general. These theories are sceptical about the possibility or desirability of attempting to produce totalising narratives, which reveal essential truths about the world. Post-modern theories are sceptical of final definitions and classifications. Classifications, like those based on race function to eliminate alternative discursive formations and suppress difference. Postmodernism critiques the dominance of any singular discursive formation by emphasising the partiality of knowledge, which generates a series of different perspectives.

Such theories offer a theoretical opening to analyse the oppressive identity formations and the construction of difference. Following this line of thinking, identity "is a contested terrain in which meaning is not given but discursively constructed and reconstructed in conditions of historic specificity" (Weiler, 1993, 213). Our identities are riddles that are shaped by fantasies, formed through mistakes, instabilities and contradictions. Some 'systematic' though not necessarily coherent ideas evaluate one race over the other so that white is foregrounded. These ideas and their practices are discourses: our identities are made through them. When discourses intersect, certain identities are constituted as both more powerful and more valuable than others. The constellation of dominant ideas in South Africa may be a white bourgeois heterosexual male even after democracy. The SAHRC's pathology at this present historical conjuncture is to subsume the constellation to one dominant idea and that is the issue of race. It is precisely the purpose of this article to disrupt a paralysing race analysis and to recreate a theoretical space; denounced by apartheid and perpetuated by the SAHRC, to the constellation of identities and differences that shape South African educational discourse. This idea is not restricted to race because in the intersection of discourses there are many contradictions. These discursive interventions are diverse and

complex and contested. Especially important to this argument is the manner in which an English speaking white able-bodied, classed, heterosexual, propertied Christian male perceives other people who are not like him. From his position of power he tends to see them only in relation to himself. He understands black only in terms of its difference from white, male from female, Christian from non-Christian. He sees other identities only in terms of his own understanding: he sees them as his Other. He is Same because in his inability to recognise difference from himself in terms, which do not refer to himself this dominant subject position can only see himself. This structure of Same and Other is embedded both in what it means to be an English speaking white able-bodied, classed heterosexual propertied Christian male and in the production of knowledge about the world (Ellsworth, 1989).

Knowledge production has emerged from the Enlightenment belief in Rationality. The notion of Reason is not race, class, gender or spiritually neutral. On the contrary it works in tandem with a mostly male, mostly white, economically comfortable and presumptively heterosexual Christian elite. Since the time of Descartes, knowledge was deemed as independent from the social position of the knower. The assumption of objectivity which is unmarked by any particular social position allows this kind of rationality to claim itself as universal. It assumes that it is comprehensive and thus the only knowledge possible. It is underpinned by the Sameness of particular subject positions which can only understand difference in relation to themselves thus a certain form of rationality became identified with, and in turn identified religion, race, class, gender, ability, sexuality, caste, shape, size, space and place. Conversely, the irrational Other became associated with woman, the disabled, the poor, and black amongst many others. The argument I raise here is that oppressive relations cannot be reduced to race and conversely race cannot be privileged as a form of oppression: in the construction of the complex interrelationship of difference and otherness there are overlapping forms of oppression. Discursive construction is not simply an issue of binary positions but what distinguishes them is the relation to the Other.

The SAHRC is caught up in a range of historically discursive positions, relations and practices. The SAHRC is itself discursively constructed. Its establishment as a state institution supporting constitutional democracy, emerged precisely out of the heinous abuses of the apartheid past. The construction of race as an identity is to deny alternative meanings. This raises interesting questions about the "independence and the impartiality" (Devenish, 1998) of the SAHRC and the elevation of racism as a form of oppression, despite its interwoven relations with other human rights issues.

Race

Race may be a powerful and legitimate category, both natural and obvious, especially in South Africa with a history of racial oppression. But the discourse within which race and racism are created and maintained affects the way in which we organise our world and they have material effects in the way in which relations of oppression are reproduced. The very opposition to racism, anti–racism or even critical anti-racism is premised upon the category race, which simultaneously unsettles and reinforces the efficacy of racist discourse. The emphasis on anti-racism may unintentionally shift the discourse through opposition to form new exclusionary and bounded identities. A hegemonic race glorifies space and place and abuses and misuses it. The celebration of race as a form of analysis reinforces the idea that categories of race are necessary differences, differences that are predicated upon nature and discriminate on the basis of these differences, as "self and other" (Goldberg, D.T., 1992); man and woman; black and

white. This opposition is the nature of modern society. The order of difference is rationalised as the law of nature. This rationalism is at the essence of western foundational thought. This logic has been spawned as the universal explanation of human thought: a subject who is constructed through a systematic certainty of itself and does not question the Other.

Following Delacampagne a racist discourse is "not born in an irrational pathological atmosphere but developed in the midst of a system of thought that strove to be rational; it progressed hand in hand with the very foundations of western rationalism" (1990, 83). My argument is that a certain kind of rationality persists even after the critique of apartheid. The faith in this type of rationality has certain consequences. Within rational thought there appears what Derrida (1978) calls a "desire for a centre", Derrida's idea clearly illustrates the rationality that guides the SAHRC. It falls unwittingly into a labyrinth of binaries: black-white, white-black. Derrida's centre is imaginary yet powerful. The centre is elusive but exerts a real power over our whole social framework. It loiters in all our construction of reality. The centre legitimates certain kinds of knowledge and eschews others: it is in the specific notion of the way knowledge is constructed that marginalises. The centre relegates the Other as irrational. In this instance difference is defined as Other and suppressed. This epistemological violence in reducing and suppressing the Other is contingent upon western rational thought. Binary oppositions have underpinned the entire foundation of western metaphysics according to Derrida; one term is legitimated while the other is relegated. The world is divided into an us and them logic. Those categories that are constructed as the irrational Other include women, disabled, albinos, gays, lesbians. An attempt is made to swallow up, absorb and appropriate the Other. An absolute difference is drawn between the Other and what is Same. The illusionary line between Same and Other denotes a split. The split is triggered when "the centre expels its anxieties, contradictions and irrationalities onto the subordinate term" (Haymes, 1995, 115). The imaginary split has the material effect of constructing difference negatively which has the effect of shaping the Other as a lack but simultaneously legitimating the privileged centre, the Same. This logic serves to perpetuate inequalities. One term is viewed positively in relation to the other, which is deemed its negative. The Same functions as the authorising framework upon which the truth or falsity of discourse is determined. Our understanding of life is manufactured by bipolar logic. The world is seen in terms of good and evil, black and white, same and other. Differences are stereotyped, collapsed and simplified. Accordingly, differences between black and white are constructed as absolute monoliths. Rationalism produces the "scandal of the Other in order to keep itself going" (Docherty, 1993, 14). The SAHRC Report validates this form of rationality: the scandal of racism provides it with a foundation upon which it establishes reason. The SAHRC legitimates its own position by expelling its anxieties about race and racism. In this manner race and racism become elevated forms of analyses. The effect of this analysis is that it obfuscates its human rights agenda. The SAHRC validates its position as a gatekeeper against the apartheid monstrosity and the fixation on race and racism during apartheid is perpetuated. This form of reasoning is precisely what is under critique. The validation of race as a category has the power to keep the world firmly fixed. All forms of representation including the category race are established and grounded. To represent foundations and in this case the representation of race as a foundation and the fixing of identities is the principle of Reason (Heidegger, 1991); a form of representation that is predicated upon by the SAHRC. This firmament of race as a category of analysis bears the marks of Reason.

The SAHRC gives terms of difference and affirms Reason by the setting apart of Same from Other. The SAHRC perpetuates the very foundation of Reason by reinventing the binaries:

white-black and black–white with the same consequences. The metaphysical assumption behind race as a category are reductive, autarchic and protective of rationalism and in the crossing from theory to practice there is this satisfaction of rationality. The SAHRC investigation of schools suggests that they operate within the stereotypical binaries. The SAHRC does indeed negate the homogenisation of races by referring to 'intra-black dynamics' yet there is little justification offered. It is in the notion of the Other that rationalism is unsettled.

The Other provides the possibility of making more explicit the invisible contours of reason so that the logic and absolutism of the Same is called into question. Following Derrida the power of the Same to claims of truth is not intact. Meanings are never fixed but constantly shift. The binary oppositions of Same-Other can easily be inverted as they are upheld. This method undermines the clear logic of the difference between the Same and the Other. Since the Same can only be understood in un-like terms (Other), its own foundation is dependent upon the construction of an Other. It is not a case of Same-Other, Black-White, rationality-irrationality, racism-anti-racism, but rather a situation of relationships: "What is interesting is always the interconnection, not the primacy of this thing over that, which never has any meaning" (Foucault, 1989, 280). It is possible to problematise our predilection for seeing the world in terms of binary oppositions.

Such a predilection based upon essentialist terms is a dangerous game to play. The game is based upon seeing for example, black as essentially different from white. This form of essentialism has been criticised because it retains the assumptions of a master-subject dualism. The contradictions of the supposedly singular concept of Same shatter the homogeneity on which its claim rests. The Other is not outside the territorial discourse of the Same and herein lies the subversive potential of the paradoxes.

What does this mean for education in South Africa where reconstruction, social justice and democracy are seen as political and social imperatives? According to Foucault (1989) no individual subject can demystify and tear apart a veil of ideology and we are left feeling that there is no hope. How is it possible to conceive of social justice in South African education unconstrained by race as the singular ontological perspective? This does not assume that the project of recognising race as a significant category of social analysis has been achieved. The SAHRC makes clear that the issue of race is a major part of a social justice project. But it is also clear that focusing on race alone will not capture the realities of difference. How do education constituencies respond to people's multiple and simultaneous positioning in complex, never static and often contradictory patterns of power relations between races, between those of different sexual orientations, those of different religions, those of different classes, and those differently abled? The list of differences always changes depending on particular historical moments and is never final.

The challenge of education in post-apartheid South Africa is to try to take account of and comprehend the complexity of all forces of identity formation. The notion of the Other rather than race is enabling. The Other is useful because as Docherty (1993, 14) suggests: "in our genuine encounter with what is other or alien (even in ourselves) that we can further our own self-understanding". The Other provides an interesting form of analysing the ambiguities and the inconsistencies as it is played out in schools. Those that are interpellated as Other are not simply Black. The specificities in each schooling context may reveal more than just race discrimination and yet the SAHRC marginalises other human rights issues, gives credence to racism and hence socio-economic, political and civil rights becomes chimerical.

The question that is invoked is why the SAHRC is predisposed to define itself towards understanding race as alienated from other allied and interconnected forms of marginalisations. Indeed, why did the South African Constitution and the Government allow the SAHRC to emerge in this form?

Despite the multifaceted experiences of everyday life, the Cartesian division of black and white continues its legacy in South Africa and within the contexts of the SAHRC assessment of school racism. The current discourse on education reduces all life to racism. The SAHRC report makes clear the commitment of all stakeholders in education to create a space in which to transform racist attitudes. Teachers and learners are expected to work within race, talk about race, feel oppressed about race, and feel disadvantaged about race as if this was the total reality. This type of identity construction is regressive.

Both the South African Government and the SAHRC (whose leader, Barney Pityana was the Black Consciousness leader) are caught up in a discourse of racism that are indeed victims of its success. The oppositional consciousness of both the government and the SAHRC were formed against apartheid and the struggle against racism. In other words, the identities of both the present government and the SAHRC were created through an oppositional discourse. Its blackness, not the same as black, was defined through this opposition and gave it a voice. Race and racial identity defined its construction.

Understanding racism is not less important, but what is called racism has many other forms. Socio-economic conditions, age, ability, gender, spatiality, are equally influenced by racism. It is difficult to understand oppressive relations in education as an issue of class or race because class, culture, ethnicity and gender are intertwined with language and spirituality and a particular view of the world emerges through this multifaceted relational interaction. In South Africa race and class issues have emerged with authority (and even destruction) at particular historical conjunctures. The racial contradictions and tensions are precisely what the SAHRC set out to investigate and were unable to adequately analyse the interstices of race, class, gender, space and place. In circumstances of economic regression for the majority of South African who also happen to be black one could expect racialised discourses to emerge with power as a means for claiming and re-claiming economic space. Conversely, the threat of educational marginalisation in the small space called school might explain the particular viciousness on the part of mainly poor whites in Vryburg High school towards black learners segregated in a disused physical space to one side of the school property. Race and class issues seem overriding. However, it is appropriate to consider other aspects of this debate: language, culture and gender, which also shape the construction and the de-construction of space.

Elevating race as a category of difference is limiting. Difference is never static. At certain times certain factors become more prevalent than others do, but to suggest that we can systematically order the impact of the different variables and elevate race or class betrays the complexity of education and of our lives. Blade Nzimande's (1997) critique of this mode of analysis by elevating class is unwarranted.

> Whilst post-modernism raises the legitimate question of the nature of the social agency that is to lead transformation in the current international conjuncture, it abandons that social force as if the working class has ceased to exist in the 'post-modern" period. It is as if the exploitative and oppressive capital-labour relationship

is no longer the primary defining characteristic of the post-Cold War era (Kallaway et al. Foreword, 1997).

Race alone or class alone cannot construct whatever else identity is. The excesses in a race or class based argument invalidate the complexities and dis-synchronies in identity.

The SAHRC Report on human rights violations in schools operates within the discursive mode of binary oppositions that stereotype rather than celebrate difference. These bipolarities provide the mode through which the primacy of the Same over the Other is established. It is this mode of dualism, which serves to de-legitimate Others.

There are several intertwining categories of difference in analysing education and human rights in South Africa. However to assume that within these differences there is sameness in terms of black oppression is misleading. The effect of this is to firstly hegemonise race as a category of oppression; secondly it perpetuates the stereotypical dichotomies and thirdly obfuscates difference.

The SAHRC recommends a fundamental change of attitude, of all stakeholders within the school constituencies if transformation in South Africa is to be achieved. A critical anti-racism is proffered as 'sophisticated' analysis in attempting to grasp, capture and to transform the racial context. It is believed that critical anti-racism will be enabling in explaining "intra-black" relations. However, the report showed little evidence of this. Intra-black dynamics becomes an add-on and is unable to de-legitimate white racism. Rather what was clear was that despite former Indian and former coloured schools comprising the study, white racism was foreground and a sacred closure is enforced as a result. What the report does (despite claiming not to homogenise races), is to exacerbate the very conditions it tries to critique. There are two questions that seem appropriate here. Firstly, does the proof of racial practices justify a conclusion? In fact the report claims very strongly that a fundamental shift in attitude is required to address the problem. Underlying this shift is the assumption that if racist practices were pointed out reasonable people would see the destructiveness and inadequacy of their thinking and would move to build a non-racial society. How can critical anti-racism attempt to acknowledge other aspects of identity, which could at any historical juncture be more powerful than race particularly gender, ethnicity and class? Again, I want to point out that racism is a powerful force that shapes identity as does homophobia, but a race-based analysis is problematic because it fixes people and demands a "true" interpretation of their lives. This is the potential paralysis of naming race as a site of oppression. Secondly, can critical anti-racism be unbiased? The point I want to posit here is that critical anti-racism may have its own nexus which in particular contexts may operate as oppressive to others who are in or out of the constituency of critical anti-racism. Is being critically anti-racist the same as being selectively racist? What are the silences and the gaps that are set up by this discourse? There can be no models that can easily be emulated without the specificities of local conditions.

It is a disarming logic to construct differences within this insulated myth of reason. The challenge of education in South Africa is to unsettle the all too solid constructions of identity. We define ourselves in terms of what we are not; hence we have an unproblematised notion of the universal claims to reason. In this regard, an education system that serves to complicate rather than describe the understandings of identity and representation may be useful. We like to think that an imaginary demarcation creates an absolute difference between

Same-Other, black-white; but the two terms are contingent upon the other. The boundaries between the two are blurred.

A different way of analysis will unsettle the dominant logic understood as a conscious conspiracy. All whites are not white in the same way; neither are all blacks, black in the same way. I am not suggesting that no white or black can escape race. Rather, I argued that both black and white are caught up in a complex series of historically discursive positions, relations and practices. What distinguishes them is their relation to the Other. This relation may enable one to understand the myriad of intersecting factors that incidentally serve to shape identity. Race is one factor in shaping identity in different historical contexts.

As we understand the reason for differences from others we are compelled to ask about the Same. The idea of the Other-Same can be a heuristic devise for grasping the process of change. This immanent force of questioning succeeds in collapsing oppositional thought that excludes its relation to each other and to interrogate the grounds of its meaning. I want to return to the point I made earlier about the abuse and misuse of binaries. I want to borrow from Spivak (1990) the neologism of "(ab)-use" as a strategic tool to undermine the assumptions of fixed meaning. This has the subversive potential of "mis"- using the taken for granted assumptions about difference. The falsities of supposedly natural differences are deconstructed and used against it. It is possible to destabilise the assumptions upon which the Same rests.

Conclusion

How do school constituencies promote a critical questioning of how it is itself implicated in the construction, negation and assimilation of the Other? We need to assess how we are complicitous in the binary constructions of race, class gender, ability and sexuality. And what does this mean for the new Curriculum 2005 initiative, underpinned by an Outcomes-based education (OBE)? How will it sustain a social justice agenda? One of the specific outcomes is to develop a democratic and an equitable society. OBE may have the appeal of being a comfortable alternative to apartheid. In fact, in South Africa OBE is premised upon transformation of the biased educational context. The emancipatory appeal arises from the abhorrence of a dominating and oppressive apartheid ideology. OBE represents a "paradigm shift" to encapsulate a new way of thinking. The possible creation of a new mindset is precisely what postmodernity attempts to unsettle. Rather, what is becoming clearer is that new and different forms of oppressive relations mutate.

The SAHRC needs to assess its complicity in binary construction, which do not serve the interests of a democracy. This attempt does not simply mean a questioning of habitual ways of thinking in the hope of revealing a hidden agenda as if there is a final moment in which we are truly liberated. Such a task involves an understanding of who we are as particular subjects, as teachers as learners, in order to refuse who we are and to understand the implications of our roles. It involves a permanent struggle between what we conceive of ourselves and why we conceive what we are not. The panacea of educational discourse in South Africa is that re-thinking the self appears a difficult task especially since all aspects of our society have been racially inscribed. Furthermore re-thinking the self is not construed as sufficiently transformational. Indeed it is argued that this form of analysis blunts the understanding of educational development in South Africa where an onward and upward discourse dominates. This forms the basis of much of the critique against a post-modern analysis.

The critique of post-modern theories in South Africa is precisely that it blunts transformation. The argument raised is that the seduction of post-modern theories is decadently misleading in the context of South Africa where the project of modernity is incomplete. In South Africa we face real and threatening problems. It is argued that postmodernity, as an exercise in "academic graffiti" will only serve to scatter attempts at transformation and South Africa's space on the global market. The abandonment of progressive politics and the abstraction of race to the Same-Other category, is believed may lead to a nihilism. This angle of critique is unwarranted.

A democratic education in South Africa will mean inclusion in which all can participate in recognition of difference. If the voices of difference, include rural African woman, fat, differently abled and subjects who subscribe to non-dominant religions, then I unapologetically use the post-modern ideas to reveal the frailty of hierarchical binaries and the frailty of the SAHRC in positioning itself within a notion of reason that supports hierarchies. Post-modern theories raise important questions about the unexamined voice of authority (SAHRC) and the claims of its universal truths.

The emerging trends in South African schools require that all school constituencies recognise who has been excluded and how. More research is needed to determine the construction of the Other. How will education and even the SAHRC use and "mis"-use their authority to determine mechanism of opposites. A different role is suggested for education and the issue of human rights. Not a privileged position to determine the rights and wrongs of discourses, but a struggle with what determines rights and wrongs.

The SAHRC report contests the image of schools underpinning the education reform policies and discourse. Democracy in South African schools has been met by a response, which reflected neither the practices envisaged nor the spirit of its ethos. How is it possible for old and new practices antithetical to those envisaged by the architects of democratic reform to flourish? How may we begin to explain such unintended consequences of policy changes? How will policy instruments like anti-racist or anti discriminatory training secure compliance or faithful implementation is not a decisive conclusion. The challenge of education and human rights in South Africa is to construct social justice by moving beyond a singular ontological perspective that focuses only on race to the realisation of multiplicity of histories, of identities, of cultures, of places and spaces and how they intersect in and are played out and at times destructively in different school contexts.

This article presented just one version of complexities in education: its confusion, its conflict and possibilities. The possibility includes the shift from dichotomies of black and white, racism or (critical) anti-racism, Same and Other but those considerations may not come simply from theory.

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Beyond Desegregation: Multicultural Education in South African Schools

Relobohile Moletsane



Relobohile Moletsane *is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Natal, Durban. She is currently teaching in the field of Teacher Education and Development and Diversity in Education both at pre-service and in-service level. She is also a member of the Agenda Editorial Strategy Group. She received the BA and B.Ed degrees from the University of Fort Hare; and the MS in Education and Ph.D. at Indiana University, USA.*

Abstract

This article aims to review the different ways in which South African schools are responding to diversity in education and the extent to which those responses are adequately addressing the needs of all learners. The article analyses the extent to which educators can/should develop an approach to multiculturalism that has multiple identities of individuals and groups as its premise. The article is not an attempt to prescribe a framework for multiculturalism in South Africa. Rather, it highlights the complexity of the issues that impact on the education of our youth, especially in the context of change and transformation. It argues for a holistic curriculum framework that validates all the identities, cultures and voices in our country, and aims to provide high quality, equitable and inclusive education for all. This may be found in a framework that is social reconstructionist or transformative and global in its approach on the macro level, as well as multicultural, multi-historical, and multi-perspectival on the pedagogical level[5].

Introduction

In response to the numerous post-1994 policies and legislation that mandate desegregation in South African schools, different institutions are responding to the diversity in the learner population and transforming the apartheid legacy in varied ways. However, research evidence (e.g., Jansen, 1998; Goduka, 1999; Carrim and Soudien, 1999; Vally and Dalamba, 1999) suggests that most attempts at providing equitable quality education for all learners from diverse backgrounds, interests and abilities are falling short. One reason for the failure of multiculturalism in our schools may lie in their inability or unwillingness to validate the identities and worth different learners bring to the teaching and learning environment. Thus, this article first reviews the different ways in which schools are responding to the diversity in

[5] I wish to thank Samiera Zafar of the University of Natal, Education Policy Unit for her invaluable contribution to the conceptualisation and editing of earlier drafts of this paper.

the identities of the learner population and the extent to which those responses are adequately addressing the learning needs of all. Secondly, the article highlights the multiple identities or "cultures" learners and other educational stakeholders bring to any teaching and learning situation in South African schools. To address these issues, the article argues that in an attempt to redress the imbalances of apartheid education and to adequately address the learning needs of all learners, schools should develop a curriculum framework that is holistic and inclusive of all identities and cultures.

Emerging research literature identifies several factors that inhibit effective multiculturalism in schools in different contexts. In the next section, some of these factors and the different ways in which schools are responding to them are identified.

The need for multicultural education in South African schools

The need and mandate for transformation in our schools have been demonstrated in widely reported racial violence and the failure of African learners in desegregated as well as mono-racial schools in the media (e.g., Naidoo, 1999), research findings (Zafar, 1998; Jansen, 1998; Goduka, 1999; Carrim and Soudien, 1999; Vally and Dalamba, 1999), and national education policy documents (e.g., The South African Schools Act of 1996). Not only is there a need for racially desegregated schools to change in order to accommodate what they refer to as "the influx of learners" from other racial groups and cultures, the mono-racial institutions have to respond to new demands as well. These demands for change in all school contexts include responding to: 1) socio-political context of the school, the country and the international or global arena, 2) differences in individual and group identities, and 3) changing curriculum policy and practice to address the learning needs of all learners.

The need for multicultural education in South African schools is firstly demonstrated by the rapid changes in our socio-political context. If our aim is to validate all identities in the education system, how can our curriculum create a space for all voices, especially those that were previously silenced to emerge within the current discourses in the education arena?

The socio-political context

National and global demands are once again being made on schools and educators to transform and redress imbalances created by the apartheid system. This transformation is taking place within the context of the much-publicised national and international debates on nation-building, African Renaissance and globalisation. These debates have implications for the role schools and other educational institutions should and can play in realising the vision of a transformed South Africa. On the one hand, to Counts' question of many years ago- "Dare the schools build [this] new social order?" (Tyack, Lowe and Hansot, 1984, 18), one is tempted to answer with an emphatic, "Yes, they must!" For, "no other human agencies are more important than education and educators for achieving integration in our society. If the schooling system fails, this will impact on the whole system" (SAHRC, quoted in Naidoo, 1999). This implies that the education system should be able to offer a peaceful, open and constructive, multicultural avenue for change.

On the other hand, the current discourse regarding the transformation of the South African society is fraught with silences and contradictions about, and from certain groups and identities in the country. For example, in her review of research literature on school

desegregation, Zafar (1998) identifies an absence of African researchers' voices, especially women. Most of the research is done at formerly white liberal institutions by white researchers. Research from Indian and coloured researchers, mostly at these universities, is also emerging. The silence also includes an absence of research on mono-racial township and rural schools. What is happening in these schools? How are power relations and issues of internalised oppression mediated in them? The silence regarding these and other questions may be contributing to the perception that since these schools are mono-racial, they are therefore, mono-cultural and problem-free. In these schools, acts of violence against women and girls, foreigners or "makwerekwere", crime, poverty, HIV/AIDS and other social ills are largely ignored. But if our education system aims to address issues of unequal power relations and to afford social justice for all, then multicultural education is as much a necessity in these schools as it is in desegregated ones.

Secondly, nation-building, African Renaissance and globalisation also seem to represent a contradiction in terms. Nation building conjures up images and visions of developing a "South African" identity or nation. For some, by definition, this excludes anything (or anybody) that is not South African. Some sectors of our society have attributed the recent rise in cases of xenophobia or hatred for foreigners to this concept (e.g., Appel, 1995). This is further compounded by internalised oppression, for, it is mostly foreigners from African countries (those who are black) who are victims of discrimination and violence, and to a large extent by their fellow blacks. So, the question for educators in this regard is, "what kind of nation should we be building, one in which the human rights of *all* people are respected, or one in which a climate of intolerance and entitlements without responsibilities dominates?"

In turn, nation building seems to be at odds with the current discourse on African Renaissance. According to this discourse, African Renaissance aims to build a new African world, in which there is "democracy, peace, and stability, sustainable development and a better life for the people, non-racism, non-sexism, equality among the nations and a just and democratic system of international governance" (Address by Thabo Mbeki at the African Renaiss ance Conference, September, 28, 1998). If we answered affirmatively to the question regarding whether schools can and should transform society, we should examine effective ways of addressing our own needs and multiple identities as South Africans. These include living in harmony as South Africans and together working to transform our country towards a competitive member in the continent as well as the global arena (van Wyk, 1999).

Maintaining the status quo in education

In research studies across the country, several strands of responses by schools and individual teachers to the "influx" of learners from diverse racial and cultural groups as well as the socio-political context in which they function have been identified. However, research evidence indicates that contrary to claims by most of our schools, attempts to respond to these changes cannot pass as multicultural education.

The assimilationist approach

Firstly, most of the schools adopt an assimilationist approach to educating diverse learners. In this approach, learners are expected to adapt to the existing ethos of the school, curricula that were developed for a different learner population, and to succeed (Zafar, 1998; Jansen, 1998; Goduka, 1999; Carrim and Soudien, 1999; Vally and Dalamba, 1999). Obviously, this is

pedagogically inadequate if genuine transformation of the curriculum is envisaged and education that aspires to validate all identities is envisioned.

Teacher perceptions and theories about teaching and learning also pose a problem against effective multiculturalism in South African schools. The assimilationist approach they adopt to respond to the change in learner population indicates a certain view to the question, "What knowledge is of most worth?" In these schools, certain "regimes of truth and knowledge" remain unchallenged, while other views are neglected. To illustrate, a major piece of the public schools' semantic territory, as the assimilationist approach suggests, has been the transmission of common values, common ways of perceiving the world, common modes of thought and attention in order to maintain social cohesion, common history, culture, and so on. Schools teach us how to see. That is, we learn to organise our perceptions into patterns that make sense and have meaning. Those ways of seeing or perceiving that doesn't have meaning in the context of schools are either neglected or denied (Hemmerling and Moletsane, 1995).

So, on the one hand schools have, for better or for worse, become commonly accepted nurturers of literacy, and on the other, they have taught us generally sanctioned ways of seeing the world. One need not ask whose way of seeing the world children are taught in our schools in South Africa. This suggests that a multicultural education framework developed for South African schools should place emphasis on recognising different ways of seeing, thinking, and hearing, speaking and meaning making. Thus, the curriculum should not only be multicultural, it should also be multi-historical, multi-linguistic, and multi-perspectival.

The colour-blind approach

A second way in which schools continue to maintain the status is the "colour-blind" approach to curriculum (e.g., Naidoo, 1996; Jansen, 1998; Zafar, 1998; Vally and Dalamba, 1999) in which teachers claim not to see race or colour and refuse to consider it in their dealings with diverse learners. According to research reports in this area, teachers who respond to learner diversity in this way often try to suppress their negative images they hold of students from diverse racial groups by professing not to see colour. Proclamations of, "In my class I don't see colour. I don't notice anyone's race. It's just not important to me because I try to treat everyone the same", are often reported. The problems with such views are obvious and numerous. Firstly, to these teachers I often want to retort:

> Hey, I'm black. That's important to me and it needs to be important to you, too. It isn't impolite for you to notice that I have very dark skin and I talk with a Sotho accent. Those are realities, and I'm not going to be offended if you notice them. I will be offended if you pretend I don't exist, which I think is one of the results of colour-blindness.

Secondly, these colour-blind and raceless notions emanate from liberal discourses and theories that equate treating people the same with equality. But how can we benefit equally from the same treatment if we don't have similar backgrounds, histories and needs?

In addition, implied in these colour-blind policies and practices is the belief that the "newcomers" into the school come from culturally and educationally inferior backgrounds and that changing the curriculum to meet their needs is tantamount to lowering the otherwise high standards in these institutions. The question is, what standards, and who are they

benefiting? Although they have not received much attention in the research agenda, despite increased rural-urban migration, cross-border migration, HIV/AIDS, poverty, violence and crime in and around schools, the mono-racial schools also seem to be doing "business as usual".

The contributionist approach

A third approach that is popular in South African schools is what Banks (1995 cited by Shepherd, 1999) has called the contributionist approach or teaching/learning about other "cultures". How many of us have gone to our daughter's or son's school's "cultural night/day", be it a Zulu day, Indian day, French day, etc? Of course, this is not part of the formal curriculum, but a feeble attempt by the school to demonstrate their acceptance of "our black/Indian learners". The learners know this and also view it as an exotic, if not primitive part of their past lives and identities in the townships or villages about which they can now laugh and entertain, but from which they cannot learn.

Top-down educational policies

An inhibiting factor against effective multiculturalism in schools relates to the plethora of educational policy documents and the expectations and burdens they impose on schools and teachers who are supposed to implement them. The list includes Curriculum 2005 and OBE, the South African Schools Act of 1996 and related issues of governing bodies, discipline, and others; the developmental appraisal framework, redeployment and rationalisation and others.

One question regarding these policies is whether there is space in them for multicultural education. For example, in the SAHRC study, Vally and Dalamba (1999), observe that the critical outcomes encompassed in Curriculum 2005 fail to include skills and values that are essential to a transformed education system in South Africa. The authors further note that the outcomes do include the need to collaborate and work together. However, the outcomes fail to examine the importance of critically understanding the unequal power relations between individuals and groups and the impact of our differently constituted identities on our everyday interactions with one another as well as in the teaching and learning environment.

A second question relates to the capacity and resources available to the education system and schools to implement the innovations as well as develop a multicultural framework for teaching and learning. In this regard, Jansen's (1997) much publicised, "Why OBE will fail", identifies several ways in which the innovation will fail to transform the education system in our country, and especially our racially divided and unequal society. Inequalities in resources, inadequate teacher training and poor culture of teaching and learning in most of our schools further compound the problems.

