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Discipline and Mathematise: The Myth of Relevance in Education

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In this paper¹ I attempt to move towards a sociology of the epistemological distinction between academic and everyday knowledge. I introduce the distinction with reference to various texts including UK school mathematics textbooks. I argue that the fundamental nature of this distinction tends to be ignored in positions which advocate the fusion of the academic and the everyday and by those who construe education in narrowly utilitarian terms. I suggest that the division of labour constitutes two distinctive modes of social relations which generate, respectively, academic and everyday knowledges as mutually incommensurable forms. This division of labour has generally operated such as to constitute a reflective division between groups (eg in terms of class and race). The resulting hierarchy is clearly contrary to the principle of democracy. Rather than seeking to ignore the division, a more productive approach might be to work towards its penetration of the individual aiming at a productive dialogue between the two forms of knowledge which develops both whilst maintaining their respective specificities.

BACKGROUND

In a stimulating and well-argued paper, Johan Muller and Nick Taylor² offer an important caveat for 'hybridising' curriculum developers. Specifically, they point to the dangers of too readily assuming a continuity between academic and everyday or commonsense knowledge. Here, I shall attempt to move towards a sociology of what I perceive as a fundamental epistemological distinction. I shall draw on my own theoretical and empirical research in the sociological analysis of mathematics texts³ and on some recent developments by Basil Bernstein.⁴ The proposition that I wish to develop is that the division of labour constitutes two distinctive modes of social relations. These modes generate, respectively, academic and everyday practices and knowledges which are, thereby, mutually incommensurable. Thus, the widely held belief that school knowledge can be made relevant to the everyday and to working practices in any direct sense is, I shall argue, mythical. I shall examine the nature of the incommensurability of these practices and, in the final section of the paper, I shall consider how it might be utilised in productive dialogue.

An important qualification must be stated at the outset. The expression "division of labour" may be interpreted as oppressive, in the Marxist sense, involving alienation and exploitation. Alternatively, it may invoke the interdependency of Durkheim's⁵ "organic solidarity". However, organic solidarity itself may entail the exclusivity of specialisms. My use of the term assumes the possibility of the division of labour penetrating the individual. In arguing the value of academic

practices, therefore, I am not seeking to maintain an elite, but rather to generalise access. The incommensurability of the academic and the everyday does not imply that we must be restricted to one or the other.

I shall begin with a brief consideration of some points made in the African National Congress (ANC) discussion document, *A Policy for Education and Training*,⁶ which has established the crucial arena for current debate on the curriculum in South Africa.

INTRODUCTION: DISCIPLINE AND KNOWLEDGE

The national core curriculum for the [General Education Certificate and Further Education Certificate] will:

[...]

(vii) Foster self-discipline⁷

One of the problems – or, perhaps, one of the advantages – associated with any document that is intended for wide circulation is the necessary dependency upon assumptions of commonsense understandings. In everyday conversation, "self-discipline" is likely to be an uncontested and unproblematised term referring to a positive personal quality. We might expect it to be glossed over without a second thought. In the context of such an important issue, however, it makes sense to enquire about the origins of the discipline.

"Self-discipline" would seem to refer to some internalising of the regulative structures and values of society. Foucault⁸ suggests a metaphor for the disciplinary society in Bentham's panopticon. The prisoner cannot see whether or not s/he is being watched from inside the dark central tower. S/he, therefore, takes on the responsibility for her/his own surveillance in what is precisely self-discipline. An apparently pessimistic image. Durkheim⁹ associates a strong common consciousness with mechanical solidarity. This strong disciplining of consciousness is substantially replaced by interdependence within the complex division of labour of organic solidarity. This release from the tight bonds of the collective consciousness allows and is the result of an increase in the scope for individual expression.

It is, perhaps, the integration of the individual into a system of interdependence that the ANC document is getting at by the use of the term "self-discipline". Certainly the document opposes self-discipline to the imposed, authoritarian discipline of the apartheid state and of an examination-driven curriculum. The core curriculum will "[b]e learner-centred and non-authoritarian and encourage the active participation of students in the learning process" and "[p]roblematise knowledge as provisional and contested".¹⁰ Yet there appears to be a certain tension between this emphasis on learner autonomy and the document's apparent reluctance to problematise its own knowledge and authority. The policy framework proposes

central control over certification and over the evaluation of textbooks. Its only mention of educational research is presented in an authoritarian way:

The gradual introduction of the language of wider communication as a language of learning is based on the research evidence which strongly suggests that the conceptual development of children is facilitated by initial learning in their home language.¹¹

"The research" is not identified for our scrutiny, but is presented in a way that subordinates the reader to the greater authority of the text.

In a similar vein, the document repeatedly announces a commitment to the integration of education and training, of the academic and the vocational. The existing curricular provision is claimed to lack relevance¹² and science and mathematics education is too abstract and theoretical:

... science and mathematics education and training, both school-based and work-based, must be transformed from a focus on abstract theories and principles to a focus on the concrete application of theory to practice. It must ensure that students and workers engage with technology through linking the teaching of science and mathematics to the life experiences of the individual and the community.¹³

It would be disingenuous to claim that the ANC document is deliberately dogmatic and authoritarian. This is very far from being the case. Nevertheless, and its status as a discussion document notwithstanding, there are strong suggestions of the non-negotiable. Amongst those with which I wish to take issue are the apparent devaluing of the academic as appropriate school knowledge and the emphasis on student-centred – which I take to imply constructivist – pedagogy. John Volmink has described a number of features of the latter, of which one is an extension of the mathematics curriculum to incorporate "situated problems":

the bulk of the curriculum should be based on authentic problems which will force students to engage with mathematical ideas and construct their own modes of expressing these explanations. The role of the teacher would be to negotiate with students as to how these forms of representations can be refined and expressed more accurately, succinctly and elegantly.¹⁴

Clearly, a shift is proposed in the balance of authority in relation to a more traditional curriculum. This is the case both in terms of the teacher's authority – who must now negotiate with students – and the authority of mathematics as a discipline. Authenticity is to be related to relevance, foregrounding, perhaps, engagement with what Volmink has described as "situated problems":

Situated problems arise outside formal mathematics, but give rise to mathematical actions, structures on [sic] insights. Their solutions directly affect decisions in our own lives or about something we really care about. In [one example], Ian made a mathematical construct (histogram) to help him to negotiate with his parents. It led to a decision that affected his own life as well as that of his sister and brother.¹⁵

A curricular programme which places subjectivity within a Rousseauian expressive and constructive student and which weaves knowledge as a seamless robe

romanticises both the subject and the everyday. I do not want to deprive Ian of his histogram, nor to challenge its value as a possible resource in respect of the everyday. I do, however, intend to argue that the mathematics classroom is not the place to get him to solve his problems with his parents. I shall initiate the argument with a discussion of an aspect of Muller and Taylor's paper.

FROM BOUNDARIES TO REARTICULATIONS

In their paper, Muller and Taylor introduce the following polarising of the current debate on curriculum:

Insulation stresses the interdictory and impenetrable quality of cultural boundaries, of textual classification, of disciplinary autonomy. It highlights the integral difference between systems of knowledge, and the difference between the forms and standards of judgement proper to them. It stresses the virtues of purity and the dangers of transgression. *Hybridity*, by contrast, stresses the essential identity and continuity of forms and kinds of knowledge, the permeability of classificatory boundaries, and the promiscuity of cultural meanings and domains.¹⁶

In Bernstein's terms¹⁷ we might label "insulation" as an epistemology of strong classification (C^+) and "hybridity" as one of weak classification (C^-). Muller and Taylor are particularly interested in the strength of classification between formal, or academic knowledge and everyday knowledge. Their position is that, whilst curriculum theory should be concerned with how this boundary is traversed, this may not be best achieved by wishing it away:

The strategy of the constructivists is to reason that exclusion occurs because of an unwarranted disparity between curricular content and the sensuous content of the everyday lives of the children who must learn this foreign and hostile knowledge. This disparity constitutes an unnecessary barrier to the learners: it is a barrier arbitrarily constructed by agents of the status quo, and it must therefore be removed in the interests of empowerment and emancipation. This strategy is, we argue, extrapolated from a strong social constructivist epistemology which can be read to say that, since barriers of this sort are socially or discursively constructed, they can just as easily be dismantled by the same means.¹⁸

Without necessarily adopting the contrary position themselves, Muller and Taylor wish to explore the possibilities of considering commonsense and esoteric knowledge as distinct forms. Following Shotter, for example:

First, the subject matter of common sense is determined by sensuous events and is thus wholly contingent on circumstance, whereas that of academic discourse is predetermined by the arbitrary systematics of the canon. Secondly, because of its systematic objectivisation, the subject matter of academic discourse can, as Wittgenstein has said, be surveyed in rational contemplation, that of common sense not.¹⁹

From this perspective, academic discourses constitute their own objects. They are, Muller and Taylor argue, arbitrary. Commonsense, on the other hand, is not. The

two forms of knowledge are, in this respect, incommensurable and ignorance of this situation entails danger:

Common sense cannot accede to arbitrariness; esoteric discourse cannot proceed without such accedence. To insist on the radical equality of worlds of discourse is, paradoxically, not to threaten the 'standards' of academia (pace the conservatives), but [...] to threaten common sense, by the wholly inadvertent imposition on common sense of an arbitrary academicised way of constructing objects.²⁰

"Hybridising", then, involves a moralising of the everyday by arbitrary discourses.

My own position coincides with that described (if not necessarily adopted) by Muller and Taylor in respect of the incommensurability of these two forms of knowledge. However, I disagree with the reason that they put forward. As a sociologist, I must focus my attention on the distinctive nature of the social relations which are constitutive of the two "worlds of discourse". Before doing so, however, I shall discuss two key differences that I have with the position represented by Muller and Taylor.

First, the description of commonsense as non-arbitrary appears to be predicated on an assumption that the everyday is driven by something which is pre-social. This might, for example, refer to the "natural" world. However, this would appear to underplay the human facility to constitute material practices in terms of the modality of social relations. This is a facility that is clearly understood by Marx. Human societies constitute their everyday material practices in diverse ways. These practices are, in other words, just as arbitrary as are academic practices and to deny this is to deny the everyday its creativity.

In my own work, I have made a distinction in terms of the degree of "discursive saturation" (DS) which characterises practices. An academic discipline entails a highly complex and articulated regulation within language: a "discursive-formation".²¹ This regulation will comprise a combination of explicit principles and canonical texts. The utterances of such a discipline are highly generalised and relatively independent of context. Such activities are described as exhibiting high discursive saturation (DS⁺). Everyday activities, on the other hand, do not, generally, exhibit regulation within language in the same way or to the same degree. The principles of such activities are, in general, tacit rather than explicit and there are no canonical texts. The utterances of such practices are highly local and context-dependent. These practices exhibit low discursive saturation (DS⁻). There is, however, no distinction between DS⁺ and DS⁻ activities in terms of arbitrariness: they are all arbitrary. The social, in other words, is characterised by heteropraxis as well as heteroglossia.²²

My second point of difference with Muller and Taylor's representation concerns the notion of "boundary". Essentially, the bounding of knowledge suggests a notion of knowledge as contents. Indeed, this is the way in which Bernstein originally referred to classification:

Classification, here, does not refer to *what* is classified, but to the *relationships* between contents. Classification refers to the nature of the differentiation between contents. Where classification is strong, contents are well insulated from each other by strong boundaries. Where classification is weak, there is reduced insulation between contents, for the boundaries between contents are weak or blurred. *Classification thus refers to the degree of boundary maintenance between contents.*²³

Whilst the metaphor is entirely appropriate for Bernstein's ongoing project (and may, indeed, be appropriate for that of Muller and Taylor), I cannot conceptualise 'boundary' within my general methodology, which is, essentially (post)structuralist.²⁴ I start with a heuristic notion of a Global Semantic Universe²⁵ of signs. In my head, I have an image of one of those molecular models one finds in (well-equipped) chemistry laboratories. Any specific practice/knowledge – I use the term 'activity' – will constitute and will be constituted by a particular state or articulation of that Universe. The value of signs within the system will be given by the specific form of relations with other signs established by the articulation as a specific activity.²⁶ The possibility of a boundary between activities thus evaporates. Crudely, a sign may quite easily be carried between activities, but its signification will, of necessity, be transformed, because it will participate, relationally, in distinctive systems.

The original state, the Global Semantic Universe, is also erased, as all heuristic devices – like construction lines in a scale drawing – must be. There is, in my conception, no positivist or realist universe which lies beneath all of its representations. We move, not between truth and representation, but from representation to representation. Uncertainty does not arise out of the gap between a yet-to-be-grasped truth and the misrepresentation of that truth within a given activity. Rather, the unthinkable may be construed as the inevitable incompleteness of articulation and the ultimate ineffableness of the non-discursive with respect to the discursive.

Boundary metaphors make it all too easy to invent militaristic strategies involving the breaching of barriers and the invasion of territories. Alternatively, perhaps, they invite the softer, hermeneutic strategy of Gadamer²⁷ in fusing horizons. The possibility of unifying the cultural domain, whether by the sword or the pen, becomes possible, even if only as a vision. The sheer enormity of the task of rearticulating the semantic universe into a single, substantive system is clearly beyond curriculum developers.²⁸ We may, however, realistically postulate the existence of such a unique articulation: prior to the advent of human life on this planet – and after its demise.

Then what, precisely is the nature of the relationship between activities? In order to address this question sociologically, I shall have to move beyond the cultural level to which the discussion has thus far been confined. Before doing so, however, I shall introduce some examples which may provide further heuristic orientation.

MYTHOLOGISING THE EVERYDAY

The first example is from one of the curriculum developers described by Muller and Taylor as "hybridisers", Paulus Gerdes. In considering the non-industrialised production practices of Mozambicans Gerdes asserts that:

There exists 'hidden' or 'frozen' mathematics. The artisan who imitates a known production technique is "generally" not doing mathematics. But the artisan(s) who discovered the techniques, *did* mathematics, *developed* mathematics, was (were) thinking mathematically.²⁹

Elsewhere, Gerdes illustrates the intended political impact of his "recognition" techniques in the classroom:

"Had Pythagoras not ... we would have discovered it". The debate starts. "Could our ancestors have discovered the 'Theorem of Pythagoras'?" "Did they?" ... "Why don't we know it?" ... "Slavery, colonialism ...". By "defrosting frozen mathematical thinking" one stimulates a reflection on the impact of colonialism, on the historical and political dimensions of mathematics (education).³⁰

Colonial power has artificially created boundaries where, in fact, there are none. The mathematics entailed in building huts and weaving buttons, in Mozambique, and in making sand drawings in Angola³¹ is essentially the same knowledge as that which is celebrated as the product of European civilisation. Luckily, another European is at hand to reveal the real value of their culture to those whom his ancestors have oppressed.

Of course, the oppression is real. But Gerdes' intervention is an extension of it and not its overthrow. Gerdes' valuing of Mozambican and Angolan culture is being made in precisely European "mathematical" terms. And he goes further, as I have argued elsewhere.³² "The artisan who imitates a known production technique is 'generally' not doing mathematics": Gerdes is denying creativity to the Mozambican practitioner by projecting onto the practices of the latter the structure of the "European" production line for which creativity is equated with resistance. "But the artisan(s) who discovered the techniques, *did* mathematics, *developed* mathematics, was (were) thinking mathematically": and this is precisely the projection of a European "great man" approach to history that sees each technological development as a reason to celebrate in the individual the intellectual power of its culture. The hut builders and sand drawers may or may not be ignorant of European mathematics. Gerdes is apparently ignorant of his own Eurocentrism.

I do not want to challenge Gerdes' political intentions. However, his writing is exhibiting the mythologising power of the European academic gaze when cast onto non-European practices. The gaze can recognize only exotic forms of itself. The European constructs the other as the public domain of its own expression. This public domain is constructed as a mythical plane on which African homunculi

participate in their everyday practices according to principles which European culture can divine, even though they may go unrecognised by the participants themselves. Gerdes' mathematical anthropology is a less sophisticated version of the objectivising structuralist gaze criticised by Pierre Bourdieu.³³

This mythologising gaze is a more general property of academic discourses. The following extract, from the UK secondary school mathematics scheme *SMP 11-1634*, mythologises shopping.

Soap powder is sold in "Euro-sizes".

These are Euro-sizes E5, E10 and E20.

In the McGee family there are 2 adults and 3 children.

The McGees use six E10 packets of soap powder each year.

C5 What weight of soap powder do the McGees use in a year?

C6 The E10 packet costs 2.59.

How much does soap powder cost the McGees each year?

C7 The E20 packet contains twice as much powder as an E10 packet. It costs 3.89.

(a) How many E20s [sic] would the McGees use in a year?

(b) How much would powder cost them if they used E20's?

C8 (a) How many E5 packets would the McGees use in 1 year.

(b) The E5 packets are on special offer.

At the moment, an E5 packet costs 95p.

How much would the McGees soap powder cost in a year if they used E5 packets?³⁵

Anthropological work by Jean Lave raises serious questions about the validity of constructing continuities across different activity/settings such as supermarket shopping and school mathematics.³⁶ However, recourse to such research is hardly necessary to reveal some of the violence that has been done to the setting in the above extract. None of the questions really make much sense within the context of domestic practice: whoever would want to know what weight of soap powder they would use in a year? Furthermore, the long timescale of the narrative ought, perhaps, to make allowances for inflation,³⁷ and the answer to C8 (b) given in the Teacher's Guide (11.40) suggests that either the "special offer" lasted all year (rendering it rather "ordinary") or the McGees bought a year's supply all at once. This, despite the family's apparent storage or money problems indicated by their customary use of the smaller and cheaper middle sized packet rather than the "better value" E20 size. The conditions have to be fixed in order to allow the exercising of the mathematical intention of the chapter, which is "to provide pupils with

experience of ratio problems".³⁸ This recontextualising is, however, apparently belied by the realism of the task formulation. The reader is provided with some "factual" information about shopping (Euro-sizes) and is introduced to a family. The task, itself, apparently concerns the optimising of the McGees' domestic routine. The setting, in other words, is highly localised in terms of both task detail and the community space of the family. The narrative is comparatively closed in terms of the level of detail given: this might be the reader's family, either now or in the future; or it might connote a "soap" family with which the reader may identify. Despite the distorting effects of the gaze, the task is being presented as if it is really about shopping. School mathematics has constructed a public domain which is a mythical plane of domestic activity.

The task is mathematically structured, but the text is silent on the matter of how it is to be read and on how the task is to be carried out. There is, deliberately, no explicit pedagogising of method in this chapter, as is common in the G series:

There are many methods of solving problems where ratio is involved. We have deliberately not set out a "standard method". After pupils have done a few questions, we hope that discussion with them will bring out these various methods, and thus help them tackle the next batch of problems.³⁹

There is an assumed transparency in the task text with regard to its reading and a repertoire of "strategies" within the classroom. The repertoire is activated by the "realistic" task and made explicit in "discussion". Thus, pedagogic practice, here, is a celebration of essential competences through official recognition and sharing in discussion. At the end of the chapter there is a bordered set of "discussion points", the first two of which are, "Why are things cheaper when you buy them in bulk?" and "Sometimes it is not sensible to buy in bulk. When is it silly to buy huge packets?"; the Teacher's Guide gives the following answers to these discussion points:

Cheaper in bulk: easier to handle, less packaging costs, less transportation costs, take up less space etc.

Large packs not best when you have little money, you can't store large packs, food might go off before you can eat it, prices might go down etc.⁴⁰

However, the inclusion of such discussion only serves to accentuate the domestic setting which has apparently been incorporated by school mathematics. In other words, we might ask why shopping should appear in a mathematics textbook. One reason might be to initiate a route into what I refer to as the esoteric domain of mathematics – the domain of specialised, unambiguously mathematical knowledge. Alternatively, the performance of the shopping tasks might be constructed as mathematically therapeutic. However, the text does not leave the public domain and, furthermore, there is very little (if any) explicit articulation of these shopping tasks with other tasks and exposition in the textbook series. Thus the tasks seem to be constituted for the benefit of optimising shopping practices themselves.

Mathematics, even if this is signified only by the subject or book title, is being constructed as a prior condition for optimum participation in the mythical plane of the public domain. This is a "myth of participation".

Two additional points may be made. First, as has been indicated, there is no pedagogising of method. Rather, methods are constructed as residing within the reader or within the setting: the reader's competence in participation is constructed as the prior condition for mathematics, whilst the latter is constructed as the prior condition for the reader's competent participation in the setting. The myth thereby deconstructs itself.⁴¹ Secondly, the setting, itself, is a recontextualising of shopping. The mathematical principles regulating the mythical plane of domestic activity are, in fact, not substitutable for the predominantly tacit regulation of domesticity. The criteria for successful completion of the tasks within the mathematics context are, therefore, different from and so not available within shopping practices. There is, in other words, no basis for the reader's competence. The myth of participation is precisely a shibboleth.

The shopping task is taken from a book in a series – the 'G' series – intended for "lower ability" students in year ten of compulsory schooling. The *SMP 11-16* scheme includes other series of textbooks aimed at different levels within the "ability" spectrum. The "Y" series, for example, is intended for students in the "top twenty percent" of the "ability range". This series incorporates a different mode of mythologising, as is illustrated by the following examples from Book Y1 (year 9 students):

Shopkeeper A sells dates for 85p per kilogram. B sells them at 1.2 kg for £1.

- (a) Which shop is cheaper?
- (b) What is the difference between the prices charged by the two shopkeepers for 15 kg of dates?⁴²

Britannia best British flour cost 0.71 for 12.5 kg.

Uncle Sam's best American flour cost \$1.30 for 3.5 lb.

If $1\text{ kg} = 2.2\text{ lb}$ and $\text{£}1 = \$1.85$, which brand of flour was cheaper, and by how much per kilogram?⁴³

Here, there is a clear semantic distance between the reader and the shopping setting and the narratives have become far more open. The first example uses a recontextualised algebraic resource, generalising through the use of letters which depersonalise the shopkeepers. This example also refers to a slightly exotic commodity and to a highly unrealistic quantity. The second case presents a transatlantic comparison which clearly cannot be relevant to most shoppers who would not be expected to board Concorde in order to get a cheaper pack of flour. In other words, the tasks include an exaggerated element of strangeness which ensures their dislocation from the domestic setting to which they now only indirectly relate. The reader is being invited to participate, not in domestic activity, but in the

mythologising itself. This is descriptive mythologising. Whilst the "G" reader is projected into the mythical plane of domesticity, the "Y" reader is to be drawn up into academic mathematics.

The tendency of the two textbook series to specialise their modes of mythologising constitutes a distributing strategy. "Higher ability" students are apprenticed into descriptive mythologising; "lower ability" students are provided with participative mythologising. Elsewhere⁴⁴ I have illustrated ways in which such distributing strategies are accompanied, in this textbook scheme, by positioning strategies which associate low and high "ability" with the working and middle classes, respectively. As far as textual strategies are concerned, then, "relevance", in terms of optimising participation in the everyday, is a fundamental criterion only to the "lower ability"/working class students. However, the relevance is, as I have illustrated, only apparent, because of the mythologising work of the gaze. Furthermore, participative mythologising tends to render invisible the principles of this mythologising. "Lower ability"/working class students are, thus, provided with "relevance" at the expense of either mathematical or everyday use-value.

Descriptive mythologising, on the other hand, tends to reveal these principles, because it always constitutes a move away from the public domain towards the esoteric. The "higher ability"/middle class texts also contain far more esoteric domain text.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the esoteric domain text in these texts tends also to realise the systematic complexity of DS^+ practices, whereas such esoteric domain text as there is in the "lower ability"/working class series is procedural and highly local in nature, corresponding more to the DS^- practices of the everyday. "High ability"/middle class students are thus to be apprenticed into academic mathematics and into the principles of the descriptive gaze.

Thus far, I have offered a description of the current situation as represented by the writings of one of the hybridisers and by the SMP textbooks. The next and fundamental problem is to consider the extent to which things might be otherwise. Is it possible, in other words, to constitute a participative and relevant curriculum which concerns the everyday, but which is not mythologising?

HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL PRACTICES: THE EVERYDAY AND THE ACADEMIC⁴⁶

Shopping is an example of what I have referred to as DS^- practices. This concept has been introduced as referring to practices which do not entail a highly complex and articulated regulation within language. Utterances within the context of such practices are always highly local and context-dependent. I want to suggest that the social relations which characterise this kind of practice can appropriately be described as "horizontal". This is a concept which has been introduced by Basil Bernstein⁴⁷ to describe practices which are constituted as a reservoir of strategies.

The individual will have immediate access to a repertoire, which is a selection from the reservoir. The acquisition and extension of an individual repertoire is achieved via the sharing of strategies within the context of weak framing. That is, there is no institutionalising of sequencing and pacing in pedagogic action. Furthermore, there is no institutionalising of pedagogic action in the form of an explicit grammar, or esoteric domain. Nor is an esoteric domain established in terms of canonical texts. On the contrary, texts and their grammars are always dependent upon the immediate material context. Under these circumstances, there can be no general evaluative principles. The evaluation of strategies can only be achieved in local and pragmatic terms, that is, "is it working?".⁴⁸ The division of labour regulating such practices is simple and closer to mechanical than organic solidarity.

Schooling is constituted within a complex articulation of the state, the family and the economic. The state regulates schooling in the normalising of a period of childhood and youth in terms of a hierarchical educational and training structure. Boards of governors and school inspectors are appointed, control is maintained over teacher supply and training, and the state frequently reserves the right to validate textbooks and certification agencies. The ANC document, discussed earlier, represents a strong programme of state regulation of schooling, as does the Education Reform Act in the UK.⁴⁹ The use of textbooks and other commercially produced materials and the role of certification for selection purposes establishes a direct link between schooling and the economic sphere. The achievement of this complex is the institutionalising of pedagogic relations and of their cultural realisations in academic knowledge. Schooling is thus characterised by explicit evaluative principles (which may or may not be made visible to the student). These evaluative principles are predicated upon institutionalised esoteric domains of knowledge which comprise a combination of more or less explicit and systematic grammars and canonical texts. The esoteric domains are organised in more or less strong framing in terms of the selection, sequencing and pacing of their transmission. The organisation of the academic, in these terms, exemplifies what Bernstein describes as "vertical" practices. The division of labour in respect of schooling is comparatively complex, in terms of disciplinary specialisms, and hierarchical, in terms of teacher-student and student-student relationships. This division of labour is closer to organic than mechanical solidarity.⁵⁰

The implications of this analysis for the pedagogising of the everyday are clear and are illustrated in the earlier discussion of the mythologising gaze of school mathematics. The institutionalising of an esoteric domain, of strong framing and of explicit evaluation principles constitutes school knowledges as DS^+ activities. The incorporation of DS^- practices by and within school knowledges must, therefore, constitute a recontextualising, a mythologising. The pedagogising of shopping in the "McGees" example, discussed earlier, exhibited certain similarities with the informal pedagogic action of horizontal practices. That is, strategies were not imposed, but "brought out" in discussion. The students are to be encouraged to

share their repertoires of strategies. However, rather than grasping the lived reality of the horizontal domestic practices, the mathematising of domesticity constitutes a mythical plane which occupies a space outside of both mathematics and the quotidian. The students are objectified by the mathematical gaze and recontextualised as homunculi which inhabit not the everyday world, but the mythical plane. Mythologised shopping is now subject to the generalisable evaluative principles of the vertical practice of school mathematics, but, at least in the "G" books, these principles are not made available to the students. This submission of horizontal practices to the mythologising gaze of vertical discourses is precisely the moralising of the everyday that Muller and Taylor signal.

There is a further difficulty arising out of the question of selection and sequencing. The gaze effects a selection of metonyms on the basis of esoteric domain elements. In other words, the everyday is reduced to sets of its features which are to be mapped onto specific mathematical structures. This entails that the sequencing of the public domain content is determined by the sequencing of the esoteric domain. This week we are doing "trigonometry", so we can project triangles onto the world and incorporate the result as mythologised "reality". Next week we will be doing "percentages", so we can search around for instances of this particular signifier and constitute a unity of what we find as a public domain region. There is, of course, no "everyday" motivation for putting together discounts in sales, mortgages, and the steepness of hills (measured, on continental European road signs, as percentages). The mythologising power of the discipline can be displayed by the extensiveness of the range of the public domain. This is further facilitated by the possibility of open, or highly partially described settings and extremely brief narratives: the everyday setting is, after all, no more than a token. The esoteric domain can always be prioritised. This is entirely consistent with the pedagogy of the descriptive myth, which invites the student to participate in the vertical discourse itself.

The pedagogy of the participative myth, however, is more problematic. Clearly, there is again a selection of metonyms which is achieved on the basis of esoteric domain elements. However, the exigencies of relevance dictate that the selection must be presented in terms of the importance of the everyday. This criterion must also inform the sequencing, which may, for example, be related to age-related interests rather than any pedagogic sequencing of the esoteric domain. The public domain sequencing of the "G" books, for example, constructs a trajectory out of the childish settings of the classroom and play to the adult world of the supermarket. A student-led curriculum in which students bring their own problems to the classroom opens up a space for an even more intrusive moralising and does nothing to render more visible the principles of the mythologising gaze.

The notion that schooling can have direct relevance to the everyday, which is to say, non-academic world is thus revealed as itself mythical. What, then, are the

possibilities for a more productive relationship between the horizontal and the vertical?

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A PRODUCTIVE DIALOGUE

I have attempted, in this paper, to problematise the emphasis on non-academic relevance which characterises the ANC discussion document and much other current writing on curriculum development. My argument has culminated in an introduction to a sociology of the academic and of the everyday which establishes these as incommensurable practices. This does not, however, lead inevitably to the reactionary position that appears to be exhibited in the SMP texts which I have described and which has, as I understand the situation, characterised much South African schooling. That is, the recognition of a fundamental sociological distinction between the academic and the everyday does not entail a necessary division of labour built on racial or on class lines.

Furthermore, it is certainly the case, as has been pointed out by Johan Muller,⁵¹ that the kind of distinction that I have made draws on a Durkheimian interpretation of the division of labour and that Durkheim's model was evolutionary. However, there is no essential evolutionism in my analysis. My argument is that everyday, or horizontal, practices constitute us all and that this is unavoidable and inevitable. Academic, or vertical, practices have been systematically distributed on class and racial lines, however. This has entailed the effective exclusion of the majority of the populations of both South Africa and Europe from the academic. This is variously achieved via the non-existence or inadequacy of schooling provision or, more subtly, by the insistence of the inclusion of the everyday and the relevant in terms of participative mythologising.

It might be noted that, in the ANC document, the only curriculum to remain untouched is that of the university in which academic freedom is to remain protected.⁵² The concern, then, is that those who ultimately produce the curriculum will have access to the principles of the esoteric domains which will dictate its form, but that these principles will remain inaccessible to all those who do not aspire to or are materially prevented from university education. How often do the vanguard prescribe something other than their own culture for those whom they would lead to freedom!

Vertical, DS⁺ practices, in the form of academic disciplines, are to be valued precisely because they facilitate the scrutinising and interrogation of the everyday. The horizontal context-dependency of the everyday ensures that utterances are always localised. Whilst the recognition of oppression and resistance against it is always possible within everyday practices, the scope for self-interrogation is limited by this localising. The principles of democracy inspiringly celebrated in the ANC document dictate, however, that those who do the moralising are those who are to be moralised: the emphasis must be on self-discipline and not oppressive regulation

by a state which guards the secrecy of the principles upon which the rest of us are to be judged. The democratic principles dictate, then, that the schools open up the availability of academic discourses to all.⁵³ The acquisition of such vertical practices necessarily involves subjugation to the evaluative principles of these discourses. Subjectivity of necessity entails subjugation. Academic subjectivity entails subjugation to a discipline. Only in this way can the DS⁺ practices be made available as structured resources for the interrogation of everyday practices by the practitioners themselves: discipline and then, and only then, mathematise.

Academic discourses, of course, cannot be taken to be timeless. This knowledge, too, must be problematised as provisional and contested as advocated by the ANC document. Firstly, their introspection is potentially interrupted by the intrusion of the empirical which is grounded in the everyday. Secondly, a dialogue between academic discourses – between sociology and mathematics, for example – may enable the focusing of attention on their own conditions of existence and the structures of power that are relayed through them. Both forms of dialogue, however, are predicated upon prior apprenticeship into the disciplines of the academic. Dialogue occurs between subjects who at once inhabit a position and recognise the possibility of the unthinkable within it.

The opening up of the academic, in these ways, can only be productive in terms of its own development. This is, of course, particularly important within the context of a society which is beginning to loose the shackles of European oppression. Both the academic and the everyday can benefit from the extension of "dialogue". If dialogue is to have social implications, however, then enfranchisement must proceed on the basis of genuine access to sociologically distinctive forms of knowledge. Self-discipline is nothing without the provision of both the material and discursive resources which enable it to structure itself. Oppression is precisely a state of power whereby technologies of the distribution of vertical and horizontal practices and discourses operate selectively on categories of individuals and groups which they thereby define and delimit. Self-discipline is predicated upon the free acquisition of both horizontal and vertical practices. This is the condition for democratic dialogue within a sociocultural domain which is characterised by both heteroglossia and heteropraxis.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented as a public lecture at the University of Cape Town School of Education in April 1994.
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3. P. Dowling, "Textual Production and Social Activity: A Language of Description", *Collected Original Resources in Education*, 16, 1 (1992); "A Language for the Sociological Description of Pedagogic Texts with Particular Reference to the Secondary School Mathematics Scheme *SMP 11-16*" (PhD thesis, Institute of Education, University of London, 1993); "Theoretical 'Totems': A Sociological Language for Educational Practice", in C. Julie et al (eds), *Political Dimensions in Mathematics Education: Curriculum Reconstruction for Society in Transition* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1993); "Discursive Saturation and School Mathematics Texts: A Strand From a Language of Description", in P. Ernest (ed.), *Mathematics, Education and Philosophy: An International Perspective* (London: Falmer, 1994); A. Brown & P. Dowling, "The Bearing of School Mathematics on Domestic Space", in R. Merttens et al (eds), *Ruling the Margins: Problematising Parental Involvement* (London: IMPACT, University of North London, 1993).
4. B. Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control volume 5*, (London: Falmer, in press).
5. Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1984).
6. African National Congress, *A Policy for Education and Training*, (Johannesburg: ANC, 1994).
7. *Ibid.*, 69.
8. M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (London: Penguin, 1977).
9. *Op cit.*
10. ANC: 69.
11. *Ibid.*, 64.
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14. J. Volmink, "When We Say Curriculum Change, How Far are We Prepared to Go as a Mathematics Community", in C. Julie et al (eds), *Political Dimensions in Mathematics Education: Curriculum Reconstruction for Society in Transition*, (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1993): 127.
15. *Ibid.*, 126.
16. Muller and Taylor: ms. p. 1, my emphasis.
17. See B. Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control Volume 3: Towards a Theory of Educational Transmissions, second edition*, (London: RKP, 1977); *Class, Codes and Control, volume 4*, (London: RKP, 1990).
18. Muller and Taylor, ms. p. 12.
19. *Ibid.*, ms. p. 7.
20. *Ibid.*, ms. p.8.
21. See M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, (London: Tavistock, 1972).
22. Cf. M. M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986); V. Volosinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973). Bakhtin, however, does not need to make the distinction, since, for him, the sign is always grounded in concrete practice: heteroglossia entails heteropraxis.
23. Bernstein, 1977: 8.