To effectively address unequal power relations between groups and individuals, any curriculum innovation neEds to begin with a critical understanding of the different ways in which individual and group identities have been constituted among South Africans.

Individual and group identities

Too often in South African schools, specifically those that have recently desegregated, learner behaviour and potential tend to be described and explained in terms of membership in groups, such as race (black/white) or places of residence (rural/urban or township/suburban). This

often leads to stereotyping of certain groups and to the maintenance of the status quo, where issues of oppressive social relations are left unchallenged. In the mono-racial schools in townships and rural areas, we often hear declarations of, "All my learners are Zulu-speaking, I don't have to deal with issues of multicultural education!" This is misleading, and a result of narrow definitions of culture and an inadequate understanding of the negative role of differently constituted identities as well as the unequal power relations that exist in the teaching and learning situation.

To illustrate, most of us were shocked by a scene from the movie, Schindler's List, in which Jews are stripped naked in order to be screened by doctors to determine who is fit to work, and who is expendable. We remember with sadness, anger and/ or embarrassment a similar practice that occurred in South Africa, where organisations like The Employment Bureau of Africa (TEBA) would recruit men from the rural areas of South Africa and neighbouring states to work on the mines. These men would also be screened for fitness before being transported to the mines. What was the significance of stripping men naked in these examples? One can only imagine how they must have felt about their tormentors and more importantly, about themselves. The need for the struggle for identity and dignity in the history of oppressed groups becomes only too obvious.

Race, gender, class, ethnicity, religion, language and other aspects of identity are all locations or places. They structure individual and group experience in certain distinct ways. They are integral to the ways in which we have learned to see the world. Everything we know, think, and believe is influenced and determined, to a great extent by our history and present experiences as positioned in those places. In schools, all of the knowledge domains/learning areas or subjects intersect with some aspects of identity and experience. What gets called knowledge depends on the vantagepoints or positions those people most responsible for making up knowledge (textbook authors and teachers) see from. Therefore, attempts to understand individual and group identities of learners, teachers, and others in the educational arena and their roles in determining their success should go beyond describing them in terms of membership in a single cultural group (e.g., race, gender, social class, etc). Rather, identity should be defined in terms of oppressive power relations of race, class, gender, ability, religion, political affiliation, and others that exist in the school and community contexts. It would therefore, makes pedagogical sense to talk about multicultural, multi-historical and multi-perspectival identities. To do this, several questions need to be addressed: Who are we? What are our identities as constructed by ourselves and as constructed by others? Who are those others who construct/ have constructed our identities? How do we construct "others'" identities?

From the above questions, it becomes clear that firstly, our identities as they have been constructed for us by colonialism, and later by racism and apartheid are very instrumental in determining the quality of our interactions with significant others (e.g., teachers and fellow learners) in the teaching and learning environment. The assimilationist approach to curriculum adopted by most desegregated schools exemplifies the quality of interactions between teachers and learners and their parents at these schools. Learners from diverse backgrounds are expected to assimilate and to adapt to the existing ethos of the schools. To ensure the maintenance of the status quo, with a few exceptions of tokenism in most cases, the staff compliment at these schools remain largely White in formerly white schools, and Indian in formerly Indian schools.

Secondly, the ways in which we have come to construct and see our own identities also tend

to reinforce the unequal power relations that impact on our lives. Research literature (e.g., Zafar, 1998; Jansen, 1998; Goduka, 1999) documents a tendency on the part of black learners in desegregated schools to deny and reject their racial and cultural identities. These learners tend to either adopt their white teachers' and classmates' ways of talking, dressing and behaving and reject and ridicule anything which they regard as black, and therefore, primitive or uncivilised. Those who reject the South African white culture tend to adopt an American identity as illustrated by their dress code, their language, music and cultural icons. The rise in the so-called "Nigger" culture (referring to African-American culture) is highly evident among black learners who go to schools and/or reside in the formerly white suburbs. This identity is also encouraged by parents who insist that their children speak only English, are taught by white or Indian teachers and are in class with majority white or Indian learners in the different contexts (Jansen, 1998; Goduka, 1999). This may suggest that these parents and learners have learnt to hate themselves and have come to regard their blackness as a sign of inferiority. Goduka (1999, 6-7) quotes Pharr (1998) at length in this regard:

> When the victim of oppression is led to believe the negative views of the oppressor [about themselves], this phenomenon is called internalised oppression. As the victim internalises the negative messages and stereotypes, there is a weakening of self-esteem, self-pride, group-pride and group identity ... Sometimes the internalised oppression leads people to be reluctant to associate with others in their group. Instead, their identity is with those in power.

Thirdly, a related issue in the research literature on desegregated schools is the tendency to see and talk about race and culture as a dichotomy (black/white). This unfortunately leads to locating "others" on a scale in the ways in which they and others construct their identities. The black/white dichotomy often translates into uncivilised/civilised, inferior/superior, less intelligent/intelligent in the ways we interact among ourselves and with others (Goduka, 1999). It also suggests that 'race' and 'culture' are fixed rather than dynamic, and that there is one white, Indian or black culture.

In addition, racist perceptions of what and who is normal also contribute negatively to curriculum transformation in the schools. For example, in a research study by Mahomed Sader (cited in Naidoo, 1999), one learner commented, "I think the "muntus" should go or they should become normal by thinking normal." Implied in this learner's statement is the belief that being white and thinking like one in South Africa and elsewhere is normal. It is not unreasonable or racist to expect blacks to act normal, and by implication, to act and think like white people. To this learner, his privileges and advantages that come with being white are invisible (McIntosh, 1989). They are just normal. This ensures that people who are not white are perceived to be not normal.

Thus, in order to change the status quo, our school curriculum should have as its premise, individual identity as defined by self and others, and how that facilitates or hinders effective interaction among people and groups, and, therefore its role in the teaching and learning environment. How can schools change their curricula to achieve the above?

Changing the curriculum

Our histories of apartheid education as well as our multiple identities and oppressions warrant going beyond superficial approaches to addressing the needs of a diverse learner population

in our schools. Rather, attempts at multiculturalism in schools should attempt to genuinely engage in discussions about issues of unequal power relations between individuals and groups. However, schools need to adopt a multicultural curriculum framework that will validate and develop all identities and knowledges that exist in our nation, while at the same time preparing us to contribute effectively to life in the continent as well as globally.

Efforts to develop curricula that validate all identities and perspectives should go beyond eloquent academic conferencing and writing about the need for teachers to support and nourish the different perspectives of their learners. Rather, educators should recognise the necessary complexities of different language groups, religious groups, social class and others, and demonstrate, through their policies and practices, a belief in inclusive and transformational multiculturalism. The messages our learners get from the discrepancy between theory and practice is that issues of diversity are insignificant. The very important connections between diversity and democracy so many of us are willing to talk about, are rarely evident in our policies, and more so in our practice.

Towards a South African multicultural education framework

Throughout history, educational institutions in South African and elsewhere have been charged with the responsibility of educating people to be participating members of democracies. For example, Mann's (1848 cited in Cremin, 1957) vision of universal education, albeit in a different context, clearly contained the recognition that the relative freedom enjoyed by citizens of a democracy could only endure as long as those citizens could make informed choices about civic affairs. This of course meant that people had to be literate, had to be not only fluent readers of print, but adept interpreters as well. In his first public statement as the Minister of Education, one of the nine priorities Professor Kader Asmal has identified for South African schools involves "[breaking] the back of illiteracy among adults and youths in five years". For him, literacy includes reading, writing and numeracy (Asmal, 1999). The school and other educational providers are supposed to be the means for spreading literacy throughout the population. However, defined in this manner, literacy alone is not enough. Clearly, as Curriculum 2005 suggests, we need more than content knowledge. To transform our society, we also need to apply the knowledge through the skills and values that we acquire in the learning environment.

This article argues for a multicultural curriculum that sees individual identity as its focus, and places emphasis on developing and validating different ways of seeing, thinking, speaking and creating knowledge and meaning. From an understanding of individual identity as informed by multiple histories, locations, experiences and perspectives, the curriculum should then aim to transform the unequal power relations that exist between and among individuals and groups. Sleeter and Grant (1992) have referred to such a curriculum as social reconstruction. A social reconstructionist or transformative approach to multiculturalism aims to prepare learners from both the oppressed and the oppressor groups to become analytical and critical about their life circumstances (privilege or powerlessness) and the social power relationships and stratification's that keep them oppressed or privileged at the expense of others. The ultimate aim of this curriculum is social justice for *all*, in which everybody participates equally and meaningfully in all spheres of life to eradicate racism, sexism, classism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination, as well as poverty, HIV/AIDS, violence and crime in our society. Such a curriculum should enable individuals and groups in any context (desegregated or mono-racial schools) to live and learn in an environment free of

racial, ethnic, gender, ability, language, religion and class biases. Greene (1988) noted that to be free means to have the capacity to choose, the power to attain one's goals, and the ability to change the world lived in common with diverse others. While education should perform the task of passing on the norms and values of one's culture, it should also aim to teach learners about diverse cultures in our society and the world at large.

For South African schools, curricula that aim to achieve this should have as their premise, principles that involve teaching learners to:

- Reclaim their identities;
- Celebrate unity in diversity; and
- Realise democracy and social justice for all.

According to Goduka (1999, 51-52), such a curriculum should aim to:

- Nurture each learner's construction of a knowledgeable, confident self-concept, cultural identity and cultural voice;
- Promote each learner's just and empathic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds;
- Foster each learner's critical thinking about bias and [oppression]; and
- Cultivate each learner's ability to defend self and others in the face of discrimination.

In addition, the curriculum needs to allow learners to analyse their own inequalities by relating directly to their lives and by connecting broader social issues with their experiences. Practical consciousness or common sense understanding of how the "system" works in one's own life and the resolution of race, class, gender, religion, and linguistic contradictions that students face, should be addressed. Because of our history of apartheid and our different experiences, locations and positionalities in terms of language, religion, social class, race, gender, and our different ways of seeing the world and creating knowledge, this curriculum should not only be multicultural, it should also be multi-historical, multi-linguistic, and multi-perspectival.

As implementers of this curriculum, teachers should become what Giroux (1992 cited by Goduka, 1999), calls,

> agents for social change who critically engage in and consistently interact with learners in the spirit of [humanity], and in a climate of mutual co-operation, respect, dignity and confidence in what each individual brings into the learning environment (24).

In their teaching, teachers should demonstrate an ability and willingness to challenge and critically interrogate the existing regimes of 'truth' or knowledge and to validate and encourage other voices, which are currently silenced and/or brutalised. This implies that educators should create a philosophy of cultural democracy to facilitate a classroom climate in which *all* learners feel confident about their cultural identity and cultural voice (Goduka, 1999:51).

A transformative and democratic curriculum can only work more humanely when the people practising it frame their practice with the clear recognition of the need to maintain caring social relationships in the teaching and learning environment. This means that stakeholders

have to be willing to listen to each other, learn each others' stories, be tolerant of each other, understand what the world looks like through someone else's eyes. In practice, this could include using resources, images, and content that reflect and validate all learners' identities, cultural backgrounds and experiences.

To illustrate how this may work in a South African classroom, using the theme: "War and Refugees", a typical learning activity could invite the learners to respond to the question: What impact does war have on individuals? This may be done by engaging with texts such as the following (adapted from Hemmerling and Moletsane, 1995):

> In their song "Ungakhohlwa", which means "Don't forget", the Ladysmith Black Mambazo sing about the effect of exile on people who have had to leave their homes for one reason or another. They sing about two kinds of exile. The first kind is visible in the lives of South African migrant workers who had to leave their homes to work in the mines for up to 12 months under contract labour. These miners only saw their families once a year because of apartheid laws that prevented them from living with their families in the urban areas. What impact did Group Areas Act and the Influx Control and continue to have on our society? The children's book, *At the Crossroads* (Isadora, 1991) is about this kind of exile.
>
> The second kind of exile is political. Many people are forced from their homes and countries because of political persecution and war. Think about Oliver Tambo and other South Africans, and Jean Bertrand Aristide of Haiti. Remember the Mayans of Guatemala, driven from the places they have lived for thousands of years. Miriam Makeba, no stranger to exile herself, sings about this kind of forced sojourn away from home. The refugees from Rwanda, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kossovo, and more recently, East Timor, are forced from their homes by wars and other violent conflicts. What causes these conflicts? What impacts do they have on individual countries and the global community?

Depending on the subject or learning area, learners could investigate the theme from the following perspectives:

- Civil Wars and other internal conflicts: Political conflicts in South Africa, the Anglo-Boer War, the Frelimo War, the civil wars in Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kossovo, East Timor, the USA and others.
- Cross-border wars: The Gulf War, World Wars, Cross-border raids by South Africa during the apartheid era, and many others.

Questions asked could include:

- What are the root causes of wars and political violence?
- How do individuals participate in wars and other conflicts?
- What social and economic impacts have these conflicts had on individuals, families and communities.
- Learning about exile and people who are exiles challenges us to break the silences that often surround exiles. Investigate actions that you can take to help break this silence. Think about individual action, group action, and organisation you can join that are engaged in such efforts.

- Use any medium to critically examine a significant story of war and persecution from your family, community or another country.

Two basic pedagogical principles are addressed in this kind of curriculum unit:
Firstly, curriculum relevance, including content and use of familiar teaching and learning aids (South African popular music and a children's book) is ensured. Secondly, different voices, including the previously silenced ones, are included and validated. In the children's book, *At the Crossroads*, the seeming simplicity of the words and the pictures allows the activity to ask important questions about who these children are, who wait for their fathers with such longing. What are their identities?

Such curricula can support teachers and learners to really think about how we know, as well as the almost unlimited potential for constructing and communicating that knowledge. They can also help in demonstrating the intersections that are often overlooked by education systems and teaching practices that organise schools and learning areas into separate compartments of unrelated and decontextualised content.
In conclusion, a true South African multiculturalism will pervade curriculum only as we envision and enact different ways of seeing, different and more complex versions of what it means to teach, and what it means to learn.

Conclusion

Within the context of current political and educational discourses (e.g., nation-building, African renaissance and globalisation), can/should educators develop an approach to multiculturalism that has identity, and especially South Africa multiple identities of individuals and groups as its premise? This article is not an attempt to prescribe a framework for multiculturalism in South Africa. Rather, I have attempted to highlight the complexity of the issues that impact on the education of our youth, especially in the context of desegregation, nation-building, African renaissance and globalisation. What I am arguing for is a holistic curriculum framework that validates all the identities, cultures and voices in our country, and aims to provide high quality, equitable and inclusive education for all. This, I suggest, may be found in a framework that is social reconstructionist or transformative and global in its approach on the macro level, as well as multicultural, multi-historical, and multi-perspectival on the pedagogical level.

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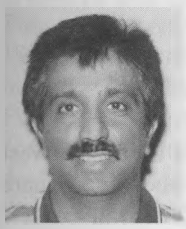
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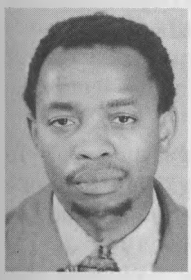
K. Odhav, K. Semuli and M. Ndandini



K. Odhav lectures at the University of North West, Mmabatho. He is currently completing a doctorate degree in Politics and Discourse at Essex University. His research areas are education and culture.



K. Semuli is a research associate in the Institute of Education at the University of North West. He specialises in Adult and Lifelong Learning programmes, facilitation, monitoring and evaluation. He has taught in high schools and lectured in Colleges of Education.



M. Ndandini lectures at the University of North West. He co-founded the Phambili School in Durban, South Africa and is a founder-member of the South African Democratic Teachers Union. He is currently registered with the University of Durban-Westville for a Ph.D.

Abstract

This paper is the result of a qualitative case study of the Vryburg High School crises in the North West Province of South Africa. We trace the history of resistance there, but also the intransigence to change and the violent confrontations in the community and the school. We also outline the many attempts at transformation by task teams recommendations for resolving the crises. While the National Minister of Education, Mr. Kader Asmal, has recently accepted our contention here that schooling faces a crisis scenario, we do not endorse the role of the legacy of apartheid in the national crises. We argue here that post-apartheid administrative, political and policy bungling are major causes of the Vryburg crises. In fact Vryburg provides an indication of how post-apartheid legislation can be appropriated to resist the transformation of schools. While Vryburg remains unique, we believe that ex-model C (rural) white schools have similar problems. Though we give express support to the

attempts at transforming the school, we confront the failures in transformation efforts at the school. These failures have to do with the lack of sustained transformative agendas by the many role players, and their relative positions in the conflict. Finally we also argue for more comprehensive and clearly defined legislation and social policy of the national and provincial government, with regards to the Constitution and the Schools Act (1996). In this regard we touch on the following areas: rural schooling; language and medium of instruction; extra-curricular programs and fee payment in rural areas; hostel based schools; communication flows and co-ordination in provincial government and the law that neEds to take its course in matters relating to violence and intimidation.

Introduction

Vryburg High School (VHS) is 107 years old, is located in the rural part of the North West Province, and serves the magisterial district of Vryburg (which is only about 14 square kilometres smaller than the Orange Free State province). It serves the rural conservative white (Afrikaner) farming community of the region spreading 300 to 350 km. It is a 'dual medium' school in that it serves both English and Afrikaans medium learners, in the form of parallel instruction in the respective languages. It is predominantly Afrikaans medium. Of the twenty classes at the school, fifteen are Afrikaans medium and five are English medium with 517 and 114 learners respectively. The same range of subjects is not made available to the English learners due to there 'not being sufficient English teachers.' Its teaching staff is mainly (white) Afrikaans speakers. It is a hostel-based school with 165 white pupils and only 11 black pupils. It has two co-opted black parents in its School Governing Body (SGB), with a black deputy principal. This recent appointment (1999) of the deputy was through secondment by the provincial Education Department, and is under dispute. While the Education Department sees it as an affirmative action post, the school is contesting the permanency of the post.[5]

The problem

With the new political dispensation in South Africa, many institutions began their path to transformation. Yet some schools did not do so in good faith. Vryburg High School's intransigence in the face of transformation led to severe community violence and conflict. The purpose of this paper is to trace significant events at the school since 1995, and in considering critical events in 1998, examine the efforts at transformation throughout this period. We examine the development of conflict, assess the transformation efforts and resistances to it, and explore the social, legal and constitutional implications of the conflict.

Methodology

This study was designed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation at Vryburg High. It is a qualitative case study whose aim is to provide an intensive and holistic description of transformation processes at the school. The researchers studied numerous documents, conducted interviews and made observations of events and activities that came into the limelight in 1997/8. Interview questions were open-ended and less structured so as to allow researchers opportunities to probe the interviewees to clarify their responses to the lead questions. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researchers. The

[5] Telephone interview, 1999, October.

latter agreed on the format of the paper and assigned themselves various sections for the purposes of sharing the writing up of the paper. Finally, an important methodological point neEds mentioning. Due to the legal and sub-judice nature of some events, there were some difficulties with accessing information. Our statements here are therefore open to contestation and correction

Organization of the argument

This paper traces the critical events in the Vryburg High School crises between 1995 and 1998. We describe principal role players as well as critical events. We then move onto a historical introduction of incidents and issues that were forthcoming in the period up to 1998. Finally, we move onto a critical, though exploratory section by focusing on legal, constitutional and social issues that we see as relevant lessons learnt from the crises. These deal with the issue of school fees in rural areas, the South African Schools Act (1996), and the South African Constitution.

Context and background

In 1995 when accommodation problems were experienced in the schools in Huhudi (black) township outside Vryburg (white) town, the key stakeholders made a temporary arrangement to accommodate township learners in separate classrooms at Vryburg High to be taught in English. But at the end of 1995 the School Governing Body (SGB) then decided to integrate the classes and return to Afrikaans medium. The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) felt that they were being discriminated against, through the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction at the school. The School Governing Body then opted for parallel streams of English and Afrikaans, and pointed out that it would be the responsibility of the Provincial Department of Education (DE) to supply the needed teachers to be selected and appointed by the School Governing Board.[6]

Parallel medium schooling created its own problems of racial division: with the English medium having black students and the Afrikaans one consisting mainly of white learners (with some Coloureds[7]). This was part of the initial tensions[8], leading to the memorandum of demands by the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM). The demands included the following: The School Governing Board had to disband immediately; The immediate withdrawal of a court interdict brought about by the Board and an apology to the taxpayers of Vryburg by the Board; The expulsion of all racist teachers and the Department of Education to effect a teacher pupil ratio of 1:35 at the school.[9]

From this point on of the conflict, the division grew between supporters of the (Afrikaans) status quo at Vryburg High and those that attempted to challenge this hegemony.[10] On the

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[6] Depart of Education documents, DE, North West Province.

[7] 'White', 'Indian', 'Coloured' and 'African' are used in the S.A. context, with the latter three used as 'black'.

[8] For some time the English medium did not a teacher and yet English lessons went on for white learners who had their own teacher. In fact for some months the English medium learners were kept in the school hall without receiving any form of tuition. The ANC (NWP) viewed this as discrimination against black students, and called for the resignation of the principal (DE documents, NWP, 1996-8)

[9] The MDM also noted that only 8 of the 86 black pupils passed the examinations (ibid.).

[10] The TOV, a white teachers union representing the principle (!) is coincidentally also 100 years old (as old as the school), while asserting reconciliation and reconstruction, fought off (white) SGB autonomy, and argued that accepting failed matriculants was changing the condition of service of teachers. The TO verged on dictating to the MEC on how to resolve the education crisis (memos/correspond, DE, NWP 1996/8)

other hand, the office of the MEC for Education responded within seven days to the memorandum of demands by the Mass Democratic movement. The office indicated that an investigation by the Human Rights Commission (HRC) had been initiated and that a report was expected soon for it to be considered by all stakeholders. Furthermore, the Director in charge of Provincial co-ordination identified the problem of over-aged pupils and 'resolved' this.[11]

From the initial problem of accommodation of black students, there was a discernible shift, with parallel medium becoming problematic and having racial overtones. While the school attempted to withdraw into Afrikaans medium, the shortage of English teachers remained. The high black failure rate only fuelled the fires, and political parties entered the debate and conflict.

In this regard, the Premier of the North West Province (NWP) had set up the Premiers Transformation Task Team (PTTT) to oversee the process of transformation. In its final report this Premier's Task Team noted that the process of integrating the school community of Vryburg was well on course as evidenced by the following. That one member of the School Governing Board (SGB) had been co-opted from the black parent body, six new teachers had been appointed and assumed duty in September 1996, and that seventy-two black students had been enrolled at the school.[12]

Then came another turn, that of rationalisation in the education sector (1996). The Education Department offered voluntary severance packages, and nine Vryburg High teachers accepted these with another two resigning in 1997. Due to the moratorium on employing educators these teachers were not replaced. The schools Governing Board decided to scale down programmes offered but still had to employ at least three teachers privately. This resulted in fees being raised from R850 to R1250 from 1996/7 to 1998, effectively a fifty-percent increase.

The outcome of this was that English medium (black) students began protesting in early 1998, alleging that this fee increase was an attempt to exclude blacks. Conciliatory actions by the School governing board were not rewarded ('payment of fees in kind'), and the board handed over non-paying parents over to attorneys in 1998 for fees owing in 1997.[13]

Crises explosion: Soweto 1976 comes to the Platteland. [14]

In summary then, the issue began with black learners seeking accommodation at a predominantly white school, which had inadequate English teachers. This "rollercoasted" with the parallel medium of instruction that divided the school into Black and White with other players entering the conflict later. These were the teachers union (TOV, representing

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[11] 'Over-age', still a persistent problem nationally (it seems), relates to students seeking VHS admission but being rejected due to age. This was addressed in July 1 1996 (Mmabatho) where it was agreed that the over-aged learners be temporarily returned to their former schools in the township (ibid.).

[12] The report added that the Provincial department (DE) would continue to work towards avoiding a situation of having two schools on one site. One of the significant successes reported by the PTTT, had been that the DE and the principal were willing to utilise the suitably equipped technical wing of the VHS to its full potential for the whole Vryburg community (DE documents, NWP, 1996-8).

[13] The SGB argued that for whose parents, who were unable to pay the school funds, some mechanism could be arranged for them to pay in kind if the were to come forward. When the affected parents failed to take advantage of this offer they were handed over to the attorneys at the beginning of 1998 for fees owed for 1997 (Interviews, October 1998)

[14] Issues of language, police violence and mishandling makes this comparison credible. There are differences: its rural and Afrikaner location, the (ironical) post-apartheid setting and its Model C status.

white teachers contesting the rights of their members), the Mass Democratic Movement (representing the broad popular front of liberation constituencies) and independent mediation by the Human Rights Commission (HRC).

While the new issue (over-aged pupils) was seen as 'resolved', the provincial government attempted to direct transformation. Yet due to the decision by the Education Department to restructure through voluntary retrenchment, the school lost staff members without having them replaced, due to the government's moratorium on employment of new teachers. The school fee increase became inevitable with the school employing teachers privately. This increase fuelled the conflict further.

In February 1998 the first sign of intense public conflict in the town erupted when five black pupils were suspended for 'bad behaviour.' The slow transformation process and the increase in fees, seen as an attempt to exclude black pupils, were two important reasons for the eruptions.

White parents protested at the rescinding of the five pupil suspensions (and demanded resignation in the Education department). They forcibly entered the school and whipped pupils. One educator was implicated and stun grenades were used against enraged parents. While a commission of inquiry was set up to investigate the five suspensions, the conflict was not only located at the school and the town, but also at provincial level. The Education Department in the province was caught up in turmoil. This was due to 'abdication of duty, failure to guide and control staff, and recklessness', with millions of Rands being lost due to these failures. Ten suspensions resulted in the provincial Education Department and the termination of the services of the provincial Minister of Education.[14]

Developments overtook politicians elsewhere when school pupils boycotted for three days (early in 1998), and the new minister promised to take action against perpetrators (not done as yet in January 1999). He also sought an interdict for not allowing weapons to be carried on the school premises. After a multi-party stakeholder meeting to negotiate issues, it was agreed that disciplinary action would be taken in accordance with the Schools Act (1996). Students scuffled at a parents' meeting and the provincial minister spoke to the five suspended pupils, and black and white parents. Eventually all pupils were allowed back into the school.

The government then set up two task teams. The first was a police investigation team to investigate the hostaging, sjambokking, petrol bombing and the 'rioting' in Huhudi. Most information regarding the events was sub-judice and has not been available. The involvement of police, judicial persons and officials in violence have not yet been legally addressed in 1999, though the press reported the many incidents, and the task team was asked to investigate.[15]

The second team, appointed by the Education Department sought to investigate school matters and was to report in three weeks, while the earlier Premiers' Task was disbanded. The Education Department's transformation task team recommended the following: The appointment of a black principal; the election of a more representative School Governing

[14] Odhav K., WCCES paper.

[15] Two policemen were suspended for complicity in the school violence, with SGB pleas for a fair hearing, despite allegations of the police bias to the SGB. Police argued over who must charge students (ibid.).

Body; and finally that parallel language medium be allowed to continue, with the option of English as a first language included in the curriculum.

While the Human Rights Commission reported increases in violence in ex-Afrikaner schools in the country, the press reported allegations of a judicial person's involvement in the violence and (white) parents' alleged attempts to interfere in the judicial process.[16] The Commissions findings were corroborated by the breakout of full-scale violence (March 1998) between police and black pupil supporters at Huhudi Township. One cause seems to be fears for black pupils at the school, resulting in tense negotiations. The provincial minister embarked on a transformation program, a study on the reasons for the poor black matric results, as well as a provincial education summit.[17]

Nevertheless, another day of violence broke out when marchers and protesters clashed in early 1998. This resulted in town bombings, attacks on vehicles and a spate of incidents in the town. Marchers, fearful of the safety of black pupils at the school, demanded the the resignation of the principal, the dissolution of the all white School's Governing body, as well as scrapping the 'two schools in one'. Press statements by the School Board at the time were quite revealing. They indicate a distinct bias in favour of Afrikaans (even to the detriment of English), that black pupils were marginally treated in a majority Afrikaans medium school, and that legal mechanisms (the Schools Act and the S.A. Constitution) were used to the full extent to support such a status quo.[18]

The violence continued for three weeks in early 1998. When black students terminated their boycott of classes, the authorities closed the school three weeks early for the Easter holiday. The national assembly's education committee sent a delegation to Vryburg to assess the situation there. The decision to close was taken after many lengthy meetings that even the provincial Minister had attended. The Education Department was unsuccessful at dislodging the School Governing Board to the extent that the latter unilaterally announced the reopening date after the Easter holiday. The School Governing Board further refused to appoint a **black** deputy principal, arguing that it was unconstitutional, and that merit overrode colour.[19]

While we have provided some indication of the level and extent of the violence as well as the background causes and reasons for the eruptions, the individual incidents are too many to enumerate. The point is that there was continuous violence and confrontation, followed either by negotiations or clashes with the police (or both).[20] In sum the following is relevant.

- Transformation was very slow in pace at the school, largely still Afrikaner.
- Legal processes were grossly neglected. So were racial, language and social issues.

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[16] The Mail (Mafikeng) reported that a 'reliable source' is said to have accused a magistrate of (whipping), with a complaint laid at the Department of Justice. It was also reported that white parents attempted to have charges withdrawn against the perpetrators of violence and intimidation (Mail, Mar. 6, 1998).

[17] The documents for these were not found in the DE documents examined, though our interviews indicate no plans implementation of the envisaged plans for the schools problems (Interviews, 1998).

[18] The following SGB press statements reflects this. 'The English section could be closed while the Afrikaans could be left open'. THat 'the school closure was against the Constitution due to a majority of white pupils being pressurized by a minority of black pupils.' Parallel medium was confirmed by the deputy (SGB) but black English students were not allowed computer study because white parents paid for them. Also English teachers were scarce there, (computer) classes were full or three yearly (Odhav, ibid.).

[19] This view does have a counter, such as the equity principle in the constitution contains affirmative action.

[20] Students demanded education at the district DE office, there were hours of student/police confrontations when illegal marches occurred with peaceful intentions, resulting in police using teargas (ibid.).

- The crises in provincial Education were highlighted by suspensions in the Department.
- Transformation was highly contested, sometimes complex, but very shaky if no sustained implementation plans were forthcoming.
- The Education Department recommended parallel language, a greater representation in the School Board, and the appointment of a black deputy – yet the Premier's Task Team was prematurely disbanded.[21]

While reactions to the events were varied,[22] in July 1998 the Vryburg Education District office gave its impression on the transformation of Vryburg School, indicating that the management was not prepared to move towards English medium institution. The District office recommended that the Education Department transformation task team to start negotiating with individual educators to test their willingness and ability to teach through the medium of English.

The crises of the Education Department in the province was further conveyed by the following, though not limited to this expression of a crisis. The new Education Department transformation task team whose members came from the directorate of co-ordination did not have clear terms of reference, and did not know to whom they had to report among their directorate, the deputy directorate office and the office of the Minister for Education. The two-member commission task team did not work as a team. They interacted separately with the School Governing Board, and even wrote reports separately (rather than jointly). One official said that the School Governing Board preferred to talk to an Afrikaner male rather than a black female (his counterpart).[23]

The task team on violence (Absolute Consultancy)[24] found racism prevalent at school, while school authorities denied this. Absolute also found the management to be unrepresentative and partisan. The following were its recommendations:

- To replace the School Governing Board with a more representative one.
- To facilitate integration and implementation of anti-racist education and facility usage.
- To re-organise the Education Departments district offices.
- To allow into school four suspended pupils but to move one to another school 'for his safety.'
- To suspend an educator for whipping students, and to appoint a black deputy principal.
- To set up an Education Department policy unit and continue parallel medium of instruction with shared subjects where possible, with English as a first language option.[25]

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[21] Government even gave the administration of the school to a governance task team, with 'administration there not to performing its functions properly', with an "all to white body (SGB) running it" (ibid.)