24. The parenthesising of 'post' intends that (post)structuralism is not non-structuralism. Rather, it denies unity or fixity in *langue* (or its analogue).
25. The term is Umberto Eco's; I am using it for heuristic purposes. See U. Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976).
26. Cf. F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, (London: Duckworth, 1983).
27. H-G. Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).
28. This is not, of course, to deny that attempts are constantly made to establish such a stable hegemony, nor that such developments are transformative (see, for example, E. Laclau & C. Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, (London: Verso, 1985)). An analogy might productively be made, here, between the tensions and constant reorganisations of a sociocultural domain which is energised by hegemonic and counter-hegemonic strategies, and the dynamic of cognitive development entailed in Piaget's hierarchised concept "equilibration" (see J. Piaget, "Opening the Debate", in M. Piattelli-Palmarini (ed.), *Language and Learning: The Debate Between Jean Piaget and Noam Chomsky*, (London: RKP, 1980)). I would, however, want to assert a greater degree of stability in the sociocultural chronotope than in that of the cognitive. Even if it is only by virtue of the sheer number of human beings alive at any one time, the transformation of the social is not to be grasped within a lifetime.
29. P. Gerdes, "How to Recognize Hidden Geometrical Thinking: A Contribution to the Development of Anthropological Mathematics", *For the Learning of Mathematics*, 6, 2, pp. 10-12: 12.
30. P. Gerdes, "On Culture, Geometrical Thinking and Mathematics Education", *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 19, 2, pp. 137-62:152.
31. P. Gerdes, "On Possible Uses of Traditional Angolan Sand Drawings in the Mathematics Classroom", *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 19, 1, pp. 3-22.
32. P. Dowling, "Theoretical 'Totems'".
33. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1977); *The Logic of Practice*, (Cambridge: Polity, 1990).
34. *SMP 11-16* is by far the most popular secondary mathematics scheme currently in use in the UK, being used by between 40 and 50% of secondary schools in England and Wales. It is published by Cambridge University Press.
35. *SMP 11-16 Book G4*, p. 18, drawing omitted; the vulgar use of the apostrophe to indicate a plural is representative of a common inelegance in language.
36. See J. Lave, *Cognition in Practice: Mind, Mathematics and Culture in Everyday Life*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1988); J. Lave, M. Murtaugh and O. de la Rocha, "The Dialectic of Arithmetic in Grocery Shopping" in B. Rogoff and J. Lave (eds), *Everyday Cognition: Its Development in Social Context*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984).
37. The possibility of prices going down is mentioned in the 'discussion points' in the Teacher's Guide, as noted below.
38. *Teacher's Guide to Book G4*: 14.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, 16.
41. See J. Derrida, "Semiology and Grammatology", in *Positions*, (London: Athlone Press, 1981); J. Sturrock, *Structuralism and Since: from Levi-Strauss to Derrida*, (Oxford: OUP, 1979).
42. *SMP 11-16 Book Y1*: 55.
43. *Ibid.*, 56.
44. P. Dowling, "A Touch of Class: Ability, Social Class and Intertext in *SMP 11-16*", in D. Pimm and E. Love (eds), *Teaching and Learning School Mathematics*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton,

- 1991); "Gender, Class and Subjectivity in Mathematics: A Critique of Humpty Dumpty", *For the Learning of Mathematics*, 11, 1, pp. 2-8; "Textual Production and Social Activity"; "A Language for the Sociological Description of Pedagogic Texts".
45. In "A Language for the Sociological Description of Pedagogic Texts", I established an estimate of more than 40% of the "Y" series as comprising esoteric domain text. The corresponding figure for the "G" series was less than 10%.
 46. The analysis which is introduced here is developed somewhat in P. Dowling, "Against Utility in Mathematics and Research: A Voice from the Twilight Zone" (plenary address to the annual conference of the Southern African Association for Research in Mathematics and Science Education, University of Cape Town, January 1995) and in "Spectres of Schooling and Utopia", *Arena*, (in press, Jan/Feb 1995).
 47. *Class, Codes and Control*, volume 5.
 48. Such evaluation is often tacit. That is, a negative evaluation is raised in consciousness only at a point of breakdown in recognition of parapraxis (see Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, (London: Penguin, 1973)). In making breakfast, one morning, I was suddenly thrust into the light of objectification when I became aware that I was pouring cornflakes into the teapot.
 49. See P. Dowling and R. Noss (eds), *Mathematics versus the National Curriculum*, (London: Falmer, 1990); M. Flude and M. Hammer (eds), *The Education Reform Act 1988: Its Origins and Implications*, (London: Falmer, 1990).
 50. A Freudian interpretation of the resonance between horizontal/vertical, prostrate/erect, feminine/masculine is recognised, but not elaborated here. Walkerdine's description of mathematics as a masculine phantasy is, however, not to be ignored any more than the fact that her own theorisings are also rationalising myths, as are mine (V. Walkerdine, *The Mastery of Reason*, (London: Routledge, 1988). Philosophical deconstruction, however, does not relieve us of the need to act with as well as on what we have.
 51. Private Communication.
 52. ANC: 116.
 53. That schools may be perceived as both having attempted and persistently failed to achieve this availability may have something to do with their misconstrual of the notion of discipline. Apprenticeship properly entails the construction of subjects, not the automation of objects (see Dowling, 1995, in press).

Classroom Talk, Interaction and Control: An Analysis of Teaching Strategies in a Mathematics Lesson

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This paper¹ reports on a reflective study of teacher-pupil interaction in a junior secondary mathematics lesson in which the author was the teacher. The study aimed to explore the extent to which a teacher who attempted to reduce her control over the classroom discourse, in order to allow for increased pupil participation and construction of knowledge, was able to achieve this, and the effects of such practice on the pupils' learning of mathematics. The contradictions that arise from these attempts are discussed in terms of potential and actual double binds that exist for the teacher and pupils in the classroom.

INTRODUCTION

Many studies of classroom interaction have focused on the control and power that the teacher exerts over the content and structure of the discourse and the knowledge produced.² This control is seen to be counter-productive to children's learning because they may be denied opportunities to develop their own ideas and construct their own meanings. Research in mathematics education, broadly informed by constructivist perspectives,³ has argued that encouraging pupils to talk more, and in different ways, in mathematics classrooms can be beneficial to learning. Encouraging pupil participation and discussion stimulates reflection and the refining of ideas,⁴ while interaction with peers' points of view increases the possibilities for conceptual growth.⁵

However, teachers who attempt to take account of such research in their classrooms may be faced with several difficulties. These include a tension between pupil control over their learning and the development of mathematical content knowledge,⁶ and dilemmas of when and how to intervene.⁷ The tension is not only a pragmatic one, it relates to understandings of the purposes of schooling, and the role of teaching in learning and development. In this paper I will show how a range of teaching strategies employed in one mathematics lesson, in which varying degrees of control are allowed to pupils, both reflects and produces the tension for the teacher and pupils. A useful frame for discussion of the tension and dilemmas is Mellin-Olsen's reformulation of the concept of the double bind.

THE DOUBLE BIND

Mellin-Olsen⁸ reformulates Bateson's⁹ construct of the double bind as a tool to analyse interaction and communication between teachers and students. Briefly, double binds result when contradictory messages are communicated to an individual. Crucial to the existence of a double bind is that the individual is not aware of the contradiction, and the messages which give rise to it are repeated.

For Mellin-Olsen the significance of the double bind is that it can be used to understand the tensions between the 'private' and the 'social' within the socialisation process.¹⁰ In formal education, contradictions arise when teachers want to allow learners the time and space to construct their own knowledge, while at the same time attempt to teach them the knowledge laid down by the curriculum. The messages that may be communicated to pupils are that they can express their own ideas and challenge the teacher's ideas up to a point, but eventually, for example in the examination, the teacher's knowledge is what counts.

Such contradictory messages would probably not arise in traditional 'transmission' pedagogy, where both teacher and pupils believe that only the teacher's knowledge is important, and her role is to transmit it to the pupils and their's is to learn it. Double binds would probably also not be expected in certain 'constructivist' pedagogies, those which assume that pupils *will* construct the appropriate mathematical knowledge, given the correct tasks and sufficient time to discuss and solve them.¹¹ The tensions arise for the many teachers whose understandings of teaching and learning lie between these two extremes.

On one level there is an epistemological assumption that students can construct knowledge that differs significantly from socially constructed mathematical knowledge.¹² This knowledge needs to be respected and maintained, at the same time as making the canon of mathematics¹³ available to pupils. On another level, and probably more widespread, is the experience that children can and often do learn by being told things at the appropriate time and in appropriate ways.

My position is informed by Vygotsky's¹⁴ theory of development. Development occurs through social relationships, particularly between a learner and a teacher. Vygotsky argues that learning precedes development, in that instruction, a teaching-learning relationship, is central to development. If we teach to current developmental levels, we condemn the child to remain at these levels. If we want the child to grow, we need to be constantly in advance of her development.

In contrast to the Vygotskian position a Piagetian perspective maintains that true learning can occur only after the prerequisite development has taken place.¹⁵ While some interpretations of this relationship argue that teaching is crucial to learning, although not development,¹⁶ the tendency in applying Piagetian ideas in education has been to suggest that direct teaching inhibits learning and development. This creates a double bind for teachers, since in practice we are constrained by the

curriculum and our own understandings of the knowledge that we are teaching. Hence an ideology of teaching has emerged in which teachers try to prompt and cue pupils to come up with on their own, the concepts that we want to teach them.¹⁷ This is reflected in the predominant form of discourse which has been observed in many classrooms,¹⁸ the initiation-response-feedback (IRF) exchange structure, where the teacher's main aim is to elicit the knowledge she wants from the pupils. She asks questions to which she already knows the answers, and if she doesn't hear the answer she wants, she modifies her questions or elicitions by repeating them, simplifying them or by giving hints or clues as to what the correct answer might be, until a correct answer is achieved. In this mode of interacting, the pupils seem to be active participants in the lesson, but what they are actively engaged in is trying to guess what the teacher wants them to say, rather than developing their own knowledge about the content of the lesson.

These observations, although made in non-South African classrooms, resonated with some of my experiences of teaching. I tried to move away from the IRF pattern of interacting and to create lessons in which there was more genuine activity on the part of the pupils. One way of achieving this aim was to open up issues for discussion in class, encouraging pupil participation, questions and different points of view, thus shifting the interaction patterns in the classroom. In reflecting on this aspect of my practice, I asked whether this shift was successful in enabling pupils to take some control over their learning. In the following analysis of a video recording of a lesson, I identify various forms of interaction between me and the pupils, and the concomitant control over classroom discourse and knowledge. Most of the interaction, including episodes where I do give over a certain amount of control to the pupils, reflects and produces double binds.

THE LESSON AND ITS CONTEXT

It has been noted by researchers¹⁹ that even when teachers attempt to change classroom practice to allow for more pupil talk, and believe that they are doing so, such goals are rarely achieved, due to institutional and other constraints. The institutional context in which I worked both enabled and constrained the success of my approach.

The school is well-resourced, with excellent teacher-pupil ratios, and relaxed teacher-pupil relationships. The mathematics teachers work together very closely, and provide an environment of considerable support for new ideas. In general an atmosphere of openness and debate is sustained within the school. With regard to classroom talk, many pupils do not speak English (the medium of instruction) as a home-language, but by the end of Std 6 most pupils are confident at expressing themselves in English, and participating in class and small group discussions.

However, many pupils at the school have experienced authoritarian and disrupted primary schooling. One of the stated aims of the school is for all pupils to

obtain an academic matric, and mathematics is compulsory for all pupils as one of their matric subjects. The focus of the junior years is to make up a backlog of both content knowledge and approaches to study. The already-scarce time needs to be shared between developing the pupils' abilities to participate in and sustain worthwhile discussion and debate, as well as developing their content knowledge. Further constraints were my own uncertainties about change, as well as sensitivity to pupils', parents' and other teachers' mistrust of change. So there are a number of goals and beliefs operating which may conflict with each other, and which contribute to potential double binds for both teachers and pupils.

The lesson that I have analysed is one of four Std 6 geometry lessons videotaped for another research project with a different focus. At the time of recording, neither the children nor I were aware that I would later attempt this kind of analysis. The lesson was the second of two on a set of questions (table 1), and was structured as a report back session on work done in groups of 2-4 students during the previous lesson, as well as some individual homework. So the pupils had thought about and talked through with their peers, some of the ideas that came up during the lesson. This allowed for more pupil talk and interaction. There were 17 pupils in the class.

An initial viewing of the video gives a sense of a lively, interactive lesson, with genuine pupil contributions and activity. A deeper analysis raises many questions about the activity and interactions, and highlights some contradictions and tensions.

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1. | If any of these is impossible explain why, otherwise draw it: |
| a. | A triangle with 3 acute angles |
| b. | A triangle with 1 obtuse angle |
| c. | A triangle with 2 obtuse angles |
| d. | A triangle with 1 reflex angle |
| e. | A triangle with 1 right angle |
| 2. | Is it possible to draw a triangle with angles that do not add up to 180°? |
| 3. | Say if the following sentences are true or false. Give reasons for your answer. |
| a. | A square is also a parallelogram |
| b. | A rectangle is also a parallelogram |
| c. | A rectangle is also a square |
| d. | A square is also a rectangle |

Table 1: The Questions

METHODS OF ANALYSIS

I have analysed the talk in the lesson in terms of the kinds of interaction that occurred. This means that both the pupils' and my activities are considered when allocating a label to particular sections of talk, although they have been labelled according to what I am doing. There are six different categories of interaction. They will be outlined here; examples from each category will be provided together with discussion in the following sections.

<i>lecturing:</i>	I or one of the pupils ²⁰ talk for an extended period of time, while the others listen.
<i>eliciting:</i>	I attempt to get pupils to articulate a particular answer (this often corresponds to periods of IRF exchanges).
<i>negotiating meaning:</i>	I reflect pupils' ideas back to them for reconsidering, genuinely try to find out what a pupil means, or try to convince them of my point of view.
<i>answering pupil questions:</i>	The pupils initiate ideas and I respond in some way.
<i>chairing pupil discussion:</i>	I play a facilitative role, by deciding who talks, and for how long, but don't contribute to the discussion.
<i>listening(or not there at all):</i>	pupils interact without intervention on my part.

All the talk, except for two short passages is describable using these terms. It is not always obvious which label best suits a segment of interaction, but when there is doubt it is between two consecutive categories. Thus the boundaries between the different categories are not clearly defined. The categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, a brief 'lecture' can be given as a response to pupil questions, or while I am trying to elicit some information. The categories are useful for my analysis because they reflect varying amounts of teacher and pupil control over the discourse.

A concept map (Appendix A) of the ideas discussed during the lesson proved very useful in providing an initial analysis of the relationship between the content and structure of the lesson and the kinds of interaction taking place. The most striking initial observation is the large number of ideas that came up during the lesson. If we encourage pupils to participate more actively, they will take the opportunities we provide and will come up with many ideas that we do not expect. There is no way that all of the ideas can be thoroughly developed or even taken up briefly. Teachers have to make decisions (usually on the spot) as to which ideas to take up, and in how much depth, which to cut short and which to ignore. Thus even when pupils are more active and lessons more participatory, the teacher maintains

some kind of control over the discourse and the knowledge constructed in the classroom. It is precisely these situations which may engender double binds.

In order to understand how the double binds may arise, it is necessary to analyse how the teacher uses her control. Mellin-Olsen refers to the level of control in removing or entrenching double binds.²¹ Going down the list above, the categories generally reflect decreasing teacher control. The concept map shows that much of the lesson consists of lecturing and eliciting, which are highly teacher-controlled, with only one session each where I answer pupils' questions or listen without intervening. This worrying observation warranted further investigation.

The above categories reflect two dimensions of teacher control, control over the content of what is said, and control over the form of the discourse. Control over form has been well documented, particularly with regard to turn allocation²² and the IRF exchange structure. During this lesson, I maintain far more control over the form of the discourse than the content. It is only when I am answering pupil questions or listening to their discussion that some pupils gain control over who speaks and when. There are only four minutes of these forms of interaction in the lesson. In contrast there are twelve minutes in which there is some pupil control over content, which is almost one third of the lesson. On one level, the teacher always has some control over content, she decides what content will be discussed, and in what ways. However, there are pupil ideas which come up during the groupwork and the report back session, which, although related to the topic being discussed, cannot be seen to come directly out of my questions or statements.

In order to understand why I make certain decisions about giving up and exerting control, the rest of the paper reports on a more detailed analysis of the various categories of interaction. First, the two categories most used and exhibiting the most teacher control, lecturing and eliciting are discussed. This is followed by a brief discussion of pupil questions, related to lecturing. Finally, the three modes of interaction which aim to promote discussion and activity among pupils, ie: negotiating meaning, chairing discussion, and listening, are analysed. Examples of interaction are given to illuminate how the relationships between level of control, the mathematical content and pupil activity reflect and produce double binds.

LECTURING AND ELICITING

From the concept map, it is evident that a substantial amount of the talk during the lesson fell into the lecturing and eliciting categories. It is instructive to compare how these two modes are used. One purpose that they both serve is to summarise the ideas that have been discussed. The lesson can be divided into 11 topically related sequences,²³ as shown in table 2. Three of these were concluded by lecturing and five with an elicitation.²⁴

Topic Discussed	Method of Conclusion
1. Right angle/ left angle	lecturing
2. 270° right or reflex?	lecturing
3. Two obtuse angles in a triangle?	eliciting
4. Straight/outside angles in triangle?	eliciting
5. Choose/draw, one/only one?	no summary
6. Two reflex angles in a triangle?	eliciting
7. How many right-angled triangles?	pupil summary
8. Angles of triangle add up to 180°	eliciting
9. Angles of triangle add up to 360°	lecturing
10. Is a square a parallelogram?	eliciting
11. Is a square a rectangle?	held over till next lesson

Table 2: Topically related sets and their conclusions

My summaries in the lesson include the pupils' ideas that have been raised during discussion, however, their crucial function is to make sure that the ideas that I believe are important are emphasised. This transmits the message that what is important, ultimately is the teacher's knowledge. In the next section, I will show that the one discussion which is not summarised (topic 5, table 2) is not crucial to the lesson, nor to the curriculum at this level. Even in the case where a pupil sums up the discussion about how many right angled triangles there are (topic 7, table 2), I have the final say:

Thandi: Cause miss because I we are like we're turning different um, we gonna get different things like different corners and then like there are so many different sizes, that's the only thing, straight, this way, this way.

Dumi: and that way also

K.B: O.K so there are lots and lots and lots and lots, O.K.

Thandi summarises what has been expressed in the class, that the right angle can have any orientation, and the triangle can have sides of any length. She has said previously that there are infinitely many right angled triangles. I re-interpret this as "lots and lots".

The following extract exemplifies many of the features and functions of eliciting, including summarising. The extract reflects an entire topically related set,

dealing with question 2 on the worksheet: Is it possible to draw a triangle with angles that do not add up to 180° (topic 8, table 2).

K.B: 6, Is it possible to draw a triangle with angles that do not add up to 180°

various: yes

yes

yes

yes

yes

K.B: Noxolo

Noxolo: You can have a [triangle with 157° but its

K.B: [Listen to Noxolo. You can get [a triangle with 157° ?

Noxolo: . [Yes miss

K.B: Did you get one like that?

Noxolo: Mm

(general mutter)

someone: yes miss

Noxolo: Mm, not exactly one hundred, if miss you said the question was is it possible to draw a triangle with angles that do not add up to one hundred, to exactly 180°

K.B: It is possible?

Noxolo: yes

K.B: O.K. What do other people think. Is she right?

general: yes

someone: not exactly

Sipho: it's supposed to be

Dumi: But miss

K.B: it's supposed to be?

Thuli: yes

K.B: [Why is it supposed to be?

Thuli: [You just get more or less if you make errors

Alex: cause we're innaccurate

K.B: O.K. we get more or less because we're innaccurate. We all got more or less 180 except a few, 157 and one someone got 122, didn't they?

(general mutter)

K.B: I remember that number for some reason, O.K. O.K., people we discussed this the other day, O.K., and what conclusion did we come to, all remember, Ruweida

Ruweida: Miss, we came to the conclusion that you could cut the vertex, the three, um three points of the triangle, and then you cut the vertex and then you get a straight line.

K.B: O.K., we all did that

general: yes

K.B: O.K., so I can say that except for a few innaccuracies because our pencils are very thick and we maybe make a mistake and we maybe add up inncorrectly which we shouldn't do O.K most, well all triangles will have angles that add up to 180°

general: yes miss

This episode displays the initiation-response-feedback exchange structure, as well as many other characteristics typical of this interaction pattern, such as: the teacher continues questioning until a correct reply is obtained, repeats or prompts incorrect or incomplete replies, and simplifies questions if the required response is not forthcoming. In this case, the pupils remember the previous lesson where they had measured angles and obtained answers different, in some cases substantially, from 180°. I prompt them for reasons for this, as well as to remember an exercise from a previous lesson, which involved cutting up angles in a triangle and making a straight angle with them. This activity, although remembered by only one pupil, held out in the end, as the officially sanctioned knowledge, backed up by the pupils' remarks on inaccuracies in drawing and measuring angles.

The next extract from the transcript shows how I summarise the discussion on the meanings of right and left angles with a lecture (topic 1, table 2):

K.B: O.K. now the word right has got a lot of different meanings. What are some of them? Darren

Darren: right hand miss, right hand side

K.B: right hand side, O.K., so it's right hand, Tracy

Tracy: correct, miss

K.B: correct

Sipho: the vote, the right to vote

K.B: a right, a human right, the right to vote, O.K.

Arthur: turning to the right

K.B: turning to the right, same as right hand side O.K. I think those are three of the most common ones but another one that I found was: vertical, like right can mean straight or vertical, the one dictionary said, O.K. if you think about it, right, correct means just right, it means almost straight, if you standing like this, you a bit not right but if you're like this, then you're right, and I think that maybe thats where it comes from – it doesn't come from any of these meanings, but it maybe means straight or vertical. Now for us of course those two are different, O.K. because we talk about straight like Arthur said, here 180° is a straight angle, and 90° is a vertical, O.K., so I think, I'm not sure, but I think that that's maybe where the word comes from, that's why its a right angle and not a left angle, it has nothing to do with this, with your right and left hand side.

In this case, lecturing ends a session where I tried to elicit information from pupils which they clearly do not have, so I tell them. In the discussion on angles in a triangle, the points being discussed had come up in the class previously, and so I tried to draw on the pupils' ideas, eliciting what I believe they had learned from recent experiences. Eliciting attempts to allow pupils to express the important ideas themselves, rather than the teacher doing all the summarising. Used in this way, it may not be as damaging as Edwards and Mercer suggest. If the pupils have developed some of the concepts, and are able to express them, there is no reason why they should not be prompted to do so.

The difficulties arise, when, as in the first extract above, the pupils articulation of their ideas or activities do not meet the teachers expectations and so she is forced to steer the discussion in a way that the crucial points are emphasised. This reflects the classic double-bind situation, where the pupils' understandings of what they have done are accepted only inasmuch as they contribute to the knowledge that the teacher wants the pupils to come away with.

Thus in comparing the two modes, it seems that on the one hand lecturing is more honest, and less prone to double binds. By telling pupils what we think is important, the information that they need in order to engage with the concepts is provided upfront for them to work with, and they are not left with contradictory messages. The rationale for eliciting is to become more child-centred, and to encourage the pupils to become active thinkers. We should remind ourselves that listening is an active process and that students can and do construct their own knowledge while being spoken to.

On the other hand, I have argued that eliciting can be useful. We may be able to reduce the accompanying double binds by making clear the purposes of the activity, and the teacher's questions. In the first example Noxolo did not understand the function of my question: Did you get one like that? (A triangle with angles adding up to 157°). I was suggesting that it was not possible to get one, and I did not believe that she had. On the other hand, she was using 157° as a hypothetical

example to make a point, and continued to do so, to answer the question that was being discussed.

A further point about lecturing is that I use it to answer pupils' questions. The second example above stems from a pupil's question about right and 'left' angles,²⁵ which her classmates were unable to answer, and so I provide an answer. Pupil questions are crucial to pupil activity and thus merit some discussion.

ANSWERING QUESTIONS

There are many examples of interesting pupil questions in this lesson, including the one mentioned above. A pupil's question initiates an exchange, and thus subverts the traditional IRF structure. An extended sequence of questions results in a loss of control by the teacher. There was one example in the lesson of such a sequence:

Thuli: Miss, I'd like to know, if like when you measure angles of shapes, why don't you measure the straight angles?

K.B: The straight angles, what do you mean?

Thuli: Like miss, if you draw a triangle and when you measure the shapes, the angles, you measure only the acute angles or the obtuse angles, but you never measure the straight

K.B: Those ones there?

Thuli: Yes

K.B: O.K. it's a good question, and I think the answers because they're not so interesting, O.K., they're there, we know that they're straight angles O.K., we know that they add up to 180° , if you want us to put a protractor there, its not really that essential, O.K. we could measure them. There's an even better question than yours, a question I think Dumi was asking yesterday, O.K. and that is why don't we measure these angles, the exterior, ... the outside angles,

O.K. and I think what we're dealing with at the moment is we're dealing with these flat shapes, O.K. three sides, three interior angles, four sides, four interior angles, five sides, five interior angles at the corners here, those are the ones we're measuring, O.K.

Thuli: Miss, if you've got like angles with a curve and no straight lines, how do you measure the angles?

K.B: It's very difficult, O.K. I'll talk to you about it afterwards

Arthur: Miss, in a test if they ask you perhaps how many angles can you make, can you mention the straight angle?

K.B: In a triangle?

Arthur: Yes miss

K.B: So, we give you this triangle, and how many angles are there? Well, how many angles do you think are there?

- Arthur: 9
- K.B: 9, tell me
- Arthur: Miss, there's three interior, three exterior and there's, uh, three straight.
- K.B: three interior, three exterior, and three straight, only three straight?
- general: no, more
- K.B: Where more, Claudia?
- Claudia: Miss, like in between the ... in between the, the straight and zero and in the middle, in the middle ...
- K.B: here
- Claudia: like in between the middle and A and ...
- general exclamation
- Noxolo: too much
- Dumi: its the same, its too much
- K.B: O.K. there certainly these here, (to Thuli) so maybe that's another answer to your question, they're just all over, O.K.

The pupils control the form of the discourse in this case, by jumping in with new questions as I finish saying something. Arthur and Thuli are two pupils who are particularly good at doing this, so many of the questions taken up in the lesson are theirs.

As can be seen from this extract, the questions are often not questions that I have heard or thought about before. My responses vary from giving a straight answer (to Thuli's first question) to deflecting till after the lesson (to Thuli's second question), to asking another question (in response to Arthur's question), which then changes the interaction into an IRF sequence. In this way I bring the discourse back under my control. It is important to note that the pupil's questions have been answered, except for the one which I decided would not be useful to discuss (Thuli's second question). In this case, I give a rationale for not discussing it, and the option to discuss it privately afterwards. If this is followed through, then the pupils are not receiving contradictory messages.

I want to suggest, first, that it is important to encourage pupils to ask meaningful questions in mathematics classrooms, rather than merely to answer them, and second, that in order to achieve this, we need to give them answers. This might lead to an increase in the lecturing mode, as we are forced to think on our feet to provide answers. We ought to distinguish between giving pupils information as a possible answer to their questions and telling them what we think they should know ie: the answers to our questions. In this way lecturing together with answering pupil questions may be the form of interaction least susceptible to double binds. If pupils

continue to ask questions, then they are actively engaged in the lesson, and should maintain their activity while listening to the answers to their questions.

In this section and the preceeding one, I have argued that there are times when teachers can and should talk, explain, tell, and give information. I have suggested that this mode is more honest and less counterproductive in certain circumstances than trying to elicit the information from the pupils. I have also suggested that it is an appropriate response to pupil questions. However, I am not suggesting that the old style chalk-and-talk methods are the best that we have, especially if they are all that we use. A pre-requisite for pupils to be successful listeners is that they are actively engaged in the lesson. In addition to this, a pre-requisite for pupils to ask meaningful questions is for them to be exposed to such questions, and to understand that questions are valuable and valued. In my lesson, a number of other interaction styles are used with the intention of maintaining activity and encouraging questions.

PROMOTING ACTIVITY: LISTENING, CHAIRING DISCUSSION AND NEGOTIATING MEANING

There is one period of four minutes where I can be characterised as listening, ie: I am not directly in control of the form or content of the discourse. During this time I leave the room briefly, and the pupils continue with their discussion, which turns into a heated argument. The argument, some of which follows, concerns question 1d (table 1).

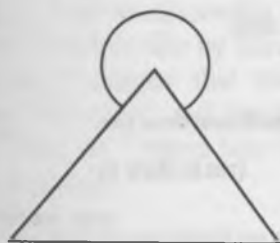
K.B: Alright lets go on to the next question. Is it possible to draw a triangle with one reflex angle? Darren, what did you, your group say?

Darren: We said yes miss

K.B: It is possible, hows it possible?

Darren: If you draw that angle there ... If you draw a triangle ... and we uh ... measure the, the, uh the reflex angle, the exterior angle, and these other two ... (inaudible)

he draws:-



- K.B: O.K. Thuli
- Thuli: Why don't you measure the other angles.. (inaudible)
- Mpho: the other side (inaudible)
(general talk for a few seconds, inaudible)
- Darren: But the question [says one
- Mpho: [Why?
- Thuli: O.K., so
- Claudia: So why can't you measure the other angles?
- Thuli: Ja
- Darren: I can measure any one, all of [them are reflex angles
- Dumi: [Any one, ja
- Thuli: It says here ... (trails off)
- Mpho: It says one
- Thuli: Is it possible to draw a triangle with one reflex angle? So you've got three angles and you can use (choose?) anyone of them, so it just doesn't mean it's only one.
- Someone: you choose anyone of them
- Thuli: Anyone?
- someone: Anyone
- Thuli: They want one, so you must draw one
(general inaudible talk and laughter)
- Dumi: so, so, so, so
- K.B: O.K. one at a time, one at a time. Who wants to say something, Sipho?
- Sipho: They say one, and there's one (points to the board). There he drew it.
- Thuli: Yes, he chose one, but he didn't draw one.
- Mpho: [He chose one of those three
- Thuli: [He drew three
- Thuli: Yes, you've got three, you[must draw one.
- Sipho: [but he drew [it
- Mpho: [one, not three
- Sipho: so he drew it, he drew it didn't he, there it is.

Mpho: He chose one of those

Thuli: Yes

Dumi: But you can see ...(trails off)

The discussion continues without resolution for sometime after this. There are complex arguments about whether Darren is 'drawing' or 'choosing' an angle. Siphso claims that indicating the angle with an arc is in fact drawing it, whereas the others are using the conventional meaning of drawing an angle (this becomes clear later in the discussion). It would have been useful to discuss this with Siphso. However, I did not fully understand what he was saying at the time. Only with repeated analysis of the transcript am I able to see the nuances of each pupil's point of view. Thus a major constraint for classroom discussion, if we are prepared to take pupils' ideas seriously, is that teachers may not understand them fully at the time of discussion, and may not be able to mediate appropriately.²⁶

This raises questions as to the value of discussions of this type. In this case, many pupils (including Thuli) had answered the question in the previous lesson in relation to interior angles, and so realised that this discussion was tangential to the question being asked. They were prepared to go along with it, and from the video it is clear that they were enjoying the argument tremendously. There is considerable emotional investment in this debate. Siphso and Darren were in the same group, so there is the possibility that Siphso is trying to defend their ideas, and his distinction between choose and draw is a line of defence. Thus there is the possibility that the argument itself has become more important than the mathematics.²⁷

It is not clear that this discussion served to develop any particular mathematical concepts. When I asked four of the pupils involved in the discussion (Thuli, Mpho, Siphso and Claudia) what they had learned from it, they all answered that there can be different interpretations of mathematics questions (relating to Darren's interpretation of an angle being outside the triangle). So what they gain from the discussion is an understanding of some mathematical knowledge or conventions being open to interpretation. I do not want to underplay this accomplishment. It is crucial for pupils to develop such an understanding of mathematics, and it was one of my aims as a mathematics teacher. However, this occurs here at the expense of the development of content knowledge, which is another of my concerns. For this reason, I attempt to regain control over the discussion.

The following extract shows how I do this by introducing an idea which I think is crucial to the pupils' debate. I suggest that they are misunderstanding the difference in meaning between 'one angle', and 'only one angle'. Most of the class does not see the distinction,²⁸ and so I move into a negotiating style, trying to convince them of my own point of view.

K.B: O.K. I think the difficulty here is that I didn't say only one

- Dumi: Ja
- K.B: If I said draw a triangle that has only one reflex angle, would that be clear?
- Candice: Yes
- Mpho: But it does say one reflex (trails off)
- K.B: But is one the same as only one? (general mumble), if there are three reflex angles then is there one reflex angle?
- Mpho: No
- Thuli: No
- K.B: I think so
- Thuli: If like, if you say only one, only ... (trails off)
- Sipho: But you're drawing, but you're drawing ... (trails off)
- Darren: It's impossible now
- K.B: So it's impossible to draw, to draw a triangle with only one reflex angle?
- Chorus: Yes
- K.B: With only one
- Chorus: Yes
- K.B: Is it possible to draw a triangle with one reflex angle?
- Chorus: [No]
- Sipho: [Yes miss[it's possible]
- Thandi: [it's possible]
- Dumi: Yes
- K.B: If a triangle's got three reflex angles, has it got one reflex angle?
- Chorus: No
- Sipho: You just don't draw the other two
- Mpho: [there three
- someone: [there three
- K.B: Is there one?
- Chorus: No
- Mpho: [There three
- Thuli: [There three

someone: [There three

K.B: But there is one, there's one and there's another one and another one.
(general mumble)

Thandi: No

Thuli: There three

Thandi: [but look

Dumi: [1 + 1 + 1

Thandi: [Are you sure

Thuli: Thank you

Mpho: is three

Thuli: is three

Sipho: But you draw the other one (laughter)

The negotiation takes place because having lost control over both the form and content of the discourse, it is difficult to regain it completely. On reflection, I believe that I introduced the concept of 'only one' firstly, because I did not understand all the subtleties of the pupils' arguments, and secondly, because I saw a possibility to teach them something important, which I thought was related. I need to negotiate because I am trying to convince the pupils of my point of view. Only some are willing to accept it and my "I think so" is an attempt to steer them in my direction.

I only fully regain control when I end this discussion and move on to talking about the interior angles. Even though many of the pupils still disagree with me, I end the discussion and do not attempt to summarise it. This is the only section in the lesson that I do not summarise (see table 2, section 3). One reason for this is because it is too difficult to do so, because of the wealth of ideas expressed and not fully developed. A second, more crucial reason is that neither the pupils' discussion, nor my subsequent interpretation of it, is essential to the progress of the lesson and to the section of work being studied.

In reflecting on my actions, it appears that I do not explicitly privilege my own ideas because I know that these concepts will not be tested at this level. Thus on one level, a potential double bind is removed, since the pupils do not have to learn any particular content. However, reflecting on this discussion as a whole, what the pupils have learned from it is that there can be different interpretations of questions in mathematics, that discussions can be fun, but that the ideas developed in them are not crucial to their mathematics learning. So, on another level, their ideas are not formally validated, and they may still learn that only the teacher's knowledge really

counts. My purposes in enabling activity and engagement among the pupils are attained, but not without the contradictory messages.

It is instructive to compare the discussion just analysed with another, on question 3d (table 1), in which I chair, allocate turns and facilitate, without making direct contributions with regard to content.