[22] The provincial premier showed concern by identifying 'similar problem schools', and interacting with community members and the HRC. SGB members blamed the mayor 'who attempted to make the school black'. The SGB principal saw no reason why pupils do not go to Huhudi township schools where eleven classrooms were empty. The Freedom front (FF opposed closure as a 'short-term solution' (ibid.).

[23] The DE transformation task team did not have information on the developments in the school prior to its appointment in 1998. THe team was not aware of the memorandum of agreement signed in May 1996 by key stakeholders undertaking to transform VHS within National and Provincial policy of education and in accordance with the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The agreement also undertook to integrate VHS students within a non-racial, non discriminating admissions policy, subject to the supply of payment of educators by the Provincial Department of Education. the following groups assented to implementation the agreement, and for the HRC to monitor transformation: SGB, SADTU, COSAS and MDM (Semuli K., The highlight of the beginnings of critical incidents at VHS, 1998, unpubl.)

[24] Absolute consultancy, of Theresa Oakely Smith, was the final task team of many ineffective teams, and saw its recommendations unfulfilled.

[25] Apart from further investigations of one of the learners, among other recommendations Absolute wanted were the following that were pertinent i) Whites to teach black pupils (and vice-versa). ii) That black parents have access to SGB, disciplinary committee, and the SRC. iii) That the new national flag be hoisted and the national anthem be sung daily. Absolute also found tensions at junior police level. iv) The school was racially divided through the timetable and separate teachers. v) The principal lacked vision and was ignorant of transformation, and taught white learners only. vi) The fee increase was implemented at a critical period of strife, with a conservative Afrikaner SGB and an all-white SRC. The ineffective PTTT was directionless, had no clear transformation goals, but disbanded prematurely (DE documents, 1996-8).

While reactions to the recommendations of the Absolute Consultancy varied,[26] the (mainly white) governing body members saw most of Absolute's recommendations as unconstitutional, with no bearing on the South African Schools Act (SASA), and saw school incidents as politically motivated.[27] Further they argued that a democratically elected Governing Board, (elected for three years) could not be disbanded without consultation with constituencies. Co-opting two black parents was a compromise that was implemented. Here the relevance of the usage (or rather abuse) of the Schools Act against the Education Department, is apparent. While democratic principles are to be respected, the abuse of such principles to uphold a certain white order was seen as a violation of the very fundamentals of the new order in South Africa.[28]

By late 1998 the Education Department was not implementing the timetable for social integration. There was also no full implementation of formal interaction between black children and white teachers, including exposure to technical subjects. General talk of improving the situation by officials and politicians continued but no concrete plans were in place (late 1998).[29]

The Department was not satisfied with only two co-opted black parents in the school. The Education Departments report points out that a short-term solution was that the minister would nominate more people for co-option, whilst in the long-term the Schools Act would be amended to ensure demographic representation of the entire community. In as far as the position of the Deputy Principal was concerned, the report said that sufficient consensus by the concerned parties had been reached, that this was an affirmative action post and had to be advertised as such. However, the requirement for the post would highlight that the incumbent should be qualified to teach Mathematics, English first language or Physical Science.[30]

The Department also recommended the medium of instruction in the technical subjects to be English for 1999. The Department saw the need to re-train educators to cope with transformation demands. One of the observations that the report highlighted was that there was general tendency among certain stakeholders that transformation was the sole responsibility of the Department whereas the latter saw its role as a facilitator wherein the main players were the school management, parents and learners.

After legal constestations, with the School Governing Board taking the Education Department to court (if replaced as per Absolute's recommendations), the provincial minister backed down on the legal action to replace the (mainly white) School Board. He then conceded a lack of consultation with the Governing Board. He also discarded the view that his backing down was a 'political decision', viewing it as a legal one. The school board was reinstated unconditionally, the school re-opened, with a few recommendations taken on

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[26] The press reported mineworkers seeing Afrikaner education at future in private schools, while some white parents welcoming transformation, and concerned parents welcoming action plans an cited incompetence by the District manager, and recommended the black mayor and the five pupils be removed. The (white) Ratepayers Association called for the mayors removal or face a rent boycott Odhav, ibid.).

[27] This view is justified by citing Vryburgs (black) Mayoral support of the school incidents, and who saw the management perceiving the school as their mini-Volkstad (a separate homeland for the Afrikaners)(Interviews, Oct Nov 1998)

[28] Interviews revealed that white members of the SGB knew the Schools Act (SASA) very well, and used it against the DE to maintain the status quo (Interviews, 1998).

[29] Black parents feel intimidated by the 'white VHS set up'. Planning for 1999 was lacking; to establish (school) Grade Committees for committee chairs of particular grades attending SBG meetings. But with lack of black parent attendance at Committee meetings, white committees would result (Interviews, 1998).

[30] DE memos, correspondences 1996-8.

board. Pertinent here was that the following principles. 'Proportional representation', 'governance through sufficient consensus', and 'co-operation with the Education Department to transform the school.' Yet at the time, the School Board refused to advertise for a black deputy. The argument was that such advertising was unconstitutional. Furthermore it also refused to comply with the Education department's recommendation for 60% learners to be white and 40% be black.[31]

Finally, in terms of the incidents in 1998, pupils were disappointed as was evident earlier in their reactions to the minister.[32] But they were also disillusioned at the schools 'weak measures' at transformation.[33] A Human Rights Commissioner endorsed this view, that the Education Department had not done enough to ensure fairness and even-handedness. The commissioner also mentioned that measures taken by the authorities might be seen to be favouring the white community, which seemed bent on resisting transformation.[34]

On the other hand, the Human Rights Commission also may be seen to be party to the ineptitude. It promised (at least as early as 1996) that if transformation failed, then it would provide personnel to do so. With the failures of the transformation process evident (as we argue here), it seems that the HRC commission needed to live up to its promises. This has not been forthcoming to the extent that it is needed.[35]

Lessons to be learnt: Constitutional, legal and other pertinent issues in the Vryburg School crises

To recap the situation, before we glance at future policy options, the following is evident.

- The crises had not been located only at the school, but had reached the communities too.
- Resistances to the School Board grew but so did resistance to transformation.
- Concessions were made but the status quo remained at the school.
- Implementation plans were either non-existent or no sustained plans were effected.
- The crisis was political too, and reached the Department of Education with ineffective co-operation their, duplication of tasks to the extent of having two head offices there.

With "Absolute Consultancy", there was some groundwork laid but no strategic plan to work within legal bounds (the Schools Act and the Constitution). Absolute also showed other weaknesses. By dissuading a student to attend school for safety reasons, it allowed disallowable forces to dictate policy. Absolute also recommended parallel language, which is at the root of the problem. While the Department of Education had no vision of the timetable merger, it did at least ask for more fair representation in the School Board (and not a proportional one as later concessions revealed). It also requested greater demographic representation at the school (through the Schools Act).

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[31] Odhav, ibid.

[32] Students grievances sampled were: 'The political authorities have not done anything though I am glad to be at school'. The SGB was not disbanded, and had no black representation, and no black principal'. 'We still do not have a English teacher but are expected to write exams.' 'Some white and black pupils are attempting to get to know each other but are scared about it, we are doing it quietly' Pre-1998 black students relate horrific conditions. These relate to direct and violent racial hatred by white pupils and discrimination by teachers, inadequately dealt with by the authorities (Odhav, ibid.; DE documents 1996-8)

[33] Examples given were flag hoisting and signing the national anthem at important occasions. They felt that the Schools Act needed amending to give more power to the provinces (Odhav, ibid.).

[34] Odhav, ibid.

[35] Efforts to contact senior HRC to present this paper at its hearings were consistently met with no replies by relevant people. Only after their workshop did it's education desk let us know that this research was worth presenting (Telephone calls, e-mail correspondence, early 1999).

Yet the concessions of the provincial government made the ground under a democratic discourse fall away, in a situation that did not reflect a level playing field. In a predominantly white Afrikaner school setting, there was an agreement for governance to be run on a 'sufficient consensus' basis. Even the notion of a 40% English and a 60% Afrikaans medium pupils for the school had been rejected by the School Board. Currently the deputy principal's post remains contested to date (1999 October)[36] as temporary by the school, while the Department of Education sees the secondment as an affirmative action post justified by the constitution. A variety of constituencies were unhappy with this state of affairs ranging from those who felt marginalized (black students) to an independent body (Human Rights Commission) who were critical of pace, drive and force of transformation as a whole.

What then do we learn from this narrative of events? What do we glean from the problems of the school, from the manner of handling these problems by the authorities, and from the issues that emerge in the violence and conflict, and finally what are their implications for future prospects and policies of similar situation schools. This brings us to the issues of policy and planning, as well as what the lessons are from the Vryburg events for not only future social and educational policy, but also future legal as well as constitutional policy.

Social policy and planning for education

To tackle the issue head on, the importance of realising certain fundamentals cannot be more emphasised. The contest around the educational cake would need sustainable with creative planning but also curriculum and extra-curriculum innovation. While the normal efforts at change are necessary, such as long-term sustainable planning as well implementable policies[37], it would also be necessary to have a strategic direction with problem schools such as Vryburg High. This is due to the concerted attempt to resist change even when the intentions of the School Board are academically sound. On the one hand, greater material support is direly needed for rural black schools, while on the other, greater ideological contestation and galvanisation is also needed. 'Ideological contestation' referring to forces against transformation to convince them that creating an isolated Afrikaner community (for instance) is untenable but also not in those children's interests. 'Galvanisation' referring to efforts to convince rural (black and white) communities of the need to participate in school affairs. Otherwise small tinkerings of change make no difference in the new global environment, unless we want to remain as isolated villages to our own detriment.[38] The conflicts cannot be left to simmer at the civic level, where communities remain so heated and without sustained legal, policy related and structural support to continue transformation. This sustained support is lacking especially in rural schools.

There is also a distinction to be drawn between 'politics of education' and 'education politics.' The latter is what the (black) Mayor[39] and the School Board members indulge in and how the Education minister has been seen to 'defect' from pupils and majority needs, even if this is merely an impression. Communication flows between the Education Department and

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[36] Telephone interview, October 1999.

[37] This would include anti-racist teaching, creative solution to edifications of apartheid and the like.

[38] Almost all the role players have been shown to be inarticulate in setting forward a tight and binding arrangement for progressive transformation for archiving more for the collective in general and for the marginal people in particular (DE documents).

[39] The mayor promises fee reduction, condemns VHS management and seems to use the opportunity to uplift his mayoral profile (Interviews, 1998.)

the provinces have been ineffective. The creation of a more consultative approach is long overdue not only within the education department itself, but also between it and its various constituencies. It may not be without reason that students found at least one of the provincial education minister's recent reports (1998) to be objectionable. Still, the 'politics of education' also refers to the inherently political nature of education. The effects of this in the new South Africa would need to be analysed for real transformation in the era after détente, after the major concessions by the Governmental of National Unity (GNU).

Vryburg high has had a history of English-Afrikaner splits, but within the history of the country these remain within the area of elite contestation.[40] With the South African language diversity, it would seem that we need a policy developed on multi-lingualism and education practice with an emphasis on mother tongue instruction. So schooling should ideally become dual medium[41] (a condition of post-modernity?) through language medium diversity. Parallel medium is expensive and causes racial division. It would need to be abolished ultimately, if a simple statement needs to be made about its future (even at ex-Afrikaner tertiary institutions). The problem with mother tongue learning and instruction is implementation and development. Development in two areas, in mother tongue medium in schools but also development in the language itself. National Education Departments would need to take on this function.[42]

It is a truism that inequality persists in South Africa[43] and this is most visible in its education system. That the levelling of the education playing field has not occurred is due to the national and global conditions that we need not delve into here. We need only refer to concessions that were being made to the school by the political authorities. A clear indication of the difference is a typical black rural school (and their range is wide) and a white rural school as Vryburg school is. They form extreme types, though this is along a continuum. The point is that rural white schools have facilities, such as Vryburg High (hard earned perhaps, but within the dominant order of Apartheid and its legitimations), and that black rural schools are much worse off.

More (black) co-option by the School Governing Board members is necessary for the future. Legislation for these exceptional schools should allow for such space. The envisaged 40% black and 60% white, despite not representing national demographics, has to be planned within a framework of creating feeder schools in and out of Vryburg high. On the other hand, the danger of the school becoming a private (Afrikaans) school would need to be avoided, despite the right to do so constitutionally due to obvious racial conditions of South Africa. It would not happen overnight and needs to be seen as a regulative idea. The political authorities need to devise well-structured plans for change and legislation. It also needs to assert its authority regarding the legitimacy of the school and even it's continued funding when change is blocked. Finally, while the call for diversity is necessary, standards need to be kept high.

The timetable integration and the creation of a sustainable political will to change need to

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[40] This is true despite the anti-imperialist battles against the English, for they fought for a minority that ultimately dominated a majority.

[41] Rural schools have been dual medium: the VHS principle learnt at one, OFS province had it (according to Prof Anderson (Social Work, Univ. of North West).

[42] The range is difficult and simple options: fusing single option schools, having dual medium of instruction beginning with the humanities based on mother tongue/region and English for practical purposes (except English speakers will have to choose another language due to their English mother tongue).

[43] See Race Relations Survey, 1995/6/7/8/9.

include the setting of deadlines provincially and nationally. These would result in greater effectiveness by all. Workshops organised would need greater black participation. The nature, pace and evolvement of workshops would need to be well defined in relation to a multi-lingual community of the future. Crisis schools, which do not only include Vryburg high, need exceptional plans and efforts to change them. While consultancies such as Absolute were useful they were not comprehensive. They did not stress the legal issues (and its boundaries), and allowed concessions that need not be made (removing one pupil for 'for his safety'). A situation that engenders this decision is not normal, for pupils safety (from any force) needs to the first guarantee.

While the Education Department is ineffective and split (having two head offices in the region to report to),[44] a monitoring agency is necessary. This would probably be need to be done under the Human Rights Commission or the Education Department (though ineffective up to now). Without effective monitoring, the progress of transformation is immeasurable and unachievable. While we cannot here reflect on all the targets for schools, we think that some could be suggested.

- Placing various mechanisms in place to offset dominantly single race schools.
- Avoiding all white committees (like the Grade committees).
- Creating committees for socialisation, extra-curricular, sport and inter-school activities[45] as well as transformation and (rural) project committees for students and staff.[46]
- Moving towards demographic reflection of the country's population without seeing this as the only expression of change or transformation.
- Technical subjects need to be opened up to all even only if with introductory courses, while the problem of old age students still needs to be dealt with.

Racism is a structural condition rather than falling in the 'good intentions' of non-racism as the Vryburg School Board members seem to perceive it. The structure of the school as a majority Afrikaner white school would inevitably be producing race problems in the new South Africa. Without altering this demographic issue, the problems will persist. A formal influx of black Afrikaans learners as a feeder school to Vryburg High is only one possibility. The notion that academic quality and transformation as inversely related is partly a misnomer but also partly true with the extent of the politicisation of education in South Africa. Transformation should feed the academic quality in education institutions in a variety of formal and informal ways.

While the creative suggestion of paying back fees by the Governing Board is welcome, they need to be carefully weighed due to black parents doing the labour. The latter could perpetuate the myth of black as the symbol of labour, and white as the symbol of capital (Fanon) – re-inserting the structure of racism in the school grounds. The divided schools such as at Vryburg high needs working towards a unified operation with negotiations in good faith. The latter has been absent at the school, particularly in relation to its Governing Board, but also with regard to black parents (not attending workshops, getting involved in the school – though problems of transport and distance and night travelling have been pointed

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[44] Thus VHS reported to Potchefstroom rather than Mafikeng head office (Interviews, 1998)

[45] See DE documents, 1995-8, Gradwell Report.

[46] VHS management statements border on the ridiculous: that two colourEds were cheering at a rugby match or citing some coloured girls involvement in netball. These are not programmatic changes.

out). Divisions have spread throughout the system, from the communications systems through the racial divide to the teachers and parents. Also important is being bale to penetrate the home and peer environments of pupils (through various unforced means) due to their heavy influence on children.

Another perception that South African institutions seem to suffer from, is that of accepting and living in the midst of two inadequate 'models of change': the crises model and the legalistic model. Due to historical reasons, both have dominated South African institutions and this needs to be changed. This can be done without derailing positive aspects of resistance, taking account of the varieties of student grievances, and enabling disciplined pupils and the pro-active handling of crisis situations. While crises are important catalysts for change, but they are also famous at creating stagnation or further conflict.

The second model of change, which Absolute Consultancy also pointed out,[47] is that of the acceptance of a legalistic model of transformation rather than its fundamentally social character. The limitations of such a view are obvious in their implications. Working within a legal frame only is limiting for a variety of circumstances and to change conditions. Also depending on legal structures 'out there' to solve our problems is a fatalistic view. Law is essentially conservative (to uphold the system in the face of social chaos in the last instance).

Finally, despite protests to the contrary (Education Deputy director general of North West) that schools are not in crises, we have argued here that education is in crises. The new incoming national Minister of Education has conceded that schools are in crises. The national minister's admission is only a first step.[48] Enough evidence has been provided herein that the education department was not prepared for handling the crises, but that many other role players did not also sufficiently contribute to resolution of the crises, and some were intent on obfuscating the progressive movement towards transformation. This negotiation in bad faith would need to be nipped in the bud. Action against pupils (as recent events show of the black pupil who went to court for a stabbing a white pupil in a race-related incident at the school), needs to be balanced with appropriate legal action against adults too. Policy needs to be formulated and implemented to create multi-lingual environments, while conceding the disadvantages of black pupils in an Afrikaner school.

The Education crises of the 1980s have deepened for different reasons though as an extension of that era, in its legacies of which some are portrayed in this paper. But we go further and state that we believe that it is a near catastrophic crisis involving mishandling, bungling, aborted task teams, duplicity and recalcitrance but also intransigence and miscommunication. Negotiations held in bad faith are not negotiations, and Vryburgs schools governors remain committed to Afrikaans medium as a sole sanctuary for their children and their Afrikaans educators. Interdicts and disputes reveal their motives to maintain the status quo. We have cited events and principles as further expressions of the crises.[49] There was thus no continuity of past efforts and present trends, showing a lack of vision, leadership and management expertise. It is thus more imperative that programmatic structures and transformation agendas

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[47] DE documents, 1996-8

[48] While Asmals step is important, it is also ambitious. Implementing plans is crucial and is needed in all sectors of education including the higher eduction sector (see Bunting I., Legacy of Inequality: Higher Education in South Africa. UCT Press, 1994).

[49] These are Insufficient handling of the crisis by the Education Department, the Premiers Transformation Task Team disbanding prematurely, no terms of reference given to the Education Department task team.

be put into place apart form legislation (which we explore below). Research, evaluation, training and implementation are crucial (with time frames and indicators of change)

Exploratory suggestions for legal, constitutional and Schools Act (1996) changes

In the light of the problems relating to justice of perpetrators that the Vryburg case exposes especially in rural South Africa, we find the need to examine and explore areas of importance in terms of the law. Specifically due to some recommendations (Absolute Consultancy, for instance) that transgressed the Constitution and laws, this is only the beginning of the path to creating a credible framework around which the schools issues can progress. None of the perpetrators of the conflict have been brought to book, except for the pupils. This is a sad reflection of the state of affairs of the courts as well as the authorities, but also points perhaps to the distrust of the population in the legal system. If a credible democratic dispensation is to be effective it has to be credible in the eyes of the youth and the population. Policy frameworks need to be constructed and refined in the legal sphere where enough space is left for the freedom of natural growth of communities, yet to direct them away from the narrow confines that apartheid has thrust upon them. The adult population that has been involved in the violence needs to be brought to book as a matter of urgency in terms of the law in a democratic country, but also any evidence regarding collusion with the police and judicial authorities need to be fully investigated and dealt with.

We have mentioned that change cannot occur without legalistic support, and this is the case in rural Vryburg where there is one judge for a district the size of another province (the Orange Free State). The Attorney General is also booked up with cases for six months. This situation is intolerable and makes a mockery of the new democratic dispensation of the country. This is not a matter of exploration but a service that a democracy needs to put into place immediately. No transformation can occur within a legal vacuum. Without a working and implementable legalistic framework, change is impossible in the schools.

We have spoken of the uneven playing field, and this needs to be inserted into legal mechanisms of the Schools Act. Integration is a non-negotiable in the new South Africa, and the fees issue for instance, which fuelled the Vryburg crises, needs to be revisited in the Act, and with particular reference to rural and disadvantaged communities. While the dangers of non-payment are always there (as is still evident with a number of services in South Africa), school fees remain a vexed issue. Without wanting to create debt burdens, the need to consider pupils that are cannot fees as (as in the case of Vryburg but also many model C schools in rural areas), needs to be taken into account in the Schools Act. Subsistence families need to be exempted for instance, but a sliding scale is perhaps is also necessary to enforce at the expensive model C schools. The law at the moment states both that the authorities can penalise for non-payment and a passage of appeal is open to pupils who cannot afford to pay. The former is most likely practice at conservative Afrikaner schools. The transitional arrangements needs to be changed in the Schools Act for integration to take place, specifically for white School Governing Boards and parallel medium schools. Rural constituencies are owed a historical debt for deprivation and this needs to be reflected in law and policy. Rural model C schools especially of the Vryburg type need specifically to be dealt with specific long and short-term strategies, with real outcomes.

In relation to the language policy, a policy effort needs to be made to transform the language policy of the country. There needs to be a development of mother-tongue instruction as we said earlier and this needs to be placed at the heart of education policy. If South Africa is to fulfil its promises to the population it needs to construct policy, around which all mother tongues are accommodated in the long run, which means that they need to be developed too. At Vryburg high an African language has been introduced, and this needs to be developed to instructional language (medium of instruction in the long run), as with other schools.[50]

The complexities of dual medium instruction are worth debating, but parallel medium needs to be abandoned with dual medium to be phased in over a period of time so that multi-lingualism develops.[51] What needs to be recognised is that both Afrikaans and English need to be placed in the dominant language in relation to their social history, but that they need not be abandoned due to current practicalities. No school should be allowed a single medium of instruction[52] and an African tongue would need to be compulsory. Ethnic enclaves would only then break or at least crack. An office for language needs to be placed within the existing Education department. English and an African-tongue to be compulsory as a second language (rather than limiting it to mother tongue only) for cross pollination of the tongues and avoiding ethnic enclaves of the mother-tongue variety. Obviously regional location and population language demographics of schools are also fundamental.

While the Schools Act (1996) is progressive in relation to apartheid policy and its mention of redress and the progressive aims of the new dispensation, it is also idealistic and academic in its assumption that with the legal declaration that schools would simply become open to all. The Vryburg case shows this clearly. What the Schools Act does not deal with is the levelling of the playing field, especially pertinent in the rural white/black school divide. While the Act does allow for two schools to be governed by one School Governing Board (based on the decision of the Minister), the authorities do not seem to want to make use of this aspect of the Act in the case of Vryburg high. This would put the ball back into the court of civil society (parents, teachers, community members) for arriving at solutions for rural schooling. The special situations around the country would need this kind of special leverage for taking care of the apartheid inherited inequalities of the rural school system. While Vryburg high school has received the attention that it needs, it has also received much funds and attention due to the crises (partly a result of the governing bodies' actions). The continuous positive spin-offs that the school receives for its crises can be questioned especially if rural schools are wanting in simple materials, infrastructure and even (human) resources. The real victims of apartheid education (rural black pupils) deserve the attention and transformative urge of the Education Department. Rural schools also deserve the workshops that Vryburg witnessed, as well as staff skilling and black rural parental involvement in their children's schools.

Another area worthy of investigation, are parent-teacher associations, community involvement in the governing bodies, but also local and national business concerns with rural schools. The draft legislation of the Schools Act had community representation included in it.

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[50] This means that the language itself needs to be redeveloped, with relevant statal and non-statal support.

[51] This introduction would begin in the humanities due to its non-technical jargon (compare natural science)

[52] VHS SGB members openly express the willingness to go back to Afrikaans only (Interviews, 1998)

While we are not aware of the reasons for this omission of this in the final Schools Act, it seems that in such cases as rural and white enclaved schools there needs to be greater accountability to the community even if only to offset the racial biases and imbalances. While parents at the school might object, the law needs to take account of such instances where racial biases are dealt with through greater accountability to the community. This could be done in a variety of ways. One could appeal to the principle of minority rights of black pupils within the school. One could also appeal to their majority status nationally and demographically. Finally, an appeal to the dominant language prevailing in the school, though other tongues need to be catered for through community representation in the School Boards. Statutes, either national or provincial need to take care of this through careful legislation. Other possible interventions are district boards, parent-teacher associations to re-emerge and make there presence felt if not legislated, so that School Boards can be monitored with the law supporting them and with professional assistance (when necessary). If community representation in School Boards remains optional, this leaves the door open for strong groups to dominate to the detriment of others (as at Vryburg).

Perhaps a neglected area that is lost sight of is the hostel situation in the school, as well as curriculum transformation at such schools. Little mention has been made of this aspect here, and perhaps the law needs to state that hostels need to be normalised racially (minimum mixtures at hostels for instance). Curriculum also needs to be transformed and that technical subject needs to be accessed in more than one language for the time being.

One other area, it seems that legislation is lacking is in stating whether racial unions are allowed or not. While they may be voluntary and be open, what can be done about unions that represent mainly or only white members (as TOV seems to do for the white teachers and principals)? In fact, why are there two unions? Can a union be language based? Is this allowed under the new constitution? While cultural rights are entrenched in there, can these be taken to such an extent of political and union representation and with a de facto racial grouping? Also how can a union represent workers and bosses – i.e. the white teachers and their bosses in the form of principals?

Finally, other areas also need to be clarified by the law. Firstly, the relationship of the clauses in the Labour Relations Act (1997) and the clauses in the Constitution. Can Afrikaans teachers assert that they need not teach in English since they have been employed for Afrikaans teaching? If so, changes to the medium of instruction would correct this situation and the Constitutions clause of cultural diversity could be used to justify this. Secondly, the status of Model C schools. We do not want to belabour and old debate on model C schools, but merely point to the actual problems that such (legally) grey situations of Model C schools can cause. If enabling legislation is placed to transform these schools then the situation would be ameliorated. Otherwise, what can result is that previously model C black schools could suffer in their task to maintain standards. Finally, while we have not examined any of the literature, it would seem that a comparative analysis of schooling needs to done. This would give us some indications of the situations in the African and Southern Hemisphere for similarities, but also for differences with the Northern Hemisphere experiences of schooling and education.

List of Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
DDG	Deputy Director General (provincial level)
DE	Department of Education
FF	Freedom Front
HRC	Human Rights Commission
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
NWP	North West Province
PTTT	Premiers Transformation Task Team
RRS	Race Relations Survey
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SGB	School Governing Body
SRC	Student Representative Council
TOV	Transvaalse Onderwysers Vereeniging (white Afrikaans 'teachers' union)
UDW	University of Durban Westville
VHS	Vryburg High School/Hoerskool

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Drawing the Unsayable: Cannibals, Sexuality and Multimodality in a Johannesburg Classroom

Pippa Stein



PIPPA STEIN is an English teacher-educator and teaches in the Dept of Applied English Language Studies at Wits. She is a member of the New London Group International Multiliteracies Project. She is currently completing her doctorate under Gunther Kress on social semiotics, multimodality and representation in the classrooms.

Abstract

In the majority of classrooms in South Africa, writing is the most valued form of representation. Through a social semiotic analysis of multimodal (visual and written) narrative texts produced by three adolescents who participated in a multilingual storytelling project on the East Rand, I argue that each student presents a particular set of relations to each semiotic mode. I suggest that this set of relations be produced through the constraints around what is considered 'unthinkable' and 'unsayable' within the context of existing cultural forms. What this article demonstrates are the limits of language in the representation of states of feeling and desire and the importance of legitimating multiple means of representation in classroom spaces which build on the representational resources which individual human beings bring to and embody in these spaces. I argue in particular for the repositioning of the visual as a mode of meaning making from the periphery of pedagogical concerns to the centre.

Introduction

This paper is a case study discussion of multimodal texts produced by three adolescents who participated in a multilingual storytelling project in a township primary school east of Johannesburg. Through a detailed analysis of the written and visual texts, on the same subject, by two girls and one boy student, I suggest that each student present a particular set of relations to each semiotic mode. I argue that this set of relations is produced through the constraints around what is considered 'unthinkable' and 'unsayable' within the context of existing cultural forms.

The area I address in this paper is one marked culturally by silence, namely adolescent sexuality. This includes sexual desire, sexual experience and practices. For young girls particularly, who are subject to high levels of sexual assault and violation from boys and older men, language fails them. Language is dangerous: talking about rape and sexual assault can lead to further violation. Through discussion of particular students' written and visual texts on the theme of cannibals, I argue that in areas of experience culturally demarcated by

silence, other semiotic modes offer possibilities for exploration of experience and feeling that language cannot. In this instance, it is the visual mode that presents possibilities for metaphoric exploration of power, ambivalence and dread in relation to emerging masculinity's and femininities. Drawing on recent work in social semiotics and multimodality (Hodge and Kress, 1988; Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996; Kress, 1997), I argue that it is not only the choice of signifiers within the texts themselves which are motivated choices for representation, but the choice of semiotic modes themselves can be motivated by the constraints and possibilities for representation which exist and are maintained within the dominant culture.

The title of this paper 'Drawing the Unsayable', points to the limits of language in expressing the arc of human experience, particularly experiences of fear, violation, pain and loss. It also alludes to contexts where language and discourse are heavily policed, for example, where male discourse is dominant and women's voices are erased. In these situations, the dominant group defines language practices. Resistance can come through various means, for example, contesting language practices, but in some cultural contexts, resisting domination can lead to more violation. Locating meaning making in other forms and semiotic modes which go beyond language into the visual, the body, the gestural, the sonic and the performative can become another form of resistance.

Classrooms as semiotic spaces

The larger project on pedagogy and diversity, from which this case study comes, involves thinking about classrooms as semiotic spaces in which multimodal texts – visual, verbal, performative, gestural, sonic, written – are produced by human beings who are the agents of their own meaning-making. Each text produced can be viewed as a complex sign. In the act of making meaning in classrooms, students produce multiple signs (in textual forms) across semiotic modes, in different genres, drawing on different discourses and communicative practices which they need in order to succeed in this domain. The production of these texts is constrained by the genres, languages and discursive practices which are deemed legitimate by the broader institutional context of education within the nation-state, in conjunction with the school and the specific pedagogical context in each classroom.

Social semiotics as a framework for analysis

Social semiotics is based on a social semiotic account of language developed by Halliday (Halliday, 1985) which conceptualises meaning making as choice from a range of different interlocking options. This concept of meaning making as choice has been extended by theorists such as Kress, Hodge and Van Leeuwen to include multimodal semiotic objects, not only language. The framework for my analysis draws on the work of Kress in the area of multimodality, representation and the development of an adequate theory of semiosis in relation to the new communicational landscape. Kress has stated (1997,19)

> An adequate theory of semiosis will be founded on the recognition of the 'interested action' of socially located, culturally and historically formed individuals, as the remakers, the transformers, and the re-shapers of the representational resources available to them.

Central to this theory of semiosis, is the idea of change, 'transformative action' in which the

human being is constantly engaged in a process of re-designing his or her available resources for representation. Kress has called this the 'remaking of resources in the process of their use, in action and in interaction' (1997,19). In contrast to traditional views of language and literacy as a set of formal rules within a closed system, a transformative theory of meaning making constructs meaning as a dynamic process of redesigning signs in response to other signs. This view implies that signs do not have fixed or 'intrinsic relationships' (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996) but are constantly in the process of being transformed. Meaning making as a process of transformative action or 'work' produces change both in the object being transformed, as well as in the individual who is the agent of the transformation.