K.B: O.K, number 4, a square is also a rectangle

general: yes, no

K.B: Arthur

Arthur: It's true, miss

K.B: Why's it true

Arthur: Miss, because the opposite sides are, uh, equal and parallel to each other

K.B: O.K, Thuli

Thuli: because it has four sides and two are equal and two are equal

K.B: O.K, Siphso

Siphso: Here we said a rectangle is also a square and, we said it's false miss, and now a square is also a rectangle, they said it's true, miss, but its the same question, [just turned around

[general agreement

Dumi: Yes

K.B: So how can one be false and the other one be true? Did you hear what he said?

someone: Yes miss

K.B: What d'you think Ruweida

Ruweida: Miss, I think it's false, they both false

K.B: You think they both false

general: yes

K.B: Mpho

Mpho: I think they're both true and they're both false

(laughter)

Mpho: Ja

K.B: O.K wait, let's just hear why she thinks that

Mpho: For our first, for our first answer we said its, uh, like we said false because the two lines are, the two lines on the side are, like on the top they are more than the ones on the side and ... (stops)

Dumi: uh huh, uh huh

K.B: What's wrong with what you're saying?

Thuli: I think the first one, no 3 it's false and no 4 is true cause a square is a four sided figure with equal sides, all 4 are equal, a rectangle is a four-sided figure and then 2 opposite each other are equal and two opposite each other are equal, so it means a square has got two sides that are equal and they opposite each other and another two sides and then a rectangle has that but a rectangle doesn't have equal sides, all 4 equal, so that.... (trails off)

K.B: (to Sipho) Did you hear her?

Sipho: Yes miss

K.B: O.K Say what you were going to say, and then I want you to respond to her.

Sipho: But a square. All 4, all 4 of them are always equal. But a rectangle like that one on the sides could be 5 and 5 and on the top 10 and 10, so it will never be the same square because a square will never have different, now how can you say it's it's true.

The tone of the second discussion is very different from the first. The protagonists are the same, Thuli and Sipho, but their ideas develop and are expressed more clearly for others to hear and engage with. I have had experience with this debate with previous classes, and it is one that I had planned for and thought through how to deal with. I know that both sides of the argument will be represented in the class, and I merely need to direct the discussion to make sure that they are heard. My presence tones down the argumentative nature of the debate, and allows for more extended, controlled and thoughtful contributions. Acting as a facilitator can be a very powerful technique, and from the comparison of the form of these two discussions is preferable to not being there at all.

Regarding the content, the double bind is still there, both for me and the pupils, since I know that I want all the pupils to understand that a square is a special case of a rectangle. De Villiers²⁹ shows that such an understanding is based on a hierarchical classification of quadrilaterals. Pupils working within a partitionial³⁰ classification would see a square as different from a rectangle, which is how many of the pupils in this class are thinking. De Villiers argues that a partitionial classification is equally valid mathematically, although a hierarchical classification has some advantages for classifying and solving problems. Again the issue is raised as to the possibility of children constructing meanings which differ from the teachers' meanings and the curriculum. De Villiers suggests that the pupils' partitionial classification should be fully developed in class, but that the ultimate aim is a hierarchical understanding, because of its convenience (he argues that pupils will see this convenience). It is here that the double bind might be most active. Pupils are encouraged to develop a different system which makes sense to them, and yet we want them to see the validity of our ways of thinking.

What is evident in all the interaction in this section is that there is a shift from an IRF pattern. My questions no longer reflect attempts to achieve closer approximations to my own answer, but rather to pose problems for the pupils to engage with and provide opportunities for me to engage with their ideas. This approach is effective in that it does maintain pupil activity. However, it is less clear how it enables conceptual development. What is clear is that there is potential for double binds to develop, and teachers who use such approaches need to be aware of this possibility.

In this regard, a position on learning and development which asserts socially constructed knowledge, and the social relationship between learner and teacher as crucial in the classroom, will not be able to escape double binds. However, double binds only exist if the individual who is receiving the messages is unaware of the contradictions at play. The teacher may be able to help remove them by discussing the contradictions explicitly, and by reflecting with the pupils on the purposes and goals of classroom talk and activity. Strategies to enable this need to be developed, and their effectiveness evaluated.

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have argued that it cannot be our aim as teachers to remove ourselves and our power from our pupils' attempts to construct knowledge. Rather, we need to attempt to relate their developing ideas to broader social and cultural knowledge. In attempting to do so, we will always work with tensions and contradictions.

There is no best method of teaching, rather, a number of different strategies that we can use. I have identified some of those that I use in the analysis of a single lesson. Each kind of interaction serves a different purpose in teaching, and gives rise to tensions and contradictions in different ways. Listening, chairing discussion, and negotiating meaning serve to maintain pupil activity and interest, and generate many different ideas, not all of which can be taken up, or even heard. On the other hand lecturing and eliciting serve to make available the knowledge of the curriculum. A form hardly used, but one which I think deserves more exploration is answering pupil questions.

Crucial to all forms of interaction is pupil activity and engagement with the ideas. This too can be achieved in a number of ways. Perhaps part of our development as teachers can be to identify the ways in which we do work with our pupils and try to push pupils' activity a little further within the constraints in which we work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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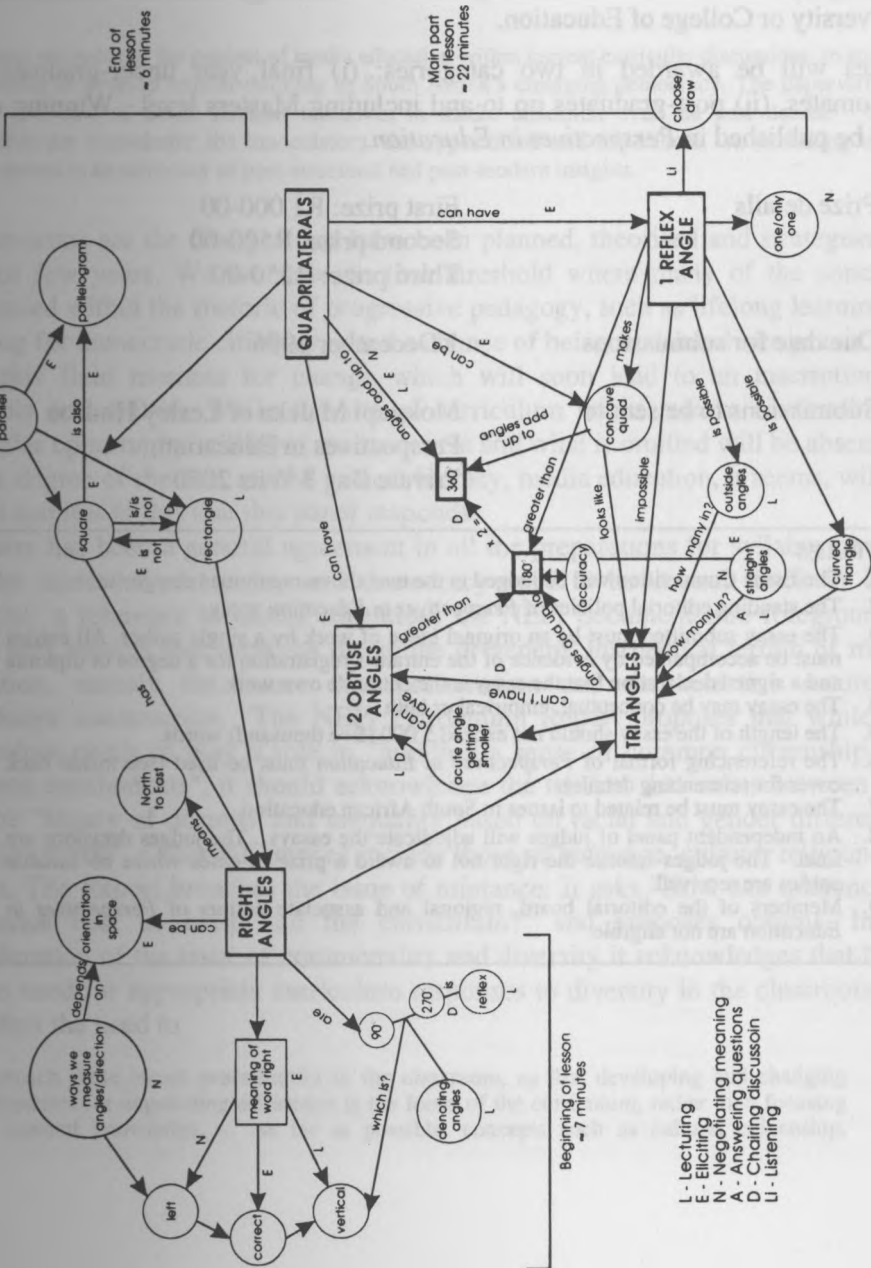
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This paper was originally developed as a Masters coursework project in 1993. It has been presented to the second annual meeting of the Southern African Association for Research in Mathematics and Science Education (SAARMSE), January 1994.
2. For example: C. Cazden, *Classroom Discourse: The Language of Teaching and Learning* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1988); D. Edwards and N. Mercer, *Common Knowledge: The Development of Understanding in the Classroom* (London: Routledge, 1987); D. Barnes, *Language, the Learner, and the School* (Harmonswoth: Penguin, 1969)
3. For example: P. Cobb, E. Yackel and T. Wood, A Constructivist Alternative to the Representational View of Mind in Mathematics Education, *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 23, 1, (1992): 2-33; S. Pirie and T. Kieran, Creating Constructivist Environments and Constructing Creative Mathematics, *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 23, (1992): 505-528; P. Cobb, T. Wood, and E. Yackel, A Constructivist Approach to Second Grade Mathematics, In E. von Glasersfeld, *Radical Constructivism in Mathematics Education*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), 157-176; S. Lerman, Constructivism, Mathematics, and Mathematics Education, *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 20, (1989): 211-223; M. Lampert, Connecting Inventions with Conventions, In L. Steffe and T. Wood (eds), *Transforming Childrens Mathematics Education*, (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1990).
4. D. Pimm, *Speaking Mathematically* (London: Routledge, 1987); D. Barnes and F. Todd, *Communication and Learning in Small Groups* (London: routledge, 1977); D. Barnes, *From Communication to Curriculum* (Harmonsworth: Penguin, 1976).
5. For example: C. Hoyles, R. Sutherland and L. Healy, Children Learning in Computer Environments: New Insights into the Role of Discussion in Mathematics Learning, In K. Durkin and B. Shire (eds), *Language in Mathematical Education: Research and Practice* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991); T. Wood and E. Yackel, The Development of Collective Dialogue within Small Group Interactions, In L. Steffe and T. Wood (eds), *Transforming Childrens Mathematics Education*, (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1990); C. Hoyles, What's the Point of Group Discussion in Mathematics, *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 16, (1985), 205-214.
6. N. Ellerton, Classroom Discourse and Mathematics Learning, *Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Conference on the Psychology of Mathematics Education*, 1991, 17-24.
7. J. Adler, One Teacher, One Method? In K. Brodie and J. Strauss (eds) *Proceedings of the First National Congress of the Association for Mathematics Education of South Africa*, (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1994).
8. S. Mellin-Olsen, The Double-Bind as a Didactical Trap, In A. Bishop, S. Mellin-Olsen, and J. Van Dormolen (eds), *Mathematical knowledge: its growth through teaching* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991); S. Mellin-Olsen, *The politics of mathematics education* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1987).
9. Bateson's concept of the double bind is most widely known in connection with his work on communication systems and schizophrenia. Mellin-Olsen does not elaborate the more psychological dynamics of the concept, but uses it sociologically in order to understand the

- pedagogical relationship. (G. Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972)).
10. Mellin-Olsen, 1987.
 11. This assumption seems to underly the social constructivist or problem-centred pedagogies that are currently being implemented in this country, and stems from the Piagetian assumption that operative knowledge is universal, and will be constructed by all children. See for example H. Murray, A. Olivier, and P. Human, Voluntary Interaction Groups for Problem-Centred Learning, *Proceedings of the seventeenth international conference on the Psychology of Mathematics Education* (Tsukuba, Tsukuba University, 1993).
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 13. Here I assume that there is a socially constructed body of knowledge called mathematics, which is open to debate and contestation.
 14. L. Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of the Higher Psychological Processes*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1978), Chapter 6.
 15. J. Piaget Learning and Development, in R. Ripple and V. Rockcastle (eds), *Piaget Rediscovered* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1964).
 16. E. Duckworth, Either Were Too Early and They Cant Learn It, or Were Too Late and They Know It Already: The Dilemma of Applying Piaget In E. Duckworth (ed.), *The Having of Wonderful Ideas and Other Essays on Learning and Teaching*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1987).
 17. Edwards and Mercer, chapter 3.
 18. Edwards and Mercer, chapter 2; H. Mehan, *Learning Lessons*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); J. Sinclair and R. Coulthard, *Towards an Analysis of Discourse: The English Used by Teachers and Pupils* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).
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 20. There are examples in the lesson of pupils standing in front of the class, explaining their ideas for an extended period of time. In this paper I will only look at my own 'lectures'.
 21. Mellin-Olsen, 1987, 188-189.
 22. P. Atkinson, Inspecting Classroom Talk, In C. Adelman (ed), *Uttering, Muttering, Collecting, Using and Reporting Talk for Social and Educational Research* (London: Grant McIntyre, 1981): 98-113.
 23. Mehan suggests topically related sequences as an intermediate structure between the IRF exchange and the lesson.
 24. From the transcript it can be seen that some of these are not intended to be summaries. However, they function to summarise and end the discussion on the topic.
 25. She asked: "If a right angle is 90°, what is a left angle?"
 26. This raises serious questions for activity based or problem centred pedagogies, and does not only relate to teachers who are underqualified mathematically. Both this example, and another that I have since documented suggest that even well-qualified and mathematically confident teachers will not always understand their pupils meanings and constructions, particularly when they differ from what we expect. See K. Brodie, Small group work and ownership of mathematical knowledge (M.Ed research report, University of the Witwatersrand, 1994), 92-94.
 27. See also: N. Balacheff, The Benefits and Limits of Social Interaction: The Case of Mathematical Proof, In A. Bishop et al, 175-193.

28. With hindsight, this is because I have misinterpreted the main point of contention, which again raises questions for teachers' capacity to mediate appropriately in very complex discussions.
29. M. De Villers, "The Role and Function of a Hierarchical Classification of Quadrilaterals" *For the Learning of Mathematics*, 14, 1 (1994): 11-18.
30. In a hierarchical classification, a square is a rectangle with all sides equal. In a partitional classification a rectangle has two sides equal and two not equal, while a square has all sides equal. *Ibid*.

TABLE 1



L - Lecturing
E - Eliciting
N - Negotiating meaning
A - Answering questions
D - Challenging discussion
U - Listening

The 1996 Matthew Goniwe Education Essay Competition

Perspectives in Education has great pleasure in inviting entries to the 1996. Matthew Goniwe Education Essay Competition. Inspired by Matthew Goniwe's name – which symbolises educational and political commitment, courage and enlightenment – the competition is intended to stimulate research and writing on education in Southern Africa from a democratic perspective.

This competition is designed to encourage the publication of research and scholarly writing by black students and is open to students registered at a South African University or College of Education.

Prizes will be awarded in two categories: (i) final year under-graduates and diplomates, (ii) post-graduates up to and including Masters level. Winning essays will be published in *Perspectives in Education*.

Prize details

First prize: R1 000-00
Second prize: R500-00
Third prize: R250-00

Due date for submissions

1 December 1996

Submissions to be sent to

Mokgapi Maleka or Lesley Hudson
Perspectives in Education,
Private Bag 3 Wits 2050

RULES

1. The Essay Competition will be judged in the two above-mentioned categories.
2. The standing editorial policies of *Perspectives in Education* apply.
3. The essay submitted must be an original piece of work by a single author. All entries must be accompanied by evidence of the entrant's registration for a degree or diploma and a signed declaration that the essay is the entrant's own work.
4. The essay may be conceptual, empirical or both.
5. The length of the essay should not exceed 5 000 (five thousand) words.
6. The referencing format of *Perspectives in Education* must be used (see inside back cover for referencing details).
7. The essay must be related to issues in South African education.
8. An independent panel of judges will adjudicate the essays. The judges decisions are final. The judges reserve the right not to award a prize in cases where no suitable entries are received.
9. Members of the editorial board, regional and associate editors of *Perspectives in Education* are not eligible.

In and Out of Language Teaching: Media Education in South Africa

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This paper responds to the neglect of media education within current curricular discussions, in spite of its potential to develop critical thinking in South Africa's emerging democracy. The paper offers a critical overview of South African initiatives in media education over the past decade. Three approaches are considered: the innoculatory, the oppositional and the critical. A rethinking of the terrain moves to an advocacy of post-structural and post-modern insights.

So numerous are the changes that have been planned, theorised and strategised in the last few years. We are now on that threshold where many of the concepts announced within the rhetoric of progressive pedagogy, such as lifelong learning or learning for democratic citizenry, stand a chance of being translated into praxis. We have this fluid moment for change which will soon lead to an inscription of curricula and syllabi. While the site of curriculum might remain contestable, a particular opportunity will have run its course and what is omitted will be absent. In spite a degree of rhetoric around critical literacy, media education, it seems, will be absent and it is to this that this paper responds.

There has been a general agreement in all the preparations for syllabus change that the issues of citizenship and democracy need to be central. Back in 1992 (without a reference to media education) the NEPI documentation foregrounded those very aspects that form the discipline or general intellectual terrain of media education, namely the issues of representation and the selective nature of knowledge construction. The NEPI Curriculum Report proposes that while the curriculum needs to play a role in "building a sense of common citizenship and common entitlements", it should acknowledge the tension that exists between this and the "legacy of disunity and inequality based on racial and gender differences (among others)". Other differences include those of language, culture, religion and region. The Report broaches the issue of tolerance: It asks "How can tolerance of difference best be built into the curriculum?" and proposes options. In its consideration of the issue of commonality and diversity it acknowledges that there is "the need for appropriate curriculum responses to diversity in the classroom". It considers the need to

approach these issues procedurally in the classroom, so that developing and changing procedures for negotiating difference is the focus of the curriculum, rather than focusing on content knowledge. ... As far as possible, concepts such as culture, citizenship,

commonality and diversity need to be understood as historically produced and changing, rather than static categories. Teaching this could be one of the goals of the curriculum.¹

It acknowledges the need to develop tolerance and calls for a curriculum that will develop an "awareness of the nature of the ethnic, social, or cultural diversity and how these have been part of the unequal allocation of power and privilege". Particular attention to the central role of representation is acknowledged when advocating vigilance against gender stereotyping and bias in content and teaching materials.

These concerns have been echoed in numerous subsequent documents. Central to achieving these objectives is the ability of students to understand how representations and attitudes arise and circulate, and how they are invested with power. Such an understanding cannot be restricted to historical constructions, but needs to incorporate those that arise in the present and those that will arise in future. This is the scope of Media Education yet still there is no curricular space being consciously nurtured for it.

As part of an attempt to address this glaring oversight, this paper presents a critical overview of different strands of media education in South Africa. It considers the paths that have been trod and points to where we might go. This rethinking of the terrain moves to an advocacy of post-structural and postmodern insights that might inform textual practices. But clearly talk is simply not enough! Unless it impacts on teacher education at different levels of preservice and inservice, unless it is inscribed in curricula, it remains just another good idea. Following South Africa's first democratic elections, the educational system is poised at the threshold of great change. Yet the potential for change will be limited by the legacy of apartheid. The educational positions and practices inscribed within the erstwhile authorities cannot simply be erased. The future role of media education under the new dispensation remains unsure and marginalized from most debates.

There has been no uniform policy to media education in formal schooling in South Africa nor has it been inscribed in the core curriculum. Initiatives have varied from one educational authority to another. Educators came together for the first time in 1990 at a conference to outline the nature and scope of media education in their departments. What was telling was which authorities were engaging in media education and how similar such initiatives were.² White educational initiatives were described by representatives of three of the four provincial white departments, and Indian education by the House of Delegates (HOD) department.³

General trends were evident. All initiatives were contained within the teaching of English. In summary, liberal or humanist concerns had emerged from the English-speaking tradition. Educators within the white authorities experienced greater leeway in terms of teacher autonomy, particularly in schools where English was the medium of instruction. Curriculum innovation tended to originate within these privileged enclaves and sometimes to trickle down to other authorities in an

order that reproduced the hierarchy of privilege. Predictably, humanity subjects were more amenable to the humanist impulse. Consequently, in spite of the state's ideological position, they partially adopted a liberal humanist approach. In any event, media education found its way into the secondary school curricula of the discipline of English (first language) white education and was subsequently taken up in Indian education.

The gravitational pull had evidently not been that strong. There were no contributions at this conference from the HOD authority, the (black) Department of Education and Training (DET) or other black African educational authorities, none of which had considered media education. Their absence possibly reflects the historic reluctance to teaching critical thinking in South Africa.

Deliberations revealed that media education had been informed by developments in the United Kingdom and tended to draw on the particular intellectual strands of high/low culture with a predominant focus on film. The discussions of the 1990 conference drew attention to other possibilities and has been followed by some significant shifts in focus within the comparatively privileged authorities.

An overview of the media education programmes and their rationales follows this contextualization. Any meaningful understanding of such initiatives in a South African context cannot ignore the historical positionings of the authorities concerned and the questions of race and power. The overview begins with the unabashed Leavisite position of the old Transvaal Education Department (TED) and Cape Education Department (CED). Thereafter, the approach of the late House of Delegates is described, demonstrating a resistance or oppositional approach to mass media. A third approach begins to emerge in the old Natal Education Department (NED) which draws on strands of postmodern theories. Finally, a recent curricular intervention by means of textbooks to impact on the teaching of Afrikaans (Ruimland) is considered.

HIGH CULTURE AND INOCULATION

The Transvaal Education Department (TED)

The TED, which was responsible for the education of white pupils in the Transvaal, drew strongly on ideas and practices emanating from the United Kingdom for the learning and teaching of English, with a strong Leavisite influence.

The articulated rationale and approach to the official syllabus of Visual Literacy and Film Study defers to the experience of industrialized English-speaking countries:

The decision to include visual literacy and film study as a compulsory component had not been taken lightly or without reference to *empirical evidence*. By 1976, when the TED's deliberations first commenced, film study had already established itself as an essential and

well integrated component of the curricula of many British, American and Australian schools.⁴

Arising from this sphere of influence was an inoculatory approach with two discernible strands. The first requires learners to be taught defensive mechanisms to protect themselves from the debilitating effects of the media. It continues the notion of mass culture as having a degenerative effect and distinguishes between literary and non-literary texts. It proposes the introduction of media texts in the classroom, on one hand, as a defensive discriminatory training and, on the other, as a pragmatic response: a realization that they won't just go away. The mass media is considered pervasive and acknowledged as constituting an important part of the environment in "what is tending to become a post-literate world". The teachers' role is to alert pupils to the mediation that occurs in the realist style of such popular culture. In a manner foreign to literary study, teachers frequently focus on questions of objectivity and bias. "The finished product enshrines a point of view, and it is the educator's task to train pupil's responses which tend to be formless, uncritical and perhaps even passively dangerous".⁵

The second strand is concerned with questions of taste. While discrimination against the media and popular culture continues in this strand, it encompasses discrimination within media. Film was privileged as an extension of the 'Great Tradition':

Film Study ... raises the consciousness of pupils and enables them to discriminate and resist manipulation; the traditional skills of writing, language and literary criticism are advanced by film studies; the film has been shown as a valid medium by which literary themes and preoccupations are conveyed; it equips our pupils with tools to interpret the increasingly dominant visual content of the communication media; and lastly, pupils and teachers have been led not to accept so blindly the second rate, the stereotyped and the cheap.⁶

This distinction between high and low culture entrenched itself in the TED⁷ and is manifest in the inclusion and treatment of film in the classroom. In line with the film auteur theory, the canon has been extended to include works by great directors. But in much the way literary devices such as figures of speech have been taught in classrooms so a new set of conventions and structures becomes part of the 'progressive' curriculum. Just as in other language lessons, learners have to acquire the code of how a certain shot (like the figure of speech) might increase the emotive impact. The emphasis and treatment are the same, the medium changed. Within this paradigm, the focus remains on the expression of an individual author rather than the learners' negotiation of socially constructed meaning. This is manifest in the articulated aims of the official syllabus of reading and literature study (which incorporates Film Study) and includes the aim to: "appreciate literature and read with discrimination."

The nature of such appreciation and discrimination accords with the high cultural tradition. The syllabus commentary elaborates on the intention to:

- gain knowledge of different styles and techniques;
- develop an understanding and appreciation of their literary and cultural heritage".⁸

The aims are to be achieved by an approach that assumes a necessarily incremental and unholistic development. Still images are considered, followed a year later with camera shots. Short films are introduced before the third and fourth year (of secondary school) when a full length film is permitted for study. The theory dictates a completely text-based approach. "The above approach – a combined one of cinematic and literary preoccupations, based upon the unit of sequence – is recommended".⁹

Discussions with stakeholders insist on the focus on film *as film* and not literature. Their concern is both with filming techniques as a skills base and with comprehension for critical communication. This concern is reflected in a rewritten syllabus which was overtaken by historical changes and not implemented. Unarticulated in the syllabus is the sense of film as low on the hierarchy of the changing canon.

In its defense let it be claimed that not only do pupils find it relevant, familiar and accessible as a medium, but those who are silenced by Shakespearean complexities and floored by poetry can appreciate and contribute valuable insights on the film. *With training* [my emphasis] they can confidently translate that into acceptable written responses.¹⁰

The value of film is also calculated as remedially expedient in relation to the more pressing textual negotiation of print.

When comprehended visually, terms like metaphor, tone, index, symbolism and irony, cease to be stumbling blocks, and transfer to these concepts can be made to these concepts in literature. The spin-offs for language study are considerable.¹¹

A teacher who was influential in this programme stressed that most students were not mature enough to deal with the complexity of other levels of social deconstruction. He added that he felt that students generally lack the maturity and life experiences to deal with such complex issues.

Outstanding features of organisation

Film Study was more pervasive within the TED than elsewhere. This was achieved through centralized control which set a film as examinable in the English Literature paper for the school-leaving matriculation examination, where the film became an

option as the fourth prescribed text. Eighty-five to ninety percent of the teachers elected to teach film. Teachers were guided by officially distributed study guides which included semiological aspects and in particular refer to narrative sequence. Study guides clearly indicate to the teachers what is important. Those teaching for examinations follow such direction very closely.

The centralized prescription of texts exercises obvious control. Moreover, conservative Christian National Education overtones can be detected in the choice of films: the selected texts have all incorporated Christian themes: *Chariots of Fire*, *Witness* and *The Mission*. The official version of the video text of *Witness* had the bath scene of Kelly McGillis and another bloody one edited out, and 'offensive' words bleeped over. An interview with a senior teacher offered useful insights into the selection procedure for the prescribed film. In accordance with a humanist morality, film texts had to be deemed uplifting. *The Dead Poet's Society* was rejected on the grounds that the issue of suicide could be deemed unsuitable. The same interviewee remarked on his growing realization that what was being presented to the pupils was a homogenized view whereby the life of industrialized countries was being normalized, (all the films mentioned portray white male protagonists with a Christian edge) and in this way validated – this in an African country!

Evaluation occurs in the terminal school examination and is incorporated in the literature paper, which examines four components: poetry, a play by Shakespeare, a novel and "one other prescribed work including film." Essay questions demand a similar type of response to the written literature.

An accurate, retentive visual memory, which needs to be bolstered by their own comprehensive and reliable notes. Pupils inability to be specific, for example, about the editing of a certain sequence which relies on that for its impact, renders answers on it vague and unsatisfactory.¹²

No connection is made consciously to research. The approach is naturalized within the Leavisite tradition. This high cultural position informs the proposed developments. Discussions suggest a movement to considering auteur theory and genre, but as an extension of literary fiction.

The Cape Education Department

The white CED similarly defined its aims as inoculatory, needing to combine:

aesthetic appreciation of the medium as 'communication art form' and critical awareness of the techniques employed by its creation to achieve specific or implicit intentions.¹³

Within this filmic focus, media creeps in but there is no sense of sustained or rigorous theory informing positions, but rather an *ad hoc* inclusion. Consider objectives 4 and 6:

- (4) To develop and refine the skills of critical viewing, taste, judgement and expression such as aesthetic appreciation and informed perception of the power of the image ...
- (6) To identify and explore the central features of character, theme, plot, setting and style in the film art form by means of customary literary methods of critique.¹⁴

Examination papers set for annual examinations suggest teacher practice where the film version is compared to the set literary text and the use of media texts like cartoons for comprehension.

No detailed description of the CED programme is presented here because of the similarity both of rationale and material to that of the TED. Suffice it to say that the CED did not achieve the systematic inclusion of film study that the TED did. This is explicable largely by the fact that centralized control has not instituted the film as examinable in the final school examination, but still plans to do so.¹⁵

RESISTING THE MEDIA: THE CONSCIOUSNESS INDUSTRY APPROACH

In 1990 the Leavisite echo recurred in the Indian HOD where film was again approached in a literary manner as an alternate genre for study. Taking their cue from the CED and TED, HOD syllabi focused on terminology and ability to employ such terminology to describe film sequences. Subsequently there have been enormous shifts in their approach to teaching media education and in their motivation for doing so.

Theoretical premises for a changed syllabus

The changing approach to media education positioned itself as part of the 'struggle' against the homogenous adversary of apartheid.¹⁶ It was based within a paradigm of media understanding that adopts a particular interpretation of the work of the earlier Frankfurt school theorists in which the power of the 'culture industry' is understood to domesticate and placate the population by producing 'false' consciousness. This argument was coupled with notions of Althusser's critique of the power of the Ideological State Apparatuses of which the media is one and the school another. The liberal concern with the isolated text was castigated for its failure to address the institutional context and the notion of agency. Teachers in HOD schools took on this theoretical approach and incorporated concepts derived from semiotics, in which signification focused attention on representations and mediation of meaning, how codes and conventions work and are used, and how cultural 'myths' operate.

This overtly oppositional approach coincided with particular events which had altered the relations of power in the HOD education authority. The HOD was always ambivalently positioned within apartheid structures. Space for personal advancement and patronage was defined by apartheid but those who took positions of authority had to speak of dismantling apartheid from within so as to retain some semblance of legitimacy. Media education became a critical arena through which opposition to the state could be articulated and two initiatives emerged, both producing materials. By considering them, one is able to glean an idea of rationales and intentions.

In 1992 two teachers developed a media education syllabus, contained in a photo-copied document entitled "Media Education for Secondary Schools" which included a foreword, an introduction, an official syllabus, and teacher contributions relating to sections of the syllabus. Marked by a lack of rigorous media theory and familiarity with debates pertaining to educational paradigms and curriculum development, the syllabus adopts the eighties' rhetoric of media activists and is implicitly based on realist theoretical positions secured by the notion of a single truth founded on a rational knowledge.

From the outset it assumes a conspiracist approach. The preface denounces the conspiracy of an all-powerful and devious media responsible "for mindsets, which will unfortunately take generations to rectify".¹⁷ Yet while it proposes a response to inequality in South Africa, it confines its understanding of such conspiracies to race alone and never widens the scope to include gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, geography or anything else. Binary oppositions underpin the approach: the good versus the bad, the enslaved versus enslavers, the manipulated versus the manipulators. The conviction includes the notion that "the society of the future will be dominated by thought control ... molding us into a gregarious herd of manipulated puppets".¹⁸ Tools of social control are superficial entertainment and the dissemination of biased information and advertising. This reasoning concludes that "one must understand the manipulator to diminish its power over us, the manipulated" and so confines media education to an exclusively reactionary role.

The syllabus is an arbitrary construction of category and media form: signs, symbols, posters, banners, slogans, pictures, photographs, comic strips and cartoons; the newspaper, television and radio news broadcasts, advertisements, television sitcoms, serials and related programmes; and finally pop songs. Noticeable is its omission of film which had been its prior focus.

No rationale is proffered for the construction of the syllabus, there is no attempt to identify key principles or core concepts. Presented in the technicist style characteristic of the positivistic syllabus construction of the centralized educational system, the syllabus is both prescriptive and limiting. There is an intense irony in a syllabus that talks about teaching deconstruction to avoid passive consumption being presented in this authoritarian, inflexible manner. Consider the first objective:

That pupils ... will understand that signs, symbols, posters, pictures, photographs, comic strips and cartoon are sources of information.¹⁹

The driving political concerns result in a form of tunnel vision and an impaired recognition both of the variety of discourses within the media and of learners' interests. The motivation for considering the media is demystificatory and learning activities are specified as 'deconstructing texts'. The introduction for posters, banners and slogans assumes that these automatically challenge the status quo: "Posters carry the voice of the people to the State". The motivation assumes an association with grass-root resistance: "Mass protest has become a way of life. We need to know how to construct these media effectively ... They convey real feelings".²⁰ Yet political and grass-root concerns are narrowly conceived. The only reference to gender is a naive article entitled "Women in Advertising". Also, at no stage is the issue of racism consistently addressed; the prevailing stereotypes in Indian schools, along racial, religious, class and certainly gender lines are ignored. The adoption of the identity of blackness by Indian South Africans is not uncomplicated and, unsurprisingly, a range of racist attitudes have prevailed both historically and presently. Yet in this discourse, racism is simplistically confined to others.

Within a second media education initiative, the HOD involved teachers in curriculum development which was co-ordinated by a teacher with a background in development education and exposure to cultural studies and performance. Development education involves active teacher participation and development.

In this initiative teachers participated in a series of workshops based on the media production materials developed in the eighties for labour and political organizations. Critical pedagogy and the demystification of media education were central themes in the workshops and supporting theoretical papers. This media education initiative also starts from the politics of resistance, but the aims of the programme were wider in their conception:

- * to encourage pupils to be discriminating in their role as consumers to give them some insight into the development and workings of the contemporary mass media
- * to give pupils the opportunity to originate and produce their own mass media materials
- * to underpin the inquiry and critique of the media with critical theory and/or Development Education principles.²¹

Teachers used the workshops to test, develop and discuss materials. Teacher materials were collected under the title "Media Education – Teacher Pack". The materials on political cartoons are particularly successful. This political focus is predictable in the light of the orientation materials and the political and historical factors identified earlier. While these materials lack the intense conspiracy emphasis of the official HOD initiative, no serious attention is given to the issue of stereotyping that might go beyond reference to 'others'. The articulated rationale which claimed to produce critical thinking was confined to a limited repertoire of what the teachers endorsed as facts against the propaganda of racial imperialism in the media. No reflection on teachers' own racism or sexism is broached and the work remains politically correct, but not that critical. Beyond semiotics, no tools of analysis are developed.

Whatever its critical limitations this approach, with its emphasis on teacher participation, provides a useful model for future initiatives. Much more work needs to be done in professional development, but unfortunately does not appear to be on the agenda. Teachers ignored structural understandings of narrative and the ideological implications of the structure which could have enabled a closer analysis of the processes of selection and construction of popular cultural messages, and their relation to particular interests.

Indian teachers have been relatively privileged within the hierarchy of education, yet were ambivalently positioned both as a minority group and disenfranchised in terms of real decision making at a national level. The politics of resistance informed this initiative in a way that enabled an easy identification with being 'black'. In contrast to the resistance content, the methodology and pedagogy retain a strong transmission mode characteristic of the educational practices in South African education. A move to critical media education would interrogate the assumptions of their present initiatives.