The concept of semiotic modes as 'resources' for meaning making is fundamental to this theory. In the same way that a social theory of language views language and literacy as social practices and resources which act as functional tools 'to get things done' in the social world, so other modes of communication are deployed by their users for specific effects and purposes. Human beings have an array of semiotic resources at their disposal: a social semiotic analysis is interested in how each individual engages with these multiple resources, in particular contexts and historical moments. Thus a semiotic analysis of a text focuses on the relationship between 'texts, social contexts and the social practices language and other modes realise' (Kress, Ogborn, Jewitt, Tsatsarelis,1998, 6).

Interested action

The notion of 'interested action' is a key concept in Kress' framework for a theory of semiosis. Every sign produced is a representation of the sign-maker's 'interest'. This interest is a complex combination of the demands of the particular social occasion in which the text is being produced (including the interrelationship between genre, language, power relations and contextual constraints of production) and the social, cultural and historical characteristics of the individual maker of signs. Thus the concept of interest works at a number of levels:
at the broadest levels of the sociocultural, historical and political
at the specific level of the meaning-making context in which the particular sign is produced
at the individual level of the human being whose specific history, culture, body, affectivity and cognition is being harnessed in the production of the particular sign.

Motivated relationship between signifier and signified

The basic assumption underlying this theory of semiosis is that the relationship between the signifier and the signified is not arbitrary but motivated. According to Kress,

> Signs are the results of the interest of their makers, and this interest is expressed through the selection of apt signifiers for the expression of the sign-maker's meaning (1997, 19).

A theory of a fully motivated relationship between the signifier and the signified contests the theory of arbitrariness in semiotics. This 'arbitrariness' theory states that the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary, and that any form (signifier) can be used for any content, that the selection of form/signifiers is in no way linked to the choice of content. Following the Saussurian distinction between langue and parole, an arbitrary semiotics is primarily concerned with 'langue' and the ideal-speaker hearer in a closed system of meaning making which detaches the human being as agent and sign-maker

from the semiotic system. In contrast, a theory of the motivation of signs situates itself firmly within the complex and messy real world of 'parole', the world of real users of signs, and the multiple and complex interventions between the users of signs, their meanings and the circumstances they are used in. What this implies is that the human social and cultural environments in constant transformation have to be placed in the centre of semiotic analysis (Mercer 1998, 2).

Multimodality and representation across semiotic modes

Working with a theory of a motivated relationship of signs, my focus is on some of the issues that arise from multimodality and representation across semiotic modes. I am interested in the ways in which we engage in different semiotic modes – the written and the visual as two examples of modes – and to what extent these different modes engage human beings in different narratives of self. In other words, how human beings draw on their own individual, social and cultural histories, forms of knowledge or cultural epistemologies, in the production of meaning in specific modes, each one of which has its own textual and semiotic features. In this sense, then, each sign produced by the sign maker is: (a) a bearer of an individual identity; (b) the product of this complex relationship between the sign maker's history and identity; (c) the textual forms and representational resources available to him or her and the demands of the social occasion in which the meaning-making is taking place.

In a more general discussion on multimodality, Kress has outlined the need for much more work to be done in the area of the difference potentialities between semiotic modes. Kress and Van Leeuwen have focused on the distinction between the written mode and the visual mode as a move from narrative to display. Kress has written:

> Both modes produce semiotic objects – messages, textual forms. If texts are metaphors of the organisation of the world, then the two modes produce quite distinctly different takes on the world, different images of that world, and different dispositions by their users – whether as text-producers or as text-consumers – towards the world. Narrative and display each have the most fundamental consequences for an individual's or a culture's orientation in the world, so this shift is bound to have equally fundamental repercussions in social, cultural, political and economic practices, and in the subjectivities of individuals. (1997, 16-17)

Multimodality as a concept is seen as the 'essential con figurative characteristic of all texts' (Kress, Ogborn, Jewitt, Tsatserelis, 1998, 4). The making of meaning thus involves the use of several semiotic modes as resources, all working in conjunction to create particular communicative effects. Each semiotic mode has its own 'grammar' and 'social languages' – its own particular patterns which give it its coherence and cohesion in specific contexts. So for example, a semiotic mode of body gestures works to produce certain communicative effects but the repertoire of gestures that the individual draws on might shift, as he or she shifts social occasions. A good example from the South African context is the use of eye contact. For many black people, not making eye contact shows respect for the person you are communicating with. For many white people, making eye contact shows respect and not making eye contact shows disrespect. How individuals navigate the use of eye contact as a gesture of respect or disrespect in diverse social settings is a question of power and context, in the same way that language users shift their use of particular language practices across settings.

If communication is produced through these different effects working together in some kind of integrated whole, then it follows that the interpretation of such texts should begin to work with the communicative effects of these different semiotic layerings. This is no simple task as the potential interplay between the simultaneous use and joint intersections of multiple semiotic modes can produce combinations of dazzling complexity. Lemke (1998) has suggested each mode can be viewed as a separate channel of communication but how each mode interrelates with the other channels of communication – as complementary, contradictory, equivalent etc – makes the task of 'reading' such texts highly challenging!

Pedagogy, diversity and the 'excavation' of silence

My own interest as a teacher-educator is in the relationship between pedagogy and diversity and the ways in which pedagogies can begin to address the contexts of diversity in classrooms in which students from multiple discursive and representational histories find themselves (Peirce and Stein, 1995; Stein, 1998). To put it simply, how can the classroom as a space in which meaning is made, become a complex space, which is founded on the productive integration of diverse histories, modes of representation, epistemologies, languages and discourses?

One of the ways in which I have worked with this question is through conceptualising the classroom as a space in which it becomes possible for some form of 'the excavation of silence' to occur, in diverse forms and modes. This term, 'the excavation of silence,' is used by Andre Brink to describe the processes of recovery and narration of history, which have been taking place over the last few years through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC gave people who were brutalised by apartheid atrocities and structures, an opportunity to record in public memory their experiences. Perpetrators of such atrocities have been given the chance of amnesty through this forum. Through the process and practice of speaking out in the TRC, it was hoped that some form of healing and national reconciliation could occur.

My appropriation of the term 'the excavation of silence' relates to the ways in which learners whose voices have been silenced, made invisible or marginalised, can become visible in the discursive space of a classroom. This project is, I believe, all the more urgent within the changing relations of power in South Africa where articulation and elaboration are central to the building of a democratic culture and a civic society.

The classroom context

I ran a storytelling project with a group of 37 Std 5 adolescent boys and girls (12 – 16 year olds) in a state primary school in a black township on the outskirts of Johannesburg. The aim of the project was to explore the multilingual and cultural resources of a group of students who were learning all their school subjects through English, which was not their main language. The local languages spoken by these children included Zulu, Sotho, Venda, Swazi and Afrikaans. All these children have the ability to interweave at least three of these languages into their everyday conversations and interactions. The school, Igagazi Primary School, was a well-run, new primary school, which took in children from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, including children from the newly established nouveau riche section of the township, and children from the strife-ridden Vosloorus township nearby.

The pedagogical task

The task given to the students was set out as follows:
Part One
1. Divide yourselves into language groups where you all speak the same language/s.
2. Each person in the group tells a story. The story can be a story you have heard from someone in your family or community or a story you make up yourself. Tell the story in the language/s it was told to you.
3. Translate the stories, if necessary, so that everyone understands.
4. Choose the best stories in the group to tell to the rest of the class.
5. As a class, listen to the best stories from each group. Storytellers should introduce their stories by telling the audience where and when they heard the story. Storytellers should tell the story in the language in which it was told to them, and use translators to translate the story into English.
6. After each storytelling event, talk about some of the different meanings the story has for you. Discuss why you think the story was told.
Part Two
1. Write the story in the language in which it was told to you.
2. Translate it into English
3. Draw the story.

Storytelling as cultural and pedagogical practice

This storytelling project was an attempt to focus on the multilingual and cultural resources of a group of students who were all learning their school subjects through English, which was not their home language. In order to do this productively, the central pedagogical question was how to structure the classroom context to provide students with the maximum opportunity and freedom to engage in the exploration of their multilingualism within meaningful, authentic, communicative events.

I decided to work with the concept of 'story' and 'narrative,' which I interpreted rather loosely as autobiographical accounts, fictional representations and historical narratives. Story and narrative are primary human activities. The manner in which we narrate our lives to ourselves and to others is through story (Bruner, 1986; 1994). Secondly, oral storytelling as a social and cultural practice has a well-established tradition in parts of Africa, and specifically in parts of South Africa, although oral storytelling as a household practice is not nearly as extensively practised as it once was (Hofmeyr, 1993). Thirdly, there is a large body of international research literature on the power and value of storytelling and narrative as a crucial activity for developing literacy and language skills (Heath, 1983; Fox, 1993; Meek, 1982). Story gives students an opportunity to develop and engage in sustained speech, to draw on available discourses and genres they already know. Haas Dyson and Genishi (1994.) have demonstrated how story and storytelling can be a powerful way of building a classroom community with students from diverse histories and backgrounds. This process of 'weaving a community', through story and storytelling, has the capacity to develop students' empathy. This is achieved by engaging the listener/reader in an imaginative world which does not lead to conclusions about certainties in the world, but about the varying perspectives that can be constructed to make experience comprehensible (Bruner, 1986, 37). Heath (1994) has shown through her study of adolescents in inner city neighbourhoods in the USA that stories are a way of testing theories about social relationships in peer networks, as well as connections to the wider society.

Local research has also demonstrated the value of storytelling for developing language, literacy, cognitive and socialisation skills at different levels. Kenyon and Kenyon (1996) describe how children in an Eastern Cape primary classroom learnt science through stories and praise poems. Prinsloo (1997) working with teachers in Kwa-Zulu Natal argues that narrative across a wide range of textual materials should be the focus of teaching since it is the common textual experience of all learners. Smith (1997) describes a project with teachers in the Eastern Cape, which includes storytelling as a major component of her course materials. Haarhof and Pflaum (1996) describe processes of working with Namibian teachers in which story is central in the ways in which students investigate their relationship to what teaching is and what it does. Smallbones and Clarence-Fincham (1997) describe a high school project in Natal where storytelling was used to explore critical language awareness in relation to multilingualism. Van der Riet (1996; 1998) discusses the value of the Xhosa iintsomi (a traditional African oral tale) from a cultural psychological perspective as an agent of socialisation in childhood, a culturally regulated bearer of meaning and as part of the 'activity' of growing up. Working with Vygotskian activity theory, she argues that traditional stories lead to a particular literacy or 'way of thinking' and that an analysis of these types of literacy will assist educators in deconstructing the learning history with which students might enter formal education contexts. Lockhart (1998) describes a similar project to the one outlined in this paper but in a different site – a multilingual, ex-model C school in the predominantly white, middle-class suburb of Randburg, north of Johannesburg. She set out to investigate her students' idea of story in the kinds of stories they tell and know, what resources they draw on in the telling of such stories, and what factors influence their abilities to tell and respond to stories.

The use of African oral storytelling in schools

Until the recent introduction of Curriculum 2005 (1997) to South African schools, storytelling as oral performance which draws on local, indigenous African storytelling practices, has not been a valued school genre. This is not to say that the dinonwane (a traditional African oral tale) have not been present in classrooms. Indeed, they have been, as Hofmeyr has pointed out (1993) but their presence is in the school readers, where they have collected, sanitised and codified as written texts for reading aloud in chorus in primary classrooms across the land. The focus on reading these tales in lower primary classrooms (i.e. on literacy) has meant that very little pedagogical work has happened around students' own productivity in relation to these cultural resources. In other words, the classroom has been the site of reception of certain canonised versions of stories rather than a site of production of these stories. The project I describe should therefore be seen as a project in productivity and creativity around the dinonwane, in which students are invited to produce their own versions of the stories they know or have heard from their cultural and familial environments. This focus on productivity in itself has consequences: (a) it involves students as creative agents in the production of culture; (b) it views culture as dynamic; (c) it validates what students know and have as cultural resources for representation, and (d) it leads to experimentation with diverse styles and forms as 'designs' for meaning making.

The traditional stories told are folkloric narratives which deal with the relationship between apparently different worlds: the world of human beings in culture, and the imaginative world of the supernatural, magical, grotesque and fantastic. In most of these tales, humans meet these fantastic creatures in the 'real' world of humans, as these creatures force themselves on the human world. Scheub's classic study (1975) on the Xhosa iintsomi describes how in most stories, a confrontation between good and evil occurs in which many resolutions are possible

– escape from the situation, confrontation and victory over evil forces, confrontation and defeat by evil, or satisfaction of desires. He argues that these traditional stories explore significant social relationships and suggest how human beings should respond in situations of fragmentation, adversity and disorder.

With the rise of urbanisation and the fragmentation of families and communities through apartheid, the tradition of nighttime storytelling has considerably declined (Hofmeyr, 1993). However I have argued elsewhere that storytelling as a cultural and social practice continues to take place in urban communities amongst children, in multiple semiotic modes, languages and genres, drawing on traditional as well as highly topical, political content (Stein, 1999).

The selection and interpretation of the data

The texts I focus on for analysis deal with the theme of cannibals. A significant 20% of the stories produced in the class were in some way connected to cannibals or similar Zim-like[53] characters, who are always male, 'all mouth', with an insatiable desire for human flesh. These cannibal figures are central to the depiction of evil in the iintsomi and migrate from story to story, retaining their devouring characteristics in different disguises. I have selected 3 cannibal stories and their drawings, two by girls and one by a boy. The interpretations I offer are suggestive rather than decisive infused with my own subject position as a white woman teacher-researcher in this historical moment, with my own representational, class and gendered history. There are obviously multiple readings possible in relation to these texts. I offer a highly specific 'take' because I think it reveals interesting things about the relationship between semiotic modes, language and cultural practices: how different semiotic modes can become inflected with meanings which have their origins in the social world beyond the individual agent or sign maker.

In a social semiotic analysis, the notion of 'interested action' is central to how the text is interpreted. If every sign is a representation of the sign-maker's affective and cognitive interest, and this interest is a complex combination of the relationship between text, context and the social practices which are embodied and realised in the different semiotic modes being deployed, then the analysis should try to take into account all these factors. My analysis works with the textual objects as signs of 'interested action' and I have read 'interested action' off these signs in an interpretative act, a form of 'intuitive' literary analysis. I have also crossed the boundaries between literary analysis of a text, and 'hard accounts' of the real social world. This was done by using recent ethnographic studies in anthropology and health on the theme of adolescent sexuality and sexual practices, which reveal the alarmingly high incidence of sexual abuse of young girls by predatory males in township schools. This method of analysis is an attempt at what Brian Street and others have referred to a kind of 'anthropological poetics' – a bridging of 'texts and practices' by mixing the literary and poetic traditions with ethnographic interpretations of social texts. Street has said,

> The project of contemporary social science in its linguistic turn is to bridge these two traditions, to apply the nuanced understandings of linguistic processes, and understandings of tropes and metaphors, to real social life (1998, 3).

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[53] Zim-like refers to the Zimwi, a half man, half beast creature who has a mythic status as a terrifying creature who captures young girls and hides them in his drum.

Resources, conventions and transformative activity

In the analysis below, I make reference to certain styles or conventions of visual images in African art, which I believe these students to be drawing on in their representations of cannibals. What is interesting is how these students have used these styles or conventions as *resources* to inflect their interests. In the same way that language can be considered immanent, continually in a process of being created rather than a fixed representation of reality, so material objects, images and conventions do not have fixed meanings. The meanings of these different styles and conventions have acquired different meanings over time in different contexts of use. What I try to demonstrate is how these particular students have appropriated these conventions for their own particular meaning making purposes.

The question of how each student uses his or her available resources is obviously linked to developmental issues, for example, the degree of the individual's skills and competencies in writing or drawing or performing. This means that there is often a gap between the possibilities offered by the available resources and what the individual actually is capable of producing. In the analysis below, I have worked with 'the actual' rather than the 'possible' in the interpretation of the students' drawings and writing. A more developmental analysis in relation to resource use is the subject of another paper.

The written and visual texts

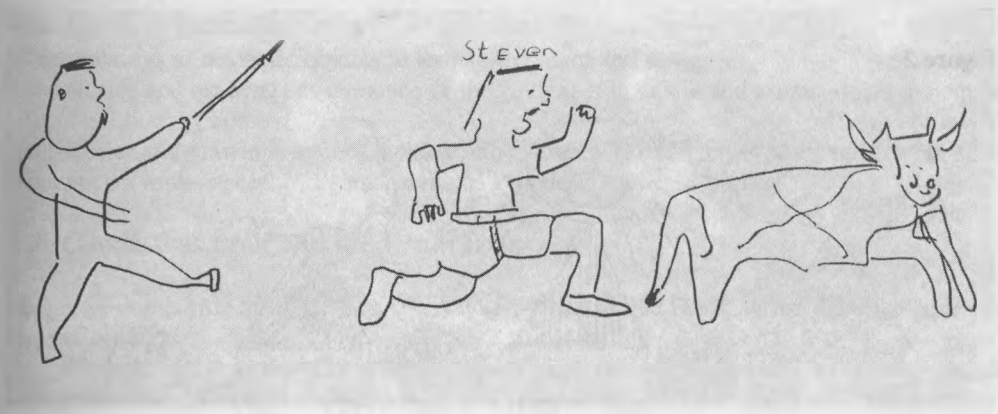


Figure 1

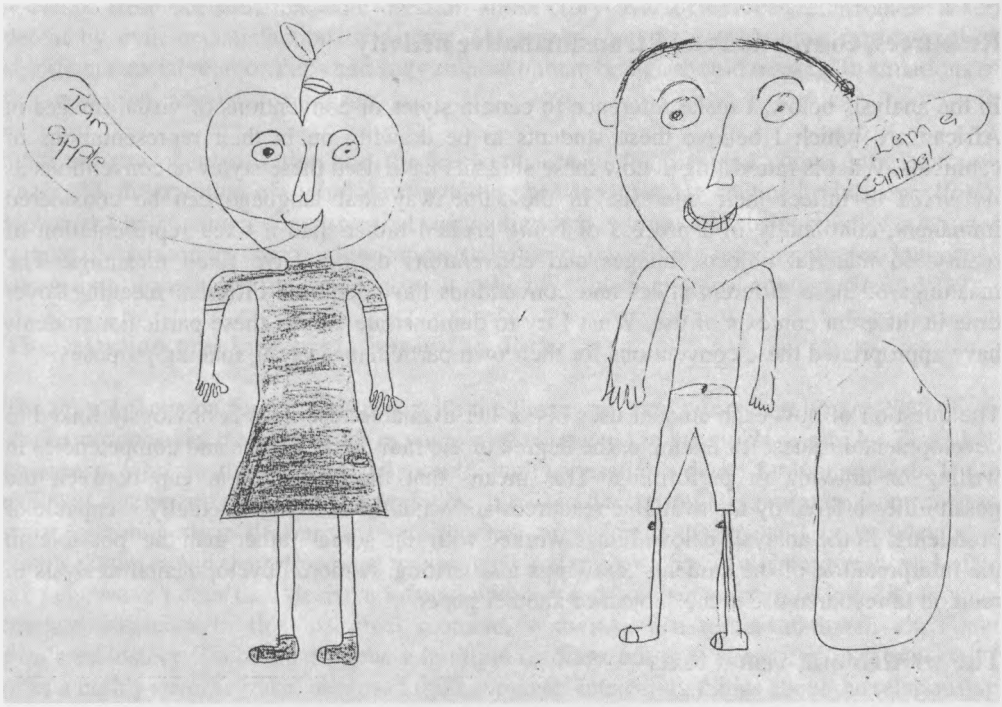


Figure 2

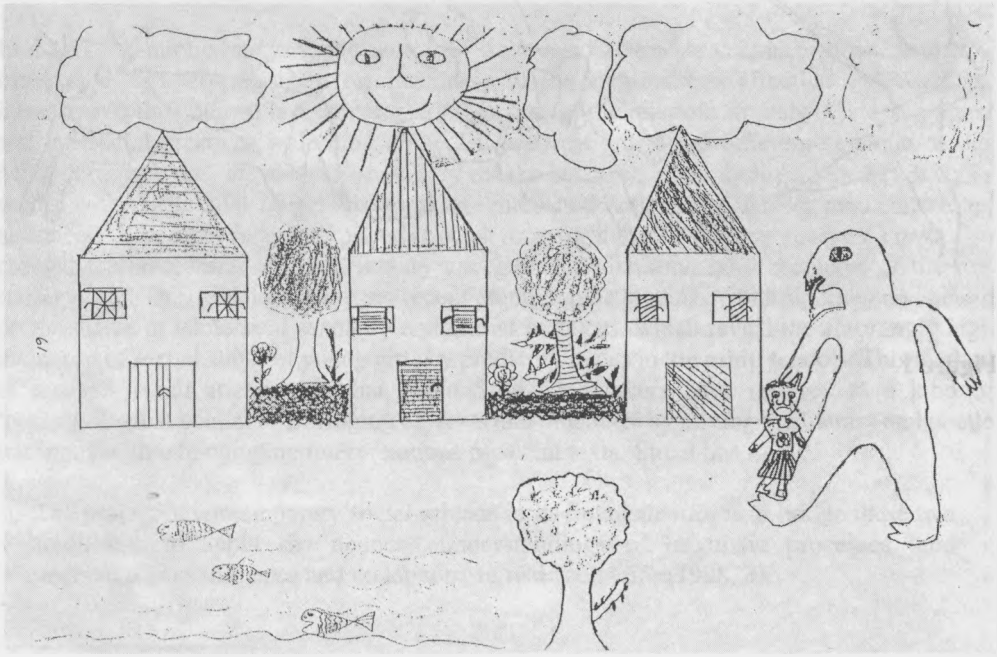


Figure 3

Claims

Through an analysis of the students' written and visual texts, I make the following claims:
- that each student produces a complex written and visual sign, each one of which is different
- that each student draws on his or her representational resources across semiotic modes to make these signs
- these representational resources are culturally and historically located in the student's history
- that each sign-maker navigates a specific set of relations to the semiotic mode she or he is using
- these sets of relations are historically and culturally located and include the sign-maker's
- history in relation to writing, orality, the visual and other semiotic modes; each sign-
- maker is a bearer of a 'representational' history
- that each semiotic mode offers different forms of disguise and that these forms of disguise may differ according to the sign-maker's relations to that mode and what is 'sayable' or 'unsayable' in terms of existing cultural forms.

Analysis of the texts

The primary focus of the analysis is on the representation of the cannibal and the human figures and their relationship in the drawings and stories. There are many other aspects of the texts that are interesting, but will not be part of the analysis, for example:
- the stories as literary texts in terms of content, myth, genre, ideology and linguistic forms
- the stories as multilingual texts
- the drawings as aesthetic objects in terms of content and design
- the stories and drawings as evidence of the students' linguistic and artistic development in a school literacy context
- the stories and drawings as geographical and historical texts in terms of the tensions in each between a mythic rural place and past and a modern township setting.

The cannibal as design in the visual texts

I begin by comparing the visual representation of the cannibal figure across the three different texts in order to:
- establish the different ways in which the sign makers use what they have 'to hand' to design their cannibal figures
- explore the meanings of these differing signs as expressions of social and cultural processes
- particularly in terms of emerging masculinities and femininities
- try to define the sign-maker's relation to the differing modes of representation (the verbal/written and the visual) in order to reflect on their semiotic potentials and limitations.

Figure 1: Zantotoza

This cannibal figure is drawn as a male human figure, with a bulbous human face, a moustache and tufts of hair. He is the same size as the other human figure in the drawing, and has been given the same name as the author of the story named Steven. The cannibal is naked – there is an absence of clothes on the figure, which is contrasted with the other male figure of Steven, who is clothed. The cannibal figure has an assegai in his left hand that he is pointing and waving at the Steven figure and the cow, who are positioned to the right,

in front of him. His left leg is suspended in the air, suggesting a running movement. He is drawn in profile.

Figure 2: Apole and the cannibal

The cannibal is a male human figure, slightly larger in size than Apole, the female half-human, half-apple figure in the drawing. The cannibal resembles a young man, with a sharply pointed nose, pointed chin, protruding ears, two eyes and eyebrows, one pupil of the eye more emphasised than the other, which seems to be glaring simultaneously at the figure of Apole and at the viewer. He has a crescent shaped mouth full of carefully drawn sharp teeth, a distinguishing marker of identity. He has two arms, the right arm fatter than the left arm, and podgy fingers – his right hand has fatter fingers than the left hand. He is wearing a pair of shorts that come to the knee, a belt or a button at the top of the shorts. He has thin legs and small knobs on his knees. He is wearing some kind of footwear, perhaps sandals. As he looks at Apole and the viewer, he is saying (in the speech bubble) 'I am a cannibal'.

Figure 3: The monster who ate people

In this drawing, the cannibal resembles a mutant, anthropomorphic creature that walks upright, like a bear or a gorilla, a King Kong or Tarzan figure. It is at least twice the size of the female character in the story and in the drawing. It is drawn in profile, has a large eye in the middle of the side of its head, with a pupil which has been coloured in black. It has a little red snout, a mouth with teeth carefully drawn, and a long red tongue hanging out of its mouth. Drops of liquid are dripping off its tongue. The left foot of this cannibal is lifted, suggesting motion. It has its left paw, with three claw-like fingers, touching or pushing down on the head of the little girl. At the same time it is lifting the girl off the ground with its left leg. The girl is still, trapped between its foot and its paws. She is weeping and looking directly at the viewer.

The differences in the choices each student has made to represent his or her 'interests' in the representation of these cannibal figures is striking. I argue that these individual choices of cannibal 'sign' are historically and culturally located within the 'representational histories' of each individual. A representational history is like a constantly shifting archive of the mind, body and imagination which contains traces of the myriad's of images, texts, words, sounds which an individual has encountered and absorbed in a lifetime of seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, experiencing. These are the resources for representation. They are constantly being added to new experience and new signs and each new resource reconfigures the relationship between the existing resources. A representational history might be composed of a visual history, a literacy history, a performance history, an oral/speech history, all of which map onto each other and transform each other in an indivisible whole.

In the case of Figure 1, I suggest that the sign maker is drawing on the style or conventions of black, male figures depicted in San or Bushman rock art which are found all over Southern Africa dating from 4000 – 2000 years ago. The San were hunter-gatherers who roamed the countryside looking for game and food. The schematic drawing of the cannibal as a naked male hunting figure, delicately drawn in a state of motion, about to throw a spear or assegai is very typical of black male representation in rock paintings. The drawing of the cow in Figure 1 is very similar in its design to traditional clay cows made by young boys in rural communities as objects for play.

In Figure 2, the cannibal is drawn as a contemporary young male, dressed in contemporary clothing – shorts and sandals. The markers of his status as cannibal, his 'otherness', seem to be fairly discrete: his mouth full of teeth, the enlarged pupil of his one eye and the little protruding knobs on his knees. It is interesting to note that these particular features – the enlarged eye, the teeth and the knobs on the knees – appear in Tsonga carved figures of wood which are used in initiation ceremonies for men. Figures such as these are used in the instruction of initiates, as young men pass from boyhood into adulthood. The male carved figure is often used with a female figure to illustrate teachings about sexual and social mores.

In Figure 3, the cannibal is drawn as a larger than life, mythical animal creature in motion, with one large eye and a long protruding tongue similar in design to some of the modelled clay sculptures of animals, birds and anthropomorphic figures used in girl initiation ceremonies like those excavated from the Shroda farm from around the 9th century AD. These figures were part of ritual ceremonies and the ceremonial sacrifice of animals. This figure is also inflected with conventions from contemporary popular media – images of King Kong and Tarzan, for example.

All three representations of cannibals are interesting examples of hybrid texts in which students have assembled their designs from a range of styles and artistic conventions which speak simultaneously to a mythic and idealised past and to a contemporary world of popular style, culture and image systems from the media.

The girl and boy as design in the visual texts

In the same way as the cannibals are distinctly different in their visual design, the representations of the human figures of the boy in Figure 1 and the girls in Figures 2 and 3 are all different.

In Figure 1, produced by the sign maker, Steven, the cannibal is in profile and in action. The human figure of the boy, significantly also labelled Steven, is positioned between the cannibal and the cow, as the protagonist in the centre of the action, the hero who is protecting his favourite beast from the cannibal-intruder. The whole image suggests a particular take on the 'sujet': a moment in media res, in narrative, as distinct from the more static image of display in Apole and the cannibal. In some sense, the image is working both as narrative and display. The scene depicted is styled as a typical 'chase' scene from a picture or comic book, or a movie, with the 'baddie' running after the 'goodies', brandishing his stick in the air. This image brings to mind countless real, photographic and television images of large, white South African males chasing after or chasing off black people from their farms or homesteads for 'illegal squatting' – this scene is emblematic of the racist relationship between white and black males in apartheid South Africa. At the same time, it is also a very traditional African male narrative of a herd boy looking after his cattle, protecting his favourite cow from marauders and thieves.

Steven depicts his relationship to the cannibal as heroic: the image-maker himself is the main actor in the drawing, in a way that he is not in the written text. It is also interesting that the cannibal is drawn without clothing, while the Steven-hero character is drawn with detailed clothing – clothing as marker of progress, civilisation, culture. The cannibal is depicted as the aggressor, the savage, and the uncivilised. Steven, both as actor in the image and child in this

classroom, in this historical moment of making, is trying to distance himself from a mythic primitive past that the cannibal represents and re-present himself as the contemporary boy hero in an adventure in which he is inscribed in the text as the central actor.

In terms of Steven's 'interest' as a sign-maker, I suggest that an important part of Steven's choice of signifiers in his visual text are motivated by his own relationship to his maleness and power as a adolescent black male. Males act in the world and have power: they rescue, save, fight off enemies and protect their herds (whether they are 'women' or 'cattle'). Steven's affective and cognitive interest in his own emerging masculinity as a predatory male fighting off other predators in order to protect his property is deeply inflected in this image.

In Figure 2 of Apole and the cannibal, the whole image is working more as 'display' and acknowledgement of a state of being, than as action. The figure of a cannibal is facing the viewer and interacting with Apole and the viewer at once through his gaze and the use of written speech bubbles. The image is a good example of the image as classification (the 'I am x' relation) with some interaction introduced through speech bubbles. In terms of the relationship to the viewer, the cannibal figure and Apole are represented looking directly at the viewer with speech bubbles, introducing himself or herself. It is as though the sign maker is displaying the objects for the viewer, arranging them in symmetrical form across the space with a left-right structure.

More scrutiny of the nature of the gaze in this text reveals layers of ambivalence. It is significant that the cannibal figure is looking at Apole out of one eye, and at the viewer out of the other. His gaze controls his object of desire and the outside eye of the viewer that witnesses this desire. Apole's gaze is directly at the viewer, one eye slightly enlarged. Recent research by Henderson on adolescent sexuality among boys and girls in the New Crossroad Township in the Western Cape reveals the extent to which the nature of the girl's gaze is regarded as a marker of respect/disrespect. A seventeen-year old boy commented,

> '... When you look directly at a girl, the girl must look down. She mustn't look directly at you. This shows respect' (Henderson 1999,18).

In this image, Apole does not look directly at the boy/cannibal, possibly as a sign of 'respect'.

It is interesting to speculate why the sign maker gives a speech bubble to each figure to label and name itself, when it is obvious from the visual signs that the figure on the left is Apole (the apple) and the figure on the right is the cannibal. A number of explanations are possible: her need to classify information she is displaying in the information textbook tradition of labelling objects as a form of classification. At the same time, there is a consciousness of the genre she is working in – narrative – so she pulls in her knowledge of comic speech bubble convention in which characters announce their identity. It is also possible that the child does not believe that the visual alone will communicate this significant information. Perhaps words are trusted more by her than images because they are not open to imaginings in the way images are. What is clear, however, is that the sign-maker has knowledge of the complex interconnected relationship which exists between the verbal (the direct speech in the speech bubble), the visual and the written (the written speech), and is able to appropriate and transform what she needs to communicate her meaning.