In four years what has occurred has been a clear shift away from film study to consider the media. Both HOD initiatives served to encourage teachers to embrace media education as an integral part of the learning situation. That media is on the agenda is a significant step, yet it remains for it to respond to other educational paradigms and the changed South African scenario. Rather than be unduly critical of these early attempts, it is important that they be considered within their specific context. While the official rationale has not been altered, already the practice shows a movement to confronting some of the criticisms mentioned above. When the documents described above were circulated the accompanying letter already presents a changed discourse.

Media education is gaining support as a provider of resources for English instruction while it develops literacy, critical thinking, awareness of current developments and general knowledge of the world we live in. At the same time, it provides opportunities for cultivating a sensibility to current debates on issues that affect all aspects of the conscious world of children and adults and offers a rich environment for the negotiation of values,

beliefs and attitudes in a multi-cultural and multi-religious democracy. (Letter dated 30.5.94)

What had been an oppositional or resistance political position before the 1994 national elections now becomes legitimate and the intense motivation for resistance politics slips away.

Control and evaluation are closely linked and impact strongly on the force of initiatives. Again a strong form of centralized control tends to be prescriptive and yet at the same time demands that teachers consider media and develop classroom practices. The movement away from film to an encompassing range of media was the first shift from a high cultural position. This is reflected in the final English examination papers for First Language. The 1994 examinations were centrally concerned with media texts, both as comprehension and for interrogating positions and understanding from a range of perspectives. The texts come from local and foreign media and have a more holistic attention to agency, audience and representations than in the other work considered. The texts relate to current debates and to situations that have some consonance with teachers' and pupils' lives. That the examination requires such skills impacts on the area of study in the most direct way.

TOWARDS CRITICAL APPROACHES TO TEXTS

Media initiatives in the Natal Education Department

English teachers within the Natal Education Department (NED) tentatively engaged with media education as early as the seventies when the English subject adviser encouraged them to experiment with media teaching along the lines of developments in the United Kingdom. Predictably the initial focus was on film study and notions of 'high' culture, but there was less prescription and more support for teacher research and circulation of ideas. This enabled teachers to consider other media to some extent.

The response of NED teachers to media education was uneven. A strong spirit of contestation developed around paradigms of teaching. Three strands are discernible: a Leavisite approach, a semiotic or structuralist approach, and a critical or post-structural approach.

In the first approach many teachers' persistent concern for high culture was linked to a defense of standards. Concerns about a change in approach are expressed in statements such as "You can't sell out the first language speakers", or "There is such delight to be gleaned from Shakespeare" or as a fear of "Africanisation". Inherent in this position is an acceptance of high culture originating out of Africa.

The 1988 syllabus permitted the "study of the film as an additional set work", that is, in addition to the set literacy texts. Implicitly, these learners should not have

a diminished diet of worthy works, and film is not examined in the literature paper as it is in the TED in the final school leaving examination. The rationale for the inclusion of film alerted teachers to the significant proportion of "our pupils" time spent viewing films and televisual media and the consequent need to teach them "to resist their attitudes, values, beliefs, role-ideals, etc., being molded, shaped, stereotyped by TV, films and videos". 'Critical' skills are articulated as deconstructing devious intentions: "distinguishing between fact and opinion, questioning the sender's (of message) purpose, determining bias, slant, responding to emotive use of language in action, etc".

Examples of the work of teachers have been collated in collections entitled "Mediating the Media". The title is significant in the implicit acceptance of the negotiation of meaning contained within media texts. Yet, I cannot quite imagine "Mediating Shakespeare". A discriminatory approach informs the practices, but is open to two interpretations informed by two different rationales and understandings and there is frequently slippage between them. On one hand it operates ambivalently from a high cultural position and is informed by the anxiety about the social control of society exercised by the media. On the other, discrimination moves to a concern with the power of the media and certain political understandings, including gender. Because teachers were persuaded to be experimental and no official prescription was offered, their practices tended to adopt a common-sensical approach randomly informed by media theory. The range stretches from work that is almost exclusively concerned with manipulation and conspiracy (where the correct responses no doubt coincide with the teacher's opinion) to work requiring thoughtful analysis from a variety of perspectives. Such tasks attend to issues related to semiotics and to a range of positioned evaluations. An unarticulated politically correct position informs the work. In certain examples, there is an implied understanding of the aggressor. Where the opposition for the HOD related more directly to black and white and apartheid politics, this opposition related to 'us' and the government in power. Moreover, the resistance position was not a viable option as they were, as whites, constructed as 'the white minority regime' within prevalent political discourses. Many teachers were ambivalently placed in both advocating political change and being fearful of it.

Conspicuous by its absence within the semiotic approach is any treatment of narrative or the processes of narration. Such an approach did not find ready consonance in the range of strategies that teachers employ on their literary texts. This work has been informed by a range of publications, more particularly by Australian ones which were in a centralized library. The media forms included the traditional ads and newspapers, but also comics, sitcoms and popular films. On the whole, the sporadic and fragmented approach to media education in the NED is characterized by a lack of transfer of concepts and approach from one kind of text to another, from media texts to literary texts. There are no core concepts to inform all textual study that could transfer from text to text. This less prescriptive and

more learner-centred approach contrasts with the authoritarian stance of other authorities. The final examinations do not examine film, but at the same time the texts and activities in the Language paper do not have a clear media focus.

Critical media education

The third and final strand proposes a more holistic approach to textual investigation and production. Present initiatives are influenced by academic interest, but premised on teacher participation and critical pedagogy. Advocates of critical pedagogy propose post-structural or post-modern understandings, both to shake the prior assumptions of media educators and to offer new direction. Notions around decoding and 'reading' in varying ways have led to a rejection of the notion of the sovereign power of the text, relegating it to a position of cultural relativism.²² Moreover, educators have begun to consider learners' perceptions and subjectivity and to debate issues relating to the pleasures of the text which teachers might wish to eliminate.²³ Because post-modernism refutes the possibility of a single truth, there is a rejection of binary oppositions and an insistence that representations are social and historical constructions within hierarchies of domination and opposition.

This approach proposes a form of critical media education that attends to cultural representations in terms of the discourses they present. It directs learners and teachers to ask the questions around who is represented, how they are represented, who is omitted, who has made the message, and what interests work through the discourse. It aspires to the creation of learners who are able to cross borders in Giroux's terms, and locate knowledge historically, socially and critically. It proposes that learners need to construct their own narratives and histories, while recognizing that they are themselves located by narratives, partial and specific.

Within this discourse, students should engage knowledge as border crossers, as people moving in and out of borders constructed around co-ordinates of difference and power. ... Border pedagogy decentres as it remaps. The terrain of learning becomes inextricably linked to the shifting parameters of place, identity, history and power. ... This is not an abandonment of critique as much as it is an extension of its possibilities.²⁴

This third strand was inscribed in a changed syllabus of 1993 which responds to the changing intellectual climate, and media education has been subsequently written in so that a broad engagement is possible. With political transition there are signs of these paradigms being shifted and space has opened for the introduction of a critical approach to media education. Also by 1993 a shift in concern among a core of teachers became evident. The change in classroom population to include other races brought home to some teachers the specific nature of their teaching and they began to look around for solutions to their problems of teaching mother tongue and second language learners, all through the medium of English. Their prior assumptions and practices were thrown into question.

This initiative was a departmental intervention when the subject adviser called in a number of teachers. From these debates emerged a draft proposal which attempts to propose a radical shift in teaching of English through a focus on narrative.²⁵ It acknowledges the historical and contextual dimensions of the curriculum, that the most prevalent methodology of teaching has been transmission mode, that those learners whose knowledge is most in keeping with what counts as dominant knowledge are privileged, that this impacts on non-mother tongue learners of English and that their voices and lived experiences consequently tend to be denied value. It argues that teaching should be concerned with the negotiating of meaning and proposes narrative as the focus as it is the common textual experience of all the learners. Importantly for media education, it argues for the inclusion of a wide range of textual materials in a variety of forms and diverts attention from the content to the process of narrative construction by the narrator and receiver. It proposes that this approach "will develop the critical abilities of the learners which they will be able to apply to a range of knowledges" and inform all disciplines. This approach accords with the earlier description of critical media education. At this stage it exists largely as work in progress, but is being developed into practice by teachers.

Teachers of English were reluctant to concede that narrative could provide an important intervention. This has to be attributed to the academic backgrounds of the teachers, largely Leavisite literature, and also some linguistics (which smoothes the way for semiotics to be introduced). Nowhere did narrative provide a focus as it does in areas of study that examine film, media and genres. A stubborn resistance to things theoretical has given way to curriculum development for and by teachers. The focus on narrative enables a movement for media education from the periphery. There is a growing realization that all texts are negotiated. This holistic approach to all texts encourages the same core concepts to inform the interrogation of popular, literary and traditional forms of media. It simultaneously responds to its African context in calling on traditional storytelling as a medium that values second language speakers culture. The focus on narrative, its structuring and narrating, is both investigative and creative; it considers how the story is structured, how it is told, who it is told for, and how else it might also be told under different circumstances.

*Ruimland*²⁶

There is an important similarity in the principles and rationales that inform another initiative. In the strictest sense of the word, *Ruimland* cannot be described as a media education initiative. Rather it originates as a curriculum intervention within the teaching of school Afrikaans in order to oppose the apartheid ideology and its practices and assumptions. The research of this initiative has been funded by the publishers of the series of text books that have been developed. They consist of text

books for the Afrikaans language section from the fourth to the twelfth (final) year of schooling.

The work has been informed by particular theoretical assumptions. There has been growing acceptance and debate around Critical Language Awareness as it has unfolded within South African curriculum initiatives. The principles that underpin critical language awareness echo those that inform critical media education, including a critical awareness of the construction of meanings and the power relations embedded in texts. Both aim to create critical thinkers who interrogate and produce texts.

The *Ruimland* initiative operates from this premise and while its primary focus is not the mass media, it constantly alludes to and interrogates a range of texts, very frequently media texts. The researcher/authors have elided the two areas which normally remain discrete, namely written or printed texts and visual ones, in order that they both constantly be interrogated.

In the early stages *Ruimland* could probably be considered to fit into a resistance or oppositional paradigm. It considered itself as a concerted response to apartheid ideology. It focused on what one of the editors described as "authentic texts" in opposition to high-cultural texts with questionable relevance to many learners' lives and interests. The editors anticipated that such texts would contribute to revealing the power struggles around language and meanings. They hoped to reveal the inadequacy of the educational system with its ability to suppress the power of the word. This movement from the domain of Christian National Education and from the texts that were considered authoritative and as part of the Afrikaans canon, lead to texts they considered could subvert the historical discourses. The range of subversive texts included the transcribed oral stories of illiterate people. These texts are all forms of media, but are not limited to either high culture or popular media. They embrace the media of indigenous peoples and developing countries in addition to the mass media.

The resistance paradigm that marks the first works gives way to a different form of critical thinking. In an interview with one of the authors, it became clear that they became concerned with empowerment of individuals as critical thinkers and competent communicators. Accordingly, an empowered individual needs to be an active citizen who critiques whoever is in power. The editors' humanist position is evident in the range of topics they cover in sustained modules including environmental issues, sexism, and guidance (life skills). Yet these are approached within the consideration of the construction of meanings in numerous media texts including comics, cartoons, magazines, photos, advertisements, graffiti, newspapers (with diminished attention to the editorial and review sections prevalent in other media work of the other departments.) They consider the written and the visual text as interactive. However this humanist impulse is contained in a postmodern understanding of the polysemy of meaning. The editors constantly juxtapose texts, even subverting their own by self-conscious reflection on the voice of the book.

The theoretical background of the researchers includes social linguistics which introduces a high sensitivity to the relations of power and the theoretical underpinnings of texts. A psycholinguistic background incorporates concerns with what is important in language acquisition.

What is fascinating is the impact of this series of books at this particular juncture of South African history. The great majority of schools under the now defunct House of Representative authority (with a 'Coloured' population historically) welcomed these books. The majority of these learners speak Afrikaans as their mother tongue. The need for materials other than those of the dominant apartheid ideology was clearly more urgently felt by them than many of their white counterparts. The activities demand a new range of texts and media forms be interrogated. Simultaneously it inscribes a form of interactive and participatory pedagogy that has been rare in teacher education beyond the historically white liberal English universities. Not the rationale of the syllabus, but the textbooks drive the curriculum in this case. These books will be translated into nine other African languages in the next five years. This has the potential to impact strongly on certain other Southern African countries, in particular Namibia, Lesotho, Botswana and southern Zimbabwe.

Both the initiatives that have been included as critical media education take up the poststructural critique of master narratives of modernity, and argue for difference, multiplicity and heteroglossia. This calls for teachers to change their habits, to move to investigating the widest range of texts. The texts may or may not be specific to the learner group. They could be hostel songs, praise poetry, North American rap music, Ndebele murals or urban graffiti, humorous ads, the national anthem or racist T-shirts. They will call for us as teachers and learners to take the risks that come with questioning what counts as truth and knowledge.

CONCLUSION

Such democratic aspirations are faced with the forbidding legacy of colonialism, apartheid and patriarchy, and the intolerance around race and gender. Critical teachers will have to reconstruct education to address learners who have been constructed as on the periphery, and those who have accepted such constructions, whether they are sited centrally or peripherally. Media education confronts the powerful discourses that have entrenched power in South Africa, and needs to create the kind of critical thinkers who are not simply reactionary, angry or defensive, but who can aspire to democratic principles at this time of change.

Widespread changes are occurring in all spheres of South African life and we will confront the possibilities, problems and constraints of a single educational authority. The histories inscribed by apartheid have produced very different approaches to media education and these differences will need to be addressed at many different levels. Media education was initiated in the relatively privileged

authorities. The success of initiatives has also varied. There is evidence that the issue of examinations and evaluation have impacted seriously on the extent to which systematic interventions can occur. Similarly, the production of textbooks has been significant. Further development will be constrained by a stretched budget and an educational conservatism defended on the grounds of responding to basic needs. Most crucially, there need to be consistent interventions into teacher education.

These initiatives have not gone beyond the borders of what has been termed English and Afrikaans (First Language). If arguments for democracy and critical thinking are to inform our curricula, then obviously there is a glaring omission in all the other official languages where media education haws made no inroads. And yet, there is no compelling reason why media education should be contained in language teaching only. Internationally there are calls for a three-pronged approach. Along the lines already established, it can inform the teaching of all texts and be included in language teaching. However, Media Studies is a potential subject in its own right. Beyond this, media education can be included as a cross-curricular approach to knowledge and representations in all subjects. This approach has ready consonance with postmodern understandings as it disrupts the discrete borders of traditional subjects. It then subjects all these texts to scrutiny in terms of knowledge construction. Yet, it remains to be seen what space media education can secure and the role it can play. Media education potentially has a vital role to play in the reconstruction phase of education in South Africa, where it can begin to address issues of representation in relation to the differential and contradictory constitution of subjectivities. South African education needs a proactive and creative approach to media and culture that takes us beyond the limits of our inherited repertoire of representations. The question that remains is what impact the historical initiatives and current ones will have in the creation of a changed curriculum.

The NED narrative initiative and *Ruimland* have heralded a shift in approach to texts. They introduce the question of whether the premises of media education itself should not be reviewed. Historically, attention to the mass media developed either as an elitist response or a defensive one. Changes have occurred and the significance of the media and media texts is seldom denied any more. But, we need to spread the net wider. Those intellectual insights informed by feminist, postcolonial, poststructural and postmodern theories demand that even those high cultural texts previously sacrosanct, now be interrogated with the same rigor and considerations of meaning construction and power. Simultaneously, textual approaches would need to incorporate changes that feed off their insights perhaps incorporating understandings of semiotic, discourse and deconstruction theories. But beyond these texts and forms of media that currently are considered worthy of attention, and particularly in non-industrial or southern countries, a whole range of neglected media need to be include into the equation. Traditional and oral forms of stories, Maskanda lyrics, Zulu beaded love letters, the Ghanaian Asoka Fanta flags

are a few that I in my considerable ignorance can imagine could have resonance. Perhaps it is time to reconsider media education, even rename it, in order to validate all texts and to incorporate all histories. It has been confined within the teaching of English and then Afrikaans in that bizarre terrain known as language. What should we do? Should this subject called language (any of the official ones) fall within Media Education which widens the terrain significantly? Should we develop something called Communications or does that smack of a conservative history? Cultural Studies? Critical Literacy? Did anyone out there say something about a rose by any other name having as many thorns?

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. National Educational Policy Investigation (NEPI), Curriculum. (Cape Town: Oxford University Press/NECC, 1992), 81.
2. J. Prinsloo and C. Criticos, (eds.) *Media Matters in South Africa*. (Durban: MRC, 1991), 25-45.
3. That the OFS was absent probably links to the fact that English is not the predominant medium of instruction. White Afrikaans schooling did not incorporate media education initiatives - perhaps an example of the way the politics of difference informed education in many variable ways.
4. Goshier in Prinsloo & Criticos (eds.), 32.
5. *Ibid.*, 32.
6. *Ibid.*, 34.
7. One has only to consider the prescribed literary texts for the final school examination which continue to reflect the same canon. The poetry, novels and plays have diminished register with African students. In recent years the influence of the critique of colonialism within the academy has led to adjustments to the canon to include South African works that are deemed of artistic and literary merit.
8. Transvaal Education Department (TED), *Syllabus For English*. (Pretoria: TED, undated), 18.
9. Goshier in Prinsloo & Criticos (eds.), 33.
10. Transvaal Education Department (TED), *Study Guide to The Mission*. (Pretoria: TED, 1992), 24.
11. *Ibid.*
12. TED, (undated).52.
13. N. Faasen, in Prinsloo. & Criticos (eds.), 30.
14. Cape Education Department. *Guidelines to English Syllabus*. (Photocopy, undated).
15. It is most noteworthy that the Independent Examination's Board has not addressed itself to media education. It appears to continue a high cultural position in terms of what it considers worthy texts.
16. The growing resistance in the seventies and eighties was influenced by theorists like Cabral and Freire, and by Marxist understandings of false consciousness. The cultural struggle was premised on Freirean understandings of conscientization as process. Educators engaged in the 'struggle' identified the role of the school as an instrument of domestication and media activists criticized the pervasive ideologies inscribed in mainstream media. They were concerned to deconstruct and

demystify the agents of social control. Although there was a call for a generally undefined 'People's Education', resistance education marked opposition to the state and should not be conflated with pedagogic concerns or critical education. Mass mobilization did not equate to critical reflection.

17. House of Delegates, Department of Education and Culture. Media Education for Secondary Schools. (Unpublished, 1993).
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
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22. R. Allen, *Reader Oriented Criticism and Television*. Chapter 3 of *Channels of Discourse*. (London: Methuen, 1989.)
23. J. Williamson, "How Does Girl Number Twenty Understand Ideology?" *Screen Education*, 40, (Autumn/Winter 1981).
24. H. Giroux, *Border Crossings – Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*. (New York: Routledge. 1992.)
25. J. Ashworth, & J. Prinsloo, "A Draft Proposal for a Programme to Address the Challenges for Teaching and Learning English, both in a Changing Classroom and a Changing Country" in *Critical Arts*, 8, 1/2, (1994).
26. P. Esterhuysen *et al.*, *Ruimland* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1989-94).

Theory and the Literacy Mission

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Adult literacy work in South Africa is both encumbered with theorizing¹ and poorly served by theory. The field may be more notable for its generation of critique and its formulation of abstract frameworks than for its achievements in implementation. The case of a particular approach to adult literacy work in South Africa provides the starting point for a broad discussion of various levels of theorizing: grand theories, literacy studies, policy research and arguments around curriculum and methods. The theorizing has a clouded relationship with practice. Some of the problems involved in bringing theory and practice together in creative interaction are outlined, and the paper concludes with a more general questioning of the distinction of theory/practice and a quest for metaphors to explore the relationship.

"Thank you so much, Aunt Juley. While I have talked theories, you have done the flowers."

"Not at all, dear. I wish you would let me help you in more important things".²

TOO MUCH THEORIZING, TOO LITTLE THEORY?

Intensity of theoretical activity is a symptom of the frustration of practical and political achievement. This, at least, is a theory put forward by Hegel (reflecting on the contrasting achievements of France, Britain and Germany in the early 1800s).³ The small corner of human endeavour which concerns itself with the promotion of adult literacy would seem to bear out this theory. For the quest to extend literacy to all of humankind, or just to a few of one's fellow countryfolk, is at once peculiarly marginalised and the subject of grand theories about literacy's contribution to human betterment or social transformation. The quest is set against the power of huge modern systems of formal education, where it is often seen as a compensatory or remedial educational soup-kitchen, keeping alive those left behind in the educational stakes, history's wounded. Above all, the literacy mission works with those who lack wealth, power and influence and who therefore enjoy scant attention from markets and political systems – except when they are blamed for the poor GNP or the failure of democracy. The quest is characteristically undertaken in contexts marked by hegemonic elites as 'backward'.

Given these factors, the endeavour is seldom brilliantly successful. Yet it is passionately pursued by its proponents. And, as in other development efforts, the achievement sometimes seems to be in the quantity – if not the quality – of theorizing generated around the quest. The theorizing ranges from grand, even universal, claims about the nature, value and efficacy of literacy, through debates

about national policies and strategies for the promotion of literacy, to arguments about the best basic teaching methods – the latter at times the most divisive of the debates.

The theorizing often fails to rise above the level of competing slogans. Adult literacy work has been strangely over-theorized in terms of the generation of what some specialists consider to be myths, and undertheorized in terms of depths of careful thought or investigation. This was especially the case in South Africa through the eighties, where the nature of politics and education made the pursuit of adult literacy unusually frustrating and contentious. The legacy of the contentiousness is that we have a dedicated band of proponents of adult literacy with high levels of critical awareness and self-consciousness about what they are doing in the field. Whether or not this awareness will contribute to constructive achievements in the new polity remains to be seen.

The early 90s brought with them changes around adult literacy linked to national developments in South Africa. There was serious work in researching policy options. International and local donors were keen to devote more of their resources than was formerly the case to adult literacy. Many literacy NGOs (non-government organizations) earnestly shifted their focus from oppositional politics to the effort to promote substantive learning achievements among their students, while less politicized NGOs gained a new legitimacy as long as they were seen to have working practices to offer. The cause of adult literacy appeared to be advanced by the greater salience of the poor and oppressed in national agendas for reconstruction and redress, by the need to be seen to act progressively, by emergent union policies on worker education and by an apparent interest on the part of other mass-based organisations. The field has also felt the influence of an international move from an emancipatory discourse around adult education to a discourse focusing on productivity and a new generation of assessment theory. These factors among other things encouraged industrialists to pay newly serious attention to the learning needs of their workers. It is in the latter sector that the most resources are available for actual tuition. As a result professional commercial service organisations have grown, although the (un)free market has also thrown up some problematic commercial enterprises with goods that appeal to businessmen and officials with little educational expertise.

Within the surge of interest there has been considerable ambivalence about the value of theory. Many of those who commission or fund adult literacy programmes are averse to research and development, especially if it relates to deeper problems or long-term issues. As one funder put it to me, "We don't want all this theoretical stuff. Show us the action!" The "theoretical stuff" in question was a programme of highly focused and contextually relevant action research. It seemed that any reflection or deeply thoughtful practice was held in contempt. As might be expected, the funder concerned here used a discourse riddled with Thatcherisms. Although the discourse is philistine to those who love theory, the ambivalence

comes from a perception that much academic research is '*niksseggend*' (vacuous). The contempt for educational research is unfortunately not without foundations.

The utilitarianism of the funder is echoed by students planning post-graduate education research, who often say, in effect, "I'm not interested in theory; I want my thesis to have practical value". (A wasteful starting point which invariably leads later to entanglement in forests of intractable data and a despairing search for interpretive frameworks.) A similar attitude is taken by many practitioners and activists who tend to see inquiry as having one limited purpose: to endorse their existing convictions about what works. Among hard-pressed practitioners there is an unfortunate tendency for theory to harden into dogma – something which I have written about elsewhere at some length.⁴ At best inquiry is likely to be supported if it is concerned with mapping needs and possibilities or establishing "what works" (not necessarily a theoretically uninteresting question, as I suggest later). Questions important to those who seek to deepen understanding get short shrift: questions such as why something apparently works, or what is the right thing to do, or what are the political, ideological or ethical dimensions and consequences of particular practices. The resistance to theory is strengthened by the spirit of mission in a context of what is assumed to be pressing need. The anti-theoretical trend is nurtured by the contemporary perception of the failure of grand theories in social policy and – ironically – by directions within theory (the 'interpretive turn' and the current prominence of ethnographic perspectives) which valorise everyday understanding and local pragmatism. These directions can seem at once health-giving and yet at the same time disempowering to thoughtful and critical research.

Later in this article I shall take up a position on the role of theory and its relationship to practice in the promotion of adult literacy. But first I use one of the newer developments in local provision to show the play of theorizing around the literacy mission. What follows should not be read as an evaluation of *Brand Knew*. Rather, I anchor my reflections to the controversy which was generated by the appearance in the 90s of this addition to the organisations, methods and services available to institutions wishing to promote adult literacy.

1. LOOKING AT *BRAND KNEW*

*i. The Package*⁵

Brand Knew's package of products and services is identified by the following characteristics:

- * It was designed not by educators, but by marketing specialists with the addition of some training specialisation.

- * It pays close attention to up-market features. Learners – the target group consists essentially of urban industrial workers – are called ‘delegates’ and are issued with designer fixtures in an elegant burgundy, with matching zipper bag, books and executive pad with other quality equipment. The teacher has a smartly packaged set of resources, including audio-cassettes. Classes are held in convention centres rather than classrooms.
- * Most striking, however, is the fact that the whole method is built around commercial logos and pay-off lines. These are held to have ‘lifestyle relevance’ or to tie in with ‘the trainees’ lifestyle needs’. Thus, learners are introduced to literacy by being shown the brightly printed (full colour, high finish) logos for the country’s top sellers in the black community: Toyota, Omo, Lion Lager, Nissan, Smirnov. The learners are encouraged by the discovery that they are, without realising it, already initiated into the world of reading. In the course of a series of substantial primers the learners encounter most of the country’s leading brands. (Each brand holder represented in the course contributed R5000 to the programme’s development.) As a large repertoire of sight logos are established, exercises and games are introduced to encourage learners to deduce major phonic conventions. Towards the end of the course forms are filled in and letters written. The claim is made that after some 80 hours of instruction previously illiterate learners will be able to read *Drum Magazine* (a publication which makes no deliberate concessions to any lack of language or reading proficiency on the part of its readers).

Shortly after its establishment *Brand Knew* was reputed to be making inroads into the growing market for adult basic education in industry, and also in some areas in church and community centres. Some donor organisations and notable social figures were impressed by the promotions of *Brand Knew*, but its progress on the national scene met some fierce resistance, especially from long-standing NGOs.

ii. Theory and Brand Knew

In what follows I shall look at several areas of theorising around the literacy mission, at what these theories have to tell us about *Brand Knew* – and what *Brand Knew* tells us about the theories.

a. Ideology / Grand Theory

The pursuit of adult literacy has been driven or justified by a range of ideological positions. These positions derive from strongly conflicting perspectives. Yet the discourse of many organisations and individuals involved in literacy work often incorporates the contradictions so that they shade into each other. This could be called opportunistic, but it is usually honestly intended by people with a conviction

that what they are doing is worthwhile. They believe that if their endeavour can be strengthened by appeals to one or another grand theory then rigorous clarity is unimportant.

Their position is rather like T.S. Eliot's claim that the meaning of a poem (i.e. the 'message' which one could paraphrase) is of value only in that it keeps the reader busy while the poem does its real, deeper work. The grand theoretical claims about literacy do their job as long as they please the policy makers and the money lenders and this makes space for the practitioners to get on with their work. The important things that they are doing are nurturing, satisfying needs, promoting things which they love – justice, reading, language, culture, specific bodies of knowledge and skill – helping others in difficult positions, sharing and developing confidence. The broader ideological statement pales before the reality of this action. Its interest is about as strong as the interest of someone running a hard-pressed health service – urgently alleviating pain, holding death at bay – in the ideological, economic, historical or semiotic significances of the discourses and power at play in their work. The larger extent of theorizing around the promotion of literacy is in part a function of the fact that there is much greater immediate and directly observable benefit in healing or growing better crops than there is in the slow promotion of reading, writing, learning and understanding. However, it could also be argued that awareness of the problematic play of interests and power in health practices is much more easily silenced by the magic of practical effects than in the case of literacy work. To carry through the Eliot analogy, what is the deeper work of the poem?

Even if many practitioners are moved by a very practical mission, there have been powerful strains of ideological motivation in literacy work. The Christian literacy mission from its earliest days was sometimes touched less by a desire to catechise than by the radical egalitarian implications of the gospels. (Ironically, though, it would appear that notable advances in national literacy in some Protestant countries were the result of a much more authoritarian practices: no marriage unless you could sign the register or appear to read out a well-known passage from the Bible.)⁶ The egalitarian literacy mission shades easily into Tolstoyan humanism and the quest for universal rational human rights and dignity. This in turn feeds into aspects of the socialist passion for literacy, reflected in numerous campaigns, and into Paulo Freire's notion of literacy as "cultural action for liberation" and critical "conscientization". In spite of sorely-contested arguments about positions between these movements they share clear family resemblances.

Modernizing theories which emphasised the hoped-for contribution of 'functional' literacy to economic growth, agricultural extension and industrialisation have often been set against this uneven tradition. Yet even here we find a strong interpenetration of the discourses of liberation and equality in the modernization rhetoric. At the same time it is becoming clearer that the Protestant, humanist and Freirean missions have shared certain enlightenment and modernising assumptions

– assumptions about agency linked to essentialist views about the nature and destiny of ‘man’ and the role of education in uncovering essences through historical progress – which we only recently and tentatively have begun to find problematic.⁷

However, if we can perceive underlying commonalities in the past ideologies of literacy, we also see their differences. These relate to political position and the opposition between those who saw literacy in terms of structural change and those who saw it in terms of individual growth or empowerment. Even here there are complexities: socialists and modernisers shared assumptions about the literacy process and productivity, yet placed each other at very different positions on the left / centre / right spectrum. Radicals and populists have been concerned more with the empowerment of individuals and small communities, but have tied their work into broader revolutionary agendas. They have been particularly assertive in attacking the assumption of modernisers and liberals that literacy work or education is a neutral technology rather than a process which must be engaged in consciously in the interests of change.⁸

Brand Knew has very little explicit relation to these positions and debates. It simply ignores the discourses around the grander aspirations for literacy. It certainly does not seek to locate itself consciously among the Grand Theories. Nonetheless, in presentations it makes appeals most clearly to a particular notion of human dignity as participation in upward mobility on the one hand and to a modernising position on the other. It is presented as an efficient and neutral technology which can transmit general skills for a range of purposes.

It is here that *Brand Knew* is particularly intriguing as a phenomenon since its pretensions to ideological blindness cannot help being contrasted with its implicit but rather obvious endorsement of consumerism and corporatist culture. In this it stands in marked opposition to cherished values across virtually the whole spectrum of thought in adult education and literacy work. These values centre on the aspiration to critical participation and understanding. *Brand Knew* plays into a certain contemporary paralysis of these values brought about by the collapse of socialism and encouraged by certain trends in post-modernist theory. *Brand Knew*'s approach could be seen as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the commoditising of the sign. With the deconstruction in thought and in fact of critical enlightenment systems, with the arrival of post-modernist pragmatism and the almost nihilistic joy in the play of the powerful arbitrary sign which we find among neo-Nietzscheans like Jean Baudrillard, we are left without easy critical defences against an educational programme like that proposed by *Brand Knew*.⁹ Is *Brand Knew* the latest state-of-the-art approach to literacy work in post-modern terms (if it works)? Or does the weakening of critical response not point instead to a questionable reactionary potential in leading post-modernist positions?

b. Literacy Studies and *Brand Knew*

Literacy studies is a generic name for a fascinating and relatively new multi-disciplinary field of investigation which encompasses the social history, the ethnography and the cognitive effects of literacy.¹⁰ Literacy studies, though contentious, represent by their nature a less polemical, more nuanced and more academic approach to the theorizing of literacy than the Grand Theories touched on above.

It is therefore not possible to do them justice here. I will focus on one general trend which amounts almost to a current consensus. This is captured most forcefully in Brian Street's concerted attack on what he calls "the autonomous model of literacy" and his argument for "the ideological model". Street marshalls substantial evidence and argument against the idea that literacy is a technology with a universal and predictable impact on the way people think or societies function – an idea implicit in the thinking of Innes and McLuhan and more or less explicit in Goody's and Ong's studies of literacy. Street and other students of literacy – especially the ethnographers like Shirley Brice Heath – have increasingly focused on the practices and uses of literacy in particular societies and have demonstrated how dependent these are on social and cultural contexts, satisfying a wide diversity of needs and shaped by what they mean to people living in those contexts.

Street's thought cannot easily be reduced to guidelines for the promotion of literacy. It does seem to have some disturbing implications, however. One implication might be that there is not much point in deliberately promoting literacy, since people will develop the kind of literacy that they need within their own contexts and cultures. If they don't develop it or use it they presumably live quite satisfactorily without it. As Street himself is engaged in supporting adult literacy work it is clear that he would not give much credence to this implication.¹¹

The second implication must be taken more seriously. This is that the way in which literacy is promoted must be rooted in the practices and needs surrounding the learners. This implication appears to provide endorsement for the approach adopted by *Brand Knew*. *Brand Knew* argues plausibly that the most powerful and pervasive literacy practices surrounding illiterate adults in South Africa – the literacy which is most used, reinforced and desired in their environment – is the literacy attached to advertising and to getting and spending. (*Brand Knew* offers no research evidence to back this claim.) A corollary in the general position is also the argument, shared by *Brand Knew* and Street that literacy should be promoted immediately through the dominant (sought-after) language rather than through the mother-tongue.

While there is obvious cogency in the argument, it is troubling. Does the uneasy feeling that goes with it point to a weakness in the theory rather than to an endorsement of *Brand Knew's* commercial culture and/or a dominant language first

approach? There is something undialectical and lacking in nuance in these theses, at least when they are baldly-stated and reduced to a guide for policy by less reflective enthusiasts than Street. They would seem to deny the critical, oppositional and transformative potential of educational interventions like literacy work or the power of a value-driven endeavour concerned with the empowerment of people through their own languages. Street himself would not be pleased with such a simplifying gloss on his theory, but there is a danger that the 'ideological' position can have very similar effects on the motivation of literacy work as those of the trends in post-modernism touched on above. The theory can get caught in the act of conjuring an essentialist rabbit out of an anti-essentialist hat, of absolutising the local so that it becomes a prison for those whose local struggle is to get out of the local into the cosmopolitan – if not the universal.

c. Theories of National Policy and *Brand Knew*

There are earnest debates about the best national policies for large-scale promotion of adult literacy in South Africa.¹² One feature of the debates where, for the time being, the argument has been won, lies in the distinction between formal and non-formal education. There has been a growing perception that the non-formal paradigm – with its unstructured delivery and its focus on local and individual needs and a linkage to survival and functional learning – has not delivered the goods. As a result the paradigm has been set aside. (There is, however, a pervasive intent to keep many of the values of the non-formal tradition alive and to keep remembering that many adults with learning needs might not be advantaged by the shift.) At the same time the idea of 'literacy' has been under pressure. There has been a growing awareness that adult literacy alone is not transformative, that many adults need a fuller curriculum than very basic reading and writing, and that adults would benefit from a qualifications framework which encourages mobility into further training or job opportunities, participation in social reconstruction and measureable, accountable growth in learning. This shift has been signalled by the virtual abandonment of the term 'adult literacy work' and the general adoption of 'Adult Basic Education and Training' or ABET.