The image of the girl figure, Apole, is complexly layered both in itself and how it relates to

the cannibal figure next to it. The Apole figure is a visual pun on popular images of woman as Eve, as 'apples' ready for eating. Apole is a mythic creature with the body of a young girl and a face that is both human face and apple. In her written text, the sign maker uses the name 'Apole' not apple, and makes no mention of the main character having a face that looks like an apple. The sign, Apole, in the verbal text has become a visual metaphor in the visual text. In the language of sexual desire amongst adolescents in the Umtata youth study (Wood and Jewkes 1998, 9) and New Crossroads study (Henderson, 1999, 9), metaphors of eating and consumption are common. Youth referred to sex as an inexorable physical need, with reference to food metaphors such as 'tasting', 'chowing' (literally: eating) and girls are referred to as 'cherries'. The boys are those who eat, and the girls are eaten. Girls are referred to as 'tasty' and 'ripe' for plucking. As one girl from Umtata put it,

> ... boys use us, they need sex then after tasting you, leave you for other girls (Wood and Jewkes, 1998, 8).

The relationship between Apole and the cannibal is intriguing. They are arranged side by side, standing upright facing the viewer, very much in the tradition of the male and female wooden or clay figures used in puberty initiation ceremonies to teach about sexual practices and mores. I think it is remarkable the extent to which the cannibal figure has been designed as an ordinary young man, a 'dude' and how his markers of danger and desire are almost invisible. What the sign-maker seems to be saying to us, the viewers, is 'the cannibal is one of us'. The cannibals among us are young men with sharp teeth and protruding eyeballs who desire to eat apples (young girls). But unlike the image of the girl trapped by the cannibal in Figure 3, Apole is depicted as separate, still free, although subject to the predatory eyes of the young men-cannibals. I suggest that Apole's separateness could express some contestation and ambivalence in relation to the male devourer's claims to devour. She acknowledges her gendered construction as an 'apple for eating' but is holding on to her individual agency and power. It seems to me that her 'interest' is in negotiating her relationship to sexuality and desire (in the sense of both affirming and contesting) and this is determining her choice of 'apt signifiers' and their arrangement on the page.

Unlike Figure 1 of the boy as hero, escaping from the clutches of the cannibal, the depiction of the young girl in Figure 3 is an image of entrapment and surrender. There is little sense of the girl as agent in this image with any power. We view a moment in action – the young girl weeping while the cannibal pins her down between his claws and paws. In terms of the sign maker's relations to the cannibal, she designs it as an overpowering, large force, the protruding tongue a symbol of sexuality dripping drops of saliva, blood, semen, a force from which there is no escape. The presence of the tree in the lower third of the drawing fixed between the girl and the monster is covered in fruit, with the strange branch-like phallic object protruding from the main trunk. The symbolism resonates with the Apole fruit image in Figure 2. The drawing is imbued with phallic images – the shark-like 'branches' are coming out of trees and fishes swimming through water. All that is left is for young girls to weep at their state of dread as male predators close in.

The sign-maker's relations to different semiotic modes

In a comparison between the semiotic possibilities of the visual and the verbal, Kress has suggested that the two modes produce quite distinctly different takes on the world, different images of that world and different dispositions by their users towards that world (1997,

16-17). He suggests that writing, in its focus on language, is primarily concerned with the functions of narrating, describing, explaining and classifying whereas images carry information which display what the world is like.

A comparison between these sign-makers' visual texts and written texts seems to suggest that each sign-maker is using different semiotic modes to navigate a specific set of relations to his or her 'interest' and in these particular images and texts, the driving 'interest' at stake is each individual's emerging sexual identity. In other words, each sign-maker is drawing on his or her representational resources to explore, contest and/or affirm a certain cultural, social and historical relationship to masculinities and femininities. Each sign maker's choice of representational resources and semiotic mode is inflected with varying degrees of disguise in relation to the content selected for representation and these varying degrees of disguise relate to the 'unthinkable' and the 'unsayable' within the terms of existing cultural forms. Butler (1990) has pointed out,

> What remains 'unthinkable' and 'unsayable' within the terms of an existing cultural form is not necessarily what is excluded from the matrix of intelligibility within that form; on the contrary, it is the marginalised, not the excluded, the cultural possibility that calls for dread or, minimally, the loss of sanctions. The 'unthinkable' is thus fully within culture, but fully excluded from dominant culture (1990, 77).

Recent research into the sexual practices of black adolescent boys and girls has highlighted the alarming degrees of violence within youth sexual relationships in the forms of physical assault and forced sex (Wood, Maforah, Jewkes, 1996; Wood & Jewkes,1998; Henderson,1999; Centre for Violence and Reconciliations report on violence and crime in schools,1997). In one report on Xhosa adolescents in Umtata (Wood & Jewkes, 1998), the use of violence by boys was a way of imposing the 'rules' of the relationship. Included were 'rules' around girls' rejections of proposals of love, their attempts to end the relationship, their refusals of sex and their attempts to check up on boy's infidelity. It was found in this study that issues to do with gaining and keeping girlfriends or boyfriends were overwhelming preoccupations of the youth, with their male and female identities substantially constructed in terms of success in sexual relationships. These emerging identities are played out in struggles for power and positions in the peer group, with high levels of vulnerability:

> With evaluations of self-worth and power so critically dependent on the actions of others, boys and girls remain inherently vulnerable. Thus boys used physical coercion against girls in order to maintain their fantasies of power. Girls were restricted in their ability to resist violent men for fear of losing a relationship of 'status' and, whilst characterising men as irresponsible and deceitful, were eager accomplices in acts of deceit against other women when these increased their power and position within the female peer group (Wood & Jewkes, 1998, 2-3).

Wolpe, Quinlan and Martinez (1997) in their report on Gender Equity in Education, comment on the taboos in relation to 'open' discussion of sexual violence, maintaining that there is a 'remarkable silence' around general acts of sexual harassment and violence which are perceived as a 'normal' part of 'growing up' or an example of 'boys being boys'. Recent ethnographic fieldwork by Henderson (1999) describes the silences surrounding boys and girls' sexuality in New Crossroads and how silences in relating sexual experience and desire take on differing inflections in relation to boys and girls.

> Although boys have a predatory language with which to express their pursuit of girls, girls are far less voluble concerning their relations to boys. A more general silence in communicating sexual matters between parents and their children marks respectful avoidance between generations (1999, 4).

Her work shows, however, that this lack of communication of sexual matters needs to be placed in juxtaposition with increasing sexual violence towards young children and especially young girls. Violent practices against women have been described as endemic, in the sense that they are widespread, common practice and deeply entrenched. Rape statistics presented to parliament by the ANC Women's Caucus in 1997 show that one in three girl children and one in eight boy children are sexually assaulted before the age of eighteen (National Research Council) and it is estimated that a woman is raped in South Africa every 35 seconds. South Africa has the highest rape statistics in the world.

The silences in young girls surrounding sexuality are the most powerful in relation to rape, where girls prefer to remain silent. Henderson suggests that this silence in language comes about because speaking about this violation turns her (the girl) into an object of curiosity and titillation. Thus the amplification of her experience through speech amplifies her own sense of shame. This sense of shame is endorsed in her peer group: her friends protect her through their presence and insist that 'her recovery will be affected through silence, through forgetfulness' (1999, 22).

Verbal language as a semiotic mode is dangerous and unsatisfying,

> The terms that we may apply to illuminate areas of silence too quickly take on the character of unsatisfying speech, speech that slips past what we attempt to explore or communicate. Yet it is just such areas of silence that circumscribe painful areas of social limitation for particular groupings of people and that need to be addressed by the social sciences (Henderson, 1999, 23).

Seremetakis (1997) has written that splits between the 'public' and the 'private' between the 'sayable' and the 'unsaid' creates zones of 'inadmissible memory' that constitute a space for forgetfulness:

> The cultural construction of the 'public' and the sayable in turn creates zones of privatised, inadmissible memory and experience that operate as spaces of amnesia and anaesthesia ... As the zones of amnesia and the unsaid expand in tandem with the increasingly formulaic and selective reproduction of public memory, the issue of narrativity becomes a zone of increasing political and cultural tension (19-20).

I suggest the split between the 'unsayable', the 'unthinkable' and its representation within existing cultural forms is being mediated by the sign-maker through the semiotic objects and modes each one has chosen to represent. Each sign-maker uses different semiotic modes to represent the split between the 'public' and the 'sayable', and the 'private' and the 'inadmissible'. In the story of Zantotoza, the sign-maker's written and drawing text of Zantotoza illustrate interesting choices around the 'public' and the 'private', particularly in relation to his cultural construction as a male. His 'public' text is his written narrative, a carefully rendered version of a traditional oral tale that he has heard in an oral storytelling event in a domestic setting. That is his interest – to be faithful to the oral tale in his written

version. However, his interest shifts in the visual representation. In the material and physical act of drawing and in the process of making the marks on the page, he transforms the abstract idea of 'the boy' who is the protagonist in the written text. It is transformed into an 'I', a signed self-portrait, in which he inscribes himself as the hero of the tale. The 'unsayable' in the written text becomes the 'sayable' as the 'visualised' in the visual text. In his choice of visual image, he displays his masculine predatory power in a moment of triumph. The visual text offers the possibility to display a private self, which the written narrative text conceals. I suggest that his relation to the visual and the written mode are historically and culturally located within larger communicative practices within his community or family around 'the sayable' and 'the writable'. Thus, for example, writing is part of the domain of the 'public' – a mode that produces something fixed or permanent that is to be read. Writing is impersonal, distant and sacred; it does not admit the realms of the 'private' or 'inadmissible' self. In addition to this, the 'written' story is a written version of an 'oral' story. Traditional oral stories need to be faithfully rendered. So, for this sign-maker, an accessible mode in which he chooses to participate beyond the limits of written and oral language in order to display a more private, individual self, is the visual.

The written story of Apole and the cannibal was originally in Zulu that was then translated into English by the author. Her story is about a mother who colludes with a cannibal to give him her baby to save her own skin. The baby is the young girl, Apole, who with the collusion of a girl friend, manages to outwit the cannibal and save her life. In the same way as Steven in Zantotoza uses a different semiotic mode to represent the split between the public and the private self, the author of Apole renders a faithful, conserving account of the Apole tale in her written text. In her visual text, she metaphorises the narrative in a different way from her written metaphorisation – I am working with the assumption that the written text as a complex sign is already a metaphorisation of a particular conjunction of social and historical relations. Her written text does not suggest that Apole is half-apple, half-girl, she is 'a girl who lived with her mother'. And the cannibal is not described in the written text as a young man with sharp teeth and pointed features, with knobs on his knees. He is simply 'the cannibal'. But the visual text offers the possibilities for the author to re-present 'the inadmissible' – that the cannibal, like the child abuser or rapist, is one of us. Furthermore, unlike the explicitness in the image of the face of boy/cannibal, the girl Apole cannot show her face – like the young girls in New Crossroads, she hides behind her apple disguise, her mask of 'inadmissible' silence to protect her from further violation and shame.

In all three texts, it is significant that the central characters, all children, show different degrees of vulnerability to outside forces of dangers that are bearing down on them. The struggle for each child, then, is how to negotiate these dangers and emerge safely from them. In Zantotoza and Apole, the children as active participants in this process outwit the forces of danger. In the story of the monster who ate people, it is the forces of evil that triumph. It is interesting to note that there are many different endings (sad and happy) of this story circulating in the tradition. This student chose the violent ending.

In the making of these textual objects, what we see is evidence of these students' work as active participants in cultural life, as creators and interpreters of the significant symbols and practices which are the 'stuff' of their everyday histories and lives. Through these texts, they are negotiating their relationship to culture and the moral order, using the funds of knowledge and 'ways of knowing' that they feel comfortable to inhabit.

In this analysis, I have looked at the texts in relation to a number of different contexts and sets of practices that are mapping on to one another in the production of these textual objects. One context is the school and classroom including the set of pedagogical practices in which the text was produced. Another is the cultural context and set of practices which produces certain kinds of texts and genres, i.e. the genre of oral storytelling and the kind of stories which come out of this cultural practice. Yet another context is the visual and written styles and conventions which each sign-maker is drawing on from his or her 'representational history'. Another context arises from my social semiotic reading of these texts as 'apt signifiers' for the sign-maker's affective and cognitive 'interests', which I have interpreted as a textual negotiation of each student's emerging masculinity or femininity. I have sought support for this interpretation in anthropological and gender studies on actual sexual practices among adolescent boys and girls in Gauteng, Cape Town and the Eastern Cape. Thus the analysis is a complex mapping of the interrelationship between textual objects, social and cultural contexts and practices in an attempt to work with the texts, to quote Bakhtin,

> in the totality of all its events, including the external material givens of the work, and its texts, and the world represented in the text, and the author-creator and the listener or reader; thus we perceive the fullness of the work in all its wholeness and indivisibility, but at the same time we understand the diversity of the elements that constitute it (1981, 255).

Where the method of analysis might be criticised is in the area of specificity of the individual students who produced these texts: I do not have empirical or ethnographic evidence of their specific relationship to their emerging senses of masculinity and femininity. All I have worked from are their texts and their drawings that I have interpreted as signs of larger cultural and social processes.

Conclusion: pedagogy, silence and representational histories

In this paper I have attempted to show how students' drawings and writings produced in a particular classroom setting are complex signs, each one of which is different. These signs are the results of the 'interested action' of the sign-makers. I have tried to show how the 'interested action' in these texts is primarily located in their gendered identities, their historical and cultural conceptualisations of emerging masculinities and femininities. Through their different textual forms, these individuals are navigating, contesting, displaying, affirming or denying their masculinities and femininities, with varying degrees of disguise in relation to what constitutes the 'sayable' and 'unsayable', within the terms of existing cultural forms. What constitutes the 'sayable' for each individual is constructed by family, community, institutional and political structures, but this cannot be separated from the available resources for representation (in language and in other modes) for each individual human being, who is the maker of his or her own meanings.

Each sign-maker's relationship of access and engagement with available representational resources is evident in the careful selection, appropriation and transformation of particular cultural forms of making meaning which they find comfortable to inhabit and which speaks of them. From the above analysis, I suggest that different semiotic modes offer different possibilities and constraints in relation to how they might operate as spaces for the expression of amnesia and forgetfulness. I suggest from the above examples, that these students are using the written mode to express the 'public', communal self and the visual mode to express a

more 'private' individual self, that the visual mode seems to offer them more space (materially and metaphorically) to articulate the 'unsayable'. Why this is the case in these examples seems related to deeper issues around the students sets of relations to different semiotic modes, and the ways in which these sets of relations have been historically and culturally constructed. There is a sense that students are expressing relations of distance and respect with regard to writing, an implicit belief that writing does not admit the private 'I' or the 'narrated self'. Students' beliefs about what writing is and what it does, what the visual is and what it does, are related to their 'representational histories' which in turn, are deeply embedded within culture and history.

There are numerous implications of these ideas when thinking about classrooms as semiotic spaces in which students with diverse representational histories are called upon to make meanings. In the majority of classrooms in South Africa, writing is the only legitimated semiotic mode, the mode that determines access to education, work and power. While I am not suggesting that writing is unimportant (we know how important it is), I am suggesting that different semiotic modes, other than writing, be legitimated for meaning making in classroom spaces. This is an issue of equity, as much as an issue of representation, in that classrooms which privilege fixed and narrow forms of representation privilege certain students who have access to these forms in their 'representational histories' and exclude students who do not have access to these forms.

These texts and drawings on boys and girls and cannibals raise deep and troubling questions for the English teacher (as well as for students) about the boundaries of what constitutes 'legitimate' content and practice in the English classroom. The pedagogical implications of 'excavating silence' are complex and controversial and I think they go to the heart of what it means to be an English teacher and what the 'stuff' of teaching English should be. Along with others, I think that the English classroom is the only place in the curriculum which offers the space for multiple and complex exploration of experience. I do think that the English curriculum should be concerned with things that matter, with exploring what it means to be human. Translated into pedagogical terms, this inevitably leads teachers and students into discussions around human experience and the sharing of experience. This is part of coming to understand oneself in relation to others, what might be called the 'anthropological' function of talk.

Talk becomes controversial when it moves into 'the confessional', the officially censored, the subversive and the taboo. During the apartheid era (1948 – 1994), discussion of politics, religion and sex was banned in schools. Students' voices were officially silenced. This paper foregrounds a taboo topic around which there currently exists a remarkable silence, namely, the deepening social crisis around sexual violence towards young women. My own pedagogical position on 'excavating' the voices of those students that have been excluded from classroom spaces for so long, is that the privileging of silent voices has to take into account the multiple ways in which the articulation of silence might occur. This is not to say that the articulation of silence has to be forced or imposed, but that opportunities need to be made available, in diverse and complex ways, for those who wish to use the space for the 'sayable,' for the breaking of silence. What this means in practice is that multiple modes of meaning making need to be legitimated and made available which build on the representational resources which individual human beings bring to and embody in the classroom space. In the majority of classrooms in South Africa, writing is the most valued form of representation. To make matters even more complicated, it is writing in English

which is the focus of classroom writing activities and for most students, English is an additional language. What this paper has demonstrated are the limits of language in the representation of states of feeling and desire and the importance of the visual as a mode of meaning making which produces different narratives of self. A mode of meaning making which needs to be repositioned from the periphery of pedagogical concerns to the centre.

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Archaeology, Time and Space in the Human and Social Sciences: Curriculum 2005

Amanda Esterhuysen



AMANDA ESTERHUYSEN has a Masters in Archaeology, as well as a Diploma in Education and is a member of staff in the Archaeology Department, WITS University. Presently, she holds the only Educational Archaeologist post in the country. She has also launched an Archaeological Resource Development Project aimed at providing support materials and training for teachers of the Human and Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. This project has received backing from both government and private sponsors. She is also a specialist in charcoal studies and has published several papers in this area. She is the present chair of the Gauteng branch of the South African Women in Science and Engineering.

Abstract

This paper is divided into two parts. The first provides a brief outline of the relationship between Archaeology and curriculum development in the past, and to its more recent contribution to Curriculum 2005 in general and to the Human and Social Sciences (HSS) in particular. The second part investigates problems with the existing HSS framework, specifically with regards to the notions of 'time ' and 'space'. It argues that the chosen definitions of time and space not only rally against the application of archaeology, but also against the underlying ethos of an outcomes-based education program.

Part One
Archaeology and the curriculum: A brief history

The southern African archaeological past was largely excluded from school curricula prior to 1994. It has been argued that this exclusion was related to the fact that the substance of archaeology, human evolution, African and southern African history contradicted many myths perpetuated by the Nationalist version of history (see for example, Marks 1980; Smith 1983; Mazel & Stewart 1987; Hall 1988). Thus, even though attempts were made by some archaeologists to redress these myths, through academic publication, presentation and more progressive history textbooks, their attempts made little impact on mainstream school history.

In 1994 change in government, and consequently in the education system, meant that changes in history syllabi were imminent. The interim core curriculum, however, was disappointing as it differed only slightly from the old curriculum. It remained content laden and provided no link to the outcomes-based paradigm to be implemented by the year 2005. Equally

disturbing was the fact that "prehistory" was crudely tacked on to various syllabi, and that, archaeologists were never consulted. For this reason, the Educational Standing Committee of the South African Association of Archaeologists (SA3) began lobbying for archaeological representation on what was to become the new History Curriculum Development Committee. In August 1995 members of the archaeological committee drew up a supplementary History Curriculum. This document was presented to educationists and historians at the Potchefstroom History Teaching Conference in January of 1996, to members of parliament, in February and finally, this document was discussed at a meeting with the Deputy Director of Curriculum Development in March. Archaeologists in most Provinces became active; attending Human and Social Sciences (HSS) Learning Area Committee (LAC) meetings, writing letters and providing feedback. A research project was launched by members of the WITS, Archaeology Department to investigate the potential for Educational Archaeology in South Africa, and the results of this research were submitted to the Department of Education.

Unfortunately, it is not clear from the HSS Learning Area whether this dogged 'participation' made any impact at all. Although, we may be responsible for the statement "Precolonial (from earliest hominids)", which appears repeatedly as a Human and Social Sciences Range Statement (*Government Gazette* 1997, 52), the poor definition of what constitutes an 'archaeological source' (*Government Gazette* 1997, 51; see Specific Outcome No.1 (SO1)) betrays an ongoing ignorance about archaeology.

What is archaeology about?

Archaeology, often conceived of as the work of antiquarians coveting objects or treasures captured from the past, has in fact long abandoned object centred studies and moved towards a greater concern with the temporal, spatial and social context of objects and landscapes in the past. Through the influence of anthropology, sociology and social geography there has been a growing interest in the dialectic between space, time, object and /or landscape. Various studies, for example, have focussed on the way that objects and places are reused at different times and assigned new meanings by different groups of people (see for example, Johnson 1996).

Similarly, the popular conception of the definition of material culture, the objects of the archaeologists desire, is considerably broader. Deetz (1977, 24) defines material culture as 'that sector of our physical environment that we modify through culturally determined behaviour.' He then goes on to point out that this would include a full range of objects from the simplest pin to the most technologically complex interplanetary space vehicle. It would also include cuts of meat, plowed fields, our own bodies, dance, dress and even words. "Words, after all, are air masses shaped by the speech apparatus according to culturally acquired rules" (Deetz 1977, 24-25).

All archaeological data thus occupy, possess and inscribe three dimensions: time, space and form (Deetz 1977, 64), and in the effort to detail each of these dimensions a vast array of evidence are studied, and a multiplicity of techniques, scientific or other are implemented. For example: objects are dated, documents studied, animals and plants are identified, people's diets are determined, the spatial and temporal context of each artefact is considered, and so on. This tendency to draw on many different kinds of evidence provides a means of accessing information about the past even when documents do not exist. By focussing on different kinds of material evidence archaeology can provide information about people who

were not written about in the past; as well as explore tensions that may exist between the material evidence and the written record. In South Africa this approach is of particular importance, as the written record covers only a fairly short period of southern African history and was limited to small group of literate people. Archaeology thus provides a means of filling the "historic" gaps and silences and a way of challenging biases and distortions in the written record.

Does archaeology fit the new educational paradigm?

South African historians have repeatedly pointed out that history under 'Christian National Education' was politically manipulated (see for example, Marks 1980; Kallaway 1995), required very little skill besides factual recall (Kros & Vadi 1993) and furthermore bore no relation to the pupils' own life experience. Proposals and suggestions to remedy the situation have been reminiscent of the 1980s debate in Britain, where, amongst other things, it was argued that history should move away from the conveyance of accepted facts. It should become concerned with the "making of informed judgements, and ... the displaying of the evidence on which those judgements are made" (HMI Report, quoted in Stone 1991, 93); and that history should provoke children to question their own social circumstances (Stone 1991, 93). It is perhaps not surprising then that we find these sentiments echoed in the introduction to the HSS SO9, where it is stated that, "For outcomes-based approaches to succeed, learners need to acquire investigative and problem-solving skills. This crucially involves "critical thinking, processing information and communicating effectively" (*Government Gazette* 1997). With regards to the Human and Social Sciences the learning organisers should "help learners to equip themselves to make meaningful decisions based on an understanding of their location in South African, African and Global contexts" (National Department of Education 1997, 3).

Local (Esterhuysen & Smith 1996; Esterhuysen & Smith 1998) and international research (see for example, Devine 1989; Smardz 1989; Stone 1992) have demonstrated that archaeology is well suited to achieving the ends of "outcomes-based", integrative curricula. First, because it has been influenced by a farrago of other subjects, it is already a fairly broad-based discipline that comfortably integrates the arts and the sciences. Secondly, the application of archaeological methodology in the classroom invites learners to develop their powers of observation, inference and interpretation and provides scope for developing 'ingenuity and imagination' (Harris 1976, 1; see also Stone 1992). Learners can make observations based on the spatial and temporal context of the archaeological data, and then working within these parameters begin to interpret the data. Because data bases are often enigmatic, and the interpretation of objects dependant on the background knowledge of the interpreter, more than one inference may be made from a single set of data. Learners can thus begin to entertain the possibility that more than one interpretation may exist, recognise the factors that may have influenced each interpretation, and realise that further investigation may be required in order to obtain the most valid interpretation.

These issues were highlighted during a study undertaken to determine at what point pupils aged between 6-12 are able to interpret objects found within a specific context (Esterhuysen in prep.). The material remains of a birthday party were laid out within a two metre squared grid. At one end, children's toys, birthday candles, paper and cards were spread out, while at the opposite end the remains of 'adult activity' were set out; a newspaper, an empty water bottle and paper cups, were arranged around a cluster of charcoal. Each pupil was asked to write a story that would explain the presence and position of the material evidence. Some of

the pupils recognised the adult and children space, while others sub-divided the adult space further into gender categories (newspaper=male; water bottle=female). But, one group's responses were particularly interesting in that all the adults in their narratives suffered heart attacks. This particular group had attended a first aid class before carrying out the archaeological exercise, so that this groups' interpretations of the archaeological materials was coloured by the newly acquired knowledge of heart attacks. When these classes were presented with the range of different interpretations, derived from the same basic data set, the social factors that had influenced their stories became evident to them.

This example indicates that learning through an archaeological approach is by nature dialogic and involves a hermeneutic mode of thought. The meaning of objects, paintings, places on the landscape can be revisited and reinterpreted in the light of new information or experience. Past meanings can be linked with present meanings to create greater empathy and more nuanced understanding; and in so doing develop historical imagination.

Thirdly, archaeology draws on a variety of different kinds of evidence; from microscopic droplets of blood on stone tools, to animal bones in a cave, to mummies in the desert, to rock art, to the remains of plants, to monumental structures; the list is endless. In this way the pupils' experience of the past is not limited to the study of different texts; rather it allows them to venture beyond 'text' and experience a multiplicity of clues to the past. Indeed, through interaction with actual artefacts the learner can encounter a more "textured" past. The tooth of a sabre-tooth cat and the puncture marks in the head of an early hominid, for example, create a vivid impression of the life of the early humans. It also introduces debates around what it is to be human, how we as hunters were once hunted, how the food chain has been altered and other ecological issues. Interaction with a more 'textured' past encourages learners to engage with the past, and promotes empathy and a willingness to preserve the past. These attitudes are important when trying to instil notions of heritage and pride in the social and natural landscapes of the present.

Lastly, there is a strong relationship between archaeological research methodology and the essential outcomes that underpin the new curriculum.

Learners are able to:

- apply different and appropriate learning strategies,
- communicate effectively across a range of contexts using visual mathematical and language skills,
- collect, analyse, organise, critically select and evaluate information from a variety of sources for appropriate use,
- to work independently and co-operatively as a member of a team
- use science and technology critically,
- to demonstrate cultural and aesthetic sensitivity across a range of social context (summarised from National Department of Education 1997, 18).

Archaeology thus does not offer simply the addition of extra facts; it offers a new and innovative way of teaching the past, through which history can be made exciting and tangible. It enables learners to engage with the past in a critical manner and to develop an interest and willingness to engage with in the historic landscape around them. And, it offers an approach consistent with the essential goals of outcomes-based education.

Part Two
Archaeology, space and time and the Human and Social Sciences' performance indicators

I now move from this broader contribution to the specifics of the Human and Social Sciences performance indicators. This demands a close examination of two of the parameters that define archaeological thought; the concepts of "time" and "space".

The Human and Social Sciences learning area does not examine or explore the concept of "time". Although it aims to develop an understanding of change through time – learners must "demonstrate a critical understanding of how South African society has changed and developed" (*Government Gazette* 1997, 51, SO1). However, the dimensions of the concept 'time' are not unpacked. This may be problematic as it has been demonstrated that an "understanding of the relationship between subjective time and measured time develops through understanding other dimensions of the concept of time – chronological sequences, duration, changes over time, similarities and differences between now and past times, and the vocabulary of time" (Cooper 1995, 9).

Time in the HSS is in fact presented in terms of fixed socio-political categories: Precolonial, colonial, post-colonial, Apartheid, post-apartheid. Precolonial encompasses the period from the early hominids right up to colonial influence; a 3 million year block of history. This crude periodisation is problematic. First, the conflation of such large scales of time does not allow for the recognition of small-scale social dynamics; and change, for example, is seen in terms of large-scale technological shifts. African history thus becomes reduced to the "Stone Age" and the "Iron Age"; social nuances, interactions and modifications become invisible. Secondly, implicit in these time categories is the notion of 'progress'. The conflation of social categories with time thus creates the impression that societies in Africa progressed from, to use the terminology used in the HSS framework, "less developed" to "developed societies" (*Government Gazette* 1997, see for example SO2, 2). Sadly, research has shown that it is a short step from seeing the precolonial past as simple and undeveloped and viewing the present non-industrialised or third and fourth world societies as simple and undeveloped (Mackenzie & Stone 1990: 2). This problem was highlighted in a survey of British children's impressions of photographs of children in the Third world where the British children ...

> thought that school girls in Colombo went home to sharpen their flint spears and watch black and white television. Villagers from Bangladesh rubbed sticks together to light a fire ... There were no shops and when asked where a women got her sari from, one group of children claimed it came from the 'inside of an animal'. When asked why it could not have been bought from a shop, the children insisted that these people wore the insides and outsides of animals that they killed with their bare hands (Graham & Lynn 1989, 22-23; also quoted in Mackenzie & Stone 1990).

Lastly, gross periodisation can also imply broad scale continuity, which is often perceived as evidence of the inability of certain groups to change. By compressing three million years of time into one category the pre-colonial past is reduced to a blur of hominids, hunter-gatherers and African farmers, whose only apparent impetus for change are external stimuli; the environment or the influence of Europeans.

Time, as a cultural artefact is also never introduced. The fact that ideas of time are not innate, but are intellectual constructions and therefore dependant on, "children's experiences, of language and opportunities to listen to and talk about stories and rhymes concerned with the passing of time and with other times ..." (Cooper 1995, 8) is never broached by the HSS performance indicators or range statements. Learners thus may not be taught, for example, that we operate by means of an artificial calendar system. It is due to the influence of Western thought that we measure our months and years in the way that we do. During our research in 1998, we discovered that in classes where this had been neglected, pupils often thought that the earth was created 1998 years ago. Likewise, the failure to introduce different dating systems, meant that pupils (and often teachers) struggled to comprehend AD/BC dates and battled to convert them in to 'real time' or BP (Before Present) dates.

The HSS performance indicators further stress the need for the learner to recognise and understand "patterns of social development" (*Government Gazette* 1997, 59, SO2), which when combined with the related time periods, translates very broadly into precolonial space and colonial space. This notion of space suffers from the same problems as those mentioned in the context of time. On a grand scale one looks for large-scale patterns rather than for evidence of individual social activities, the end result being that material evidence overwhelms the social context of its production and interpretation becomes ahistoric. This interpretation, based on gross spatial patterning denies the fact that, space and objects in space, allow for different meanings by different people at different times; and human agency and acts of resistance, for example, become invisible.

Finally, by opting to approach the past at grand scales of space and time; by choosing social process over social action, and social patterning over individual context it could be argued that the HSS does not allow one to deal with the more subtle individual voices from the past. Thus one is forced to question whether such broad categories of space and time will allow for the redress of gender, race and identity.

Conclusion

Archaeological methodology is consistent with the underlying ethos and essential outcomes of the new curriculum, and actively contributes to the teaching of a textured past allowing for learner participation in the discourses behind the production of the past. However, the range statements and performance indicators rally against the production of a textured past by operating at a scale that prevents access to the more subtle and individual voices of the past. In doing so it minimises participation in historical discourse, and does not make history interesting or allow for the development of historical empathy. Teachers are thus going to have to adopt a more textured approach to prehistory than the framework allows. They must also allow for learners to come to terms with the nature and duration of time and the complexities of human activity and interaction that occur during the first three million years of history in South Africa. Indeed, I hope that the underlying ethos of the HSS document; outcomes-based education or competency building, will stimulate the teacher and grant them sufficient leeway to approach this HSS document in a more creative manner.

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Women in Higher Education: An Account of Women in KwaZulu-Natal Universities

Queeneth Mkabela



QUEENETH MKABELA, is a senior lecturer at the University of Zululand. Her research interests include afrocentricity, feminism, language, inter-cultural communication and religion.

Abstract

This article examines the occupational status of women at three universities in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, between 1992 and 1999. The study was based on the following assumptions: that few women occupy positions of power and influence in the universities under investigation; that universities under investigation have not sufficiently addressed gender imbalances with particular reference to the vertical mobility of women within them. In confirming the above assumptions, some conceptual realities, relevant to opportunities for women in these universities are exposed. Issues for further research and intervention strategies for improving the current conditions are also provided.

Introduction

The South African constitution recognises the importance of equal opportunities for all South African citizens. Women should obviously, therefore, not be exceptions when it comes to the positions they occupy in both private and public institutions. However, women still appear to be under-represented in these institutions, particularly when it comes to vertical mobility.

At this stage, my aim in this article is simply to provide a descriptive analysis of existing trends, with respect to the representation of women in senior management of universities in this region. It is hoped that this paper will stimulate further critical debate on some of the issues raised.

The article examines the position that women hold in the three universities of KwaZulu-Natal, viz, University of Durban-Westville (UDW), University of Zululand (UNIZUL) and the University of Natal (UN). These universities have been associated with the apartheid constructs of Indian, African and White population groups respectively. My focus, in this discussion, is on the period 1992 through 1999 in which I examine the representation of men and women in senior management positions (both academic and non-academic) at these three institutions.

By 1992 it was already clear that the first democratic elections were looming on the horizon, given significant progress in the political negotiations to end *apartheid*. Affirmative action and gender equity were already 'buzz words' in both academic and professional discussions (Boulle, 1988; Hugo, 1990; Biklen, 1987; Sash, 1990). Many businesses had already started to apply employment equity policies between 1992 and 1996. One would have expected universities to take a lead in these initiatives, not because of the impact these would make in the society, but because of the strategic nature of universities in knowledge production and information dissemination.

The year 1999 marked the end of the first five years of the democratic government. Issues like affirmative action and were already legislated during this time. It therefore became necessary to investigate the issue of the location of women in the managerial hierarchy of KwaZulu-Natal universities so as to ascertain whether universities in this province are in line with the national policies regarding gender equity.

The position of women in the three universities

The place of women in education can be ascertained from the positions of responsibility they hold in universities. Both the status and occupation of women on the managerial ladder serve as indicators of the position of women in society as a whole. Accordingly, such an analysis also demonstrates the extent to which women have gained access to positions of power and authority in and outside universities. The status of women should thus be viewed in the context of the positions they hold in those universities, for it is this structural configuration that gives rise to the sustainability to those forces that determine the power women have in these institutions. For instance to be a member of Senate (the academic decision-making body) or head of department, in many universities, one has to be a professor. This is not merely an assignment of responsibility, but also the allocation of power and influence over resources

Numerous questions have been raised concerning the implementation of the Employment Equity Act, which came into effect in August 1999. Many educators, political leaders and other organisations have expressed concern about the sluggish response to facilitating equal employment opportunities for women in positions of authority. For instance, the Minister of Education, Kadar Asmal, expressed his concern about the enormous difference between the degree of participation of men and women in management positions (Sowetan, August 1999). The urgency regarding the implementation of the Employment Equity Act is indubitable.

Like all other institutions, public or private, the universities have a significant task in the implementation of the Employment Equity Act, in addition to their role in generating new knowledge through research. The sociological and political characteristics of our society requires that universities make changes and adjustments with respect to gender equity both in organisation and approach. In this way, higher education should become a resource for the transformation of our society by continuing to demonstrate tangible redress of inequalities.

Occupational status of women

It is quite apparent that there are fewer women amongst academic staff in universities and

rarely are they found in positions of power in both academic and administrative fields. Unlike the situation in schools, where women do at least constitute the majority at the lower levels of the educational hierarchy, women lecturing in universities are in the minority. For instance, 1999 statistics provided by the Human Resources departments of universities reveal that at UDW women constitute 38%, UNIZUL 34% and UN 31% of staff employed at these institutions. In addition to being in the minority in the academic corpus, they are also concentrated at the lower levels of the academic occupational status in the three universities. Table 1 illustrates the percentage of women in different academic categories.

STATUS	UDW		UNIZUL		UN	
	1992	**1999**	**1992**	**1999**	**1992**	**1999**
Professor	10%	10%	13%	11%	11%	13%
Associate Professor	9%	23%	0%	17%	13%	14%
Senior Lecturer	22%	28%	19%	33%	19%	31%
Lecturer	42%	48%	44%	38%	65%	49%
Associate Lecturer	56%	51%	92%	57%	36%	79%
Below Junior Lecturer					52%	

Statistical information was provided by the human resources of the respective universities.

Table 1: *Occupational Status of Women*

Table 1 reveals that at the top of the academic ladder (professorship), there are now only 2% more women since 1992. At UDW nothing has changed, and there is a drop of 2% at UNIZUL. However, the most dramatic and important upward mobility has been in the associate professorship category where women have made significant gains. At UDW the percentage has risen from 9% in 1992 to 23% in 1999. At UNIZUL the percentage has risen from 0% to 17%. The percentage gained in these two universities is between 14% and 17%. At UN women only gained 1%. However, in percentage terms, it is worth noting that UN was already ahead (13%) compared to the other two institutions by 1992.

The above table showing the historical (1992) and present (1999) participation of women in different academic positions, confirms the assumption that a marked degree of gender imbalance occurs in the three universities, with women being extremely under-represented in senior positions and therefore in positions of power. The common practice as articulated by Marshall and Mitchell (1992) that 'women teach and men manage' still holds true despite government legislation to affirm women in educational management and other sectors of the South African society.

Although there is evidence that a small proportion of women are ascending the managerial ladder in the three universities since 1992, the status quo leaves much to be desired as women still constitute the minority at the top positions and as compared to the lower positions.

STATUS	UDW				UNIZUL				UN			
	1992		1999		1992		1999		1992		1999	
Non-Academic	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Council	22	4	21	6	12	3	22	4	25	2	24	8
Chancellor	1	–	1	–	1	–	1	–	1	–	1	–
Rector (Vice-Chancellor	1	–	–	1	1	–	1	–	1	–	–	1
Deputy Rector	3	–	3	–	3	–	3	–	4	1	5	–
Registrar	1	1	2	–	1	–	1	–	1	–	1	–
Human Resources Director	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	–	1	–

Key: M – Men
W – Women

Table 2: *Women in non-academic positions*

Table 2 indicates that in the non-academic positions of these universities the situation is similar to the academic sector. The chancellors at the three universities are men. This is testimony to the patriarchal nature of our society that manifests itself even at the highest level of university governance. It is also interesting to note that UDW and UN had one woman in their executive management by 1992, (at UDW as a registrar and at UN as a deputy vice-chancellor). In 1999 UN and UDW still have one woman each in their executive management teams – this time as heads of these institutions (vice-chancellors). Although at UN and UDW the vice-chancellors are women, little progress is evident, as women do not constitute a visible presence in the executive management positions of these institutions. UNIZUL still lags behind its sister institutions since there has been no women in an executive management position in the period 1992 to 1999. The highest position occupied by a woman in the 'non-academic' category at UNIZUL is that of director of human resources – which was not the case in 1992. UDW also has a woman as a human resources director. In the councils of the three universities (the university's highest decision-making body), women are also in the minority. In 1999 at UDW women constituted 22% of council members, at UNIZUL 15% and at UN 25%. It is also important to note that since 1992, the chairpersons of the councils of the three universities have consistently been male. However, there is an improvement in the gender representation of council membership since 1992 at UDW, where women gained 7% and at UN, where women members increased by 18%.

These figures paint a gloomy picture with respect to opportunities for women as there have been no significant changes in either the senior non-academic or academic positions held by women between 1992 and 1999. The empirical question is whether there are compounding variables (e.g. the availability of posts since 1992) in the institutional responses to gender equity challenges.

The scarcity of women in managerial positions has a number of implications for universities. The first derives from women's subordination to men in the policy-making processes of these institutions. For instance, the majority of women are excluded from Senate. Also, women's

lack of representation in senior positions transmit an insidious message to female students, and women-in-training, about their status and role as women.

With regard to the information in Tables 1 and 2, it is clear that the potential of women's academic and managerial contributions have not yet been fully utilised by the leadership of the three universities. But there are other questions: does the emergence of the few women in leadership bring 'women's culture' onto the centre stage or are they simply acting as men? The discourse of gender-equity in universities, as in other sectors, revolves around the issue of reconciling the maintenance of 'standards' and merit. This paper is therefore not merely an argument for numerical equality, but of real equity in the organisational culture that fosters or impedes women's personal, academic and professional development (Shakeshaft, 1983).

When an assessment is made of the role that these academic institutions have played so far in the struggle for gender equity, one realises that their role has not been exemplary with respect to intellectual leadership. Issues like the lack of education and skills deficiencies cannot be used as justification for the scarcity of women in management positions. I have already alluded to the fact that the same inequality that has been prominent in society exists in these institutions despite their presumed wealth of information and knowledge production. This fact is nowhere more substantiated than in their handling of women's access to positions of power as stipulated by employment equity policies. While there are opportunities for women (for instance in the University Councils), universities have not adequately responded to the expected transformation of such bodies.

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, Mamphele Ramphele (1995), argues that while the government has a responsibility to restore equal opportunities and create an equitable framework for its citizens, this does not necessarily include (the right to) successful outcomes. Emphasis should be placed on equality of opportunity and not on outcome with individuals being held accountable for their own performance or lack of performance.

It might be instructive for higher education to examine the significance of women in management demonstrated in studies of schools (Bush and West-Burnham, 1994). The effectiveness of schools was linked to 'feminine management', which entails qualities such as empathy, warmth, genuineness and concreteness. These studies show that women managers tend to be more democratic than males, their speech tends to be more polite, less aggressive and tentative. If universities want to motivate and engage its workers they need to recognise and value what women have to offer in the management of education. The structure and models of management need to accommodate the feminist view. This will alter the view of the practice of management that may be masculine in nature, thus not fitting the life experiences of women. In future research, it would be interesting to test Bush and West-Burnham's (1994) theory in institutions where women demonstrate 'feminine management' approaches and so enable us to observe the organisational response and organisational effectiveness.

Considering the current status of women in these universities, what can be done in the future to improve their condition? It is recommended that universities:

- participate in the generation of more knowledge about women in universities;
- examine studies already conducted in other countries with regard to affirmation of women and studies focusing on the conceptual frameworks, assumptions of researchers' methodologies and conclusions;

- produce longitudinal studies that examine coping strategies and decision-making processes of women in universities as they develop as managers in diverse settings;
- increase the degree of early intervention, or mentoring for younger women as they take occupation in universities and begin to develop career aspirations;
- make concerted efforts to enable women to overcome the obstacles that have been put in their way, and to develop their capabilities to the full so as to have real chances on the managerial ladder;
- empower women to move up the ladder and assume managerial posts while guarding against 'entryism';
- use an index of occupational integration that tests the degree to which gender equity plans are successfully implemented.

Conclusion

Women have fought against formidable obstacles in universities. Undoubtedly, they have not been unaffected by the limits set upon their entry and promotion through the ranks. They have made some gains since 1992, even though most of them remain at the bottom of the management ladder. They continue to be heavily concentrated in lower-levels of the universities' occupational hierarchy, but they increase as a percentage of management at a slow pace. The challenge for academics, both women and men, is to ensure that that the continued oppression of women is not permanently institutionalised.

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Call for Papers: Special Issue in *Perspectives in Education* on Curriculum

Each day millions of students all over the world enter a classroom of one sort or another, sit at a desk (if available), usually in rows, in set time slots and listen to a teacher. We do, of course, have some progressive, even radical classrooms and schools, but for the vast, vast majority of students, their curriculum experience today is the same as it has been for much of this century. Yet this belies the accumulation of our curriculum tomes, volume upon volume. So much has changed and yet so little has changed as curricula are engaged, endured, constructed, enacted, resisted ...

As we enter the new millennium, perhaps it is time to reflect on this past century and consider the relationship between curriculum and society. We have had colonisation and post-colonialism, Auschwitz and Apartheid, genocide and ethnic cleansings. What implications for curriculum? We have had and continue to live through all kinds of isms, from marxism to capitalism and debates rage about post-modernism. How are we to analyse and explain curricula, their universality and also their uniqueness. Technology and globalisation have forced their way into all our lives and changed our worlds forever. But what of curriculum? The gaps between the wealthy and the poor across countries and within countries widen. What role for curriculum? Democracies, young and old, struggle to develop and sustain themselves. What relation to curriculum policies and practices?

A huge and varied language is employed as we write and speak about curriculum. Curriculum change or reform in one context, for instance, becomes curriculum transformation or even revolution in another. Curriculum is studied and experienced from a variety of vantage points: from the perspective of policy, and of implementation; from the perspective of particular theories and practices; from within single disciplines and in inter-, multi- and trans-disciplinary modes; from the perspective of resources and development; globalisation and indigenous knowledge systems.

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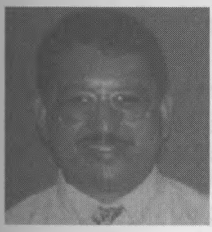
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PART TWO

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RESEARCH

Foreward

Rubby Dhunpath



Rubby Dhunpath *is Deputy Principal of the Merebank Secondary School in Durban, South Africa. He also teaches Scociolinguistics to post-graduate students in the School of Educational Studies: University of Durban-Westville, South Africa, and is the current managing editor of* Perspectives in Education.

Since its introduction in Vol.18.1, *Conversations about Research* has elicited favourable responses from readers of PIE. This has prompted me to reflect on the reasons for its popularity and to probe the perennial question, "what do researchers do". I think that in the broadest sense, the fundamental purpose of research is to study the world we inhabit, and create authentic and accessible ways to represent to the world, what we have learnt about it. Ultimately its value as research is determined by the judgement of a critical community.

The problem with conventional methods of representation is that they actually confine the critical community to the academia. Surely, we need to find ways of illuminating the message rather than obscuring it? Surely, we need to make research more accessible to broaden our conception of a critical community? Surely, we need to engender a sense of empathy for the lives of the people we study? Not because we want to make research a sentimental undertaking, but because we now know that human feeling does not pollute understanding, it illuminates it. In educational research,

> it is to the artistic to which we must turn, not as a rejection of the scientific, but because with both we can achieve binocular vision. Looking through one eye never did provide much depth of field. (Eisner, 1981, 9).

Eisner (ibid.), suggests that educational research must go beyond both the empirical-analytical and historical-hermeneutic to become a form of acquired self-knowledge which, by making individuals more consciously aware of the social and ideological roots of their self-understanding, allows them to alter, reject or make more secure, their tentative views of the world. Educational research has to focus on the self as a living contradiction. It should acknowledge the essential fallibility of human beings, and enable individuals to theorise about their own professional practice as they attempt to improve the quality of their own and others' learning.

Conversations about Research, through its informal "chat-room" atmosphere provide the space for reflexive self-interrogation as researchers negotiate their experiences. In this volume, Michael Samuel explores the organic, ethereal form of representation and reflects on whether it is worthy of "entry into the hall of academia." He reflects on the world of the imagination, supposition, and dreams and whether these constitute research. He interrogates

how research is defined, and by whom? He asks what "tightwire ropes" do academic researchers walk? What are the pursuits of the poet and the researcher and who defines these pursuits? In his powerful and compelling argument, Samuel attempts to explore alternative forms of representation which are "increasingly becoming the hallmark of researchers who feel stifled by the conventionality of traditional genres of academic research". He argues that the deviation from traditional forms of representation "can be understood theoretically, methodologically and pragmatically as social science research attempts to expand its contribution to knowledge production, development and dissemination".

Conferences and seminars are an inextricable if not inescapable part of an academic's life. They provide access to a critical community to share and test ideas, and help to prise open our academic and intellectual oysters. The recent IOSTE (International Organisation for Science and Technology Education) conference held in July 1999 brought together academics from across the globe to the University of Durban Westville. *Conversations about Research* zooms in on the experiences of two of the conference co-ordinators, Margret Keogh and Jasmin Paras who assess the potential of conferencing for capacity building. Through a reflective journey of their experiences in co-ordination, they declare unequivocally that conferencing is, and should be seen, as a mechanism for capacity building.

A noteworthy feature of IOSTE9 was its attempt to expand its audience to include school teachers and teacher educators from colleges of education. In evaluating the impact of the conference on their professional growth, two delegates to the conference, Siva Chetty and Sagie Pillay, declare that they have been enriched by the wide experiences of the many presenters at the conference. It has, they suggest, developed in them confidence that they too have the capacity to be researchers and to make presentations at international conferences, an accomplishment they previously believed was the preserve of an elitist group of University lecturers.

Conversations about Research profiles two book reviews, one on Science and technology Education by William Kyle and the other on Schooling Sexualities by Jeanne Prinsloo. In an incisive analysis of the edited publication, *African Science and Technology Education into the New Millennium: Practice, Policy and Priorities,* edited by Prem Naidoo & Mike Savage, Kyle urges readers to pay particular attention to Jegede's theory of collateral learning. Jegede asserts that the duality in the mental schema of non-western learners, with a resilient indigenous knowledge framework, results in collateral learning when they learn Western science. Collateral learning represents the process by which a non-western learner in school constructs, side by side and with minimal interference and interaction, Western and traditional meanings. Collateral knowledge is therefore the declarative knowledge of a concept that such a learner stores in the long-term memory, with a capability for strategic use in either the Western or the traditional environment.

In Jeanne Prinsloo's rigorous critique of *Schooling Sexualities* by Debbie Epstein and Robert Johnson, she asserts that the book confounded her expectations in many ways. The absence of a "Rubicon-like dense theoretical chapter to come to grips with before wading to the realms of analysis of actual situations" as well as its accessible style, incorporating theory into the discussions, presents valuable insights for teachers or educators who are willing to engage with the tricky issues of sexuality and nationality as constructs that are schooled. The book signals to the way in which schools present sexuality as constantly limited to biology and, explores how such notions of national identity are universalised and naturalised (as 'we')

within the powerful discourse of compulsory heterosexuality. Prinsloo argues that it is essential to challenge these constructs in relation to any movement to sexual and social justice. Sexual identities are formed in part at schools and invested with power, and this book, Prinsloo claims is part of the attempt to create counter strategies to inform work that will prepare the ground for change.

Janet Stuart, the former director of International Studies at the University of Sussex (now enjoying retirement) reminisces about her work in Africa and in particular, Southern Africa where she spent several years developing Masters programmes and action research frameworks. In appraising the success and value of her work, she contemplates the merits of appropriating a cultural curriculum from a foreign context. She is critical of borrowed ideas, which have not been adapted for the context and notes that sustainability is problematic. She warns that the pedagogy is only appropriate if the teachers first equipped students with appropriate learning styles and challenged certain cultural assumptions.

Working closely with Janet Stuart as a research fellow in the Multi-site Teacher Education Research Project – (MUSTER), June George reviews her work as a research broker for Trinidad and Tobago. She identifies one of the key challenges in this role, as being able to negotiate between the research agendas and interests of the donor country (UK) and the peculiar neEds of the recipient, suggesting that there were often tensions in their respective research orientations which needed to be brokered.

To end *Conversations about Research* in this volume, Darryl David, takes us on his research expedition as a Doctoral student. In a refreshingly frank analysis, David examines the joys and dilemmas of doctoral research through a co-ordinated seminar programme, declaring quite enthusiastically that "if research is a journey, he is enjoying the ride"

We invite researchers, novice and accomplished, to take readers of PIE on their journeys through the mystifying, bedevilling and illuminating landscapes of research.

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Risking Ambiguity: Exploring Voice in Research

Michael Samuel



MICHAEL SAMUEL currently lectures in the Faculty of Education at the University of Durban-Westville, South Africa. He teaches courses in Curriculum Studies, English Language Teaching and Learning, and Teacher Professional Development. His most recent publication is a CD-rom version of his doctoral thesis "Words, Lives and Music: On Becoming a Teacher of English" (1998), which exploits a multi-modal form using art works, diary records, letters, visuals, music and narrative texts.

Constantly Risking Absurdity

Constantly risking absurdity
and death
whenever he performs
above the heads
of his audience
the poet like an acrobat
climbs on rime
to a high wire of his own making
and balancing on eyebeams
above a sea of faces
paces his way
to the other side of day
performing entrechats
and sleight-of-foot tricks
and other high theatrics
and all without mistaking
any thing
for what it may not be

For he's the super realist
who must perforce perceive
Taut truth
before the taking of each stance or
step
in his supposed advance
toward that still higher perch
where Beauty stands and waits

with gravity
to start her death-defying
leap

And he
a little charleychaplin man
who may or may not catch
her eternal form
spreadeagled in the empty air
of existence.
Lawrence Ferlinghetti

There is no such luxury as "freedom of speech". Perhaps only in that inner dialogue with the self do we grow closer to understanding what that freedom entails. Are we ever free to express whatever and however we wish to, without suffering the consequences of censure, exclusion, marginalisation, or perhaps reaping the flattery of fame? Why have we continued to be fascinated with the world and language of our dreams, our imaginations? What degrees of censure can the "sleeping mind" ignore? What potential does this imaginative world release?

For centuries the creative artist has attempted to reconstruct this imaginative world, populated with both the taut realities of the logical and rational, and the species of inexplicable, intuitive, organic, non-directive and (some would describe) "natural" reflections. It's a fascinating world, revered by many. But do we consider these latter forms of reflections as worthy of entry into the hall of academia? Does the world of the imagination, supposition, dreams and fascination constitute research? How is research defined, and by whom? What tightwire ropes do academic researchers walk? What is the pursuit of the poet and the researcher? Beauty? Truth? Beauty and truth? Who defines?

In this paper I will attempt to explore the realm of alternative forms of representation which are increasingly becoming the hallmark of researchers who feel stifled by the conventionality of traditional genres of academic research. I shall attempt to argue that this deviation from the traditional forms of representation can be understood theoretically, methodologically and pragmatically as social science research attempts to expand its contribution to knowledge production, development and dissemination. I shall first explore why alternative forms of representation are necessary in achieving this goal, but also point to the possible limitations of this approach within the present climate of academic research. Hopefully this article will encourage others to explore the possibilities of using alternative forms of representation, whilst aware of what they would be signalling theoretically, and that this "re-looking" at academic writing would also impact on how data is collected, analysed and re-presented to its potential audience.

Who is writing?

My own foray into an alternative to the traditional form of academic writing, stemmed from my concern that after several years of in-depth research and reflection, my thesis would end up on a proverbial dusty shelf in some library. I believed that writing an academic thesis was not simply about my wanting to earn the titles and qualifications that accompany a successful candidate. I believed that the ultimate test would be in terms of how my writing would be able to influence others to think and act more deeply about how they became and continue to be

teachers of the English language. The sub-title of my thesis, "On Becoming a Teacher of English", identifies clearly its target audience. They are teachers. They are individuals who have (on the whole) become sceptical of the world of academe, who label the lecturers at universities as "ivory-towered" and "theoretical". They thus became the co-writers of the thesis, unconsciously shaping how and what I wrote.

Perhaps we need to reflect on why teachers have become so categorical and vociferous in their opposition to the "academic perspective" on education and training. How have they come to label academics the way they do?

The starting point could be to challenge teachers. Not only "academics" perceive the world along theoretical lines. All individuals own and act out "theoretical" perspectives around teaching and learning; all of us have inherited and develop our own brand of principled positions which reflect our assumptions around many educational matters: about governance, about educational service, about language teaching and learning; about everything educational. These perspectives themselves may not often be articulated by teachers as "theoretical", but nevertheless can be inferred from the manner in which they act (or not) in relation to particular circumstances within the educational terrain (Eraut: 1996). Of course even if one chooses to be anti-theoretical, this in itself is a theoretical perspective about how to view teaching and learning.

Another reflection could cast a gaze in the direction of the producers of the academic writing: those 'publish-or perish' die-hard academics who have mastered the "art" of being seen, heard and read in academic forums, journals and books. What motivates academics to write and speak the way they do? Why has this language become so predictable (and unimaginative)? How often have you been to a conference where it is possible to switch off for several minutes, as homage is paid by the speakers to the gods of traditional academe? How often have you read a masters or doctoral dissertation where the level of predictability of what the students will say compares favourably with the likelihood that rain will follow a drought? Academic research has fallen into a formulaic pattern related to not only what one researches, and how one researches, but also why one researches.

Why have we landed in this predicament? These latter academics are themselves not independent actors; their freedom of speech is not unfettered. The world of academe has become saturated with communicative conventions in a language that is exclusionary, that dialogues with itself, with speakers and readers who have acquired this shared language. This is the language of formal propositions and precepts, usually using the world of numbers and abstract logic to represent the thoughts/experiences of its "speakers/writers". For the main, many authors are constrained by the conventions of what its audience considers to be academic research: its methodologies of data collection, analysis and representation of "findings". Authors intent on being part of this community of "researchers" soon learn to speak/write its language. Their assimilation and acceptance is more likely guaranteed when they write and speak its talk. Writers can express an intention to set themselves outside of the established convention, but run the risk of being marginalised by the forces of the powerful regime that guard the gates through publications boards, conference organising teams, publishing houses, academic employers, etc. Using its language displays the academic's acceptance and arrival into a community.

The audience (community) of traditional research is not the practitioner teacher whose

worldview is (on the whole) concerned with the pragmatics of engagements with a learning community, a school staffroom and the parent body. The academic is not dialoguing with the teacher practitioner when s/he writes or speaks. Maybe this is a harsh generalisation of all traditional academics ... A softer claim: the academic is constrained by whom s/he perceives to be the context, audience and purpose of his/her output. Ultimately it is the audience who seems to be writing the text.

> Language lies at the borderline between oneself and the others. The word in language is half someone else's. Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely into the private property of the speaker's intentions. It is populated – overpopulated with the intentions of others (Mikhail Bakhtin, 1981, 294).

In relation to academic writing, I believe Bakhtin to be saying that it is a crucial question who the writer of academic journals, articles, speeches and reports perceive they are dialoguing with. The writer academic has to consider in which circle his/her dialogue will occur and what purpose it is likely to achieve. For the academic who is constrained by the need to publish or present, the audience becomes the gatekeepers of the academe. Only when the status of belonging to the community is well accepted is the individual academic allowed the privilege to flout the terrain of conventions. But first it is necessary to arrive within the circle through a process of learning the rituals of the community, before attempting to step outside. Few "uitloopers" are granted sanctuaries within the borders. Perhaps the purpose and goals of transforming the circle recedes into the background as the novice is inducted into the academic research environment.

The problem with language

However, even when the intentionally of the author is clearly explicated beyond the traditional confines, the text produced has only a potential for serving its original intentions. The readers will choose to make sense of it in ways that they deem fit. Language is a powerful yet also restricting medium of thought, since it is " populated" with the possibility of being ambiguous. Each reader can choose to ignore its writer's intended meanings. Texts therefore only have "potential for meaning". It is more likely that the writer's meanings and the reader's meanings will come closer when there is a shared degree of interaction between both, so that the intentionality of both can be understood, shared and perhaps agreed upon (Widdowson: 1984). Reading and Writing is thus a creative act!

If academic writings aim to develop a dialoguing community within the social sciences, it therefore has to consider seriously how the community of interlocutors present themselves to each other. Firstly it needs to consider whether its language is a shared medium of thought and action. It needs to look at means of interactive exchange that illuminates the potential for meaning making. It needs to recognise the kinds of languages that both communities of theoreticians and practitioners share and understand, because no language is ever free from its embedded cultural and ideological assumptions about how to relate to the world. It also needs to explore the potential that inter-disciplinary dialogue can offer. Social scientists also need to look outside the realms of their parent disciplines within the humanities and explore the creative world of natural sciences research paradigms, which themselves are self-reflectively re-examining the possibilities and problems that traditional research paradigms yield.

Re-searching research

This re-questioning is a paradigmatic question, which goes to the heart of the intention of academic research. The dominant convention of academic research which aims to pursue the development of explanations, that seeks to uncover patterns of certainty and control, that believes that objective distancing between the researcher and the researched is desirable, that believes that it is able to present sizeable and chunkable labelling of "the truth" – would seriously need to be reconsidered. The empiricist conventions of objectivity, replicability and validity would need to be interrogated as the hallmarks of what constitutes research.

If we define research as a process of re-searching (re-looking) for available forms of illumination about phenomena that we encounter daily, then it is necessary that we look towards **new ways of being illuminated**. If we see research as a process of developing a democratic sharing of illuminations gathered from a variety of vantage points within and outside the research context, then it means that we need to populate our research reports with **opportunities for different individuals to make sense** of what we as researchers have come to understand. These opportunities should not only be restricted to those participants within the research environment, but also to the **readers** who will read the final reports. Each of these above positions reflects paradigmatic expectations about the **purposes of academic research** and therefore need **different touchstones** to measure the value of its research outputs. All of these positions will be greatly enhanced if it is permitted the opportunity to delve into the world of alternative forms of gathering information, of analysing and re-presenting the insight, knowledge and understanding researchers have gained while involved in the process of re-searching.

Learning a new language

Making a choice for alternative forms of researching entails making a shift in how information is gathered, new ways of being illuminated. Do we restrictively rely on gathering data that presents itself in that problematic and powerful medium of language? We as researchers need to free ourselves to be able to be illuminated by the power of other forms of representation of understanding and experience: the **visual** forms of photographs, diagrams, maps, paintings, collages; of **performance art** in dance, music and rituals; through the treasure house of alternative "non-academic" **genres of literature**: poetry, letters, diaries, journals, etchings, drama. All of these forms do not necessarily escape the boundaries of a language, and it becomes the data-gatherer's responsibility to explore the territory with as full an induction into the cultural and ideological conventions of the language of dance, art and performance of each of the research communities s/he seeks to understand. The cultural ethnographic researcher participates in the process of research fully aware of the limitations of his insider/ outsider perspective, his/her (in) ability to speak the language of the participants in the research, and therefore neEds to in representing his/ her research uncover his/ her subjectivity during the process of exploration, unearthing and representing of the languages to the world of academe. Researching in this perspective becomes an exercise of learning a new language, the **language of the research context**, not simply learning to speak the language of the audience of academic convention.

When a researcher chooses to explore alternative forms of knowledge within the research context, s/he relinquishes the status of superiority as knower. Nevertheless when s/he chooses to write back to academe, the presence of the other participants in the research could also

become silenced and marginalised. The democratic researcher is wary to impose his/her interpretations on the research context, and therefore allows the "data" to be interrogated by all participants. Often participants in the research context may not "speak the same language" as the researcher and may choose to communicate using a "language they know and use best". This language may also extend to a language beyond words and the researcher would need to include it in the final representation of the research. This allows for the research report to become a "thick description" (Geertz: 1983) layered with multi-possible data and interpretations. It is likely that when these various forms of data are assembled that the report becomes a field of blurry edges, a walk through a valley of reminisces and distortions, a peering out of a mountaintop with expanding vistas, a merging into a horizon whose margins forever move. It enters into the realm of uncertainty, unpredictability, and explores into the realm of possibility. It allows for new insights and questions to be asked. It does not keep doors shut inside the prison of convention. It asks itself and its readers to ask new questions even beyond the ones the writers have intended.

New audiences, new voices

In exploring this open territory, it invites a **new and wider set of audiences** to the research process. It allows different individuals to have power over who and how academic knowledge is produced. It evokes empathy from the participants in the research because it draws on their languages, their representations of their everyday world. It sees their world, its own meaning making systems as worthy of being celebrated as "research", and they develop a vocabulary of their own to explain it. It ultimately challenges the powerful, the oppressive, the traditional researcher who claims to be the voice of the participants of the research context.