How ABET should be delivered and promoted on a large scale poses many vexed questions. Should it be centralised in a new state or highly regulated, or should there be a flexible state encouragement of a multitude of agencies, or should pluralism and a strong market orientation be pursued? What is the role of NGOs? Should a national literacy campaign (or campaigns) be instituted? Fundamental theories about state, economy and development are drawn into the debates. The theories do not seem to shape the debates, which are marked by the characteristic post-modern lack of a theoretical centre. This has led to a welcome openness and tolerance, but also to confusion and at times a failure of transparency – it is sometimes very difficult to see what influences, positions and interests are at play.

One of the problems here is that, because the procedural space has been left empty, those who focus on formulae and orderly matrices – notably planners from the industrial sector – rather than those who see the complex contexts and politics of implementation may end up having a disproportionate influence. In spite of this possibility, however, there has been an overriding sense that the future of adult literacy and basic education in South Africa, regardless of who takes the leading role, must involve partnerships, articulations, the mobilizing of a diversity of resources.

Brand Knew is a competitive business venture. On the whole it does not seem to contribute to the national policy debate – or to have much time for the debate. By implication the organisation believes that the driving force of private, profit-making ingenuity and marketing is the key to significant progress in literacy. It is certainly not participating in the collaboration of wide ranging agencies, including most of the other commercial agencies in the field, in shaping a new policy environment. In its exercises in promotion it puts itself forward as both the most powerful and comprehensive answer to South Africa's literacy problem and more modestly as one agency among others in the face of an overwhelming task. Its presentations carry the strong implication, however, that no other work of any significance has been done in this field, and that what has been done has been done by hide-bound educators of limited vision and no efficacy. (This after at least fifty years of passionate innovation and sometimes impressive achievements – albeit never remotely equal to the scale of the problem).¹³

What *Brand Knew* has contributed to the theory of development in the field is an intense awareness of the power and importance of marketing and hype. NGOs have neglected marketing, in part because of a puritanical social ethic. Even the commercial ABE agencies have been low key in the promotions in comparison with *Brand Knew*. There is now a more serious understanding that even non-profit organisations and state projects must advance their missions with adequate marketing, and that this, far from being an evil, can be an important mechanism in democratic development.¹⁴

For the rest, however, the loss of strong theoretical centres or solid cores of shared conviction has led to a situation in which it is difficult to offer more than impressionistic critiques of *Brand Knew*, aesthetic or ethical refusals and gut opposition.

d. Theories of the ABE curriculum and *Brand Knew*¹⁵

The designers of *Brand Knew* advertise it as an innovative and quick alternative to five years of formal education. This claim stands against the agonising about principles, practice and content current in many literacy organisations with years of experience and the recent impressive, thoughtful, consultative work done by

COSATU's Participatory Research Project into ABE policy. What would constitute an appropriate general framework for curricula for adults with no or little literacy?

Just one key question, for example – one already alluded to: What is the place of mother tongue literacy? There are tough contending theories about this. *Brand Knew* proposes a simple solution. Start with the universal language of advertising. (They point out, for example, that they find that Xhosa speakers frequently consider Omo etc to be Xhosa words.) While other organisations have made extensive investments in developing effective courses in mother tongue literacy, English Second Language, key basic competencies, life-skills and world-knowledge packages appropriate to adults in many South African contexts, *Brand Knew* argues variously that it is equivalent to and better than those packages or that it can slot its learners effectively into those packages once they have proficiency in basic literacy.

There have been significant efforts to advance curriculum theory and practice in ABET over the last few years with considerable sensitivity to the complexity of the issues involved. Theoretical development has sometimes impeded practical achievement in the short term, because of a concern to perfect the theory. 'Products' are slow to emerge from the process. Material, political and contextual limits to implementation are probably more to blame for this slowness, but a balance is being reached where the sophistication of the theory stands a good chance of leading to curricula equal to the best in the world. *Brand Knew* have virtually no contribution to make to the theory and practice of curriculum. Their approach can at best be called a method, and is perhaps only a cluster of techniques.

e. Literacy methods and *Brand Knew*

Even if the ideological and broader curriculum questions could be set aside, there are also contending theories about the acquisition of literacy. These are too specialised to be considered in this article. Suffice it to say that different approaches to literacy, second language instruction and numeracy could be placed on a continuum. On the left there would be theories emphasising the participation of learners in the construction of their cognitive development, paying close attention to experience and needs, the meanings learners bring to the learning, local cultures, political contexts and, frequently a commitment to critical awareness and problem-solving. On the right are theories emphasising prescribed techniques, learning objectives, hierarchies and taxonomies. In the eighties there was a common tendency to take an either/or stance in relation to this continuum, dictated largely by political position. Among thoughtful developers and practitioners there is now much greater willingness to allow a richer and more eclectic approach. However, there is still a struggle between those with a long-term view of educational change who resist what they see as quick fixes and those who argue that an effective and implementable bag of tricks stands the greatest chance of making a difference in a

situation where teachers cannot handle sophisticated approaches and contextually sensitive choices.

Brand Knew belongs largely in this last position, although aspects of its approach, like the focus on part of the experience of literacy the learners bring to their learning, belong on the left of the continuum. *Brand Knew*'s promoters stress that the package has been designed by trainers and distance themselves from the educational theorising. Yet their methods make very decided assumptions about how learning happens and the offer in a new package of a small repertoire of techniques and exercises which literacy teachers have been using for a long time. What *Brand Knew* does is to present a handful of techniques as a coherent and original approach. There is a strong reliance on association, on a look/say whole word approach. Leaps taken in the package are unexplained and without theoretical foundation, unless the theory be that people's minds are wonderful and, sufficiently motivated, will make various cognitive leaps spontaneously. (This indeed happens and can lead to speedy progress among those learners who somehow crack the codes and make the leaps. It does not mean that the method can be recommended for learners in general.) The leaps are from whole word association to moments of analysis, from meaningless trade names to English vocabulary, from isolated words to proficiency in receiving and producing English discourse – all with little attention to key theoretical arguments around the acquisition of second language literacy.

f. Pragmatism, literacy work and *Brand Knew*

People with long experience in literacy work are highly suspicious of simplistic approaches. Nothing works all the time everywhere in the same way for everybody. Yet experience also seems to teach that enthusiasm, conviction, a sense of owning something new, and appealingly persuasive technologies can be very important in mobilising support – and may even work, especially in the short term. Some professionals are therefore reluctant to come down too hard on packages like *Brand Knew*, but would rather suspend judgement in order to see if the package works.

It is here that a serious weakness in the field, and perhaps more broadly in our country, comes to the fore. This is the poverty of our capacity to conduct, value and make use of thorough inquiry, of the systematic and informed examination of experience that is one of the most important manifestations of theoretical activity. In short, we lack a serious commitment to research. There is sometimes an excess of so-called trialling of grand theories, curricula, methods and courses. At best the trials lead to a growth of experience. Developers will say that "From our trialling we know that this doesn't work and this does". This is certainly better than simply implementing untried resources. But the means by which the conclusions are reached leave much to be desired. There are seldom any well-articulated theories of inquiry, implementation, method or measurement to back the conclusions. Trialling is not a substitute for rigorous theory.

Perhaps this is the way most things happen in a 'real world' which might wither away if it were required to articulate all the theoretical frameworks underlying its discourses and action (an appalling requirement which would of course be misguided and a failure before it started.) Still, we are surely poorer for the weak penetration of theoretical disciplines into the practices of our professions and our common life. The academic world may have to take much of the blame for this because of its recent trivialising and decontextualising of much theoretical activity and its enduring privileging of technicism. Yet at the same time the academic world is almost the only guardian of theoretical activity we have – or do we delude ourselves? It sometimes seems that there are vital theoretical potentials in the community in many fields, potentials which are marginalised by the panoply of academic work.¹⁶ Trends in the West as a whole seem to point to an increasing movement of theoretical vitality to institutions other than universities.¹⁷

Brand Knew and its popular appeal to leaders and some practitioners illustrates the inadequacy of research about itself and of the quality of judgements within the user community. In the first place *Brand Knew* gives no public account of its trialling. Some agencies which have implemented it on a trial basis say that it does not work, or that the learners did not like it.¹⁸ Yet not one agency that I know of can point to a reasoned report with evidence – or to evidence, reasoning, theoretical examination even if it is not written up formally. All is hearsay and rumour. *Brand Knew* on the other hand speaks of wonderful successes, a claim which is difficult to contest or endorse. In the end, the most important theoretical question remains unanswered: Does it work?

Does it work? The question seems to stand at the opposite end of the spectrum from theory. However, it is when one starts to inquire into questions like, What does it mean to say that it works? And how do we set about ascertaining that it works? Or who does it work for? that we may begin to plumb the depths of theory and move towards theoretical vitality in our field. As I wrote in the opening, there is no lack of theorizing (i.e. vocal opinions, assertions, convictions, positions). But there is a terrible dearth of theory of the kind I have written of here.

2. PROBLEMATIC QUESTIONS ABOUT THEORY/PRACTICE

If what I have written about the field as a whole and *Brand Knew* in particular reflects a widespread frustration of practice, it also reflects a bad case of the pervasive theory/practice dualism in our wider culture – a dualism which makes theory somehow both helpful and helpless. *Brand Knew* glitters with the promise of practical effects and scorns educational theory – yet its package is a tissue of solidified theories. Even where theory is given closer attention, however, it often falls into disempowering theorizing. Our society sometimes gives the impression that it is staffed by practitioners who quote the catch-phrases of originally vital theories in such a way that the common-sense that might be brought to critique or

constructive action in their school or village is short-circuited. If this observation has any justice the situation may well be blamed on an authoritarian education system which breaks the spring of an inquiring mind: the lust to ask what *this* has to do with *that*, what learning has to do with the life around it, what theory has to do with practice – the lust to ‘only connect’.

Perhaps our greatest challenge in building national institutions in adult literacy and basic education lies in the need to reactivate this lust among teachers and leaders. We will almost certainly have to rely on practitioners with low levels of education and training. There will be few resources for lengthy training. The temptation is to use prescriptive, lock-step programmes and workbooks. Yet experience suggests that without a certain depth of education in which rationales and theories for the major features of these materials are internalised, these practitioners will undermine the best-laid plans.

A key aspect of this challenge is to develop a leadership who have sufficient theoretical insight to enact programmes in the spirit in which they were designed, and to act with creative resourcefulness in adapting programmes to contexts. What one would put into such a programme which bridges the theory-practice divide is one of the most taxing questions of current policy development.¹⁹ Adult literacy work and basic education is a field that has prided itself on its fresh alternatives to educational questions. We cannot afford to perpetuate here the unfortunate malaise in formal teacher training in which teachers go into practice with nothing better than a well-founded contempt for the unconnected, unrelated theorizing of pedagogics, didactics and empirical education.

3. PLAYS AND CONVERSATIONS: A MIXTURE OF METAPHORS

If I have given the impression that I know what theory and practice are, this must be countered by some closing reflections on an underlying, not unpleasant puzzlement at the very notion of theory-and-practice. Adult literacy work has tended to raise the matter to crisis point because of its frequent resort to an ethic which demands a clarification of people's needs, high levels of self-consciousness and political awareness on the part of teachers and learners and an intense suspicion of theoretical inquiry which seeks to define, explain or make sense of the lives and learning of ‘the other’ from expert but alien points of view. (World research for adult education in the 80s was at the forefront of the movement for “new paradigms” in educational inquiry.) It is sometimes helpful to step back from the crisis and treat the issue more playfully.

At one level I find the theory/practice distinction most problematic.

Stated radically: The distinction ‘theory/practice’ may sometimes be useful. But it perpetuates a misleading and disempowering dualism in the cultural class system. Inevitably, by analogy, it tends to be reified into a hard opposition like night/day or soft/hard. This has the effect of privileging theory as noble (but useless) and

marginalising practice as low-grade (but necessary). Does the heightened notion of 'praxis' help or exacerbate this problem?

Even more radically – There is *only* theory: There is theory without practice – playful, fanciful, maybe fruitful constructs of mind. But then this itself is inevitably a cultural practice. On the other hand, all human actions are manifestations of theory.

Yet, having said this, I believe that it is vitally important to protect and promote quality theoretical activity in our field. To do this, we may need to perpetuate the unreal notional separation, because I am not sure that either theory or practice are well served by reducing theory to practical questions. (However, if academics do this they need to build in gestures to protect their space, but also to signal that they do not occupy a theoretical manor house from which they can look down on the practising peasants.)

It has seemed to me useful to think of theoretical work in theatrical terms, in two rather conflicting ways: Either as an interpretive and expressive backgrounding of the action – a kind of ideal environment. Or as throwing light on the action. Although practitioners can benefit directly in the short term from many applicable mid-range theories, I suspect that it is the deeper interrogation of practices and the contexts of practices that offers the long-term benefits for good practices on any scale. The view of theory as a totally authoritative (but always disappointing) step-by-step script is not only misleading; one is too busy following the directions to notice what the backgrounding and the play of the light are inviting one to learn about what is really going on on the stage.

Whatever the case, we should not underestimate the importance or the severity of the challenge to activate a creative relationship between theory and practice in our specific area of concern and in our society as a whole. Only those who have had the privilege of a satisfactory initiation into the pleasures and power of theoretical pursuits know their potential in the shaping of worthwhile action. Part of the power comes from the deep knowing that the best relationship of theory and practice is like the conversation of equal but different partners who do not mind that they do not always speak the same language but can help one another to see things better within a workable way of life. If theory is a garrulous judge and practice an emaciated and resentful prisoner accused of mortal deviation, then there is no real relationship at all. If theory is a good friend but practice has no time to listen then there is also no relationship.

A PS: Formal theory seems to have a quest to avoid figurative language, to go beyond metaphors to a pure decontextualised symbolic language or to statements of facts and relationships which are devoid of metaphor. But it seems to me that we can never get beyond metaphor or analogy. We can only refine or fine-tune or enrich our metaphors. In my neck of the woods I find the enriching metaphor more helpful.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Throughout this article I use *theorizing* in a somewhat pejorative sense, as opposed to the dignity of *theory*, *theoretical pursuits* etc. This picks up on the Shorter Oxford Dictionary's loose or general definition of theory as "a mere hypothesis, speculation, conjecture; an idea or set of ideas about something; an individual view or notion."
2. From E.M Forster's novel *Howard's End*, Chapter 7. The novel treats of the disjunction between the worlds of sensibility and action, theoretical and practical life. It is prefaced by the injunction "Only connect" which I use later in the article.
3. Although I cannot trace the source of this observation, I remember it vividly. Hegel was commenting, with a certain wry self-reflection, on the manifestation of the *Weltgeist* in Britain as the industrial revolution, in France as the political revolution, and in Germany as the critique of pure reason.
4. E. French, 1990. The baleful influence of linguistics on adult literacy work. In K. Chick (ed.), *The Search for Relevance: Proceedings of the Conference of the SA Applied Linguistics Association*, (Durban: University of Natal, 1990)
5. It is difficult to access substantial sources on *Brand Knew*. Information is drawn from two public presentations which I have attended. As is the case with some other commercial providers the materials are carefully guarded and are not readily available for inspection or evaluation except fleetingly in presentations. Information has also been gleaned from informal circulars and invitations, and from implementers who have used the approach. This article was passed to an official of *Brand Knew* who circulated it within the organisation many months before publication. No comment has been received, but I was led to believe that a number of the features which were found problematic have been changed by the organisation.
6. For a fuller discussion of the research around literacy and many of the points made in the following section about the impact of literacy, grand theories and literacy studies, see especially Chapter 2 of E. French, *The Reading World of Black Workers*. (Pretoria: HSRC, 1989).
7. See a number of provocative articles by Mastin Prinsloo, especially "The Limits of the Modernising and Conscientizing Agendas in Adult Literacy Teaching" in J. Rodda and C. Mareka (eds.), *Proceedings on Literacy and Basic Adult Education in South Africa* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1990).
8. For an accessible and full account of this position see especially L. Wedephol *Lessons from a Literacy Project* (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1988).
9. M. Poster, *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*. (Cambridge: Polity, 1988). See especially the later writings. The problem touched on here is discussed in R. Rorty, Habermas and Lyotard on postmodernity. in Bernstein (ed.), *Habermas and Modernity*. (Cambridge: Polity, 1985). The question of whether the sign is arbitrary or motivated is disputed.

10. Some texts relevant to this section are: B. Street, *Literacy in Theory and Practice*. (New York: Cambridge, 1984). Street publishes widely in what he calls "the new literacy studies". His latest publication as editor is *Cross-cultural approaches to literacy*. (Cambridge University Press), 1993. See also S. Brice Heath, *Ways with words*. (Cambridge University Press, 1983); W. Ong, *Literacy and Orality: The Technologising of the Word*. (London: Methuen, 1982).
11. Street has developed a nuanced response to the critique of the new literacy studies. He divides the critique into three Rs: romanticism, relativism and relevance. See M. Prinsloo and M. Breiner (eds.), *The Social Uses of Literacy*. (John Bennjamen: Amsterdam, forthcoming).
12. The debates are excellently summarised in National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), *Adult Basic Education*. (Cape Town: OUP, 1993). See also T. Tyacke, M. Jacobsen, and E. French, *Towards an Organisational Infrastructure for Large Scale Promotion of Adult Basic Education*. (NEPI sub report), Centre for Continuing Education, Wits University 1992.
13. See Hutton Chapter 2.
14. Commenting on this observation in a personal communication (March 1995) Street argues that it – and *Brand Knew* in some of its features – provides support for the general ideological model of literacy. This does not stop supporters of the model as such from disagreeing with the specific ideology promoted by *Brand Knew*.
15. Very thorough accounts of issues in the grand theory, curriculum and methods of adult literacy and basic education are to be found in B. Hutton (ed.), *op cit*.
16. Reporting on a confidential evaluation of a university's centre for adult education in 1993 I wrote "There is one issue that generally puts university-based adult educators at odds with the more traditional academic research establishment. The difference centres on the demand for 'international' peer review and an implied universality. This demand is reinforced in the SAPSE formula and by influential research bodies like the CSIR and the HSRC. The reasons that adult educators are at odds with the demand are twofold:
 Firstly there is a principled, intense and largely egalitarian engagement in 'local struggles'. Adult education researchers see their work as informing and changing local South African practices and are committed to communicating their findings accessibly and interactively with a local clientele. In this situation 'international' research publication looks like an intolerable luxury and an enforced fetishism. Precious work is seen as being lost in inaccessible, pretentious journals which reinforce the knowledge hegemony that adult educators contest. (One also finds a strong and principled rejection among adult educators of the use of 'service' research for degree purposes.)
 Secondly, and more rarely, there is a sophisticated attachment to the contemporary theory of knowledge which cultivates an awareness of the fragility of claims to universality. This position, sometimes known as 'anti-foundationalism', sees little interest in the pursuit of general laws of behaviour and privileges the interpretation of local cultures and discourses. Added to these points is the fact that international journals dealing with adult education seldom publish papers that command the same respect that good local reports deserve. There are in fact few quality international publications dedicated to adult education, and adult education articles in the great education journals seldom reach those whose real interests they touch. Yet all the dignity – and subsidies – are accorded to the journal articles.
 The fruitful debate that could be held on these issues has not been convened as far as I know. The tensions could be enriching, but the persisting contradictions are unfortunate. The epistemological conservatives and the complacent academic bureaucrats remain effectively unchallenged, adult education researchers find themselves marginalised in the formal status and CV stakes, and the genuine benefits of international exposure and structured peer review are lost."
17. See *The Economist*, January 1994.

18. Discussions and interviews with a number of practitioners and two agencies who cannot be named.
19. It is pleasing to note that since this article was first conceived much work has been done to build training programmes for ABET teachers. A dedicated working group in the National Training Strategy Initiative has created developmental standards for the newly-termed Education, Training and Development Practitioner (ETDP), the Peninsula Technikon and USWE (a literacy organisation) have jointly created a three-year professional programme for ABET practitioners, and Unisa is running a certificated programme with handsome course materials (two workbooks have emerged so far.) The University of Natal, through the Natal ABE Support Agency (NASA), is running an impressive post-graduate internship programme in which practical experience and study are integrated. All of these have given attention to theoretical and contextual insights.

The Influence of the Home Environment and Parental Support on School Achievement

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This article reviews some of the literature which explores the impact of the home environment and parental support on school achievement. It argues that because socialization processes play a major role in school achievement, they require analysis. In order to align the school with the home domain, the paper elaborates on a range of approaches and suggests a set of manageable parental activities and responsibilities. These approaches and activities are considered as possibilities or means for home-empowerment in the South African multi-cultural society.

INTRODUCTION

At any given time in the life of any child, development is the product of the maturation of inherited potentialities through the cumulative effect of environmental influences.¹ These two contributors to development – heredity and experience – are so interrelated that the influence of one or the other cannot be completely isolated for study of the child's development.

Yet, most of us would not deny that the home in which we grew up contributed perhaps the most important environmental influence on who and what we are today.² Social scientists of all persuasions³ have studied what was thought to be an intuitive sense of the family's ability to mould to some degree the future of the child.

More and more, as a result of research, we have come to understand on a functional level, the nature of the home environment as it relates to school achievement. During the first few years of a child's life, often from birth to ten years, the home has been described as a *total institution*, that is, one which operates with very little other competition for the child's attention.⁴ Implicit in this orientation to the problem of the influence of the home on school achievement is the notion that the first ten years of life is a period of most rapid development for the human characteristics in school success.

The concern of this paper is that while South Africa (SA) is presently moving through a dramatic transition process, and while it is grappling with the implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), it cannot miraculously shake off the legacy of the Apartheid past. This legacy causes a myriad of problems, particularly due to the denial of equity to the past disadvantaged majority population. Although the lack of equity in education has

crippled the quality of life of the past disenfranchised and marginalised population, particularly with regard to home environments that lack the educational resources to meet children's educational needs adequately, it is possible for educators to create a breakthrough for children from such disadvantaged homes.

This paper argues that this breakthrough can be successfully initiated by educators if schools include parents as important members of the educational process. The questions this paper considers are: How can teachers be made aware of the enormous potential of parental support and involvement in children's school achievement? Is it costly and time-consuming to involve parents and other caregivers, particularly of these disadvantaged or at-risk children and deprived or at-risk communities,⁵ in manageable parental responsibilities and activities in the education of their children and the school?

This paper reviews some of the research which explored the impact of the home environment on school achievement, in particular the processes of socialization and education, and emphasizes the need to consider how children's development is affected by a changing home environment.

The paper concludes with a brief report of a parental involvement study at the Helderberg Primary School, at Bishop Lavis, Cape, with specific and manageable parental activities and responsibilities, which can serve as guidelines to teachers. Reference is also made to the impact of widespread parental involvement at accelerated schools,⁶ to point out that accelerated school communities involve parents as an integral part of the educational process.

SOCIALIZATION AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS APPROACH

There have been several distinct approaches to the study of home environments. These differences in approach reflect the different emphasis of the social science discipline in formulating the problem of the influence of the home environment on school achievement.⁷ Structuralists, or those concerned with larger, more formally defined macro-variables such as the structure of the home environment, include both demographic and sociological variables. These macro-variables focus on the Socio-economic Status (SES) of the family such as size, the birth order of the child in question, the type and quality of housing and/or neighbourhood, ethnicity, income, parental education, and prestige of father's occupation.⁸ The immediate physical characteristics of the home are also classified as structural variable,⁹ but these exert their influence indirectly.

These macro-variables have been found to exert their influence by way of parental attitudes and values. Kohn and Schooler¹⁰ have demonstrated the powerful effect a person's occupation has on the degree of autonomy and initiative in the home. The prestige of the father's occupation has also been found to be a strong indicator of the complexity, in particular the physical complexity, of the home environment. Even when parents make few active interventions in their child's

development, the immediate physical setting of the home environment exerts an influence on the child's attitude and values.

Research show that these SES variables have significant effects on school achievement, in particular due to the general and subject-specific aptitude a learner brings into the learning situation.¹¹ Further, the structuralist assumption is that the SES variables are proxy measures of what a family is since they epitomize the structural-functional approach which can be estimated more conveniently than other, more complex variables.¹²

The question that educators have asked is 'What can the school or parents do to alter the parents' level of education, occupation, income, or ethnic characteristics?' The answer is 'very little'. Therefore these SES variables offer no specific clues as to what could be done by schools or parents who do not have access to these social or demographic characteristics to improve learners' achievement.

Fortunately some investigators of the home environment have moved away from structural notions, and developed more direct and accurate measures of these characteristics and measures. Mainly these educators were concerned with the culture of poverty and compensatory education, and focused on particular experiences taking place in the home. The Home Environment Process variables, researchers typified as those things or activities to which a child attends or reacts and which influence the child's educational performance.¹³

HOME ENVIRONMENT PROCESS VARIABLES

A number of researchers regarded the SES variables as stable resources – variables that cannot easily or cannot at all be altered. They therefore investigated, not the potential resources available to these parents for facilitating their children's achievement, but rather what these parents actually *do* to assist and motivate their children's academic growth.¹⁴ They were interested in the educational experiences taking place in homes with access to the characteristics provided by the SES variables, and homes which have no access to the qualities and experiences provided by the SES variables.

Researchers of the Home Environment Process variables investigated the home experiences which exercise a significant influence on children's school achievement. The search was for specific information, such as parental interest and involvement in the child's educational activities linked to school achievement, which could serve as a basis for intervention programmes in the interest of the parents, children and school.

It was assumed that discrete educational and other activities that occur within the larger network of interaction within the family, could be identified.¹⁵ It was further assumed that these interactions which are relevant to the development of individual characteristics could be identified. Bloom¹⁶ believed that there was a teaching style

and even a curriculum in each of these homes, which accounted for the childrens preparation and reinforcement through the learning process at school.

The outcome was a methodology concerned with family process variables,¹⁷ or the home environmental process variables that have congruent learning emphasis with the school.

Before clarifying the duration, form and intensity of these sub-environments, the views about the larger environment of the home – the society, and the extent to which the social environment affects school education, is examined.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT WITHIN A CHANGING SOCIAL WORLD

It can not be denied that children develop within a changing social world. During their various modes of interaction with others, not only with the family, children acquire new ways of responding to people and objects, as well as events around them. But, even as children practise and master new skills and while they utilize new knowledge, their environment changes. In order to grow and develop, they have to start learning all over again – learning other ways of behaving in their social world.

In South Africa, for example, children have been taught by the South African society that in Apartheid South Africa, people who were racially different were exposed to different treatment. But, with the April 1994 elections in South Africa, children had to learn that *all* could vote based on equality of inclusion and exclusion criteria on the voters' roll. All South Africans now have to grow and develop within a rapidly changing South African society – a democratic new South Africa, while they all have to both learn and practice democracy.

What mode of development occurs within our ever-changing social environment? What is happening, is that within the mind of the learner is a store of information of that which is understood from the environment up till a certain time in the present.¹⁸ During each present time, new forms of behaviour are experienced whilst interacting with the learner's social environment. When it does occur, such as when South Africans have to learn and practice democracy, the learner needs someone to interpret the change in the environment. Very often it is a conflicting change, vastly different to what has been mastered.

In order to develop and grow, while society changes, learners need to understand how they fit into the changing environments. Adults or more capable peers have to act as indirect links between the external stimuli and the learners' understanding or responses. The adults or more capable peers serve as mediators. They focus learners attention on relevant dimensions of the environment, supply strategies for dealing with problems and oversee ongoing activities.¹⁹

This kind of development and learning within a changing social environment occurs in a *dialectical fashion*. The dialectical interpretation of development has

been investigated by educational researchers and psychologists in most countries – such as the Soviet Union,²⁰ and in the West.²¹

Many researchers have started to study trends of interactions between dyads such as *mother-child*, and *tutor-pupil*.²² This dialectical perspective has led to new views about the development of intelligence,²³ and how intelligence can be assessed and modified.

One view that emerged from the dialectical perspective that is directly related to issues about the development of intelligence is that of the Zone of Proximal Development, a concept defined by the Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky.²⁴

THE ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

The zone is regarded as the difference between individuals' current level of development and their potential level of development. It refers to the difference between that which individuals can do and understand in the present, and that which they will be able to do and understand in the near future.

The zone has practical and predictive utility, if assessed within each society, and for each individual. In the research on the culture of poverty and compensatory education, for example, it has become clear that children perform poorly simply because no-one in their environment is able to act as mediators. Put simply, no one can learn from someone who has not had the opportunity to learn.

The implication for the SES approach to learning is that it is not the status of the parent on its own – the parents education, occupation and income that determine educational achievement. But, as a result of the parents' status, the parents have had access to learning. As a consequence specific processes that have been learned, as they occur within the larger network of familial interactions, that are relevant to the development of particular characteristics of the learner or child of these parents, can be identified.

A further implication is that other parents who do not have the characteristics of the SES variables, can learn about these mediating processes, even though they might never acquire such a socio-economic status. Because these mediating processes are alterable, they serve as both cues, and clues to parents and schools about what they can *do* to improve the learning and development of any child.²⁵

It is thus evident that higher psychological functions such as speech, memory strategies, and reasoning cannot develop without social input. Other humans, adults and more capable peers demonstrate and teach the knowledge and skills of their culture²⁶ to children.

Once children understand the skills and knowledge, they incorporate this understanding and ability into an inner, individual, mental system that becomes each child's own. It is a kind of *internalization* that takes time.²⁷

Another implication for learning is that what children can do with the assistance of others is, in some sense, indicative of their mental development. It is their

potential level of development. The distance between individual children's actual level and potential level of development is defined by Vygotsky²⁸ as the zone of proximal development. Bloom²⁹ and other researchers such as Dave³⁰ and Stodolsky,³¹ investigated approaches whereby the home and parents can be guided to support, and act as mediators in, their children's school achievement, in particular to assist their children to attain their potential level of development.

THE HOME ENVIRONMENT AND PARENTAL SUPPORT VARIABLES

A view of some researchers that there is a curriculum and teaching style in each home, accounts for some of the differences in children's preparation for, and guidance through school learning.³² It was the task of these researchers to identify and explain the form, the intensity and duration of the specific processes which occurred within the larger network of familial interactions. These processes were thought of as a sub-environment within the larger social environment of which the home forms a part. They were identified to the extent that they relate to school achievement,³³ to intelligence³⁴ and to verbal ability,³⁵ as well as to the need for achievement and self-esteem.³⁶

Dave³⁷ started with the theoretical framework which assumed that specific aspects of the home environment *pressed* for the academic achievement of the child. Dave used semi-structured interviews to gather information on and identify the home processes. He then hypothesized that six process variables were relevant to school achievement. These process variables represent the characteristics of the home and parents in terms of: (a) provision for general learning; (b) role models and help provided for language development; (c) social interaction and (d) the stimulation and concern for achievement and learning.³⁸

Process variables, as used here, refer to those things parents do to which the child attends or reacts and which influence the child's educational performance'.³⁹ Dave simplified these by formulating clear and manageable activities for parents, as on the questionnaire in the Appendix of this paper. These parent-child interactions, can be intentionally or unintentionally related to school achievement. The process of intentionality is compounded when the form of the process changes over time. This paper, however, does not review studies that investigated the changed forms of process over the entire course of a child's development.

The six process variables Dave⁴⁰ investigated are described below, with the distinct and manageable activities for parents, as provided on the questionnaire in the Appendix, indicated in brackets by listing the respective and relevant numbers of the statements on the questionnaire. It is obvious that some of these statements or behaviours are relevant to more than one process variable.

1. Parental Press for Achievement. This includes:
 - Parents' aspirations for their child(ren);

- Their interest in and knowledge of their offspring's educational achievement; and
 - their standards or reward for educational achievement.
- (Refer to numbers: 3, 4, 5 on the questionnaire.)
2. Language Models, such as:
 - the quality of language used by the parents, and
 - the quality of language taught directly and indirectly

(Refer to numbers: 6, 8 on the questionnaire.)
 3. Academic Guidance, which refers to the availability and quality of help parents provide for school related tasks.
(Refer to numbers: 10, 11, 12 on the questionnaire)
 4. Intellectuality. This includes the family's intellectual interests and activities, such as:
 - the types of reading done;
 - the nature and extent of conversations about ideas;
 - the intellectual models parents provide.

(Refer to numbers: 5, 7, 9 on the questionnaire)
 5. Activity in the home
 - This refers to the degree to which parents encourage children and stimulate them to explore the environment.

(Refer to numbers: 1, 6, 7, on the questionnaire.)
 6. Work Habits
 - Structure and routine in the home management; and
 - emphasis on educational activities over other pleasurable things.

(Refer to numbers: 2, 3 on the questionnaire.)

MEDIATING INFLUENCES OF HOME INTERVENTION STUDIES

The positive outcomes of the studies on the Home Process Variables by Dave,⁴¹ Wolf,⁴² Stodolsky,⁴³ Keeves⁴⁴ and other researchers, are encouraging because they indicate that more specific measures of the home environment explain more of the individual variation in school achievement than the indirect measures of the SES variables.⁴⁵

On the other hand the strong relationship between a child's home environment and school achievement is discouraging if nothing can be done to alter the experiences in the home for those children who are reared in deprived home environments.

Measurement of the mediating influences of the home environment process variables by Dave,⁴⁶ and other researchers such as McGuirk,⁴⁷ was in the form of indices of the home educational environment, arrived at by extracting information on questionnaires (as in the Appendix), during semi-structured interviews with either one or both parents. The process categories were *a priori* theorised as relevant to a certain characteristic, such as Item 8 on the questionnaire: 'I encourage good speech habits, helping my child to use the correct words and phrases and to learn new ones', being relevant to parental support in providing *Language Models*, No.2 of the Process Variables in the Dave study.

This information was then rated along a six- or nine-point scale to determine the intensity of the family's *press* for academic achievement. Intensity refers to the relationship between characteristics of the home or parental concern, interest, motivation and involvement in providing experiences in the home that are conducive to the child's achievement in school.⁴⁸

The success of these home intervention programmes in changing parents' attitudes and behaviours support the contention that the home environment *can* be altered when educators involve parents intentionally. Further, the outcomes of studies reviewed show that positive changes in the home environment often produce improvement in children's school achievement. Most encouraging for home environments in deprived communities is the knowledge that these interventions are not costly. Generally the studies show that parents, regardless of their socio-economic status can be encouraged to support their children's educational activities, and that engagement in more educationally relevant activities with their children is within their reach.

The questionnaire used in the Dave study (Appendix, p 304), which is a practical application of these process variables, is the instrument used by the writer in an Action Research study, at the Helderberg Primary School in the socio-economically deprived community of Bishop Lavis, in 1990.⁴⁹ The principal and teachers at the school were keen to stimulate and empower parents in this deprived environment, by involving them in their childrens academic development, for the benefit of the improvement of the school and the community.

Bishop Lavis, a product of the Group Areas Act of South Africa, is one of those low socio-economic townships where poverty is prevalent. Most parents in this predominantly Coloured society can be categorised according to the static low SES variables of class, race, income, occupation and education, as discussed in this paper.

THE BISHOP LAVIS STUDY (1990-1991)

The Bishop Lavis study⁵⁰ was conducted at the Helderberg Primary School, a school that accommodates pre-Primary to Standard One pupils.