Using alternative forms of representation in research reports is not simply a matter of novelty, curiosity or cleverness. It is about providing audiences with a view of the **complexity of systems** being researched. Whereas traditional dominant educational research paradigms have tended to be reductionist in their quest to categorise and narrow down the realities into "biteable chunks", the use of several forms of representation of data gathering, analysis and reporting allows the readers (and writers) opportunities to think divergently and explore multiple interpretations which are more likely to exist within a community. Researchers exploring this latter divergent form of research are indirectly serving to expand the participation of a wider community of individuals engaged in "Re-searching", each recognising the value of several interpretations and understandings, and thereby enriching their engagement within their world. Perhaps this would provide more **resonance** with how individuals do experience their everyday world, unlike the staid conventionalised world of traditional research.

Another value of using alternative and multiple forms in the representation of research is that it allows access for those who have different ways of seeing, reading, interpreting and understanding their world. Not all individuals are enchanted by the possibilities of the language of words and numbers as a means of reading the world. "A picture paints a thousands words", said some lyricist ... and music has often stirred the emotions, reflections, passions and thoughts of full-blooded humans without the need for words.

Productive ambiguity

Nevertheless Eisner (1997) cautions us to the "productive ambiguity" of alternative forms of

representation in research: it has the potential to evoke insight and draw attention to various ways of seeing the world, yet it also has the potential to be read and misread in ways that are beyond the control of the authors of the composition. It is limited in that it is unpredictable in terms of the effect it is likely to have on the research community – besides providing the means to drink more deeply of the cup of life. It meanders out into a world that cannot claim responsibility for the journey it will lead the readers into. Its responsibility stops in the presentation of the possibility for pointing the direction the journey should embark on.

A simple pragmatic limitation of exploring of alternative forms of representation in the academic research community is that the world of printed journals is not fully able to capture many forms of audio data, or data that reflects kinaesthetic ambiance of dance and ritual, of paralanguage systems in operation. To some extent this matter can be resolved with the advent of electronic computer journalling, or the presentation of research material in the form of CD-roms. But we crawl in this age of technology, because our feet have become accustomed to stamping the wet mud we know. Hopefully as we become more confident about the potential of multiple forms of representation of research we would see more researchers reporting using visuals, video clips, verbal transcripts of interviews, art works, dance presentations on computer screens rather than relying only on the printed word to convey our thoughts and understandings of our research environments.

The tightrope researcher

It is a tightrope we walk as academics: the "sea of faces" which sit in the audience within educational research include both the gatekeepers of the traditional research paradigms and the ardent teachers critics who devalue the abstract theoretical propositions that characterise the convention. The "sleight-of-foot tricks and other high theatrics" we perform as researchers exploiting alternative forms of representation is motivated by a strong passion for balancing the "taut truths" we know and experience in our everyday interaction in a complex unsanitised world. We constantly know that our "charleychaplin" antics can be fatal! However we are driven not just by the applause of our artistic performances. We believe passionately, and as full-blooded humans, that the democratic right to perform our own walk, our own means of getting to the other side is what drives us as academic researchers.

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Conferences for Capacity Building: Can it be done, should it be done?

Margaret Keogh and Jasmin Paras



MARGARET KEOGH taught Biology in schools and at M L Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal. She worked with the Science Education Project (SEP) and became the SEP Biology Materials Co-ordinator. At the University of Durban-Westville, she lectured in pre-service education programmes and is presently the Network Co-ordinator for SCISA (Science Curriculum Initiative in South Africa), which promotes curriculum development from grades 5 to 9. Her research interests are in policy implementation and the role of teachers in curriculum development.



JASMIN PARAS, is the Academic Development Co-ordinator in the School of Education at the University of Durban-Westville. She is currently completing her Honours degree in Mathematics Education. Her research interests are in the areas of Curriculum Policy and Practice issues in Mathematics Education and gender issues.

Some background to the conference and a hypothesis

The International Organisation For Science and Technology Education (hereafter, thankfully referred to as IOSTE), was established in 1979 to advance the cause of education in science and technology, as a vital part of general education of the people of all countries and to provide scholarly exchange in the field of Science and Technology education. Its origin can be traced to a symposium on World trends in Science Education convened in August 1979 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

At the third symposium, held in Brisbane, Australia, in 1984 this informal circuit was transformed into a formal organisation with membership of over 50 countries. Since then, it has continued to hold symposia every two or three years', achieving recognition by UNESCO as an official non-governmental organisation. IOSTE provides a vehicle for participants from more than fifty countries to carry forward the aims of the organisation. It supports the call for changes in Science and Technology Education to meet the needs of the people of the 21st century, including changing curricula to make them more relevant, gender sensitive, culture inclusive, and more supportive of sustainable development.

The first IOSTE symposium to be held in Africa was hosted by three regional institutions in

Kwa-Zulu Natal. The theme of IOSTE 9 (Science and Technology Education for Sustainable Development in Changing and Diverse Societies and Environments), emerged from both recognition of the significance of both cultural diversity within populations and the diversity of environments on which these populations depend.

The demands for survival in a technologically dominated world would have to be sustained by balanced development, of which the economy, quality of life and environment are all important aspects. Science and Technology Education have, therefore, a very significant role to play in mediating sustainable development in diverse cultural and environmental contexts.

In the South African context there are some tertiary institutions which have relatively few members of Faculty with doctoral degrees, extensive research publications, and international experience (a consequence of the narrow teaching focus which was a policy of the previous government). These are referred to as Historically Disadvantaged Institutions, (HDIs). All the co-hosting institutions at this conference would be described in this way. They were the University of Durban-Westville (UDW), the South African College of Open Learning and the University of Zululand. These institutions are all part of regional initiatives to improve research capacity.

The need to develop skills, gain exposure and confidence, have a range of experiences to focus and develop individual and group capability, often referred to as capacity building, is part of the national life of any developing country. Inevitably, it was at the back of our minds as we embarked on planning the programme for IOSTE 9. Any form of activity, which extends its participants beyond their normal routines falls into the category of capacity building. The experiences were many and varied: tour guide, driver, translator, and all valuable in their own way.

This reflective report, however, focuses on those activities which we believe have potential to develop capacity in the areas of research. We refer to novice researchers as the target group and include here post-graduate students and junior members of Faculty at the hosting institutions. Clearly, we would be hosting a number of eminent scholars in various fields of Science and Technology education. Equally, we placed great emphasis on making it possible for large numbers of African and particularly South African delegates to attend. Inevitably, the demographics of this conference would be very different from those in northern hemisphere/developed country contexts. The challenge to us was to maximise the potential of this professional interaction in order for everyone to learn as much as possible.

The Dean of Education at UDW, repeatedly asked, "How are the COMET students going to be involved in this," (a reference to the large Co-ordinated Masters in Education programme reading at the University of Durban-Westville). Our response was a somewhat vague, "Well, they will attend and participate, of course." On reflection, this was the point at which we decided that if we were going to make the most of this opportunity we would have to put in place structures to really make it happen. The organising committee supported the idea in principle and the programme committee began exploring ways to implement the idea. Our hypothesis (to use the terminology of experimental design), was that conferences can and should be used for research capacity building.

Designing the experiments to test the hypothesis

What follows is a description of how IOSTE 9 tested the hypothesis. Clearly this is only one such experiment and many more are needed.

On reflection, the key criteria of the planning process may be seen to be three-fold. They are described here separately, for the sake of clarity, although in reality they overlapped considerably. In summary they were that the conference would:

a: focus on building capacity research in the region,
b: encourage participation and interaction,
c: involve a democratic process of producing the conference report through the participation of as many delegates as possible.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationships.

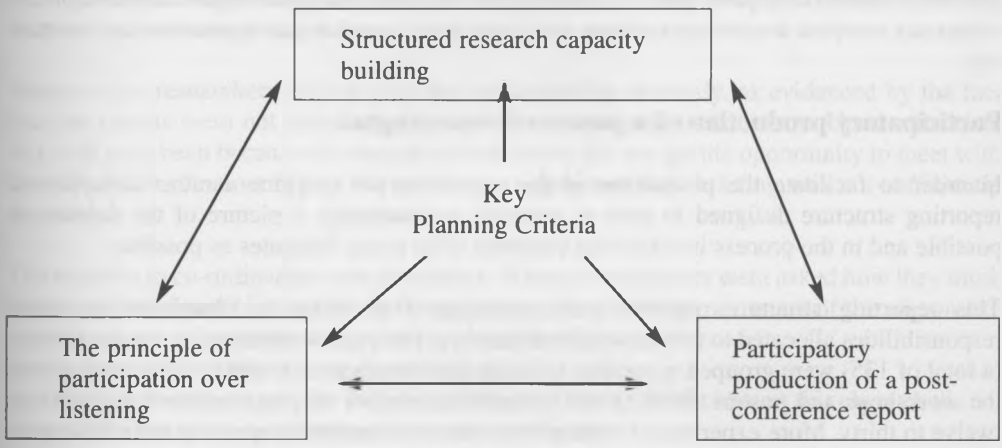


Figure 1 *The key planning criteria and the interactions between them.*

It was our belief that research capacity building would be achieved in two ways. Firstly, by structures which encouraged participation in debates, and secondly, by giving novice researchers specific responsibilities in managing the conference and in the production of the post conference report.

Participation and responsibility

In 1998, as we began the planning process, we carried out a mini-survey amongst experienced conference-goers with the question "What makes a good conference?" Colleagues were unanimous in advising that the quality of discussions and interactions was a key factor. The principle of encouraging participating over listening was coined.

We tried to put the principle of participation over listening into practice during the planning process by having a conference design in which the majority of the presentations were clustered in themes and the presenters each encouraged to make short inputs followed by general discussion. This required that the participants had access to the conference papers and we were able to read them in advance of the discussion. We were able to have the compilation

of papers ready for the delegates on their arrival at the conference. In the process of doing this we encouraged the novice researchers to become familiar with the submissions and to select papers of interest which would inform their research and whose authors they would like to meet. They were then invited to enhance their participation by acting as co-ordinators for sessions that particularly interested them. In designing this kind of informed and structured participation we were attempting to counteract the kind of conference interaction characterised by confident out-going "high-talkers" who can unwittingly exclude others from the debates conferences.

Having made a selection about which session interested them the novice researchers were then inducted into the role of co-ordinator. The role of co-ordinator here was modified so that in addition to the usual practical functions they were asked to report on key issues, debates and questions arising from the session. The session chairs more experienced researchers were asked to assist with this. This responsibility dovetailed with the key-planning criterion described above as the participatory production of the post conference report. The session co-ordinators received written instructions and a two-hour question and answer session on their role.

Participatory production of a post-conference report

In order to facilitate the production of the report we put in place a rather complicated reporting structure designed to give as accurate and authentic a picture of the debates as possible and in the process involves the concerns of as many delegates as possible.

This reporting structure requires some explanation in order to illuminate the extra responsibilities allocated to the session co-ordinators. The papers submitted to the conference (a total of 135) were grouped according to focus unto seven strands and to these were added the workshops and posters. Each strand contained a number of presentations varying from twelve to thirty. More experienced researchers, often international experts in their field were asked to act as strand co-ordinators. Their role was to receive the reports from the session co-ordinators, and through discussions with them to summarise these and to pass the summaries and original reports to the three people responsible for the conference summary and final report. Fig 2 summarises the process.

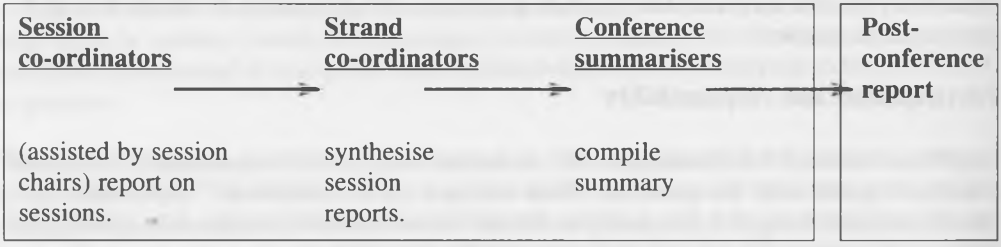


Figure 2 *The process of involvement which generated the post-conference report.*

The results of the capacity building experiment

This section deals with the results in the form of our perceptions based on our personal reflections and those of other organising committee members as well as the responses to a

post conference questionnaire we sent to participants. Of course the real results of the experiment are probably not available to us now and may only be seen in the future. We deal with the results in a chronological fashion and in some instances comment on ways in which we see that the programme could be improved.

The idea of using a conference, as a capacity building strategy was not readily accepted by post-graduate students, it was seen as an added responsibility rather than an integral part of their programme. Possible reasons could be, this is a novel idea; a conference culture does not exist amongst post-graduate students and most of the post-graduate students are in full-time employment in schools, thus increasing their professional responsibilities and making it difficult to take leave for the conference. We have positive experiences of building participation into the course work of a master's programme at a national conference on research in mathematics and science education. Based on this we believe that it would have been advantageous to follow a similar process at IOSTE 9. This would have involved a piece of academic writing, which formed a course assignment and would have enhanced and focused the students participation.

Some novice researchers did not take this responsibility seriously, as evidenced by the fact that the reports were not timeously forwarded to the strand co-ordinators. Upon reflection, this may have been because the session co-ordinators did not get the opportunity to meet with the strand co-ordinators before the conference began and their briefing was not sufficiently rigorous.

The benefits to co-ordinators were enormous. When co-ordinators were asked how they think they benefited from this capacity building process, the following are some of the responses:

"meeting with presenters and sharing ideas, building links"

"acquired more information about the subject"

"reading the papers prior to the presentations was an excellent idea as this elevates the level of discussion and critique is more meaningful"

"felt a bit overwhelmed as this was my first experience of being a session co-ordinator, although I was given a set of guidelines to follow but the only chance I had to put this into practice was the session I was co-ordinating. Also overwhelmed, in the sense of performing my role as co-ordinator and wanting to ask several questions."

Two of our masters students made professional contacts which they are maintaining by email and which have developed into significant support for their dissertation research. One of the delegates to the conference, Bill Kyle, an internationally reputed academic from University of Missouri USA has agreed to be guest editor of a special volume of *Perspectives in Education* on the theme: Maths, Science and Technology Education.

On the downside, the process was very rushed and often, despite the goodwill of those involved, it was not possible to make the necessary contacts and to meet the tight deadlines. Again, this could have been avoided if capacity building had been at the forefront of our thinking during the planning stages.

Conclusion

Adding capacity building as a specific focus for conference planning requires the allocation of considerably more time and effort. It involves co-ordinating the needs and activities of a

much larger number of people. If we were to repeat this activity, we would certainly take this into account.

As a final word we, both novice researchers, are of the opinion that there is sufficient evidence to give some support to our hypothesises that conferences can and should be used for research capacity building. We look forward to reading about other experiments, which would test our hypothesis.

Yes, it can be done and yes it should be done.

Reflections on IOSTE 9

Siva Chetty and Sagie Pillay



SIVA CHETTY is an Acting Subject Advisor in Biology for the Durban South Region. He is a Membership Secretary of the KwaZulu-Natal Association of Science and Technology Education (K.A.S.T.E) and is also an Executive member of K.A.S.T.E. Provincial Committee. Is a member of the Provincial Biology Committee of KZNDEC.



SAGIE PILLAY is a lecturer in Biology Education at the Umbumbulu College of Education. He is the Chairperson of Durban-South branch of K.A.S.T.E. and is a member of the Provincial Executive Committee of K.A.S.T.E.

As representatives of the *KwaZulu-Natal Association of Science and Technology Educators* (K.A.S.T.E.), our brief in attending IOSTE 9 was to imbibe the myriad of science and technology issues that emerged from the conference, and to share this knowledge amongst members of our association. This article examines some of the major issues emanating from the conference, and speculates on how they will inform our future action as science and technology educators. It also proposes recommendations for a future conference.

The conference attracted a diverse array of presenters from all parts of the world, many of whom are experts in their field. This provided us the opportunity to make informal contacts, during breaks, with presenters as well as delegates from out of our province and out of the country, allowing us to forge linkages for future communication.

The diversity of presentations also enabled us to compare the different contexts within which we all operate and to find areas of common concern. Meeting with such a range of people helped to broaden our thinking on various issues and re-affirmed the value of our endeavours, but it also pointed the way towards alternative modes of thinking and acting. It was quite reassuring to learn that we as South Africans are not unique. The problems we consider peculiar to our contexts are in fact universal.

With SA in the process of phasing Curriculum 2005 into the schooling system, many recurring international themes were found to be relevant to our local context. Up to now, educators, especially at secondary school level, were restricted to teaching a somewhat limited prescribed curriculum. For example, science teachers generally feel that they are constrained by the boundaries of pure science and are usually uncomfortable to venture out of this territory. Various presenters drew attention to the need and value of linking science and technology and other

learning areas to challenge the myth that science is an isolated body of knowledge. Such integration needs to be built into the process of developing teacher education learning programmes.

Outcomes-based education also stresses the importance of science teaching being made relevant to the learner to ensure that the learner is the centre of the educational process. Many presenters promoted this ideal as they emphasised the need to link science teaching with relevance to industry and life-skills development. Other presenters emphasised relevance by placing their presentation within an environmental education context. They felt that environmental education should be linked to social change in Africa, emphasising the importance of a balance between the need to conserve natural resources and the social needs of the indigenous communities.

SA is presently grappling with the language issue, particularly the use of English as a medium of instruction in a context where the majority of the population are non-native speakers of English. The resulting deficiency in literacy levels in English constitutes a hindrance to the promotion of learning. A few presenters stressed the mutual relationship between science and literacy. Development in literacy has an obvious advantage to the development of science learning. Presenters demonstrated that effective science teaching could also help develop literacy.

The rights of women have been enshrined into the new South African constitution. While there are attempts to arouse gender awareness, in practice, little has been done tangibly to rectify gender imbalances in the field of science and technology. Many presenters successfully conscientised delegates into thinking more seriously on this issue.

The conference very successfully pointed to directions for future action for us as science educators. In our jobs as subject advisor and college lecturer, as well as our involvement with K.A.S.T.E., we are constantly interacting with other science and technology educators. This places us in a favourable position to share with others our experiences emanating from the IOSTE 9 conference. Workshops held for this purpose need to be instituted. Through the development of exemplar material to reflect the ideals of good science teaching, innovation in science teaching can be encouraged. Further, having common workshops for science and technology educators will help strengthen the bond between these two areas.

Most of the presentations ranged from reasonably good to a very high standard. There were however, some very poor presentations. A more stringent screening process may be necessary to ensure academic excellence. The availability of the conference proceedings before the conference allowed delegates to familiarise themselves with the text of the presentations beforehand, enabling delegates to participate and contribute more fully in the discussions that followed the presentations.

We feel very fortunate that South Africa has hosted an international conference of this calibre. We feel enriched by the wide experiences of the many presenters at the conference. It has developed in us the confidence that we too have the capacity to be researchers and to make presentations at international conferences. Previously we tended to think that this was the preserve of an elitist group of University lecturers.

As the aftertaste of our enjoyment of IOSTE 9 still lingers on, we are already in the mood to start packing our bags for IOSTE 10 in Brazil.

SUDARSH MOODLIAR teaches English at a Secondary School. She works actively in the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, enjoys working creatively with her students, and has produced school magazines which profile her students' writing. She has been influenced by Kahlil Gibran and his writings in The Prophet.

Breaking my Horizon:

The inch by inch
Struggle for a clearing
where I'll find
the voice I clearly hear
the only voice I want
of an up-moving sun
breaking my horizon

The Teacher:

Last week, my classroom window
Was broken,
Because I scolded a child
For being impertinent.

Yesterday, my name (together with other words)
was sprawled across the school walls,
Because I reprimanded a child
For being late.

I wonder what mischief
awaits me today.
It is my turn to:
accost latecomers,
check the wayward fancies
of teenage couples,
Scatter ruffians from
the toilets, and
remind the outsiders of
the rules of the school.

They told me that teaching
was a noble profession,
The teacher, a respected
Member of society,
The school, a place
To nurture minds!
They lied:
I've become a tyrant, and my children,
The products of my tyranny.

Book Review:
African Science and Technology Education into the New Millennium: Practice, Policy and Priorities
Prem Naidoo and Michael Savage (Eds.)

William C. Kyle, Jr.



WILLIAM C. KYLE, JR. is the E. Desmond Lee Family Professor of Science Education at the University of Missouri, St. Louis (USA). His research focuses on the implementation and evaluation of science reform initiatives, primarily in urban schools and communities. He is particularly interested in the socio-cultural, political, and economic issues associated with school reform and the prospects for equity in the process of schooling. He has been recognised for his work by several professional associations; including the Association for the Education of Teachers in Science, which recognised him as the 1990 Outstanding Science Educator of the Year. He is past editor of the Journal of Research in Science Teaching.

Review of the book *African Science and Technology Education into the New Millennium: Practice, Policy and Priorities.* Prem Naidoo & Mike Savage, Eds. Kenwyn Republic of South Africa: Juta & Co., Ltd., 1998, 229 pp., ISBN 0-7021-4476-2.

This edited volume will be of value to individuals interested in issues associated with science and technology education in sub-Saharan Africa. Emanating from the African Science and Technology Education (ASTE) conference held between 4 to 9th December 1995 at the University of Durban-Westville (Republic of South Africa), the collection of articles herein offers a historical perspective of the disappointing impact of science and technology education over the course of the past four decades while articulating practice, policy and priorities that will shape the future and enable African educators to meet the challenges of the coming century. Convened under the auspices of The African Forum for Children's Literacy in Science and Technology (AFCLIST), the conference was the first such meeting of leading African science and technology educators, scientists, and media practitioners in over 25 years. The conference was organised around 11 Key Issues. I had the pleasure of attending the ASTE conference and serving as a Key Issue discussant. Thus, my review of the book is grounded in the context of having contributed to the dialogue surrounding the question as to whether science and technology education in Africa can meet the challenges of the new millennium.

Many African countries, in the context of modernisation and economic development, recognise the importance of science and technology education (see Makhurane, Chapter 2).

However, policy makers and educators alike question whether the curricular emphasis has had the substantive impact on modernisation and economic development that might have been envisioned. Reflecting upon socio-cultural conditions and the realities of schooling, Naidoo and Savage (Introduction, p. xiii) state: "The people of Africa are suffering more than they were four decades ago. There is less inquiry science learning and more rote-learning. Children are less rather than more able to extract meaning from their schooling in ways that can applied to bring change to their lives. Thoughts that schooling could and should be enjoyable and linked to indigenous knowledge bases have become unthinkable."

Past realities offer challenges for the future. Grounded in the realisation that science and technology have not contributed to the wider societal changes envisioned, the authors in each of the chapters investigate the complexities of socio-cultural, political and economic factors in Africa and offer their perspectives regarding science and technology education priorities for the future. A contributing factor to the decline of science and technology education in recent years is the direct link between political and economic instability and an exodus of talented personnel from the African continent. The gap in science and technology education between the developed world and sub-Sahara Africa has widened during this period of instability. This demonstrates profoundly the inextricable link between the contextual reality of daily life and both the politics of and impact upon education.

Enhancing the science and technology educational opportunities for the youth of sub-Sahara Africa may be more linked to issues of self- and social-empowerment than to establishing "standards" for science teaching and learning. In this regard, Yoloye (Chapter 1) asserts that while the science education reform agenda still requires funding from donor agencies, there must be a conscious move toward interdependence rather than dependency. He also notes that those engaged in educational reforms must recognise that sustainable change is a process that transpires over a considerable period of time and that all individuals must recognise that they are engaged in the process. In essence, there are no quick fixes to issues of systemic reform. As Savage (Chapter 3) notes, systemic and sustainable reform requires the congruence of teaching, learning, and assessment; further, the reform of school-based science and technology education must be in harmony with the reform of teacher education and subsequent professional development opportunities afforded teachers (see also such issues raised by Dyasi & Worth, Chapter 7). Savage asserts that all learning experiences ought to contribute to feelings of confidence, self-empowerment and knowledge that one, rather than external factors, is in control of one's learning. Further, reform must be holistic and transcend traditional school boundaries to include communities (see Fabiano, Chapter 9) and the mass media (see Mschindi, Chapter 12) to motivate and support children's inquiry (a key feature of several AFCLIST funded projects is the involvement of communities and the mass media).

A reform agenda ought to critically examine the ideological assumptions about education and the assumptions about what education does (see Shymansky & Kyle, 1992). In my work with teachers engaged in science reform projects, we spend much of our time trying to bridge the artificial boundaries between politics and education, between curriculum and the teaching/ learning process and critical questions and issues of cultural, political, and economic power. If we are to address the political realities of schooling, then we must begin to eliminate such boundaries, which Bourdieu claims are pure products of academic reproduction (see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 148-149). Volmink (Chapter 4) addresses the question of control in science and technology education. He focuses upon ideology, rather than pedagogy;

and, he considers the role of epistemology, namely what counts as knowledge in science and technology education and who decides what knowledge is worth knowing (see Note 1). The transformation of science and technology education in sub-Sahara Africa requires an understanding of how structures that legitimise oppressive forms of control both have been and are produced and reproduced, so that counter-hegemonic strategies of action can be formulated. In the context of Volmink's assertions, I believe it is important for educators to recognise that they are part of the discourse and power structure; further, their actions and work have long-term social implications. If we are to strive for a pedagogy of hope, then educators must become transformative intellectuals (see Giroux, 1988). The focus of schooling should shift from a focus upon teaching to a focus upon learning, and learning ought to lead to self- and social-empowerment. Educational reform must be linked to teacher empowerment and student voice. Such a shift has significant implications for teacher education and professional development, as discussed by Dyasi & Worth (Chapter 7); as well as the structure of the classroom environment and issues associated with researching the science program (Onwu, Chapter 8).

Whenever one speaks of creating educational opportunities and possibilities for students, as well as ensuring relevance of the teaching-learning process, one must address the issue of equity (Rollnick, Chapter 5; Reddy, Chapter 6). The social vision of equity, in education in general, and in science and technology education in particular, is imperative (see Jegede & Kyle, 1999). I call attention to the fact that while the social vision is necessary, it is not sufficient. Any regime of truth is enacted or functions only through specific practices. Thus, a reform agenda in and of itself does not ameliorate the existence of inequalities in terms of gender, race, class, religion, and access to educational opportunities and possibilities unless the fundamental commitments of social reconstruction are imbedded within the reform agenda. In the context of science and technology education, I assert that the totality of an education in science ought to be equally as much oriented toward social justice, critical democracy, empowerment, action-taking, and investing in our future's intellectual capacity as it is about constructing conceptual understandings of the world (Kyle, 1999a). Thus, how we view an education in science must be transformed; otherwise, we will never address the power/knowledge/ethics inequities that permeate modern society at the close of the 20th century. Issues such as poverty, social inequities, access to schooling (including issues of school enrolment and school drop-out rates), and educational inequalities based upon gender and the associated family and societal views about schooling for many African females must explicitly be a part of the reform agenda. We must examine school, societal and family practices; perceptions of schooling; political, institutional, and individual factors; workplace opportunities; and the economic status of the family. The bottom line is that changing classroom practices only will not achieve equity. Educational reform that fails to address the more comprehensive socio-cultural, political, and economic issues is destined to failure. The challenges are immense; the opportunities are before us.

Jegede (Chapter 10) elicits several barriers that have contributed to why science and technology have not brought about the expected changes in Africa. Such barriers include: 1. the traditional African knowledge structure that is widely believed to be non-linear and multifaceted, rather than hierarchical and pyramidal; 2. the lack of an appropriate knowledge base derived from the African world view; 3. the notion that African learners in science and technology classrooms must deal with a duality of world views and a multiplicity of cultures; 4. the indigenous African culture that inhibits the construction of school knowledge in science and technology; 5. language issues, which serve as an impediment to learning; and 6. the lack

of attention to issues that serve to disenfranchise learners. Several of these issues are addressed in a recent Theme Issue of the *Journal of Research in Science Teaching* focused upon Science Education in Developing Countries (see Kyle, 1999).

In the context of the barriers raised by Jegede, I urge readers to pay particular attention to his theory of collateral learning. Jegede asserts that the duality in the mental schema of non-western learners, with a resilient indigenous knowledge framework, results in collateral learning when they learn Western science. Collateral learning represents the process by which a non-western learner in school constructs, side by side and with minimal interference and interaction, Western and traditional meanings. Collateral knowledge is therefore the declarative knowledge of a concept that such a learner stores in the long-term memory, with a capability for strategic use in either the Western or the traditional environment. Jegede also notes that instruction is at the heart of implementing a curriculum. However well designed, if the content of a curriculum is not effectively communicated, efforts to build the curriculum remain ineffectual. He notes that African cultures have several effective instructional strategies used within the community and at home that could be used in the classroom, such as role playing, story telling, songs and dance, ceremonies, and rituals. Role-play is common in African communities, be it during children's play, in open theatres, local festivities, or within the home and extended family. Role-play enables children to appreciate what others are communicating and allows them to express their feelings directly. Ødegaard (1999) states that the pedagogical advantage of drama / role play is the possibility to step out of role and reflect at distance on personal experience, which gives occasion for metacognition with empathy. She notes that to learn about science in the context of society, drama can be used for making simulations of the real everyday world, where science is recontexualised for specific purposes, and where students' experience using cognitive, affective, and active aspects of learning. I believe that the nature of the instructional strategies offered by Jegede and Ødegaard represent ways in which the goals of preparing all students to be active, critical, and risk-taking citizens can be achieved. In essence, the learning process empowers students to acquire an active voice and students discover how meaning is constructed actively through the multiple formations of lived experiences that can foster a sense of hope and possibility. Such a perspective to learning matches well with Giroux's (1988) perception that students should learn to understand the transformative possibilities of experience.

In discussing issues related to educational research, Naidoo (Chapter 11) contends that central to research, is the development of an articulated language of possibility and critical competencies necessary to reveal and deconstruct forms of oppression. In my presentation at the ASTE conference (Kyle, 1995), I stated that educational research must be critiqued within a context of knowledge, power, cultural struggle and possibility. Further, I noted that it is not surprising that there are few examples of how the teaching – learning process has been improved through research, since most science education researchers have focused their inquiry upon research about science education (a moral action), rather than upon research for and in the service of education (an ethical action). Naidoo affirms such notions by noting that few studies have focused on issues such as language of instruction, enhancing the processes of teaching and learning, gender studies, teacher education or current priority issues in science education throughout Africa. Volmink (Chapter 4) notes that policies are not informed by research, but are assertions made by politicians, bureaucrats or donors and Naidoo notes that silences seem to centre on macro issues such as financing, equity, planning and policy. Naidoo offers the conclusion that perhaps the intellectual climate in African

countries is more responsible for these gaps than is the international world. Naidoo solemnly concludes that presently little science and technology education research in sub-Sahara Africa is directed toward helping the continent face the central challenges of the 21st century. I contend that science education researchers must critically appropriate an ethical perspective to their work, thereby offering the potential to transform schools and society, as well as enabling teachers and learners to function as active subjects committed to self- and social-empowerment.

This edited book is an important and timely contribution to the efforts to reform and sustain innovations in science and technology education on the African continent. The pedagogy of hope for a better tomorrow will require the Africa peoples to believe in themselves and to engage in self-liberation to change their circumstances and their preparedness to invest in their own futures. Presently, most of the countries ranked in the bottom 97 least developed countries globally are in Africa. And, Africa is the least developed continent in terms of science and technology. Africa was the last continent to modernise and participate in the debate on the role of science and technology in development. However; though a latecomer, discussion and expectations have been intense in Africa, especially during the 1960s and the first wave of decolonialization. Regrettably, there is little to show for the initial investment in science and technology. Political independence in Africa was an important factor contributing to the development of science and technology. Striving toward science and technology education for sustainable development may be more difficult in the absence of the optimism and hopes of the immediate post-independence period. This realisation offers tremendous challenges – as well as opportunities – for educators in Africa as they progress toward addressing the science and technology education neEds of almost one-fifth of our global population's children.