During May 1990, just before the mid-year examination, the writer conducted a workshop with parents and teachers, to decide on a *plan* for improving children's general low school achievement by involving parents in their children's learning process. The teachers and parents were informed about the manageable procedures of the Dave⁵¹ study for involving and encouraging parents to provide a supportive home environment. The nature of the support was simplified by illustrating involvement in educationally related activities as per the twelve statements on the questionnaire in the Appendix (p 304).

After teachers had been informed about the procedures for using the questionnaire as a measurement instrument, the writer and teachers demonstrated to parents at the workshop, how to use the questionnaire, to determine whether they would be providing a home environment that supported their childrens school learning.

Parents and teachers were stimulated by the manageable nature of the *action plan* for involving them as active partners in their children's and pupils' school achievement. Parents and teachers were guided to compare childrens May 1990 examination results at the start of the study, with test and examination results on two subsequent occasions: after the September 1990 examination, and at the end of the November 1990 examination.

Shortly after schools reopened in January 1991, the writer conducted a follow-up workshop with the same teachers and parents. Final year 1990 examination results showed an improvement in the raw test average scores of all classes.

Records of June 1990, September 1990 and November 1990 tests and examination scores were compared and contrasted by individual parents, and class teachers, in order to enable all to *reflect* on and understand when, where, and why their involvement with their children's learning process had contributed (or not contributed) to the positive test and examination results experienced by their children.

Individual parents were enthusiastic about their childrens achievement, and described how the questionnaire had guided them as parents by describing specific and manageable activities by which they could support their childrens learning process. Parents had not realized, prior to this intervention, that such intentional and ongoing support could make an impact on their childrens learning, and that they therefore could be instrumental to help their children learn. Parents were delighted that they had learned what they could do to assist the school and their children to improve school learning and achievement.

The principal and teachers reported a closer relationship with parents, such as more visits by parents to schools and of teachers to children's homes. Also, parents had developed greater confidence in consulting teachers, and learned to understand their children better. This clearly demonstrated how parents attitudes and interests towards their childrens school learning had altered, in particular their attitudes about themselves as mediators in their childrens development.

Parents reported how they had developed in the process, learned how to teach 'school work', and were surprised that they had such talents. They also learned certain forgotten concepts and skills from their children, in particular some learned how to write neatly and orderly.

This study showed that in a deprived community such as Bishop Lavis, SA:

- * Parents' involvement is a process by which their potential is actualized.
- * Parents' strengths and talents are developed during parent involvement, and are used for the benefit of their families, the school and community.
- * Parents are a potent force in the lives of their children and can play an important role at schools, to teachers and administrators.
- * Importantly, if parents are guided with specific programmes, so that they can learn what to do, and how to do it, and
- * If the nature, kind and extent of the relationship is defined, parents learn to understand involvement procedures, and the nature of the contributions they can make in the best interest of their children, the school and community.⁵²

Alterability of the relationship between children's home environment and their school achievement

The results of research by Dave,⁵³ Jantjes⁵⁴ and other researchers such as Leichter⁵⁵ and Dolan,⁵⁶ on the effect of the home environmental variables on school learning, have implications for the needs of our present pluralistic and multicultural South African society.

The findings, as tabulated below, show that positive changes in the home environment such as positive attitudes and behaviours of the parents, very often produce increases in children's school achievement, irrespective of the socio-economic status of parents. The findings also reflect the limitations, that if no efforts are made to guide and motivate parents how to become involved in the educational process, they would not know how to aspire at, or demand quality education, or contribute to the improvement of the teaching learning process.

- a) It is possible, where necessary, to alter the home environment by altering specific process variables, unlike the socio-economic status (SES) variables of parents' class, race, income, education, and occupation.
- b) But results also show how discouraging it is for parents, children and teachers if nothing is done to alter the home environment of children who are reared in deprived or ineffective home environments, as with the low school achievement of children prior to the Home Involvement intervention of the Bishop Lavis study.
- c) In homes where the intervention occurred, substantial gains were made both initially⁵⁷ and up to three to four years after the programme of the treatments had been discontinued.⁵⁸ For it is a 'treatment' that becomes part of the life-style of the home: educational activities continue to receive special attention as a matter of routine; and parental interest and involvement in the child's educational activities continue.
- d) The earlier the home environment is improved, the better the chances of effectiveness, but parent intervention can still be effective in later years.
- e) Experiments with surrogate parents support the findings that the quality of involvement and interaction with a caring adult is important in improving a child's achievement. It is parental involvement that matters – parents' (adults') interest, their motivation, and involvement in providing experiences in the home that are conducive to the child's achievement at school.
- f) Parents *can* be encouraged to support their children's educational activities and to engage in more educationally relevant activities with their children. For it is what parents do rather than what they are on the socio-economic level, that is the more important determinant of the home's influence on the child's achievement.

INVOLVING PARENTS INTENTIONALLY

On the questionnaire (see Appendix, p 304) as used by Dave,⁵⁹ by Dolan⁶⁰ and by Jantjes,⁶¹ is a series of activities and responsibilities which described what parents can do, can be taught to do (or do or do not do), and their attitudes towards their children. Bloom,⁶² and his fellow-researchers such as Dave and Dolan and later Jantjes, found that the list of characteristics or parental support variables account for a major part of the home's influence on the early learning in the school. It was also found that these activities can be changed if both parents and teachers decide this in the interest of the children, the parents, the schools and the communities.

At the accelerated schools that intentionally offer enrichment strategies for at-risk or disadvantaged children,⁶³ parental support activities are chosen that best fit the individual schools' needs. Some of the approaches geared towards increasing parent involvement vary from parent education classes to parent volunteers for

providing regular assistance in classrooms and at school events. Accelerated schools focus on including parents as members of the educational process is more widespread than in the research reviewed in this paper. Parental involvement at accelerated schools includes participation of parents *both* in the school during school hours, as well as in home activities on behalf of their children. Although this paper does not review research at accelerated schools, reference is made to the parental involvement at accelerated schools to point out that parents can also be involved as an integral part of a school.

To encourage parental involvement in manageable home environment activities as described in this paper, it is suggested that most parents need to be reminded of these responsibilities at least once or twice a year, even though some parents may continue this support and interest in their children's learning without further reminders. Therefore one or two meetings with parents annually will result in some improvement in children's learning achievement. Parents themselves can determine whether there is improvement in their children's school achievement, and their attitude towards school learning. Parents can also appraise their own support to their children's school learning. This can be observable within six months of the application of the home environment and parental support variables.

CONCLUSION

In our pluralistic and cross-cultural or multicultural South African society, efforts to improve the influence of the home on education is essentially an educational one. The processes involved are changes in social structures, in attitudes, perception and thinking. Ideally, these processes can result in the transformation of our society from one where the prevailing ruling group dictates behavioural patterns for all, to a truly multicultural society in which behavioural patterns of all cultural groups are equally acceptable, and valued despite and because of their diversity.

Similarly teachers' conceptions of parent involvement can be transformed from the narrow and one-dimensional processes of help only when necessary, such as possible solvers of children's disruptive classroom behaviour, or at parent-teachers' meetings with fund-raising projects. Parent involvement could become a comprehensive and developmental process, whereby parents are guided to discover and develop their strengths, potentialities, and talents in the interest of themselves, their children and families, the school and the community.

It should also be noted that when conceptualising parent involvement, we do not only mean mother or father. Parents also include all individuals who provide children with basic care, support, protection and guidance. An effective parent or home involvement programme involves whoever is considered to be the child's caregiver in this sense. The more 'caregivers' teachers involve in a home or parent involvement programme, the greater the positive effects the community would experience as a result of this mediation, interaction and intervention.

In conclusion, no matter what kind of parental involvement programme is implemented, it is the coordinated and reflective efforts of all involved that contribute to effective change. The change envisaged here refers to improvement in education, with mutual benefits for all concerned: parents, children, teachers and the community. The choice and challenge is ours. As educators we can decide to continue not involving our parents, with all the excuses we often make for doing just that, or we can start to develop genuine links with parents, the home and the community. Parents, and therefore the home, can influence childrens education positively.

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Author	Year	Source	Findings
Leichter	1980	Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago	Found that home environment and parental support were significant predictors of school achievement.
L. Dolan	1980	Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago	Found that home concern and support, instructional quality, and achievement were all significantly correlated.
Jantjes	1980	Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago	Found that home environment and parental support were significant predictors of school achievement.
Keesee	1980	Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago	Found that home environment and parental support were significant predictors of school achievement.
Dave	1980	Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago	Found that home environment and parental support were significant predictors of school achievement.
Dolan	1980	Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago	Found that home concern and support, instructional quality, and achievement were all significantly correlated.
Jantjes	1980	Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago	Found that home environment and parental support were significant predictors of school achievement.
Bloom	1981	Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago	Found that home environment and parental support were significant predictors of school achievement.
Levin	1988	Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago	Found that home environment and parental support were significant predictors of school achievement.

QUESTIONNAIRE

To the parents

APPENDIX

The 12 questions in the following chart can help you determine whether you are providing an environment that will lead to good school learning for your child. As important as how well you score, however, is the fact that you can improve your support of your child. Think about the 12 statements in the chart and use them to guide future efforts. If you make major changes, you should see clear results in about six months. Your child is likely to become more interested in school and more eager to do his or her best. You should also see your child's test scores and grades going up.

	Almost Always True	Sometimes True	Rarely or never true
Does Your Home Encourage Learning? Score two points for each statement that is "almost always true" of your home; score one point if it's "sometimes true"; score if it's; score zero if it's "rarely or never true".			
1. Everyone in my family has a household responsibility, at least one chore that must be done on time.			
2. We have regular times for members of the family to eat, sleep, play, work and study.			
3. School work and reading come before play, TV or even other work.			
4. I praise my child for good schoolwork, sometimes in front of other people.			
5. My child has a quiet place to study, a desk or table at which to work, and books, including a dictionary or other reference material.			
6. Members of my family talk about hobbies, games news, the books we're reading, and movies and TV programs we've seen.			
7. The family visits museums, libraries, zoos, historical sites and other places of interest.			
8. I encourage good speech habits, helping my child to use the correct words and phrases and to learn new ones.			
9. At dinner, or some other daily occasion, our family talks about the day's events, with a chance for everyone to speak and be listened to.			
10. I know my child's current teacher what my child is doing in school and which learning materials are being used.			
11. I expect quality work and good grade. I know my child's strengths and weaknesses and give encouragement and special help when they're needed.			
12. I talk to my child about the future, about planning for high school and college, and about aiming for a high level of education and vocation.			

If you scored ten or more, your home ranks in the top one-fourth in terms of the support and encouragement you give your child for school learning. If you scored six or lower, your home is in the bottom one-fourth. If you scored somewhere in-between, you're average in the support you give your child for school learning.

An Ecological Metaphysics and Its Implications for Education

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This article outlines an ecological metaphysics in the face of dissatisfaction and criticism of the dominant Enlightenment tradition and the consequent possibility of individual isolation and loneliness in our society. In view of the emphasis placed on science in the old world view, it takes the debate in physics as a starting point making use of quantum theory's challenge to the Newtonian order. The paper focuses on the implications of belief in process and dynamic interrelatedness within an educational context. It proposes two major immediate responses to metaphysical difference: Firstly, an 'ecological proficiency' programme providing an opportunity for reflexive thinking; secondly, a change to the attitude of the teacher involved therein from a conveyor of content to an existential philosophical counsellor.

As we move towards the twenty-first century, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the 'new South Africa' is a part of a greater change of world view. We have reached a crisis point of global proportions in which violence takes precedence over peace, antagonism and confrontation over care and where ethics is a word seldom spoken in public. It is a crisis of intellectual, moral and spiritual dimensions which, whilst being complex, touches every aspect of our lives.¹

Looking to the age of Enlightenment for reasons contributing to this predicament, Adrian Atkinson² proposes that there is a substantial content of ideas and related activity which is indicative of the dominant European or Western tradition and which is found to be problematic. He asserts that reductionist science has granted profit and power through technological advancement to selected individuals, classes and nations, and to one particular culture. The idea of progress which had its roots in millenarianism, has been metamorphosed and secularised into scientific advancement acting through the medium of technology. He maintains that the concept of individualism which indicates a cluster of related terms – freedom, liberty, justice, equality, autonomy, privacy, dignity – has had the effect of replacing moral responsibility of the Church by that of the individual conscience. Atkinson points out that:

This provided moral and religious impetus towards the creation of an essential inner isolation and loneliness of the hypostatised individual that is the hallmark of modern capitalist society.³

Atkinson's theory suggests that competition for profit and power and technological progress are key concepts which formulate a framework for thinking influencing

our comprehension of the meaning of life. This way of thinking places tremendous pressure on the individual to take on moral responsibility but without any support system such as the Church. Consequently, the individual is inert, handicapped through isolation and loneliness. Whilst there is ample proof of environmental destruction worldwide from technological advancement within a narrow vision of the meaning of life, the individual has not escaped deep scarring either. Not surprisingly, we find that the old world order is being questioned dramatically and urgently in many different disciplines.

The most notable dispute occurs within the discipline of physics where the Newtonian order is challenged by quantum theory. In view of the emphasis placed on science in the old world view, this challenge is significant. Firstly, it has made clear that process is a fundamental principle of reality and not the notion of a fixed, static structure; secondly, that there is a dynamic interrelatedness to that reality.⁴ These are metaphysical transformations that have immense implications for our way of thinking about life and for education in particular. In this article, I focus on the implications of belief in process and dynamic interrelatedness within an educational context. My motivation for doing so is through an increasing awareness of the possibilities of isolation and loneliness of the individual in our society.

Nelleke Bak has pointed out an often incommensurable tension in the view that there is a holistic interconnected totality of things. She has indicated that this tension is conceptual "between the struggle for our own identity or self-realization and the holistic globalization process".⁵ I agree with her when she argues that unless one accepts the idea of imposing a universal human morality in which case there is a real danger of the development of a world ecological tyrant, then it is not possible to extend globally a moral principle of caring for others. Her perception is that eco-educationists are guilty of maintaining an empirically based epistemology which presupposes a perception that:

all people have more or less the same sensuous capacities and since knowledge is gained through empirical experiences and perceptions, knowledge is 'accessible' on a more or less equal basis to all.

Once again, I am in agreement with her. In this paper, I intend to indicate an alternative ecological epistemology that accommodates the concepts of process and dynamic interrelatedness. Since these are fundamental beliefs affecting any world view, an epistemology that favours them signifies an alternative metaphysics; in other words, that which structures our way of thinking, whether we call it a world view or a paradigm, appears different.

At this point, I need to say something about my approach in writing this paper. To some, the paper may seem too ambitious, glossing too glibly over enormous issues of debate and discussion. In my defence, I point out that I am dealing with change at a fundamental level, a change that implies dynamic interconnectedness. Therefore, I am bound to reflect this in my writing or stand accused of contradicting my own statements in stating them. Consequently, in offering an ecological

metaphysics which implies an unending change to and broadening of consciousness as a continuation of the evolutionary nature of existence, it is difficult for me to focus on one or two issues and to concentrate analytically upon them. Since I am dealing with change at a fundamental level, a change that implies dynamic interconnectedness – and this includes the author of the statement – I am obliged to highlight the *interconnectedness* of many large areas of debate and discussion as I perceive them.

TOWARDS AN ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Political ecology is one of a number of ecologically related theories which have emerged in response to the onslaught on the older order.⁷ It is a set of theoretical propositions and ideas as well as a social movement referred to as the 'ecology movement' which signifies radical changes in politics and society and represents a new paradigm of thinking in the structure of social and political organisation and lifestyles. The theoretical propositions of political ecology are based on the assumption that life and human consciousness are interconnected and interactive, as opposed to viewing nature and knowledge as being in need of breaking down into discrete aspects or disciplines for the purposes of analysis and manipulation. This assumption represents a change in ethics and the way we understand the meaning of life.⁸ The tradition of political ecology signifies the principle of process as well as the ensuing appreciation of a dynamic consciousness; and the principle of interrelatedness denoting responsibility for an environment within which we exist. The goal of political ecology is decentralised co-operative and community based practices and there is evidence of co-operation of this nature particularly here in South Africa where economic pressures force many to work together to improve local conditions. No doubt there will be many more challenges to our fundamental conception of the nature of reality in our evolutionary development.

Another assault on the old world view comes from opposers of the 'Neo-Lockean theories of perception'. To take an ecological approach to perception is to move beyond the idea that knowledge is the consequence of a cause and effect correlation dependent upon a connection between the eye and the brain,⁹ which, as Nelleke Bak has pointed out, is the result of an empirical epistemology. In ecological terms, whilst the environment is specified in the structure of the light that reaches us, it is entirely dependent upon our ability to perceive it.¹⁰ Perception is an event in a context and the definition of that context depends upon the individual concerned who is *in* the environment and therefore interpreting it. We do not all respond in the same way to stimulus. Our response depends upon our preparation to receive new incentive. Hence, our understanding of our relationship with the environment is constantly changing. There are important moral implications.

Firstly, because we perceive ourselves as being in the environment, we are more aware of our need for and our being needed by that which makes up the context in

which we at any time find ourselves. We are interdependent with, inexorably linked to, our context, a context of humankind, of animate organisms and inanimate objects. By 'context' I mean the social and natural environment with a history of change. I make a distinction between the context and the 'situation' of any individual organism. By 'situation' I mean the historicity of the human agent. All that is thought, felt, desired, all that influences the human agent, the interplay between conscious thought and physical sensation, the influence of the unconscious.¹¹ Situation and context are interdependent. The dynamic of their interdependency manifests through the evolution of consciousness which implies movement and change. Therefore, the notion of a 'non-participatory consciousness' is precluded.¹²

Secondly, we are aware that, in turn, we form part of a context for others and therefore cannot absolve ourselves from some form of responsibility for their wellbeing. Our being in the environment implies more than the development of a conservational awareness; it implies social awareness; a consciousness of human relationships and our responsibility for them. Development of consciousness depends upon a caring, compassionate ethic for guiding our thoughts and actions, the culmination of the acceptance of our interdependency with our natural and social environment. The development of a caring, compassionate ethic depends upon the accumulated experiences of caring relationships with our environment as our personal or 'internal wealth',¹³ in contrast to the accumulation of external wealth prevalent in our consumer society. At present, we lack a politics of ecology and an ecological ethic indicating awareness of our commitment to the environment. Feminist theorists who challenge western culture's emphasis on autonomy, individual rights, and justice are developing alternative and correlative concepts of relatedness, responsibility, and care.¹⁴

I summarise briefly points made so far that contribute towards the definition of an ecological metaphysics. Firstly, as proposed by political ecologists, life and human consciousness are interconnected and interactive which is a process manifested through a dynamic consciousness. Secondly, ecological perception defined as an event in a context has moral implications: That there is an interdependency of situation and context of the individual manifested through the evolution of consciousness; and that we are part of the context of others and therefore cannot avoid a caring, compassionate ethic for those with whom we are inexorably bound. Hence, an evolutionary consciousness becomes the medium through which ontological evolution transpires. What is the nature of this ontological process?

In *The Phenomenon of Man*, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin contends that evolution is evident in the ever increasing complexity of existence which is 'bound up with' the 'psyche or consciousness'.¹⁵ He infers that different 'spheres' of consciousness in the world exist at different levels of development, each level:

to be defined by the sphere to which it belongs, by its position on this sphere and at the same time by the movement which carries it towards the following sphere....¹⁶

He claims that:

the atomic structure of the world is simply the expression of a law of construction inherent in the phenomenon of spirit; it is essential and existed from the beginning.¹⁷

Teilhard implies that consciousness is in all matter at different 'spheres' or levels of physical development, an expression of a law of psychic construction; therefore, spirit and matter are interdependent.

In dualistic terms, there are two energies, spirit and matter. Whilst science has coped competently with analysing the latter, the former has remained elusive. We are left with a metaphysical choice: Either we adhere to a monism in which case we have to face another more daunting choice of whether as monists we are materialist or whether we believe in something less tangible as a basis; or we adhere to dualism when we now have to face the dilemma of disparate variables. Either way, we seem to be trapped by dualism: spirit and matter.

The old order has been greatly influenced by the dualistic Cartesian Split which has resulted in mechanistic or reductionist thinking in an attempt to find certainty in knowledge and hence rid ourselves of all doubt.

this 'I' – that is, the soul by which I am what I am – is entirely distinct from the body¹⁸

According to Descartes, the processes which we know as understanding, willing, imagining, remembering and perceiving are 'kinds of thought' which are locked away in the mind, quite separate from the body.

But when we try to get to know our nature more distinctly we can see that our soul, in so far as it is a substance which is distinct from the body, is known to us merely through the fact that it thinks, that is to say, understands, wills, imagines, remembers and has sensory perceptions; for all these functions are kinds of thought.¹⁹

Descartes equates mind with soul or spirit which he conceives as distinct from body or material substance. Consequently, the Cartesian influence has resulted in our being trapped by the dichotomy of body and mind, matter and spirit.

To avoid fundamental dualism, Teilhard assumes that all energy is psychic in nature, divided into tangential energy, linking elements with all others of the same order, and radial, drawing all elements to ever greater complexity and centricity, forwards through the evolution of consciousness.²⁰

In this convergent universe, all the lower centres unite, but by inclusion in a more powerful centre. Therefore they are all preserved and completed by joining together. Union of concentration (the *only* true union) does not destroy but emphasizes the elements it swallows all the elements into which the personal consciousness of the world appeared in the beginning to be broken up ... are carried to their maximum individual differentiation by maximum union with the All²¹

This increase in interiorisation occurs through spiritual energy. The teleological nature of his theory of complexity finds its resolution in that to be a fully 'centred' human being, that is, capable of evolution of consciousness, a belief in something greater than oneself is a prerequisite.

I suggest that the recognition of holism expressed by the new physics, and the desire for its acknowledgement by political ecologists, is an intellectual interpretation of this need for the human species to concede to something greater than itself.

This greater whole provides cohesion for all our activities, attitudes and beliefs, that is our situation defining context.

Therefore, we are part of this whole through our consciousness. Physicists working with quantum theory acknowledge the interconnected and interactive nature of their research. Political Necologists recognise that life and human consciousness are not discrete, capable of reduction, analysis and manipulation but are interconnected and interactive encouraging empathetic co-operation, an ongoing learning experience. Teilhard's theory adds the continuously evolving concentration of consciousness, the process suggested by quantum physics. To move beyond the dichotomy between the physical and the mental vividly portrayed in the discrete fields of biology and anthropology, two distinct domains or categories, Teilhard defines 'civilisation' biologically, making it a sub-section or component of biological evolution:

By civilisation I mean not a fully realised state of social organisation but the actual process that generates the organisation, and in that sense civilisation is, ultimately, simply zoological 'specialisation' ...²¹

An important corollary of this is that physical and mental cease to be dualistic, the mental, now as much as the physical, part of an evolutionary process. Now, however, the psychic is predominant.²² Historical social development supersedes physical mutations within animal phylogenesis. Teilhard calls the former 'socialisation' which is "...an expression of a primary, universal, property of vitalised matter" which gives evidence of becoming 'totalised',²³ moving from ethnic and national diversity into a comprehensive social whole.

Teilhard perceives socialisation as an 'association in symbiosis'. Whilst many may object to the notion of being herded into an amorphous mass, this would be to confuse the meaning of the concept with a form of coercion with which we have become familiar. On the contrary, socialisation contains within its dynamics a dimension for intense, personal and individual growth and development:

... it is becoming clear that ... it is only as a result of synthesis, i.e. through personalisation, that we can preserve the truly sacred core hidden deep within our egoism. The ultimate centre of each one of us is not to be found at the term of an isolated, divergent, trajectory: rather, it coincides with (though it is not lost in) the point of confluence of a human multitude, freely gathered in tension, in reflection and in one common mind, upon itself.²⁴

The individual needs the group within which each one's potential, the 'sacred core', the 'personalisation', can be explored. Is this not something that we have the capacity to experience constantly? In the give and take of true unselfish love, we come to know its liberating and personally fulfilling consequences – a process that stresses a unifying coming together, a 'point of confluence of a human multitude' whilst at the same time accentuating individual potential, our 'ultimate centre'. In research and communication through debate, dialogue and collaboration, we create the opportunity to fulfil our own individual potential whilst at the same time contributing towards the advancement of the multitude as we progress in socialisation. Teilhard submits that love is the psychic energy which drives disparate elements towards each other. Whilst one might argue that gravity is that force, Teilhard's emphasis on love as an energy that unites discrete units incorporates the evolution of both physical and mental in a concordant evolutionary process. It is hard to comprehend Teilhard's theory in the midst of the political, economic and social chaos that confounds us today. This does not indicate that it is of no value to us. On the contrary, it may provide a cohesion for many of the ecologically motivated ideas: The essence of a caring compassionate ethic, the feminists' concepts of relatedness, responsibility and care and the political ecologists' desire for co-operative community-based practices is the realisation of socialisation. The dynamic of this process brings the principles of interconnection and interaction acknowledged by quantum physicists into social realization. Each one of us is part of our environment – the social dimension through the process of socialisation, and the physical through the notion of interconnection and interaction fundamental to quantum theory.

I summarise the main points identifying an alternative ecological metaphysics. There is an urgent need for radical change in the way we understand meaning of life. The basic assumption that life and human consciousness are discrete is already being superseded by the understanding of their interconnection and interaction. This implies a radical change in our metaphysical understanding. The human species needs to concede of something greater than itself which provides cohesion to all our attitudes, beliefs, values and activities, that is, to our consciousness, the manifestation of our situation and identified context. Since our constantly reinterpreted situation and identified context are interconnected and interactive, we find that we learn through the meaning of our experiences gained out of interaction with both the natural and social environment; therefore, socially, we must find ourselves propelled towards greater unity in a process of socialisation. Unification brings further individual fulfilment through the dynamic of evolution of consciousness. At present our evolutionary position gives us the capacity to recognise the importance of empathetic co-operation, of fulfilling *individual* potential in socialisation, not state compulsion. Recognition of the evolutionary nature of our attitude to both the natural and social environments presupposes that

our consciousness evolves through ongoing learning experiences, an assumption which becomes a major consideration for any educational curriculum policy.

ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND EDUCATION

Traditionally, the predominant aim of educational practice at schools is to describe and explain the world around us. In some cases we learn the art of interpreting it and in even rarer occasions we learn how to relate to it. We are objective, neutral and passive in our learning activities, absorbing what is presented as true in the form of textbooks through the medium of the teacher who provides explanations. Traditional educational practice is based upon a consciousness which remains preoccupied with power and control which directs our highly sophisticated information technology currently available.²⁵ The kind of power which goes hand in hand with the technological onslaught is what Gary Zukav refers to as 'external power' which encourages competition, domination and hence fear.²⁶ This suggests that we are raising generations of frightened, threatened and hence defensive or defenceless children.

What are the implications for education of the emerging ecological metaphysics? There are a number of factors which need to be taken into consideration and the prime one is that incentive behind all relationships with the environment is acknowledgement of interrelatedness and socialisation. With this recognition as a starting point, subsequent conditions are logical, such as empathetic co-operative attitudes and actions, development of a caring responsibility for both the natural environment and human relationships implying decentralised community practices. We have a dilemma in South Africa at present. Whilst idealistic ideas such as these appear to be light years away from our grasp, they are the very ones that may help us take another step in the direction of settlement in education. The dynamic of human consciousness demands to be addressed despite violence and confrontation. If, as it has been suggested, our 'cultural record' shows that our consciousness has not only emerged from a process but *is* a process with a past and future,²⁷ then what are the implications for curriculum discourse? Firstly, it is challenged for being atemporal reducing human consciousness to a *static* frame, a frame which is finished, settled, not in movement.²⁸ Secondly, there is a challenge to curricula which are focused on fixed bodies of knowledge which may be moved around from time to time but continue to require gurgitation and regurgitation as generations of students pound their way through an ever growing mountain of information which makes their school years at best tedious and at worst destructive. Thirdly, the notion of a dynamic consciousness in a socialisation process suggests that meaning is "derived from an active process of involvement and participation".²⁹ In what way do these challenges affect the curriculum content?

In this paper, I will suggest two ways in which consciousness as a dynamic process could be accommodated immediately in our educational institutions.

Long-term changes would require immense alterations to educational institutional operations and I do not believe that one can impose such fundamental changes. We can plant a seed for change within current establishments which in time would provide the impetus for further change in what becomes an internal evolutionary dynamic brought about through ongoing learning experiences of those directly involved. For immediate accommodation, firstly, an ongoing learning experience suggests the need for a programme that orientates the learner to its environment. I have called this an 'ecological proficiency programme'; secondly, dynamic consciousness in a socialisation process implies a changing nature of relationships between student, teacher and educational institutions in which involvement and participation provide a learning context for all.

i) An ecological proficiency programme

To accommodate and facilitate evolution of consciousness, a curriculum requires a facility whereby students make their life's context meaningful through an understanding firstly of their own situational thinking processes, and secondly, the ongoing transformations that occur in our thought patterns, our code of values and in the motivations for our activities and their consequences. I call this undertaking 'ecological proficiency' and its consequence is informed action within a process of socialisation.

Ecological proficiency is not an urgent call for historical detail. The student does not learn facts about the past in order to 'know' what happened; nor does she learn historical skills in order to take part in a historian's methods or study different interpretations of the past in order to debate their validity. These are different requirements. The starting point towards 'ecological proficiency' is not the past but the present predicament. The process begins with current concerns, problems and/or disturbances that affect our individual life style. What is the nature of the problem? It may be local, national or global. What is its historical context? It may be rooted in one particular tradition or in many, or it may occur in different guises in different cultures. In what way does it affect us directly as individuals within an environment? How will it manifest in the future and what are the implications for us? For example, violence in South Africa is a topic which we cannot avoid thinking about in present circumstances. In what way does violence impinge upon each individual's life? What are the existential implications for that individual? How does violence shatter the taken-for-granted day-to-day activities that provide a context within which an individual survives? Is the individual coping in the face of not coping? The kinds of questions that we ask in our interpretation bear witness to the need to heal rifts and break barriers. We seek not so much to find the truth but to help articulate values and attitudes held by diverse people in different situations. Through dialogue, we come to know ourselves and others differently. So often, in educational institutions and in the perception of many people outside of them,

subjects that might offer, or be adapted to offer a forum for the development of ecological proficiency are eclipsed in importance by the sciences. We have created a technological environment which affects our way of thinking with regard to our attitude to ourselves within that environment. Students find themselves pressured into choosing the sciences for future career opportunities. Whilst I appreciate the importance of scientific knowledge, to concentrate on them at the expense of developing an understanding of the principle of relationship in life can deprive our youth of an opportunity to learn how to perceive interpretatively the social and natural environment with which we are inexorably bound. How then can they learn to act responsibly be it in the natural or the social environment? In South Africa, we have moved towards a so-called democratic dispensation. What percentage of our population are ready for this step? What are we doing about assisting them in changes of attitude? What is being done in our educational institutions in this connection? Studying the sciences will not achieve this. We require proficiency in the understanding of ourselves within the context of events taking place around us, a proficiency which will provide ongoing learning experiences as a way of life.

In working towards ecological proficiency, the role of the teacher is less that of teaching and more that of encouraging discussion for self-expression and self-understanding about one's historical situation within an environmental and historical context, an ongoing experiential learning leading to different informed action. I call this meeting of situation and context 'reflexive thinking'.³⁰ To facilitate reflexive thinking, the ecological teacher works firstly with students' ability to focus clearly on matters of concern, anxiety or disturbance in their own lives; secondly, in the formulation of a personal and social context for these matters through questioning personal assumptions and those inherent in society; thirdly, in comprehending and empathising with a need for constant often fundamental changes in the social and natural environment through incorporating new ideas sympathetically yet critically; fourthly, in providing group-work contexts for communication across barriers of class, race, sex, age, status and ideology; fifthly, in developing the art of decision-making for thought-through action that is the result of a reflexive understanding of the reasons for and consequences of that action. The end result is a career choice — a calling — that grows out of a student's own thought-through actions as a consequence of reflexive thinking as a way of life. Teaching ecological proficiency becomes a form of existential philosophical counseling³¹ rather than a transposition of a body of knowledge to students.

ii) Ecological relationships in teaching ecological proficiency

In (i) above, I have indicated that teaching a proficiency programme requires a different attitude towards what a teacher's experience of teaching is. I have called this different attitude 'existential philosophical counseling' which I suggest is, at the outset, a study of the language used by individuals. However, it is not a linguistic

exercise but an *existential* one. A close analysis of language used provides a conceptual framework within which to understand why and how an individual acts and relates to a personal environmental context.³² In other words, existential philosophical counseling provides space for making sense of our individual experiences:

It must be part of the philosophical practice of making sense of experience to respond directly to another person's every expression of suffering, voluntary and involuntary, and help to weave such expression together into a cohesive pattern, a narrative, in which the suffering person recognises and understands him or herself.³³

Many emotional, moral and other problems weathered in daily life are philosophical in nature. In order to cope with this predicament, the counseling teacher requires firstly, to be a trained philosopher familiar with the phenomenological tradition. She works with the conceptual understanding of each person to assist in interpreting and examining the thinking processes and structure of ideas, values and beliefs, particularly in regard to their historical context.

Secondly, she requires empathy and a caring consideration of those with whom she works as they explore understandings of meaning of life. As an ecological thinker, she concedes of something greater than herself providing cohesion to the consciousness of participants; in working towards the structuring of a narrative for them, she recognises the interconnected and interactive nature of their situations and contexts, and the concept of evolution of consciousness through the development of linguistic ability. The counseling teacher aims to assist participants to redescribe their situations.

The outcome of the philosophical counseling procedure is ecological proficiency and its consequence is the maturation of linguistic ability. The inevitable advantage in constant language acquisition through this procedure frees the individual from the restraints of conceptual illiteracy at more advanced levels of understanding. The more conceptually literate a person is the less likely she is to make prejudiced judgments and carry out rash action. I suggest that the changing nature of consciousness manifests through conceptual literacy. Consequently, when vocabulary changes, a person's situation changes enabling her to interact differently with the environment. Through thinking reflexively, we learn to redefine constantly, as a way of life, our assumptions about life, hence our ways of thinking, feeling, believing and thus doing.

At St Enda's Secondary School, an educational institution in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, South Africa, which caters for the post-apartheid disadvantaged students, a programme of this nature has begun for those at matriculation level,³⁴ and is an attempt to introduce the concept of ecological proficiency into a secondary school. The programme provides the opportunity for students to engage in in-depth discussion about events, ideas, problems and activities, usually in groups, in what has become known as the 'Let's Talk' programme. The activity provides participants with the opportunity of understanding their present perception of the

topic under discussion and to examine different, perhaps more comprehensive ways of realising it.

CONCLUSION – ECOLOGICAL METAPHYSICS AND PROFICIENCY

What meaning does life have for us in the late twentieth century? In the dominant European or Western tradition, it would appear to be demarcated by competition for profit and power together with technological progress. The repercussions are often helpless isolation and loneliness. These key concepts which formulate a framework for thinking influence our perception of the meaning of life. Now, in the final decade of the twentieth century, it is becoming increasingly apparent that we are in crisis globally. We are confronted by constant and escalating violence, antagonism and confrontation. Here, in the southern tip of Africa, we find that our volatile capitulation into the so-called 'new South Africa' is but a part of a greater change of world view.