The Key Issues deliberated at the ASTE conference posit a challenge to the dominant hegemony so pervasive in the philosophy and pedagogy of science education and the associated science education research. The ASTE conference has created a tremendous opportunity for African science educators to engage in "furthering the type of solidarity, participation, and mutual recognition that is founded in dialogical communities" (Bernstein, 1983, p. 231). Constructing a public life that can strengthen solidarity, possibility, and a willingness to engage in rhetorical conversation facilitates the process for individuals to become members of dialogical communities. It should be evident that the struggle for social transformation begins with the educational process. I would hope that collectively we see the value of investing in our most precious resource; our children deserve the investment and our future depends upon such an investment.

Notes

Bring to your attention the similarity between Volmink's questions and those raised by Herbert Spencer in 1859. Between 1854 and 1859, Herbert Spencer wrote and published separately four essays on education. In 1861 the four essays appeared in a single volume titled, *Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical.* The tone of the essays was aggressive. Although the proposals were revolutionary, Spencer noted that many of the ideas were synthesised from earlier writers on education. However, the new doctrine that ran throughout all of the essays was most fully articulated in the 1859 essay titled, What Knowledge is of Most Worth?" See Herbert Spencer, *Essays on Education* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1911).

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Book Review:
Schooling Sexualities
Debbie Epstein and Robert Johnson

Jeanne Prinsloo



***JEANNE PRINSLOO** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education at the University of Natal. Her academic interests relate to media, textuality, gender and education and she is currently researching the curricular context of language education in the province of KwaZulu-Natal.*

Review of the book *Schooling Sexualities*. Debbie Epstein and Robert Johnson, Open University Press, Buckingham (1998) 224 pp. ISBN Paperback 0 335 19536 9, Hardback 0 335 19537 7.
SA agents: Book Promotions (Pty) Ltd, Croy House, 110 Main Road, Diep River.

When I received this book for review, I pondered the title and the nuances it gestures to. First, the word schooling implies both location and process. Then the coupling of the domains of *schooling* and *sexuality*, the former associated with the public and the latter associated with the private, make for an uncommon partnership, and one that will probably be surprising or provocative for certain audiences. I opened the book with particular expectations probably informed by other theoretical work on gender and education that I am familiar with. I anticipated a particular structure of a theoretical overview followed by descriptions and analyses of the processes and role schools play in schooling/forming identities of sexuality. However I was to be surprised. Instead I encountered a refreshing and, I would suggest radical approach to the complex issues that the title alerts the reader to anticipate.

In a self-reflexive turn, the authors, Debbie Epstein and Richard Johnson, locate themselves theoretically as many intellectuals of the late twentieth century are inclined. They also locate themselves in terms of their personal biographies and sexual orientation which is more startling on account of its frankness; self-disclosure around sexuality immediately demands we attend to the relations between the margins and the centre which is a central theme of the book. The authors share the disciplinary background of Cultural Studies, which manifestly informs this work. Richard Johnson's engagement with issues of the history and politics of education here takes on questions of sexuality. For Debbie Epstein this work on sexualities extends her concerns with education and identity formation in relation to race and gender. The different interests of the authors are developed to some extent discretely within the two separate sections.

Foucauldian notions of discourse and the forms of power/knowledge inform their work that

positions us as subjects. Here the focus is primarily on sexual subjects. As the title suggests this book attempt to further understandings of how sexualities and schooling are connected and how they shape each other in complex and multiple-layered ways. The authors are mindful that schooling never exists in isolation from other social institutions and provides only one of several sites of identity formation. It is their intention therefore to investigate the discursive strategies that make up the contemporary cultural formations around the sexual by considering certain contexts of power and meanings within which the work of sexual identity takes place.

Section One investigates sexuality's in public domains other than the school in order to reveal their intricate interconnections of these apparently discrete formations with schooling and educational institutions. Turning to formal politics, government and the media, the book probes the construction of nation and nationality.

While the issue of national identity might appear to be remote from questions of school and sexuality's at first glance, the book explores how such notions of national identity are universalised and naturalised (as 'we') within the powerful discourse of compulsory heterosexuality. Insisting that any version of the nation is also a social politics and dependent upon other social identities they link the construction of a national identity with gendered and sexual identities. The notion of nation is a strongly gendered one, and according to Epstein and Johnson centrally informed by the discursive formation of the family and heterosexual married couple. While this might be the dominant or hegemonic discourse it operates alongside other contemporary counter discourses which accentuate the diversity of possible sexual identities.

The work of constructing national identities occurs in multiple sites including, of course, the school. After all if schooling is about forming the identities of the young, it is also about the formation of the nation of the future. This is picked up in contrasting ways. Frequently moral traditionalist discourses place the onus of any notion of moral decay on both schools and the depravity/inadequacies of the teachers. On the other hand, schools are conceived of as possible moral saviours of the nation. We only have to turn to the insistence on a National Curriculum, with their implicit promise of a 'better' way to produce the nation for the future. This nation will obviously be differently inscribed in different national locations. As a book written by British authors this publication consequently draws on British subjects, British versions of nationhood and specific notions of inclusion and exclusion that relate to that context. They identify sexual identities as carrying the burden of these divisive tactics.

This investigation assumes that national identities are socially constructed within particular discursive hierarchies, that they are selected and then evaluated. The analysis of construction of sexual hierarchies identifies forms of the sexual that are recognised and validated as exemplary of Britishness while others are relegated to the margins. Accordingly, sexual identities are identified as central to such constructions and homosexuality in particular is made Other. By naturalising and rewarding identities constructed within this social hierarchy, it becomes possible to also use schools to inculcate this particular moral order. Just as arguments of national character acquire validation from 'nature', so to do sexual matters within such debates. Yet the larger societal picture reveals changing discourses and open contestation around sexual boundaries that have occurred during this century and which now must be viewed through a globalised and well as national frame.

Turning to the discourses within formal politics, the authors note how New Right politics reiterate the centrality of the heterosexual family with biological children. Significantly, the idea of marriage was positioned as ideal, the sexual limited to genital terms, to what the authors unambiguously term as fucking. "Notions of normality and perversity in traditionalist discourse almost always have a procreative/non-procreative criterion lurking somewhere" (56). Such privileging of the pro-creative element of sexuality is thereby premised upon a range of exclusions, including sexuality as fun or pleasure, desire, personal identity and/or intimacy. While this discourse assumes a natural/perverse binary opposition the libertarian or Neo-Liberal discourse that also is given voice in parliamentary debates proposes toleration but is criticised by the authors for its weak sense of power relations and difference. This liberal discourse is criticised for undermining the claims that cultural processes (including education) are important in enabling conceptions of the sexual.

This work also explores how the media narrates the constructions of nationalism and sexual identities. In doing this, it focuses on the borderlines of heterosexuality and its moments of disruption as reported in the national press. It considers how the sexual 'peccadilloes' of prominent public figures are handled and contained, within both the Neo-Conservative and Neo-Liberal discourses of both tabloids and liberal papers. A sex scandal genre is identified that has emerged in part in response to the 'Back to Basics' theme of the former conservative leader, John Major, with its traditionalist tone. Ironically, it was accompanied by eight sexual scandals concerning key government figures in the following nine months. The discussion focuses on the deeply regulatory way in which the press in particular handled issues of public sexuality of public figures and teachers.

Against this background of public discourses of sexuality that has identified the dominant discourse of 'compulsory heterosexuality' as an organising matrix, the second section explores what schools are like for teachers and students who are lesbians and gay. This decision to focus upon the experiences of these sexual subjects is a striking and radical departure. Homosexuality is centred in these discussions. This work is carried out using qualitative research approaches of school-based ethnography and in-depth interviews. This work is highly nuanced in its acknowledgement of the production of the sexual self. It acknowledges the heavily determined power relations and dynamics of control and resistance. The shaping of the sexual domain within schools is a paradoxical one in which expressions of sexuality by both teachers and pupils are constrained and yet, or in consequence, expressions of sexuality are frequent. It is similar to the ordering of discourse that has been described earlier in the book in relation to other domains. The establishing of sexual identities on the part of the students whom Debbie observed is carefully described and considered in terms of gendered and racial identities. She remarks on the struggles and looks particularly at self-narration around identities that are also strongly gendered. For a girl, Tracy, her sexuality and rebelliousness are conflated as negative. In contrast for boys, sexual bravado is considered in a positive light, all of this within a heterosexual imagination.

The policing of sexuality and in particular homosexuality of teachers and pupils forms the focus of two chapters. It unpacks instances of naturalised heterosexuality, for example teaching themes on 'weddings' and 'marriage' that validate a 'normal' way of life. These themes had immediate consonance for me in terms of South African contexts. What sprung to mind were examples of 'multicultural' teaching in schools where students are required to role-play the different wedding rituals of their 'cultural' groups. An exercise designed to, in my mind, run the serious risk of stereotyping cultural groups and freeze them in 'cultural'

time warps, while enforcing compulsory heterosexual takes.

The penultimate chapter is provocative in its take on sexuality education in schools and as in South Africa, the focus upon biological sex education, on the prevention of 'unwanted pregnancy' and protection from disease becomes the focus of sex education, a preoccupation with fucking once again. The stress on sexuality as danger rather than as relationships contributes to the constraints in classrooms to dealing with sexuality in terms of desire or identity. The validation of particular macho behaviours among male pupils is seen as contributing to the atmosphere within sex education classrooms where boys employ humour to disguise their ill ease when discussing intimacy.

They conclude by summarising their theoretical and political intents: 'bodily differences must be *made*, can be made to mean *differently*, and can be imbued with more or less *significance*' (193). They argue that within daily sexual practices, very few are procreative in intention or form for lesbians, gay men or heterosexuals. In addition, as a result of technological procedures now possible, procreation is no longer dependent on the idea of genital contact and sexual intercourse is not essential for conception to occur. If we acknowledge this position, then two aspects emerge from this are important to highlight as nodes of challenge. First, in schools sexuality is constantly limited to biology and, second, there is a prevalent myth of the male sexual drive impels the dominant heterosexual narrative. It becomes essential that these be challenged in relation to any movement to sexual and social justice. Sexual identities are formed in part at schools and invested with power and this book is part of the attempt to create counter strategies – this book attempts to inform work that will prepare the ground for change.

To return to my opening comments, this book confounded my expectations in many ways. There is no Rubicon-like dense theoretical chapter to come to grips with before wading to the realms of analysis of actual situations. This rather comes as an afterword and a conclusion. The style is accessible and the theory is incorporated into the discussions. It presents valuable insights for teachers or educators who are willing to engage with the tricky issues of sexuality and nationality as constructs that are schooled. For a South African audience the illustrations of public figures in the British realm will no doubt have less resonance. However, for such an audience it is the issues that are raised that retain the challenge, particularly those posed by the discussions of gay and lesbian sexual identities.

I have to acknowledge that I initially found myself uneasy about the authors' decision to focus on narratives about the sexual identities of lesbians and gay men. At no point did I feel that this was not important but I found myself wondering about the decision to marginalise heterosexuality. Questions of balance and concern whether other narratives would not be useful for educators to understand the emergence of heterosexual identities unsettled my reading. On musing about my sense of unease, I came to recognise what I had done and that I had missed a point that now appears glaringly obvious. I recalled the account of a situation where three people where asked the question, 'When you look in the mirror in the morning, what do you see?' The white man disclosed that he saw a person, the white woman that she saw a woman, the black woman that she saw a black woman. I had to remind myself that hegemonic discourses naturalise themselves and that what is 'othered' becomes part of the repertoire of a conscious identity. Similarly, heterosexual identities are socially constructed as 'normal': there simply is not the same consciousness of becoming 'straight'. It is identities that are 'othered' that will emerge as conscious narratives. My discomfort emerged from a

position that in some way had ignored this crucial lesson that the book had presented. Power is invested in our institutions in particular ways. In his discussion of whiteness in white Western culture, Dyer notes how power works. I quote from his work taking the liberty to omit the reference to white people or whiteness.

> ...[A]s long as [...] is felt to be the human condition, then it alone defines normality and fully inhabits it. ...The equation of being [...] with being human secures a position of power. [...] people have power and believe they think, feel and act like and for all people; [...], unable to see their particularity, cannot take account of other peoples; [...] create the dominant images of the world and don't quite see they construct the world of their own; [...] set standards of humanity by which they are bound to succeed and others bound to fail. (Dyer 1997:9)

It is easy to see how possible it might be to insert heterosexual/heterosexuality terms. In order to move towards understanding inequalities it is important for people regardless of their orientation to start examining it through the lens of those who are not construed as the powerful. There is no other way to begin really. This publication plays a valuable role in such work.

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Critical Reflections on Teaching and Learning in Africa

Janet S. Stuart



JANET STUART is a Deputy Director of the Centre for International Education at the University of Sussex, UK. She established the international strand of the Masters programme in teacher education at Sussex and has worked widely in this field. Her doctoral research involved extensive fieldwork in Lesotho where she lectured for six years. She has worked collaboratively to evaluate emergency teacher training programmes in Malawi and has developed teacher education programmes in the Seychelles. Her research interests are teacher education, action research and gender in education. She is co-author of development studies materials used in Southern African schools and is currently working on curriculum issues.

To contextualise these reflections: I am flying out of Africa, both physically and mentally, and, suspended above the Highveld, between Lesotho and Johannesburg, at the end of my last official trip to the continent, this seems a good place to think over my experiences.

Let me start with a short biographical account of how I, a British teacher by calling and family tradition, came to be doing research in Africa. A fairly common mixture of professional development requirements drove me, I needed a doctorate – and professional interest – a desire to know how useful and appropriate my work was.

I had taken up a job at the National University of Lesotho to prepare undergraduate students to become teachers of Development Studies. I was full of ideas from my own work in London of the Seventies – about student-centred, open-ended, activity-oriented teaching methods – and these I preached enthusiastically to my students, who described them back to me in essays and exam answers. But what actually happened when they entered the classroom? And could I involve the teachers in finding out? Back in the UK 'on leave', I stumbled across Action Research and heard how British teachers had found this empowering. Would it work in Lesotho?

I now had two research questions, both concerned with cultural borrowing, transplantation and sustainability: firstly was this kind of pedagogy suitable for Lesotho classrooms, and secondly, would Action Research prove helpful to Basotho teachers?

The full story can be read elsewhere (Stuart, 1991; Stuart, et al, 1997) but in brief, the answer to both questions was a qualified 'yes': borrowed ideas have to be adapted, the context must be carefully prepared, and sustainability is problematic. The pedagogy was appropriate but

only if the teachers first taught the students how to learn in this way; certain cultural assumptions were being challenged and it was not easy to transplant. For example, we wanted the students to enquire about things, and to critically challenge taken for granted assumptions, but in Basotho culture children were not supposed to ask questions; we agreed, however, that in today's world, this aspect of culture needs itself to be challenged and adapted.

Secondly, Action Research was possible, it was empowering for the teachers – leading to varieties of professional development and promotion – and developmental in that it allowed for endogenous models of teaching and learning, but it was not easy to transplant and sustain. The Lesotho Action Research Group flourished for 5-6 years under the guidance of a couple of enthusiastic people, but did not take lasting root. The environment did not seem conducive.

So what makes for a conducive environment? Clearly there are resource constraints operating both directly to limit funding and technology, and indirectly to limit the number of qualified people. Those who are knowledgeable and experienced get overloaded and no longer have time to do quality work; sometimes there are too few to constitute a crucial mass. To develop a research culture, it is essential to set up groups of people who can both support and challenge one another, and who can induct the next generation of researchers into a wide range of skills.

Other elements are harder to pin down and describe. Reflecting on my experiences, I looked back at my own socialisation into a certain mode of thinking, characterised by restless questioning, a desire to know why, a belief in our joint capacity to improve, reform, and change the way things are. African colleagues did not always share this mode of thinking and the general culture seemed at times antithetical to such ideas – as exemplified in 'not asking questions'.

Such thoughts made me turn back to my own cultural roots and try to understand 'the passion of the Western mind' (Tarnas, 1991) for asking questions, building grand models and schemas, the passion that drives research. I felt the need for more dialogue with other cultural traditions: what other kinds of passions should I be aware of, and how could I learn about those?

In his book *Frames of Mind* (1993), which discusses the idea of 'multiple intelligences', Howard Gardner offers another perspective. Research activity, particularly in the positivist tradition, puts a premium on 'logical-mathematical' intelligence. This particular form of intelligence has been cultivated as the most important in the West over the last centuries, possibly to the detriment of the other intelligences he identifies, such as the linguistic, musical, kinesthetic or personal intelligences. Arguably, many African cultures have traditionally put more emphasis on these others.

Yet there are other forms of research, particularly in the social sciences and education, where linguistic and interpersonal intelligences are vital. Interviewing, life history, participant observation, and various forms of ethnographic research might be culturally more sympathetic and productive. It seems therefore rather ironic that educational research in Africa began at a time when the positivist paradigm ruled in the metropolitan faculties of the North/West, and the pioneers sent overseas to study were exposed mainly to quantitative methods. In the university these were the only methods being taught to novices, who often found them difficult.

During the last five years I have had further chances to undertake research in Africa and I have been excited to see how things are changing. Some of our African research colleagues have undergone different research training and work with great success in the qualitative tradition. Articles are appearing in Western-edited journals by African researchers that discuss how different cultural paradigms can illuminate each other. Indigenous research journals are being set up. I hope that these will try not just to mimic Western ones, but have the confidence to develop their own forms of deep and rigorous thinking.

Networks and research associations are flourishing along with their acronyms – LERA, BERA and SERA in the BOLESWA countries, for example! Most stimulating of all, some centres are developing a research culture, where there is a critical mass of thinkers, and where foreign researchers are challenged and inspired to review their own ideas – UDW Faculty of Education being a prime example!

And where next? Certainly more sharing of both good paradigms and good practices would be useful: African and North/Western researchers need to spend time in each other's countries. When collaborative research is on the agenda, they need to spend time also in each other's company, and to discuss openly and fearlessly the different assumptions and frameworks they bring to the work. Thereafter e-mail makes collaborative writing and joint publications easier, as long as the communications systems function – different software can be as disruptive as different research assumptions!

Above all, more time, space and money for research and researchers would allow for the experimentation, discussion and learning which is essential for quality work to be done. This is a problem world-wide, not only for Africa, and that is perhaps why I find myself writing in the limbo of an airport lounge before getting back to a desk piled high with paper that isn't always relevant to research ...

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Collaborative Research: Work across the Seas

June George

JUNE GEORGE is presently a research Fellow in the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities and Education, at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus, Trinidad and Tobago. An educator with over 25 years of experience at tertiary and secondary levels, Dr. George's main interests are in the fields of science education, indigenous technology and traditional practices and belief, and teacher education.

The opportunity to work as a member of an international research team presented itself when the institution at which I work, the University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago campus, became a partner in the Multi-site Teacher Education Research Project – MUSTER. This research project, which began in January 1998 and ends in December 2000, is designed to explore the policies and practices in initial primary teacher education in five countries – Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa and Trinidad and Tobago. A small team at the Centre initiated the project for International Development at Sussex University, United Kingdom, who secured funding from DFID. I serve as the project leader for the Trinidad and Tobago component of MUSTER.

As a research fellow in a small university in a developing country context, I have often worked in isolation. Over the years, the emphasis in the School of Education has been on teaching since the main source of funding has come from the government's financing of the post-degree Diploma in Education for high school teachers. This teaching programme takes up a significant proportion of the time of most members of academic staff. The opportunity to work on the MUSTER project immediately opened up additional lines of communication with other researchers. The opportunities to plan a full-scale research project with others, to gain perspectives hitherto not thought of, to tease out knots in plans and to articulate one's position clearly and succinctly are invaluable.

These benefits have had a cascading effect. Because of the magnitude of the project, I had to be creative in involving other members of staff. I approached this by dividing the project into sub-components and inviting colleagues to participate in at least one sub-component. This strategy appealed to some staff members (particularly the newer ones), with the result that small research teams emerged – a situation that had not existed in the School of Education in my 15 years tenure there. This meant that the opportunity for dialogue and sharing became available at two levels – at the international level and at the local level. This put me in the interesting position of having to act as a "research broker" between these two groups.

As an international project, MUSTER was structured so that there could be comparisons

across the five country sites involved. The co-ordinators and initial designers of the project at Sussex University had their own research interests and orientations. In the initial planning meetings, attempts were made to come up with country research plans which struck a balance between the neEds of the respective countries and the orientations of the Sussex co-ordinators. It was against this background that the country research plan for Trinidad and Tobago was devised. My role as research broker emerged when I had to work with my local colleagues in implementing this plan.

One of the difficulties in doing research in a setting that doesn't have a rich culture of research is finding appropriate blocks of time in which to do the work. These blocks of time are not time-tabled and this is a serious problem that we are facing with MUSTER. Given this situation, my local colleagues and I have, almost automatically, tried to focus on what we think is essential and manageable. In so doing, we draw on our own knowledge of the local situation in deciding what is possible and desirable and what is not. Our local research team has had to deal with challenges in the local context and reconstruct the research agenda to suit the situation. This has meant that our agenda has not always synchronised completely with the overall MUSTER agenda. My function as broker is to interpret constantly the overall MUSTER plans and to try to maintain a balance between the overall MUSTER plans and what is useful for, and manageable in, the Trinidad and Tobago context. This has been, and continues to be, a very challenging role.

Another great challenge has been the task of trying to meet the various deadlines by which reports on the various sub-studies are to be submitted to Sussex. Some of these deadlines have come at the busiest time in the university's calendar – the end of the academic year. Again, in this situation, I have had to function as broker, being sensitive to the demands being faced by my local colleagues while trying to encourage them to make their contributions to MUSTER so that we could fulfil our role as part of an international team. At such times, I have sometimes felt that, if we had been working alone, and not as part of an international team, the pressure would have been much less and we would have been able to function more comfortably. However, I am also very much aware of the fact that the structure provided by the MUSTER project has probably pushed us to draw on our reserves and make that extra effort.

As indicated earlier, the MUSTER project is structured to include planning meetings involving the project leaders and Sussex personnel periodically. These face-to-face meetings have been invaluable in that they provide opportunities for reflection, dialogue and the redefining of research plans. This bringing together of minds to focus on issues of common interest has been most useful. I have, however, noted that there are differences in the ways in which people approach such tasks. I have not yet decided whether or not these differences are cultural. My own orientation (perhaps it is an idiosyncrasy!) is to discuss for a while, produce some writing on the matter, and then make that writing available for critique by the group. In our meetings, the periods of discussion have been much longer than I would have structured them. Nonetheless, the eventual outcomes have been most useful.

In a related vein, there are differences in how work is produced in the field. Some people are comfortable in writing many drafts as the work progresses; I am not! I constantly peruse the data and write memos to myself while I am in the field. But, I write serious reports only when I feel that I am beginning to "get there". This means that, in a team project such as this, I am not always able to share fully written progress reports as often as others might wish.

One important aspect of the MUSTER project is the issue of funding. Attracting funding for research projects in an institution such as ours is not an easy task. The fact that the MUSTER project was funded by DFID was, therefore, a positive feature of the project. The proportion of the funding available to the five research sites is small compared with the overall budget for various reasons, some of which are outside of the control of the MUSTER team (for example, meeting the requirements of the funding agency and the administration of Sussex University). This raises issues of power and equity. The danger is that those of us from developing countries, none of whom were involved in securing funding from DFID, may feel that we are not equal partners. It is to the credit of the Sussex team that steps were taken to secure additional funding from DFID for the research sites to address this imbalance. I am conscious, though, that our ultimate goal as a fledgling research institution is to produce work of quality and relevance so that we would be able to be actively involved in attracting funding for projects such as this.

What does the future hold? My hope (and intention!) is that the research work being done in Trinidad and Tobago as part of the MUSTER project will shed new light on, and give valuable suggestions for, primary teacher education in the country. I fully realise that the local researchers and I are the ones who must ensure that an appropriate research agenda is maintained to allow this to happen. I am also eager that our work should add to knowledge in the international community through the comparative studies that will be done with data from the other sites. I look forward to continuing to build our local research capacity and also to share and work with others in the team. When it is all done, I would expect that we would have all grown and we would also have made some lasting friendships, thanks to MUSTER.

On Cartography, Architecture and Research

Darryl David



DARRYL DAVID lectures in the Department of Afrikaans at the University of Durban-Westville. His post-graduate journey has seen him travel far and wide, from Literary Theory and Afrikaans Literature to Psycholinguistics, Sociolinguistics and Second Language Acquisition. His research interests are the philosophy underpinning Outcomes-based Education and language and education.

I joined a seminar-based Doctoral programme at a South African University early in 1999.[54] The programme covers a wide range of disciplines in both the Social and Natural Sciences. My reasons for joining were purely strategic. I'm a lecturer in the Department of Afrikaans, a position I'm desperately trying to hold on to. In investment circles, everyone now talks of diversifying. Joining this programme was my way of diversifying – my way of going "offshore". In another sense, but with the benefit of hindsight, being part of this seminar-based doctoral programme has also given me exposure to international academics of repute in their respective fields.

The plans for this paper were conceived in our very first session. Our programme co-ordinators encouraged, and stressed the need to publish. They said: "You could even publish your experiences of your baptism into the field of research which could help other novice researchers." I immediately latched onto this investment "tip". However, I hope that my reflections will also offer other programme co-ordinators of doctoral programmes an insight into what has been described as "the most flourishing doctoral programme in the field of education in South Africa."

My research reminds me a lot of my experiences during my house-hunting days. I had been looking for a house in 1996 for approximately two months. We saw many houses during that period – a period of exploration. In research, one of the co-ordinators refers to this as a period of "allowing yourself to dream". And then one day, there appeared this black and white photograph in our local newspaper – the sun obscured much of the house. All that was clearly visible was a fence that bordered what looked like a pool. But there was something in the curvature of that fence that drew me to the house – something that made me want to explore "my hunch" further. (About research – one of the co-ordinators spoke about building in the need to know.) The rest, as they say, is history.

My research was conceived in much the same way. We started our doctoral programme with a talk on what our dissertation topic might be. From the many useful things that the presenter

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[54] The University of Durban-Westville hosts a seminar-based doctoral programme which involves monthly contact sessions over weekends.

had to say, one phrase stuck in my mind. I don't recall the context in which it was used. But it had a poetic quality to it, the like of which I had not heard for some time. And because I come from a literature background, I was drawn to it like a moth to a flame. (No, like sea-water to the shore – that is a better description). The phrase that he used? "Building an Architecture of Knowledge." From the moment those words left his lips, I knew it would form the cornerstone of my research. I also knew that when I began floundering in the stormy waters of that which is called PhD research, I could always return to this title as a point of reference. (Very much like the way in which sea-water always revisits the shore).

But now I'd like to talk about something totally unintentional that happened during our group's second meeting. It's almost uncanny how things sometimes fall into place. During this second group meeting, we had to present a tentative plan of where our research was heading. During my talk, I was problematizing certain common-sensical statements around OBE, particularly, the statement that all students can succeed, but not on the same day, and not in the same way. I recounted my own experiences to problematize the issue. I told them of my experiences in Std 6-7 (Grades 8-9). I was always a good student at school (top 10%). But for 2 years, I failed hopelessly in just one subject – Technical Drawing. In all the other subjects – above 70%. But in Technical Drawing, I averaged 25% (and that because of the goodwill of the teacher). Yes, the group tried to persuade me that I had a mental block, etc. But I soon persuaded them that Technical Drawing was not meant for me – not ever. All of this, of course, had the group bent over with laughter. How could a man who couldn't understand Technical Drawing have as his research topic: Constructing an Architecture of Knowledge around OBE and its implications for Language Education. But this only served to strengthen my resolve – it was as if God had intervened, saying: you may not have the foggiest notion about Technical Drawing. You may have lost out on the opportunity to design your own home by buying someone else's home. But I'll give you the opportunity to "Construct an Architecture of Knowledge around OBE and its implications for Language Education."

At our third meeting, dealing with Research Proposal Writing, only three symbols were on our minds – PG2 – an administrative requirement dealing with your research proposal. (NB. In most religions, three is an important number. And trust me, as a novice researcher, you are as much in awe or intimidated by the PG2 form as you are by religion. For poetic effect, I will not entertain people taking issue with the latter half of my sentence).

We arrived a bit late for this third gathering. The co-ordinators were saying something about directions to someone's home. I thought: "only these two strange individuals could come up with such a strange example." But wait that came out a bit wrong. Rather say: Such obscure comments from two, anything but obscure members of the Faculty of Education. And then I saw it (though they never phrased it this way): the f..... Research Proposal is a map. Or as the co-ordinators put it: "Research Proposals are like sets of directions." At that moment, I wanted to kiss them. They made it seem so simple. Suddenly, it wasn't this mysterious process I had been having nightmares about. That's what I like about both of them – the metaphors they offer to illuminate our understanding. It's like something I remember from my literature background on the elusiveness of meaning: You can never see the wind; only its effects on the trees. And that is what the co-ordinators do. We as research novices are looking for the wind – they point and say, "look at the leaves".

The next step was deciding on our Statement of Purpose. Now I know that some people have

a flair for this. But for me, even though I consider myself an intelligent person, and even though it only had to be one sentence, (incidentally, I didn't know this either), this was a daunting task. But by putting up examples of good and bad Statements of Purpose, everything began to seem so simple that you actually start to feel stupid. After all, how often can you say you took almost 30 minutes to formulate one sentence.

Overnight, we had to develop our critical questions. Once again their explanations about the use of "wh- questions" in your critical questions, about {subject/object/site} always having to be in your critical questions, (this {subject/object/site} follows from your Statement of Purpose) was really empowering. I know this word empowering is something of an empty word in the S.A. context, but today I really feel empowered. And that is even though I'm not sure how my critical questions stand up to accepted research practice. Right now, I'm on a high. I feel I'm capable of anything. PG2 is beginning to feel like 1-2-3 (and reader, remember, there's a fine line between confidence and arrogance, so don't be judgmental).

Today was the last day of our session. I strutted into the class as though I hadn't a worry in the world (something I'd pay for dearly for the rest of the day). Today I felt like being alone – I wanted individual time to consolidate on issues that were still fresh in my mind – otherwise they disappear like clouds in one's coffee. But this was not to be – my confident look saw to that. You see, we were grouped with the Masters students. And they interpreted this PhD student's strut as "He knows it all". If only they knew. But the more I tried to convince them otherwise, the greater grew their belief in me as the all-knowing subject. I couldn't help but think, one-eye is king in the land of the blind.

But what fascinated me today was one of the co-ordinator's discussions on the construct of validity. According to her, in the interpretative paradigm, one cannot use the construct of validity. Rather one has to talk of authenticity, trustworthiness. In the critical paradigm, she spoke of catalytic validity i.e. whether your research participants are moved from where they are. In her own research, she coined the construct democratic participatory validity i.e. to what extent were participants involved in the research process. This, for me, was a truly fascinating discussion. I'm quite certain I could easily have gone through my entire research project for four years and never made this discovery. As a researcher, as a lecturer, I can feel my personal growth. Now just to get my waistline to shrink!

Driving home, I kept thinking of Eric Clapton's song 'Running on Faith.' That's exactly my disposition towards my research. I feel like a traveller driving to an unknown place, like the first time I drove to the Eastern Cape. I had never been there before. But I was confident I would find Plettenberg Bay. I knew I most probably would take one or two wrong turns. But with the directions offered by the Automobile Association (AA) map I knew I would get there. That's how I feel about my research. These co-ordinators are like my AA. I tell them the place I would like to visit. They discuss with me various ways of getting there. And even if I get lost, or my car (substitute computer; worst case scenario – my brain) packs up, help is at hand – 24 hours a day. (This is no exaggeration.) It is said life/research is a journey. I'm looking forward to the ride!

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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Freire, Paulo. 1995. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York: Continuum.

Journal Article
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