There is an urgent need for radical change in the way we understand the meaning of life. In this paper, I have indicated an alternative ecological metaphysics which aims to succeed empiricism by ontological realisation and continuance. Firstly, this essential change to our way of thinking indicates an awareness of the evolving nature of our consciousness as a continuation of the evolutionary process. Life and human consciousness are interconnected and interactive which is a process manifested through a dynamic consciousness. Secondly, if we understand ourselves as being *in* the environment rather than observers of it, then we aim not to control but to fathom our association with it. We perceive ourselves as within our own milieu in which we survive and develop. Hence, we accept a way of thinking about the situation of each person as interdependent with, inexorably linked to, the context within which each of us find ourselves, a context of humankind, of animate organisms and inanimate objects manifested through the evolution of consciousness; we are part of the context of others and therefore cannot avoid a caring, compassionate ethic for those with whom we are inexorably bound. Thirdly, since our constantly reinterpreted situation and identified context are interconnected and interactive, we find that we learn through the meaning of our experiences in a process of socialisation. Through its acknowledgement, evolutionary consciousness becomes the medium through which ontological evolution transpires. Fourthly, the human species needs to concede of something greater than itself which provides cohesion to all our attitudes, beliefs, values and activities, that is, to our consciousness, the manifestation of our situation and identified context.

Recognition of the evolutionary nature of our attitude to both the natural and social environments presupposes that our consciousness evolves an assumption which becomes a major consideration for any educational curriculum policy. The starting point for 'ecological proficiency' is the present predicament and the focus is on individual existential experience with a personal environment. Through

understanding the principle of relationship in life, we have an opportunity to understand and learn how to perceive interpretatively the events that take place around us, a competency which relies on some kind of historical understanding of the way in which our current situation meeting context has developed, through reflexive thinking. This requires less a knowledge of historical facts and more an ability to think historically, to develop an awareness of the evolution of consciousness of the human species through cultural changes reflected in beliefs and values.

Transformations which operate at a metaphysical level require changes of attitudes and values which result in modified life styles. An example of a change of this magnitude is that endured during the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries where scientific innovations challenged the authority of the church as the arbiter of knowledge, machinery and the merchant changed the economic structures of feudalism and political revolution of the middle class challenged the absolute power of the monarchy. The values and attitudes of the modern European cannot be compared with the pre-fifteenth century counterpart and we are in the midst of changes of similar magnitude. I may be accused of being Euro-centric but the tradition out of which ecological thinking emerges cannot be ignored. What is hoped is that in the future South Africa, interconnection and interaction amongst different racial and ethnic groups will bring forth a mix in future interpretations of ecological proficiency which are beyond my own experiences and limited portrayal.

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26. G. Zukav, *The Seat of the Soul*, (London, Rider & Co, 1990), 220-233.
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30. I am grateful to my colleague, Steven Segal, for helping me to clarify this concept.
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Does Walzer's Theory of Complex Equality Illuminate Current Issues in South African Education?

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The demand for a more egalitarian society in a New South Africa focusses on distributive justice in education as a priority. In particular, access to equal education is seen to be important in helping previously disadvantaged people into the work place. It is also seen to be important in building a new national identity. In the light of certain dilemmas that emerge from a re-distributive education policy, this paper asks whether Walzer's theory of complex equality has utility in illuminating such distributive debates.

INTRODUCTION

The question of distributive justice in education has been sharply focussed by the democratic movement in South Africa. Walzer's theory of complex equality¹ derives from an analysis of distributive justice; and that being so, it seems appropriate to ask whether it has relevance in the South African context.

This paper provides a concise account of the main features of Walzer's theory. Beyond that it examines the contextual relevance and utility of Walzer's theory in illuminating two educational issues under debate in South Africa: (1) how education might best advance the economic aspirations of disadvantaged sections of the South African populace; and (2) how education might help build a sense of national identity in a site of great diversity.

WALZER'S NOTION OF COMPLEX EQUALITY

Walzer's theory of complex equality is undergirded by a theory of goods. The latter proposes an ideal economy in which goods are conceived, created and distributed² within coherent human groups;³ e.g. neighbourhoods and political entities. Within such groups Walzer argues for a social definition of goods derived from and contributing to a collective conscience.⁴ In contrast to other philosophical traditions from Plato onwards (e.g. Rawls, who argues for the "one good that ideally-rational men would choose"),⁵ Walzer's central position is that there is no single good. Rather, he insists, there is a multiplicity of goods, with no single access, no single medium of exchange and no single set of creative or distributive agents.⁶

Walzer's position is derived through six logical propositions. The first argues that all goods with which distributive justice is concerned are social in character, i.e. he

sees distributive justice as being concerned with manufactured goods related to human needs and aspirations, not with aesthetic goods like sunsets. His second proposition concerns human identity, it being argued that individuals find identity and rewards "coming to them"⁷ from society in recognition that their ability to conceive, create, possess and employ social goods has value for society as a whole. The third proposition stresses that there is no single primary or basic good which addresses all moral and material worlds; rather Walzer conceives of goods as *objects* of historical transition, related to necessity (e.g. war versus peace), opportunity, power and regulation. In his fourth proposition he argues that it is the social meaning attached to goods that determines their distribution; in the fifth proposition he argues that such meanings are historical in character; and in the sixth that, if meanings are distinct, the distribution of different goods must be autonomous, i.e. operate within distinct spheres of operation. This last proposition supports the important implication of Walzer's theory that principles of distributive justice must be pluralistic in form. That is, different goods ought to be distributed for different reasons, in accordance with different procedures and by different agents.

In all of this, Walzer's implicit assumption is the possibility of ideal economic conditions in which individuals are free to create and distribute goods in an open market. That such conditions rarely if ever exist he explains in terms of distributive justice being hindered by the anti-social activities of "powerful persons";⁸ in particular, activities leading to dominance and monopoly. Dominance is the use of social goods in a way that is "not limited by their intrinsic meanings, or shapes those meanings to its own image"; an example of dominance is the use of political power to build personal wealth. Monopoly is the power to control social goods in order to exploit their position as dominant goods.

In searching for adequate responses to these hindrances, Walzer sees re-distribution as the correct response to monopoly and the autonomous distribution of social goods as the best counter to dominance. But his analysis of these strategies finds re-distribution to be an inadequate response in that when a monopoly in relation to one good is broken it can be predicted that monopolies in relation to other goods will come into play; that is, Walzer sees that "talent will out" and "inequality (will always) take on new forms". By way of example, he cites the development of a meritocracy following a redistribution of money which allows an equal opportunity to buy education.⁹ One response to this would be to regulate talent but this, Walzer argues, would simply "squeeze the problem sideways". It may also precipitate undesirable tensions; e.g. between statism (with a dominant good of political power) and private privilege (based on talent and industry).

Walzer argues that problems of distributive injustice are best addressed by attacking the tyranny of domination. He proposes a notion of complex equality arising out of "vindicating the autonomy of (different) distributive spheres". Through the provision of such autonomy, Walzer sees the possibility of an equality

derived from a complex of distributive relationships; i.e. relationships based on participation in the manufacturing and distributive process, rather than on an identity of possessions. He is encouraged in this view because he sees "resistance to convertibility" as something that can be maintained "by ordinary men and women within their own spheres of competence and control, without large-scale state action".¹⁰ His optimism in this is supported by the long term success of the artisan guilds of Europe and the traditional distribution of power in primal societies, e.g. the differential power relationships of village headmen and sangomas. Walzer discounts the possibility of super-persons performing in many spheres with equal excellence. Rather, he sees complex equality catering for unequal talent in a constitutive way, rather than through suppression.

Walzer does not under-estimate the difficulties of establishing an arrangement of complex equality. And he is not prescriptive on "how many goods must be autonomously conceived before the relations that they mediate can become the relations of equal men and women". However, he is insistent that "as soon as we distinguish meanings and mark out distributive spheres, we are launched on an egalitarian enterprise".¹¹

THE IMPLICATIONS OF WALZER'S NOTION OF COMPLEX EQUALITY FOR SOUTH AFRICA – WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CURRENT EDUCATION POLICY DEBATES.

Having now a concise account of Walzer's theory of complex equality, this paper proceeds to an analysis of its utility in illuminating education debates in the South African context.

The industrial trek

Over the past hundred years or so in South Africa there has been a general and sustained trend for rural people to migrate into urban areas; to make what Weihahn has called "the industrial trek".¹² Such people have not only demonstrated their perception of a Western style economy as a good but, along with Walzer, have demonstrated an expectation that in South African industrialised centres they would find the liberty necessary to participate in the process of conceiving, producing and distributing goods. In reality, for the vast majority of South Africans, this trek has been seriously hindered by a long history of discriminatory policy.¹³ On reaching the industrial centres they have found themselves not only precluded from finding an identity in a wider South African society but, as a result, excluded from participating in the rewards normally available to members of that society: e.g. "power, honour, kinship, love, knowledge, wealth, work".¹⁴ More particularly, they have often found themselves excluded from satisfying their basic physiological and

safety needs. Now, as doors of opportunity open in a New South Africa, such people are found to suffer a two-fold disadvantage. In terms of the means of production, they have no land, capital or experience in industrial management. With regard to school credentials and work experience, they find themselves to be a proletariat with nothing to offer but their labour.

In such situations, it is widely argued that African people perceive education, higher education in particular, as a panacea for their economic ills. Fisher¹⁵ reports a Tanzanian case where secondary students being provided with free vocational training were found, with few exceptions, studying for their "A levels" by candle light at night. Analysts have explained such behaviour by referencing theories of human capital and credentialism,¹⁶ notions predicated on the human expectation that higher education automatically brings greater economic rewards. In Walzer's terms, such theories argue that people do not see education as a good operating in an autonomous sphere but a dominant good opening doors to wealth and power. In South Africa such perceptions are currently seen to be precipitating demands for equal schooling; i.e. a re-distributive education policy in which all citizens are granted access to equal schooling. That is, a schooling which provides an equal possibility of good results in national accreditation examinations and, by inference, an equal possibility of entry to remunerative jobs in the work place.

But a re-distributive education policy based on a notion of simple equality precipitates a number of dilemmas. Firstly, as Blaug asks, "what do we mean by equal? Do we mean an equal amount of education for everyone, education to bring everyone to the same standard or an education which permits everyone to reach their given potential?"¹⁷ Secondly, such a policy does not provide for the disadvantaged beyond school age. Thirdly, there is the dilemma, in the present economic climate, that formal education certificates are not opening doors into the job market in ways expected.¹⁸ With regard the utility of an 'equal education' it can be agreed with Walzer,¹⁹ on the basis of wide experience, that if people are granted equal schooling under any sort of universalised re-distributive system, schools themselves will necessarily degenerate into competitive sites. In particular, objective realities²⁰ relating to students lives come into play. Some students are advantaged by their natural talent in relation to school tasks, others are advantaged by their family upbringing,²¹ still others show special abilities in writing exams. All of which influence school results and leads to the emergence of a meritocracy, i.e. a "group of the talented" claiming educational success, with the accreditation to prove it. In Walzer's view such "groups (can be predicted to) claim that the good they control should be dominant outside of schooling: in offices, titles, privileges and wealth".²² He sees the process as insidious, opening doors for the development of meritocracies in the work place. All of which is indefensible if we accept that the notion of merit is itself a myth and the mass of students who do not make the grade are brought into consideration.²³ These latter students not only fail to access the advantages open to the merit group but also suffer psychologically from the impact

of failure which may predispose them to bad performance in other sites of operation.

If it is agreed that distributive types of schooling cannot produce an equal schooling but, on the contrary, inevitably lead to inequalities both in schools and beyond, it must be asked whether an education based on a complex equality would have greater utility. In Walzer's terms, such an education would call for "ordinary men and women, operating in their own spheres of competence and control ..."²⁴ to have access to the planning and execution of the educational process; rather than this being the sole prerogative of a dominant authority like the state. This raises wide ranging questions related to the greater participation and influence of the business sector, parents and students in the schooling process; too many to focus adequately here. But a common focus for all of these social actors is the reality that students show a diversity of interest and application; a diversity not encouraged in traditional school programmes. Walzer's theory of complex equality would argue that this diversity of interest and ability should be encouraged rather than suppressed. It would argue that students be allowed to explore as wide a range of choices in education as possible rather than be forced to choose from a narrow range of academic options.

A key concern of an education aiming to help people into a social identity in the work place would be to help them into informed career choices; not in the deterministic way promoted by people like Talcott Parsons²⁵ but in a manner opening up a multiplicity of choice. In that regard, there is strong opposition to the idea that schooling should be directly related to the needs of the work place. But such objections are hard to sustain in the face of current expectations amongst South Africans that schooling will help them into the distributive community. And even if it is agreed with people like Archer and Moll²⁶ that students should leave career choices as late as possible, if entry to the work place is perceived as a good, it is apparent that all students need to make that choice no later than in the latter years of their secondary schooling.²⁷ Traditionally, subjects chosen at that level have been selected on the basis of what has proved easy in the past or on the basis of what a student likes out of a short list of what is available, rather than on what will build the cognitive and technical skills appropriate for "conceiving, creating and distributing" goods in their career of choice. All of which leads to the conclusion that schools should be opened to facilitate a wider range of options in education; perhaps, necessarily, with increased participation and assistance from parents and the private sector.

Coming to the disadvantaged beyond school age, there is some consensus that a form of affirmative action is required to get such people into the work force. Happily, democratic politicians in South Africa,²⁸ having the advantage of familiarity with the history of affirmative action in the USA, seem to understand the hazards of pushing un-skilled people too quickly into employment; particularly in the light of the great need to upgrade the whole South African economy. They have

proposed, rather, a conflict diffusing strategy which re-focuses affirmative action as the opportunity for people to gain on-job training and experience. Such a policy is acceptable to employers because the cost of on-job training may be charged to the budget of human resource departments and claimed as a tax deduction. That is, by this strategy the cost of training becomes a hidden cost shared by the whole community rather than a direct expense of the company concerned.

Such a strategy seems appropriate in the light of Walzer's theory of complex equality. Rather than the state attempting to provide a costly common re-distributive type of compensatory schooling, under this modified type of affirmative action individual agents would be enabled to get training leading to entry into an industry of their choice, without the extreme difficulty of returning to school. In South Africa, the limitation of such a programme would be the capacity of business entities to provide sufficient opportunities for the vast numbers of unemployed. Clearly, an objective of full participation in the economic community would require state commitment and participation beyond providing simple taxation incentives. In this regard it is of interest that the South African National Training Board have a National Training Strategy²⁹ in place which aims to provide the accreditation procedures needed to back up an on-job training exercise of the type envisaged. And beyond that, the Trade Union movement in South Africa has in place a strategy of Life-long Learning³⁰ aimed at ensuring that people disadvantaged by changing economic conditions have an opportunity to re-train and maintain their place in the distributive community. All of which seems to advance notions of economic justice. Under such strategies, in Walzer's terms, each person would have the opportunity not only to find an identity in the national life but to enter into the rewards necessary for the satisfaction of their basic needs and aspirations.

With regard to the third dilemma, that traditional schooling credentials are failing to provide graduating students with access to work, it need simply be said that this may in the long term determine important changes in attitude towards formal education, particularly once the alternatives outlined above are in place. This reality sounds a warning to traditional schooling institutions that they can no longer afford to ignore the needs of employers in their operations and curriculum planning. Rather, they may need to embrace, however reluctantly, a more instrumental view of education as a matter of their own economic survival.

Towards a national identity

A concern for those intent on building a new South Africa is how to build a national identity in the face of diversity, especially where the need 'to belong' is so critical for those who have been locked out of the political process. The question being asked is how schools might be organised to contribute to that end. Now, a necessary condition for Walzer's theory is "collective consciousness", a notion that parallels the idea of a perceived common national identity. This raises the question of

whether Walzer's arguments for distributive autonomy provide grounds for granting some autonomy for South Africa's diverse social groups with regard to the provision of schooling, curriculum development in particular.

That South Africa in 1995 shows social diversity needs no special emphasis. Its political boundaries shelter ethnic groupings with distinct and diverse conceptions of social goods; many of which have demonstrated sustained coherence over time. The Zulus are a case in point; showing persistence in their demand for the autonomy of their nation and the Zulu King. Afrikaners are another; for them self-rule is regarded as a dominant good. In the face of such diversity, insisting on a simple equality in education, in which all citizens are obliged to adopt a state ordained 'equal' curriculum, can be predicted to precipitate conflict in a New South Africa. And that being so, it might be argued that a conflict diffusion policy embracing principles of "complex equality", whereby local groups are granted some autonomy in determining their children's school curriculum, might sooner bring about an egalitarian society.

In contradiction to this, analysts like Amy Gutmann³² have argued that groups left to themselves tend to mould their membership to their own values; values which in South Africa have been demonstrated historically to precipitate bias and closed mindedness towards other groupings. From this perspective it could be argued that the decentralisation of curriculum development would lead to an increased isolation of groups from one another with negative implications for a national identity. But, as Weiler³³ reminds us, decentralisation is a strategy which not only helps in political conflict diffusion but also precipitates an increased legitimacy for the state. This being so, the question might be asked whether the state could not use such an increased legitimacy to put in place strategies that would overcome a social fragmentation.

The first step in such a process might be for the state to identify those aspects of national life which are of crucial concern to a national identity and those which are not. Such an analysis in the South African context suggests that there would be four aspects which could not be compromised,³⁴ viz: (1) a common citizenship providing for freedom of movement within a common political boundary; (2) a common right of access to a common political process; (3) common rights and responsibilities under a common legal system; and (4) a common right of access to a common economy. Outside of these things, other aspects of community life (e.g. the need for Caledonians to play in Pipe Bands and the expressed need of some people to play rugby rather than soccer) could be accommodated without any negative impact of national import. Even home language might not be crucial, provided of course there existed some *lingua franca* through which citizens could communicate when required to do so. As such, the state might well consider bartering the decentralisation of these non-crucial issues, i.e. allowing schools to maintain special emphases of local significance, on condition that such schools agreed to cooperate in providing curriculum inputs in relation to the crucial issues

defined above. The state might, for instance, in return for some decentralisation of choice of language, religion and sport, gain the cooperation of schools in helping students to a quality appreciation of the aspirations, attitudes and values of other groupings within the South African society. Certainly, it could be predicted that acceptance of such inclusions in the curriculum would be more likely gained by this type of trade-off strategy than by the forceful imposition of a rigidly state-controlled unitary school curriculum. For the latter could be predicted to precipitate passive resistance whereby entrenched attitudes towards other groups would be reinforced rather than modified. And there is always the reality, that needs to be guarded against, that a strong centralist policy might open doors for tyrannical domination by an entrenched state. That such is a possibility in South Africa needs no special emphasis.

Another objection that might be raised to a curriculum showing predilection towards local values is that this might 'lock-in' individuals intent on emancipating themselves from the traditional values of their 'given' society.³⁵ But in a New South Africa, where conditions of common citizenship and freedom of movement within the national boundary will operate, there should be no lack of opportunities for people to seek alternative schooling. And in this respect the availability of schools showing curriculum diversity would advantage people seeking a non-traditional education, as opposed to the inevitable denial of such a possibility in the case where everybody was forced to settle for a unified obligatory national curriculum. Over time, the intermixing of people from diverse backgrounds could be predicted to lead to an increased number of people finding a relaxed freedom in accepting diversity as part of their national heritage.

CONCLUSION

The above analysis suggests that Walzer's notion of complex equality does have utility in illuminating current education debates in the South African context. In focussing a policy of autonomy of distribution in opposition to policies leading to dominance, rather than re-distribution to avoid monopolies, it suggests some strategies which seem appropriate in helping resolve a number of dilemmas facing South African education policy makers at this time.

The strength of Walzer's theory lies in its underlying objective of a societal framework based on mutual and productive human relationships. For this offers hope for all South Africans of that identity and those rewards that most would regard as minimal criteria for a truly human society.

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Mystification of Democracy: Penny Enslin's Critique of Nation-Building

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This article is a critical review of the contribution of Penny Enslin to the debate on nation-building and democracy in South Africa. For this purpose, the article discusses Enslin's arguments on nation-building, particularly her claims that (1) nation-building is incompatible with democracy and (2) that the promotion of nation-building through education is indefensible. It contends that there is a sense in which nation-building is compatible with democracy and a sense in which the promotion of nation-building through education is defensible. To support this argument, the article explores the processes of nation-building in the South African context and their relationship to the democratic struggles, as well as the relationship between myths, education and democracy.

INTRODUCTION

In a paper entitled "The Dialectic of Unity and Diversity in Education: Its Implications for a National Curriculum", Cross and Mkwanazi suggested that nation-building is morally and politically desirable for the project of construction of a unitary national identity in South Africa. They stressed that this project should take into account as much as possible the legacy of social and cultural diversity in South Africa. Based on the assumption that new identities can be constructed only with reference to old identities,¹ they argued that the project of a unitary national identity in South Africa will require the questioning, re-articulation and contestation of political identities inherited from the apartheid legacy. Inevitably, this process will be such that no single identity will be either entirely transformed or kept completely pure and intact. There will always be elements of continuity and discontinuity. They suggested that an educational system which emphasises notions of unity, national reconciliation and anti-racism would certainly play a central role for the project of unitary South African identity to succeed.

The paper invited several critical reactions from experts, educationists and practitioners from South Africa and overseas.² One of these was by Enslin, whose recent writings³ have been dedicated to a critique of the concept of nation-building in South Africa. What is specific about this critique is its feminist orientation. It is in this context that the paper seeks to engage with Enslin's critique of nation-building, not so much as an apology of the argument advanced by Cross and

Mkwanazi, but primarily as an attempt to (1) explore the question, meaning, and practices of democracy, as a contested category, in relation to the project of nation-building, and (2) to rethink the centrality of the discourse of democracy in relation to other political positions, such as feminism and nation-building. The first objective alludes to the conceptual status of 'democracy', and the second to the link between the concept of democracy and certain political projects. Our central question is whether nation-building, as a political project, is intrinsically incompatible with democracy and non-sexism, as claimed by Enslin. In engaging in this debate we certainly have something in common with Enslin: the concern with the philosophical foundations of the projects of democracy and nation-building, which for us represents an uncertainty under present circumstances and, therefore, our 'underlying anxiety'. As Wilson has indicated:

Conceptual or philosophical questions often arise because of some underlying anxiety: certain features of life seem somehow to threaten the way in which we had always thought, and hence give us a feeling of insecurity.⁴

Enslin's concern with "the lack of sensitivity to gender" and her scepticism towards the goal of nation-building in general is justifiable. Narrowly conceived, nation-building can grossly be incompatible with democracy and non-sexism. It is known that in practice nation-building usually does not take benign forms. However, we shall contend in this paper that the argument that nation-building is necessarily incompatible with democracy and non-sexism is both incorrect and untenable. We shall illustrate that there is a sense in which nation-building is compatible with democracy, and a sense in which the promotion of nation-building through education is defensible. To do justice to her philosophical stance, we shall however pay particular attention to the conceptual framework, logical structure and consistency of her arguments. However, it is not our main concern to grapple with the meaning and interpretation of nation-building. Our concern is to examine the manner in which a certain understanding of democracy is used by Enslin to critique the project of nation-building. This, it will be argued, tends to simplify and thus mystify the concept of democracy.⁵ This does not mean that we advocate a single concept of democracy.⁶ Our argument is that political concepts, such as that of democracy, are socially constructed, and as such they form part of a contested domain. This means that we cannot think and conceptualise 'democracy' independently from the particular social, political, cultural, and economic practices in which this idea is invented, pursued, and institutionalised.

RECONSTRUCTING ENSLIN'S ARGUMENT

In this section, we shall briefly reconstruct Enslin's argument, with the aim of highlighting its key attributes. Drawing on a particular feminist position,⁷ Enslin's central argument is that the project of nation-building, particularly in South Africa,

is incompatible with the project of democracy and the principle of non-sexism.⁸ This argument is premised on two main propositions. First, the proposition that "nations are a myth",⁹ and because "education for nation-building" would promote "myths rather than rational reflection",¹⁰ this would undermine the development of autonomy. In her view, "critical thinking is a necessary feature of one the aspects of autonomy,"¹¹ which she sees as a key component of democracy. Second, the proposition that "like other political categories, our concept of 'nation' is an expression of predominantly male experiences and aspirations".¹² Following this proposition, nation-building would inevitably fall under the same category, i.e as patriarchal construct it would reflect male experiences and concerns. These two propositions imply that democracy rests on the development of critical thinking – a necessary feature of autonomy – and non-sexism, and that the concern of education is with the promotion of these qualities. This means that no provision should be made for the project of nation-building in education. As she puts it, "Nation-building is not a defensible approach to education after apartheid".¹³

AN APPRAISAL OF ENSLIN'S ARGUMENT

The main thrust of Enslin's argument is the reminder about an uncritical pursuit of the ideal of nation-building, which adds to the fact that there have been undemocratic and oppressive practices in certain processes of nation-building. However, as it will be shown, problems of logical inconsistency, methodological and conceptual inaccuracies make Enslin's argument fallacious and less persuasive. Among these is the failure to engage with key concepts in the debate, which clouds her conceptual framework. Methodologically, there is a tendency to operate at the highest level of abstraction without reference to any particular context.¹⁴ Related to this is also the tendency to make unsubstantiated and uncontextualised claims.

GENERALISATIONS GET THEIR REVENGE

Throughout her writings on nation-building, Enslin makes use of several concepts such as democracy, nation-building, education, non-sexism, and so forth, without any attempt to locate them within their different theoretical contexts. When she does this, she seems overwhelmed by the method of conceptual inquiry of the Analytical Philosophy of Education (APE). This method has been described as 'criterion-based method', which is, in other contexts, in opposition to a 'context-based method'.¹⁵ However, this does not mean that one has to choose between them. Both are relatively valid, when considered holistically. Our critique of Enslin is her reliance on only one of them, the "criterion-based method", which she uses to define the concept of nation. In doing so, Enslin defines a set of criteria with reference to which a particular society could qualify as a nation. Thus for a society to be a

nation, its political features would have to conform to an *a priori* defined set of criteria. In her view, these include those criteria that characterise the 'unifying practice' through which a nation is built, namely: 'common loyalty, occupation of a political territory, political autonomy, living together, common "sets of memories and myths", homogeneous and common culture, sense of belonging together, and political community'.¹⁶

Obviously, with such a rigid, static and unqualified set of criteria the project of nation-building in South Africa appears conceptually suspect.¹⁷ To borrow from Peters, the term nation is used "valuatively, but vaguely with lack of precision regarding its area of application".¹⁸ Enslin tends to assume that the meanings of concepts such as nation are universal and uncontested. She fails to recognise that meanings of these concepts vary with different social contexts, and, consequently, in South Africa they signify different things.¹⁹ Concepts are not used in a vacuum. Indeed, they are usually asked in everyday life, under the pressure of particular social or historical circumstances. The nature of these circumstances is central for understanding concepts.²⁰

An example is the manner in which she engages with the notion of nation-building. She uses this notion interchangeably with the notions of nationalism, nation-state, nationhood,²¹ in order to argue that they all lack a "commitment to democratic political participation", and do not foster the "exercise of reason".²² She reads the "idea of nation" as comprised of "national sentiment, national ideology, and national consciousness",²³ which in her view should not be promoted in public schools. By using these notions in this manner, Enslin fails (1) to recognise the historical context in which each of these terms is defined and mobilized; (2) to engage with the conceptual specificity of each concept; and (3) to recognise that some of these concepts, in a specific context, may be conceptually contradictory to her claim.

Put differently, these concepts, applied to particular political and social contexts, conceptually do not necessarily lack a "commitment to democratic political participation". Certainly, Enslin would not disagree that regarding the concept of nation-state, in most of Western Europe, there seems to be a correlation between democratic participation and the character of the state – even if we are not clear about what she means by "democratic political participation". Further, we do not think that she can deny that there was democratic participation in the recent non-racial democratic election in the country. Thus it is not clear why "democratic political participation" would not fit into or form part of some of those concepts given appropriate social and political circumstances. While there seems to be a conceptual interrelatedness between the above concepts, which undoubtedly form part of a network or constellation of concepts, their interrelatedness cannot be established with reference to the lack "of democratic political participation", even if we stretch their meanings.

Another example is the observation that she makes about the nature of political categories, such as nation-building. Enslin states: "*like other political categories, our concept of 'nation' is an expression of predominantly male experiences and aspirations*".²⁴ Although in our view, the validity of this proposition is questionable, we would like to draw out its implications for her argument. According to this proposition, political categories, including those from feminist political philosophy, political theory, and feminist politics, privilege "male perspectives" and "masculine values".²⁵ This effectively undermines her political concerns with democracy, in that it makes it a sexist concept, propagating male domination. Inevitably, feminist projects will have to draw on new concepts that are not from the legacy of modern political philosophy. Thus her claim seems to turn the feminist project into an impossibility. It cannot appeal to existing political discourses and popular consciousness, as these are embedded in patriarchal thinking.²⁶

NATIONALISM AND NATION-BUILDING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Enslin grapples with the history of Christian Nationalism in an attempt to show that nation-building was an oppressive invention. While this argument appears valid, the same history of Afrikaner nationalism in its confrontation with other nationalist projects indicates that nation-building has also been linked to the democratic process and struggle in South Africa. This can best be illustrated through a brief analysis of Afrikaner nationalism and the African National Congress (ANC). We shall argue that although she explores the nature and the political implications of Christian Nationalism for democracy, her criticism of nation-building is not grounded on an understanding of the historical complexity of the national question in South Africa. Afrikaner politics emerged in mid 19th century in South Africa with a distinctive nationalist discourse, which encouraged Afrikaners to think of themselves as a distinct *volk* with a common history, language, culture, identity, and as culturally different from the English-speaking people. These were represented as a threat to Afrikaner identity and associated with British capital, imperialism and liberalism. Symbols, myths and such notions as Afrikanerhood, Afrikanerdom, Afrikaner nation, and Afrikaner identity, were invented to mobilize and unite Afrikaners in the struggle against British imperialism and subsequent anglicization policies. One outcome was the Christian National Education, which provided the ideological foundations for Afrikaner nationalism.

Milner tried at the beginning of the century to assert British dominance in an imagined white South African *volk* by privileging whites and marginalizing the disfranchised black majority in all spheres of life. This, it was hoped, would ultimately reduce nationalist feelings amongst Afrikaners. This would result in a white exclusivist South Africanism under British guardianship. Obviously, Milner's *South Africanism*²⁷ was categorically challenged by Afrikaner nationalists.

Soon after the proclamation of Union, Botha and Smuts showed commitment to a new and broader *South Africanism*, which would result in a broader white nation in South Africa, in which Afrikaners would increasingly become dominant. They imagined a white *volk* in a united South Africa, dominated by Afrikaners and serviced by rightless blacks. This would result from the widening of political frontiers in order to create a new identity, which would unite Afrikaners and English into a 'white volk' or nation *vis-a-vis* the black threat within the framework of Christian Nationalism. To paraphrase Smuts in his introduction to the 1907 Transvaal Education Act, this meant "to do away with sectional differences and divisions" and "to combine the whole of the white population of the country in a common system" as illustrated by the cosmopolitan integration of the United States.²⁸

After Botha and Smuts, the re-definition of the political frontiers between Afrikaners and other white groups continued to receive increasing attention among Afrikaner nationalists. The need for the Afrikanerisation of the English became part of Afrikaner nationalist discourse. The invention and re-invention of symbols and images, which emphasized difference and the need for separateness in cultural and educational institutions of whites and blacks, became a major characteristic of Afrikaner nationalism, to enhance loyalties and unity within the *volk*. First, the notion of *swartgevaar* (black danger) emphasised by Malan in 1948, whereby if no effective measures were taken to protect the white race, whites would eventually be swamped by blacks, came to legitimate the increasing marginalization of blacks and the apartheid policies of the National Party. Afrikaner identity was gradually accepted as an anti-thesis to the threat that blacks allegedly represented to white and Afrikaner communities. Secondly, the image of 'black danger' was also associated with the perception of another threat, that of communism. African nationalisms, led by the ANC, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and other resistance movements, were recreated within the apartheid discourse as communist-inspired and anti-white projects. However, the view of Afrikaner and English as having different identities, within a dominant white community, prevailed, particularly since the Verwoerdian era.

The 1950s brought significant changes in Afrikaner nationalist discourse. Notions such as 'ethnic groups' as constitutive of 'Bantu' people, and 'ethnic cultures' – the peculiar way of life of an ethnic group – as constitutive of 'Bantu culture', were invented and incorporated into Afrikaner discourse. South Africa came to be conceptualized not as a multi-racial society but as a multi-national one from the 1960s, in which blacks formed culturally and ethnically diverse social groups. Under the guardianship of a white nation, black ethnicities could progress in the homelands and eventually achieve full independence. These changes partly responded to the realisation by Afrikaner nationalists that the construction of ethnic/national identities amongst blacks could best serve white and Afrikaner

hegemonic interests. However, the fragile foundations of these ethnic nationalisms were to be confirmed by their sudden breakdown during the transition.²⁹

From the late 1960s, certain important factors had an impact on Afrikaner nationalist discourse. First, the rhetoric about the danger of communism or the revolutionary threat posed by African opposition began to dominate apartheid discourses. This led to a dual strategy: (1) co-option of moderate blacks and homeland leaders, and (2) a systematic repression and marginalization of radical, mostly urban blacks. Second, the notions of 'free enterprise' and 'economic growth', which dominated liberal discourses in the 1960s, gradually gained acceptance within the discourse of the ruling Nationalist Party from the 1970s. In addition to these measures of inclusion of new agents in the dominant block, state reforms of the 1970s, particularly in the areas of education, labour and influx control, had the effect of splitting the black population into privileged urban insiders, recognized as permanent residents of 'white' South Africa and the rural homeland outsiders.³⁰

As a result, the political black/white frontier became increasingly blurred. As Norval puts it, the inside/dominant block could no longer remain uncontaminated or purely white. It began to open some space to accommodate moderate blacks: homeland leaders from the 1950s and, from the 1980s, Coloureds and Indians. It was hoped that by granting political representation to these groups, the support basis of the dominant bloc would be broadened and thus strengthened in face of a revolutionary threat. The conception of white identity increasingly became less and less important than the notion of a new system based on western democracy.

The consequence was a generalized crisis of social and political identity within Afrikanerdom in the 1980s. The gradual 'deracialisation' of the apartheid system and the opening up of the dominant block to other racial groups had the effect of reconstituting the *volk* to accommodate new privileged elements. The radicalization of the Afrikaner Right, who saw liberal discourse as a threat to white supremacy, should be seen within this context. Tensions between the old and the new discourses in Afrikaner Nationalism from the 1970s, the decline of the influence of Christian National Education in determining education policy decisions, the forging of new identities amongst whites and between whites and blacks, must be seen against the background of the shifting political frontiers separating whites from blacks, and the need by the respective blocks to seek non-Afrikaner allies. This is for example the case of the Freedom Alliance, which included all those opposed to the decisions made during the multi-party negotiations in the 1990s and of President de Klerk's mobilisation of 'moderate' blacks into the National Party.

Related to this re-articulation of political identities, two positions emerged. First, there have been attempts to search for a reformed rationale and ideological basis for the old-style Afrikaner nationalism (based on the concepts of the fifties and the sixties) within orthodox and old-fashioned Christian Nationalist foundations. Second, there has been a movement towards seeking reformed foundations for

Afrikaner nationalist and cultural identity within a broader concept of *South Africanism*, which accommodates both blacks and whites within a social and educational framework, which afford recognition to the diversity of the religious cultures of the people of South Africa. As a consequence of this movement, the policy of white-exclusivity and its Christian National Education foundations have been increasingly wearing away from the mainstream Afrikaner thinking and being replaced by liberal principles. Cultural and political organizations, academics, businessmen, radio and television, were mobilized to address the question of identity crisis within the *volk*.

We would, therefore, agree with Enslin that the different nationalisms examined in this section, including African nationalisms, and their respective projects, were male-driven, given the particular circumstances in which they operated and, for example, who was at the forefront of them. We would not agree however that some of these, particularly the ANC nationalism, after the declaration of the Freedom Charter in 1954, did not express genuine and fundamental female concerns. As a result of the nature of the ANC's political struggle, women's struggles have been considered a fundamental element of the broader struggle for liberation in South Africa, in spite of the patriarchal structures entrenched in South African society.

We are of the argument that the history of different nation-building projects shows a process of contradiction, contestation, and struggle over identity. That is, the overall picture is that nation-building projects are not necessarily *a priori* good, or bad.³¹ Their outcome depends on a variety of social, political, cultural, and economic conditions which are internal and external. The oppressive nature of some nation-building projects, such as Christian Nationalism, is made possible by struggles over cultural and political hegemony. For example, as Enslin seems to suggest, it is clear that Afrikaner nationalism in its orthodox forms aimed at entrenching relations of domination and subordination between two polarised identities, white and black. Similarly, the emerging new nation-building project led by the ANC-government is a result and necessary part of the continuous contestation of these relations of domination, subordination, and the polarization of identities.³² This project positions itself as an anti-thesis to Afrikaner political and cultural hegemony, of which the new *South Africanism*, in its provision for the context of the development of democracy, stands as a synthesis. This nation-building project is necessitated by the demand for a democratic society. Hence the argument put forward in this paper that nation-building, in the context of the 1990s, is not only morally and politically desirable, but also a critical strategy in the overall process of democratisation.

MYSTIFICATION OF DEMOCRACY

Is it possible then to argue, as Enslin does, that there is incompatibility between nation-building and democracy? We could follow Enslin's reasoning and argue that, as in the case of nation or nationhood, the project of democracy is a consequence of human imagination or, more precisely, an invention. As an invention, it could certainly assume the form of a myth. Surprisingly, Enslin does not see this similarity, which poses a great deal of inconsistency in her argument. We have however undertaken not to deal with this obvious aspect but to tackle a much more complex issue, i.e the assumptions underpinning Enslin's argument or, in other words, what made it possible for her to argue for an incompatibility between democracy and nation-building in spite of the problems we have pinpointed.

We would suggest that by implication the argument put forward by Enslin is based on an oversimplified conception of democracy, which reduces democracy to a timeless and universal body of principles without precision regarding their area of invention and application. These "principles of democracy", according to her, include freedom, equality, civil and political rights, political participation, voting rights, individual liberty and non-sexism. In her view, for these principles to be effectively translated into social practice people should be equipped with critical thinking. As such democracy is a sacrosanct gift which societies should aspire but cannot achieve, without bracketing the myths, symbols and scholastic traditions that may hinder the development of critical thinking. This unqualified association of critical thinking with the practice of democracy makes it inaccessible to all those who have not developed a critical mind and, consequently, cannot make rational decisions and informed choices. She thus implies that there is a homogeneous and fixed interpretation of democracy, irrespective of the context in which it is practiced. Democracy would therefore appear as a remote and almost impossible project in South Africa, particularly if one takes into consideration the level of illiteracy in society and the degree of indoctrination in schools. This cannot be but a mystification of democracy.

We hold that the overall assessment of democratic practices is not guided by the simple ability to keep certain principles and values intact or by the absence of myths and symbols. Democratic practices must be assessed by the particular way individuals and groups in society organise themselves to confront particular historical situations and deal with their everyday lives. In this sense, democracy is not only a form of contestation of anti-democratic practices, but also a contested terrain within which individuals negotiate and re-negotiate the principles, social institutions, and values they deem suitable for democracy.

In our view, myths and symbols, including the 'myths' of nation, nationhood, democracy, and those myths invented for nation-building, form part of the ingredients which, within appropriate learning conditions, facilitate the

development of critical thinking. There is no clearcut antagonistic relationship between, on the one hand, the invention and presence of myths, and on the other, the development of critical thinking and the practice of democracy. It is not the presence of myths in education but the *prevailing dynamics*³³ internal to it which may or may not hinder the development of critical thinking.³⁴ This is not to suggest that the sole objective is to develop critical thinking. Education does a whole range of other things that are not necessarily linked to critical thinking, such as production of citizens. This may entail production and promotion of myths such as nation-building.

Myths are thus inevitable in modern social life. The problem is not with myths *per se*, but with repressive and discriminative nature of certain myths, as the case was with the myths promoted by Christian Nationalism and Nazism. We would suggest that the solution is to 'mythologize differently' and 'to invoke other myths'. Caputo puts it as follows:

... it is not a question of getting beyond myth of laying aside mythologizing altogether, which is no more possible ... but rather of inventing new and more salutary myths, or of recovering other and older myths, myths to counter the destructive myths of violence, domination, patriarchy, and hierarchy ... *The issue, then, is not divided between mythologizing and demythologizing - as if these always meant the same thing - but between dangerous myths and salutary myths, between privileging, elitist, and hierarchizing myths and myths that promote justice and multiplicity; between exclusionary and oppressive myths and liberating, empowering myths* [Our emphasis].³⁵

Most western countries and world democracies use their educational and cultural institutions to promote symbols and ideals such as the national flag, national anthem, patriotism, citizenship values and principles, and so forth, which are mythical. Therefore, it is impossible to conceive of an uncontaminated educational system, without relationship to myths.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This is the view suggested by post-marxists, such as Ernest Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. (See for example, Aletta J Norval's "Against a theory of ethnicity: Thinking political identities in a post-apartheid context", Paper presented to the conference on "Ethnicity, identity and nationalism in South Africa". Grahamstown: Rhodes University, 20-24 April 1993, 7-8).
2. Contributors to this debate include the following: Jacob Ndlovu, Basil Moore, Bennie Koapa, M Mzamane, Neil J McGurk, Rashad Bagus, Ian Moll, Jonathan Jansen, Neville Alexander, Clive Harber, Rudy Matai, Crain Soudien, David Freer and Mokubung Nkomo, and Penny Enslin. (See M Cross & Z Mkwazi (eds), "Unity, Diversity and Reconciliation: A Debate on the Politics of Curriculum in South Africa" - Forthcoming).
3. Her writings include: "Nation-building, Democracy and Non-sexism", in Cross and Mkwazi (eds.), op cit; "Should Nation-building be an Aim of Education", Inaugural lecture, University of the Witwatersrand, 22 September 1993; "Education for Nation-Building: A Feminist Critique", *Perspectives in Education*, 15, 1 (1993/94).

4. J. Wilson, *Thinking with Concepts* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 34.
5. Our view is that Enslin falls into her own trap, in that while she is critical of nation building, nationalism, nationhood as myths, she operates, however, with a mystified idea of democracy. She does not demonstrate that democracy is an invention, and as such could also be a myth.
6. D. Held, *Models of Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987).
7. This feminist scholarship, which emerged in the 1970s, holds that modern social institutions, practices, and discourses articulate gender relations, and these tend to undermine and repress women.
8. Enslin, "Education for nation-building ...", 15; "Nation-building and education for democracy: Contradictory ideals?", IDASA, forthcoming, 5; "Should nation-building ...", 5; 23; and "Nation-building ...", 10.
9. She draws this idea from Gellner ("Should nation-building ...", 13).
10. *Ibid.*, 16.
11. "Have you met Aunt Sally?: A Rejoinder to Leroke and Cross", p.1. In her discussion of Degenaar's view of nation-building, Enslin also makes the point that "Nationalism is not renowned for encouraging critical thinking – particularly about one's own 'nation' and its political practices – or for encouraging tolerance or the development of individuality which many of us see as qualities of an educated person, equipped for democratic citizenship." ("Nation-building...", 4).
12. "Education for Nation-building", 14.
13. "Nation-Building and education for democracy", op cit., 5.
14. This is partly a reflection of the influence of Analytical Philosophy of Education (APE). Those who subscribe to this philosophical orientation argue that they are not concerned with 'second-order' issues. These issues should be the object of disciplines such as sociology, history, anthropology and so forth. They see their task as dealing with 'first-order' issues, which are purely conceptual. This task involves clarification of concepts used within the 'second-order' domain. In the history of modern philosophy, this orientation was inaugurated by John Locke who saw his task as that of an 'under-labourer' (See, for example, R. Bhaskar, *A Realist Theory of Science*, Leeds: Leeds Books, 1975).
15. For details see M. Cross, "Open the Parcels and Check Inside Before You Stick on the Labels: A Response to Penny Enslin", *Perspectives in Education*, 8, 3 (1985): 154-164.
16. Wilson, op cit., 34.
17. It seems to me that criterion-based method is a reflection of the influence the concept of 'analytical philosophy' as applied in education within the English tradition, specifically in its orthodox form, as formulated in the classic studies of Peters and others. To pick-up one example, Peters in *Aims of Education – A Conceptual Inquiry* has suggested that a way of handling the 'concept of education' would be to lay down "criteria to which a family of activities must conform". These criteria would be "those that characterise the successful outcome of education in the form of an educated man; and those that characterise the processes by means of which people gradually become educated". On the basis of this framework he formulated his concept of education as "the initiation of people into worthwhile form of life". Although his concept of education did not pass uncontested, his form of conceptual inquiry or reasoning has had a considerable impact on philosophy of education. Peters, however, after strong criticisms has been forced to recognise the weakness of this form of conceptual inquiry: "... the term education is used valuatively, but vaguely with lack of precision regarding its area of application. From this it might be mistakenly suggested that all that needs to be done is to pick out certain criteria that seem central to one's understanding of education and lay these down as stipulatory preliminary to the issues to be discussed. This, I think, would be

pretty pointless and presumptuous procedure. (Sic) R.S. Peters, *Essays on Educators* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1991), 33.

18. R. Peters, *Essays on Educators*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1991), 33.
19. Peters has recently challenged the argument concerning the universality of concepts.
20. See for example, Wilson, *op cit*, 23-60; and David-Hillel Ruben, *Explaining Explanation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).
21. "Inaugural Lecture", 5.
22. "Nation-building and education for democracy: Contradictory ideals", 4.
23. "Education for Nation-building", 14.
24. "Education for Nation-building", 14.
25. *Ibid.*, 14-18.
26. Note that Enslin assumes that nation-building together with dominant notions of culture are an expression of patriarchal culture which is in tension with the principle of non-sexism. (Enslin, "Nation-building, democracy and non-sexism", 10)
27. Note the different meanings attached to the term *South Africanism* throughout the South African political history.
28. See Transvaal Colony, *Debates*, Legislative Council, 1907, 136 (Smuts introducing the 1907 Education Act).
29. Among others, there appears to be an exception of Zulu nationalism, for example, which has always been defined and characterized by different historical forces. The analysis of Zulu nationalism can best be outlined by the experts.
30. We borrow the terminology from Norval, *op cit*.
31. This argument has been put forward by Miller in his debate about the compatibility of liberalism and the promotion of nationality. Miller draws out attention to the need to account for historical specificity, particularly in those factors concerning beliefs and sentiments, historical continuity, national identity as an active identity, and the attachment to a particular geographical place, to understand the nature of national identity. This does not imply that we do agree with Miller's project. For example, it appears to us that it tends to dismiss too quickly the need to assess nationality also in terms of rationality and universality (David Miller, "In defense of nationality", *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 10, 1 (1993): 4-7.
32. For example, since colonial repression was very often been directed against national and ethnic groups, and since membership in such groups was often the basis for profound social inequalities, it is both understandable and justifiable that national or ethnic mobilization played a part in struggles for liberation and democracy. Further, apartheid and colonial exploitation and oppression unleashed social tensions, mass mobilisation, labour protest and other forms of contestation which found in nationalism an effective vehicle for their democratic realisation. Historically, with exceptions such as orthodox Afrikaner nationalism, nationalism cannot be separated from the struggles for democracy. (Elizabeth Kiss, "Is Nationalism Compatible with Human Rights: Reflections on East-Central Europe", Paper presented to the Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, 8 April 1993, 2.)
33. Education is not a process which excludes myths. Also, it is limiting to think that myths are stable and fixed. The provision of nation-building in education would not necessarily lead to the reproduction and dissemination of myths. For it is through education that myths are contested. It is through this contestation that critical thinking emerges, not in the absence of myths but through them.
34. Note that Enslin suggests that myths are false, irrational, illogical, mystifying, sentimental and that by their nature they do not encourage critical thinking.
35. J. Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, 3.

DEBATE

Encounter with a Straw Man: A Rejoinder to Cross and Leroke¹

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There is criticism to which one responds, other criticism to which one replies. Wrongly perhaps. Why not lend an equally attentive ear to incomprehension, triviality, ignorance, or bad faith?
(M. Foucault)²

Straw man ... a weak argument or opposing view set up by a politician, debater, etc. so that he may attack it and gain an easy, showy victory. (Webster's New Universal Dictionary)³

NEW RULES FOR THE NEW ACADEMY

Cross and Leroke describe my work on education and nation-building as illogical, mystificatory, inconsistent, conceptually muddled and inaccurate, simplificatory, untenable, methodologically inaccurate (sic), overwhelmed by analytical philosophy of education as its method of enquiry, fallacious, unpersuasive, and prone to generalisation. In their view, it suffers from a conceptually clouded framework, abstraction, universalisation, decontextualisation, failures of realisation, failures to engage with conceptual specificity, conceptual contradiction, a tendency to make unsubstantiated claims, and it falls into a trap which I have created myself.

How does one respond to an article which, while purporting to engage in debate, systematically misrepresents one's own work?⁴ Does one bother to respond? What point is there in trying, again, to restate and explain one's arguments?

Since asking myself these questions I have realised that I had quite misunderstood the significance of Cross and Leroke's paper. Distracted as I was by its sloppy argument and offensive tone, I failed to see it for what it represents. My initial impression was that it comprised a catalogue of examples of crooked thinking and dishonest tricks of argument.⁵ But given its publication in a reputable journal, doubtless after rigorous refereeing, I have to accept that it provides a path-breaking new model of critique and research in education.

Hence, I commend Cross and Leroke on the innovations they have introduced, breaking with the old, conventional rules of critique and research. For those of us who are tired of traditions of rigour and careful argument, Cross and Leroke offer

new rules and procedures for research and easy publication, which I propose to explore.

In this exploration, I will show how Cross and Leroke use a variety of creative ways of avoiding engagement with their opponent's arguments, centrally by misrepresenting them – creating a straw man – but also by using other tricks which until now have been regarded as illegitimate, and even dishonest.

Before doing so, since my arguments do not appear in this volume, I will briefly outline them, as they are presented in the two published papers which comprise the most extended treatment of the two arguments for my central claim that education for nation-building should not be pursued in South Africa.

In the first paper, "Education for Nation-Building: a Feminist Critique", I argue, from a feminist perspective, against education for nation-building on the grounds that it will undermine the emergence of a democratic gender politics. Drawing on an analysis of the concept of the 'mother of the nation' in South Africa, it is argued firstly, that the logic of nationhood expresses a universalist ontology which excludes women. Secondly, it reflects masculine values – militaristic ones in particular – to the exclusion of feminine values.

The second article, "Should Nation-building be an Aim of Education?", seeks to show the inapplicability to South Africa of the features usually attributed to 'nations'. It argues that nation-building is incompatible with the educational ideal of the autonomous person. By propagating national myths, nation-building as an aim of education will undermine autonomy as an aim of education, both in terms of the logic of nation-building and because of the values it would encourage.

MISREPRESENTATION

Misrepresentation of argument

In deploying this strategy, Cross and Leroke present what appears to be a reconstruction of Enslin's argument,⁶ which both misrepresents its structure and sets up misrepresented claims which they can subsequently shoot down. They start by stating that her central argument rests on a feminist position.⁷ This is true of the first paper, but not of the second.

The point at which Enslin's two arguments in defence of her central argument intersect is in the second of the two papers. Here she argues that nation-building would undermine autonomy as the aim of education in terms of the logic of nation-building and the values which it would encourage, and she includes a shortened version of her argument that expressions of nationalism are often militaristic and exclude the values central to women's concerns with the preservation of life.

Enslin's central argument, that education for nation-building should not be pursued in South Africa, is stated by Cross and Leroke as: "the project of nation-building, particularly in South Africa, is incompatible with the project of democracy and the principle of non-sexism",⁸ omitting any mention of her focus on education. We will return to this distortion later. They then present an account of her supposed premises which serves the purpose of scrambling her arguments. First, her argument in the second paper that by propagating national myths nation-building as an aim of education will undermine autonomy as an aim of education, is described as if it is a premise for the feminist argument in the first paper, which it is not. Second, one of her introductory comments in the first paper, that the concept of 'nation' expresses experiences and aspirations which are predominantly male, is presented as if it is the central argument in that paper.

The reader is thus likely to start her consideration of Cross and Leroke's critique of Enslin's papers with a distorted account of Enslin's arguments. This can then be augmented by adding further misrepresentations.

Misrepresentation of claims

There are a number of examples in Cross and Leroke's article of the device of misrepresenting claims made by their opponent. Two which appear in their supposed reconstruction of her argument are: that "the concern of education is with the promotion of" qualities such as non-sexism, and that "nations are a myth".⁹ We will discuss here two other distortions which are set up during their 'reconstruction' and, cast as indicators of central flaws in her argument, are particularly misleading and thereby damaging to her intended argument.

Firstly, Cross and Leroke state that, for Enslin, if democratic principles are to be effectively translated into social practice, people should be equipped with critical thinking.¹⁰ In fact, what Enslin does say is that the development of critical thinking as an aspect of autonomy is a necessary feature of *education* for democracy.¹¹ On the strength of this misrepresentation the authors proceed to reprimand Enslin for the supposed consequence that democracy is made inaccessible to "all those who have not developed a critical mind and, consequently, cannot make rational decisions and informed choices ... Democracy would thus appear as a remote and almost impossible project in South Africa ...".¹² This is neither her view nor a necessary consequence of it, though Cross and Leroke appear themselves to assume that people who have not received formal schooling are incapable of thinking critically, an opinion not shared by Enslin. But this misrepresentation has the advantage, not only of creating the opportunity to claim that she mystifies democracy, but also of casting her in the role of a reactionary who is guilty of contempt for the masses who, considering levels of illiteracy and indoctrination, are apparently viewed by Enslin as incapable of critical thinking.

A second example of misrepresentation of one of Enslin's claims is built on her observation that "like other political categories, our concept of 'nation' is an expression of predominantly male experiences and aspirations".¹³ The misrepresentational strategy used here is to amend Enslin's claim by a combination of effectively removing the qualifier, "predominantly", and then to use the device of misrepresentation by omission by ignoring her subsequent exploration and elaboration of this observation. Here, she states that one of the requirements of the feminist political project is "a qualitative change of our political practices and the discourses that inform them so that they no longer reflect male control and interests" and: "For the purposes of this paper I shall assume that a feminist democratic politics is both possible and desirable".¹⁴ Ignoring this, Cross and Leroke recast her position to read that all political categories (omitting the crucial "predominantly" thus converting 'some' to 'all') irreversibly privilege male perspectives and masculine values, thus undermining her own concerns with democracy¹⁵, which becomes a sexist concept, and (neatly) the feminist' project itself.

For both of these examples of misrepresentation to work, the authors have to assume that their reader, too, does not find it necessary to scrutinise either their text or that of Enslin very closely. It is more amusing to usher one's opponent into traps created by amending her arguments than to respond to those which she actually makes.

Misrepresentation of method

A third misrepresentational strategy employed by Cross and Leroke is combined with that of the *red herring*, exemplifying the tactic of avoiding engagement with an author's work by objecting to her supposed methodology, rather than responding to her arguments.

Claiming that Enslin's work suffers from a tendency to abstraction without reference to context (of which more later), Cross and Leroke attribute this to the "influence" of analytical philosophy of education (Enslin would say that what she *does* is analytical philosophy of education):

Those who subscribe to this philosophical orientation argue that they are not concerned with 'second order' issues ... They see their task as dealing with 'first order' issues, which are purely conceptual. This task involves clarification of concepts used within the 'second order' domain...¹⁶

There are several misrepresentations here, apart from the mistaken inversion of first- and second-order. Enslin herself describes her work as *applied* philosophy and explicitly rejects the idea that analytical philosophy of education should concern itself only with "purely conceptual" issues.¹⁷ This latter view, while not widely subscribed to in the first place,¹⁸ was abandoned by most if not all analytical philosophers of education several decades ago.

While Enslin offers an account of the practice of philosophy of education¹⁹ Cross and Leroke ignore it, again using the tactic of misrepresentation by omission, in favour of attributing to her what they quaintly dub "the criterion-based method".²⁰ In terms of this method, and citing as a reference for critique of it none other than Cross himself,²¹ they attribute to Enslin the error of defining "a set of criteria with reference to which a society could qualify as a nation. Thus for a society to be a nation, its political features would have to conform to an *a priori* defined set of criteria".²²

In fact, Enslin's discussion of different views of the origins and likely future of nations and nationalism, drawing on various texts, makes clear the extent of dispute about the features and likely futures of nations, rather than laying down *a priori* criteria.²³ And in respect of South Africa, rather than prescribing criteria, she observes that the usually-cited features or criteria mostly do not apply to South Africa.²⁴ Furthermore, there is little reference to criteria in the papers in question. There is, however, ample evidence that Enslin regards concepts as contested rather than carrying an '*a priori*' meaning;²⁵ indeed she includes the contestation of concepts among both the features of philosophy of education and the aims of education.²⁶ A reader who has examined Enslin's arguments will know that she does not lay down criteria, as central to her "method" which are rigid, static, universal, uncontested, and unqualified.²⁷ This tactic again requires that the reader share Cross and Leroke's view that reading and responding to one's opponent's actual arguments is no longer necessary.

UNCONTEXTUALISED CLAIMS: A CASE OF SPECIAL PLEADING

Another of Cross and Leroke's objections to Enslin's "method" is that unlike the "context-based method" exemplified in their reply it suffers from a failure to contextualise its claims. This objection, while apparently damning, is used with unintended irony, requiring a selective pursuit of "context".

First, in another variation on the tactic of misrepresentation by omission, this gambit involves *ignoring one's opponent's actual discussion of context*. Most notably, Enslin's analysis of the concept of the 'mother of the nation' in South Africa,²⁸ comparing and contrasting the 'volksmoeder' of Afrikaner nationalism with the 'mother of the nation' in the discourse of the liberation struggle goes unnoticed – another example of misrepresentation by omission.

Second, Cross and Leroke's call for Enslin to contextualise is made in association with the strategy of *decontextualising the opponent's arguments*. The way this misrepresentational device works here is by regularly detaching and abstracting Enslin's argument from its central concern with education, so as to make it appear less plausible. For example, as well as casting their paper as a response to Enslin's "critique of nation-building", we have already noted how in the course of what they describe as a reconstruction of her argument they attribute to

her the claim that democracy, as against education for democracy, "rests on the development of critical thinking".²⁹ Closer attention to context reveals that she argues that the role of education is to promote autonomy and that critical thinking is a necessary feature of one of the aspects of autonomy which she discusses. Third, the insistence on the importance of context requires a *selective notion of context*. What counts as context? Analytical philosophers of education will point out that there is more to context than Cross and Leroke allow. Context includes the very language we use; hence the attention paid to language by analytical philosophers, to issues of meaning and the conditions under which concepts are appropriately used.

Fourth, emphasising the importance of context no longer requires that one take into account the context in which aspects of one's opponent's argument are put forward. Indeed, one can *misrepresent the argument by decontextualising it*.³⁰ Some of us assume the need to be sensitive to the context in which the words we cite are stated. Not so Cross and Leroke. In a revealing footnote³¹ Cross sets out to turn the tables on Enslin by enlisting to his cause the assumed guru and timeless spokesman of analytical philosophy of education, quoting Richard Peters's supposed repudiation of the "criterion-based method" which Cross attributes to Enslin's work. In the second quotation of the footnote in question, Peters is cited as if repudiating his earlier work. In fact, much lies concealed by the apparently innocent ellipsis points which precede the quotation.³² An accurate reading of the page on which the passage appears reveals that Peters is commenting on the dangers of persuasive definitions. The paper which forms the context of the quoted passage does indeed represent a shift in Peters's position; he states that the conception of education and its aims in *Ethics and Education*, his best-known work, was too narrowly focused on the development of knowledge, which should relate to the human condition, and that it is also necessary to take into account attitudes and emotions, as well as the religious and the aesthetic. If Cross and Leroke take this as an unqualified repudiation, from the undifferentiated heart of an unvarying and uncontesting community of analytical philosophers of education, of the consideration of criteria as the distinguishing feature of this discipline, then they are doubly wrong. Furthermore, while their caricature of analytical philosophy emphasises attention to criteria to the exclusion of all else,³³ it has to be recognised that philosophical activity cannot take place without paying some attention to the criteria in terms of which we contest the meaning of concepts and their applicability to different activities and situations.

Context, then, is important when Cross and Leroke choose to make it so, and only on a particular reading of 'context'. An opponent's actual discussion of context, and the context in which parts of her argument or those of others are made, can be simply pushed aside. That context is important when one chooses to demand it of one's opponent but excuses it in all but one sense in one's own work is an instance of *special pleading*. The application of a double standard – a lenient one for us and another stricter one for our opponent – used to be regarded as a fallacy.

Apparently this is no longer the case. Authors can now, following the example of Cross and Leroke, do as they like, but require much stricter standards of rigour from those with whom they disagree.³⁴

ARGUMENT BY *NON SEQUITUR*

Turning now from Cross and Leroke's various strategies to counter Enslin's arguments by misrepresenting them, what of their own argument? Again we find innovation, by an approach which until now was regarded as a sign of a fallacious, unsound argument. This appears in the course of the lesson they present in the use of the "context-based method", in the section titled "Nationalism and nation-building in South Africa". Here they present an account of the history of the national question in South Africa from the mid-nineteenth century until the present. Let us assume that the account is sound; but the conclusions the authors draw from it constitute a textbook example of a *non sequitur*.

Cross and Leroke arrive at several conclusions following their discussion of the history of the national question in South Africa in the final two paragraphs of this section, none of which emerges logically from the preceding discussion. No grounds whatsoever are provided for concluding, with the signal "therefore" that the nationalisms they identify were male-driven; they probably were, but this is not demonstrated. More significantly: the section ends with the sentence:

Hence the argument put forward in this paper that nation-building, in the context of the 1990s, is not only morally and politically desirable, but also a critical strategy in the overall process of democratisation.³⁵

I do not necessarily have any quarrel with the assertion made in the second part of this conclusion, concerning nation-building (whatever it is) as a strategy in political struggle, and will not dispute it. The crux lies in the first part of the conclusion, where Cross and Leroke declare that nation-building in the context of the nineties is "morally and politically desirable". Setting aside the issue of whether this is indeed so, it is not an argument which they actually make in their paper. While they do indeed observe that nationalism played a role in the practices of both oppression and struggle, the discussion leaps from there to the conclusion that nation-building is desirable. The unexpressed premises here should have given us reasons to establish a logical link between historical fact and moral or political conclusion. Observing that events and processes took place (think of slavery, pogroms or genocide) does not on its own establish that they should still be pursued in future. What is needed here is a philosophical argument, including discussion of principles and even, heaven forbid, criteria. Having ridiculed such moves – but noting the concern they supposedly share with Enslin for the "philosophical foundations of the projects of democracy and nation-building" and the declaration of the "relative validity" of the so-called context-based and criterion-based methods³⁶ – Cross and Leroke dismiss

the kind of argument they need to establish what they present as a conclusion in favour of nation-building.

THE DEBATE THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

Given the multiple inadequacies attributed to my work on education and nation-building by Cross and Leroke, that they responded to it at all has the appearance of an act of undeserved charity. But their article cannot be called, as they describe it, a contribution to a *debate*. For this exchange to have been a debate, more common ground would be required than commending me for writing about a topic at all and claiming a shared concern about "the lack of sensitivity to gender" and "with the philosophical foundations of the projects of democracy and nation-building".³⁷

The exchange in question falls so far short of debate that, as I have shown, even describing my arguments about nation-building and education with accuracy is absent from Cross and Leroke's response. In fact, describing them inaccurately is their central critical tool. For debate to be possible, it is also necessary for critics to take seriously the arguments with which they pretend to engage. Instead, however, what Cross and Leroke describe as a response to my work parodies both that work and the very idea of debate.

What would have been necessary for their response to have contributed to a debate? First, I would have expected engagement with the substantive arguments I have presented. As far as my feminist critique of education for nation-building goes, not a single aspect of the argument is accurately taken up. This is ironic, given their mistaken observation that my central argument rests on a feminist position. My argument that the logic of nationhood expresses a universalist ontology³⁸ which excludes women is ignored, as is my argument that the concept of 'nation' reflects masculine experience and values, particularly militaristic ones, and excludes feminine perspectives and values. The only response that Cross and Leroke attempt to make to this is to dismiss it by observing³⁹ that the African National Congress's political programme includes "female concerns", completely misunderstanding the ontological point which I make at some length.

With one exception to which I will turn shortly, my argument that nation-building is incompatible with the educational ideal of the autonomous person is not taken up, except by misrepresentation. If my actual argument is wrong, Cross and Leroke have not shown that it is so.

Second, in a debate one expects that, building on arguments which respond to those of their fellow debater, opposing authors would take the debate forward by answering the criticisms and problems which she raises. Cross and Leroke have not done so. Here are two of the issues which, in a debate, they could have pursued further: What, given my argument that South African society does not match the features usually cited by authors writing about nationalism and nations, is it that

leads them to describe this society as a nation? If nationalism has tended to express masculine experiences and values, how might it be contested and revised so as to be more inclusive?

Instead, Cross and Leroke have largely concentrated their efforts on devising an inventive set of ploys for avoiding engagement in debate. Except that, at the very end of their paper they do attempt to substantiate the claim made early on, that there is "a sense in which the promotion of nation-building through education is defensible".⁴⁰ Here, actually engaging with my work, they claim that "myths invented for nation-building, form part of the ingredients which, within appropriate learning conditions, facilitate the development of critical thinking".⁴¹ It is clear from my discussion⁴² that I do not rule out the inclusion of myths if they are considered critically; and I agree, incidentally, both that the promotion of critical thinking is not the sole objective of education and that the creation of myths is inevitable in any society. My quarrel is with the teaching of myths as if they are true. If Cross and Leroke are proposing that some myths of South African nationhood be produced and then subjected to critical thinking, there is little in dispute here, not only because I too think critical thinking should be promoted in schooling. In view of the discussion I have offered (but they have not) on what could make South African society a 'nation' in the first place, the myths they allude to (but of which they significantly provide no examples) would have to be such tall stories that they would be easy material for the development of critical thinking. But then some questions remain. Why is this called nation-building at all? And the question we still find unanswered, after a largely pointless exchange, is: what is education for nation-building?⁴³

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. An earlier rejoinder, "Have you met Aunt Sally?", was presented in June 1994 at a University of the Witwatersrand Education Policy Unit-Department of Education research seminar, to a near-identical version of Cross and Leroke's paper. Copies are available on request.
2. M. Foucault, "Monstrosities in Criticism", *Diacritics*, Fall 1971, 57.
3. *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* (New York: New World Dictionaries/Simon & Schuster, 1983), 1800.
4. An accurate list of Enslin's papers on this subject is: "Should Nation-building be an Aim of Education?" Inaugural Lecture, Department of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 22 September 1993, published with amendments as: "Should Nation-building be an Aim of Education?" *Journal of Education* 19, 1 1994(a): 23-36 (references are to the latter, published version, except where the two papers differ); "Education for Nation-building: A Feminist Critique" *Perspectives in Education* 15, 1 1993/4: 13-25; "Manufactured Myths are Hostile to Democracy" *Democracy in Action* 81, 28 February 1994(b): 21-22.
5. These strategies for crooked thinking and fallacious argument can be identified by consulting introductory texts such as: R. Thouless, *Straight and Crooked Thinking* (London: Pan Books, 1964) especially ch. II, III and IV; M. Engel, *With Good Reason: An Introduction to Informal Fallacies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1976) especially Part Two.

6. Cross & Leroke, p.330-1 in this issue.
7. *Ibid*, 330. Similarly, Cross and Leroke declare that "what is specific about this critique is its feminist orientation" (p. 329).
8. Cross & Leroke, *ibid*, 330-1.
9. Enslin nowhere states, as implied by Cross and Leroke (p.331), that non-sexism is one of the central "concerns" of education. While in a different context she would argue that the curriculum should include anti-sexist material, she does not believe and does not argue the view imputed to her here by Cross and Leroke. She does not state that nations are a myth. She does quote, as against draw from, Gellner's argument in the following way: "But, argues Gellner, 'Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent though long-delayed political destiny, are a myth'. (1994a, 28-29)".
 Cross and Leroke have indulged here in what Foucault calls alteration of the text (*Ibid.*, 58).
 Cross and Leroke write (p.332), objecting to the way Enslin engages with the concept of nation-building, that she assumes that concepts such as 'nation' are universal, uncontested and unvarying according to contexts: "She uses [the notion of nation-building] interchangeably with the notions of nationalism, nation-state, nationhood". They omit to mention that she explicitly writes that she intends, for the purposes of the paper in question, to "treat 'nationhood', 'nationality' and 'nationalism' as interchangeable" (1994a, 24). She does *not* use these terms as if they are interchangeable with 'nation-state' or with 'nation-building'. As Cross and Leroke clearly use 'nationalism' and 'nation-building' interchangeably themselves and do not offer an argument either for or against doing so, we can see the move for what it is, a combined deployment of the red herring, misrepresenting Enslin's text, and special pleading.
 Cross and Leroke go further than this; in the section titled "Nationalism and nation-building in South Africa" they slide from discussing 'nationalism', to 'nation-building', to 'democratic process' as if they are interchangeable.
10. Cross & Leroke, 337.
11. Enslin 1994(a), 25.
12. Cross & Leroke, *ibid*.
13. Enslin 1993/4, 14.
14. *Ibid.*, 16.
15. In a related attempt to discredit Enslin's discussion of democracy Cross and Leroke deploy the trick of *demanding that their opponent argue a case which is obviously absurd, claiming that it is a logical consequence of her argument*, suggesting that as she argues "that there is incompatibility between nation-building and democracy: We could follow Enslin's reasoning and argue that, as in the case of nation or nationhood, the project of democracy is a consequence of human imagination or, more precisely, an invention. As an invention, it could certainly assume the form of a myth. Surprisingly, Enslin does not see this similarity, which poses a great deal of inconsistency in her argument." (*ibid*)
 This issue is picked out of Enslin's discussion and abstracted from its context, the argument that nations are an invention of nationalism rather than the converse. But more importantly, Cross and Leroke themselves employ a piece of crooked logic here. No doubt democracy as a political concept, indeed as a concept, is a product of human imagination. But why does this mean that we *have* to apply the identical argument Enslin makes about nationalism and nation-building to democracy? Could Cross and Leroke be suggesting that if two concepts share one feature then they must share all features? Why should this be? Cross and Leroke excuse themselves from any obligation to argue this case by going on to state that they have undertaken not to deal with the "obvious aspect" of this alleged inconsistency in Enslin's argument. So much for conceptual specificity.
16. Cross & Leroke, fn. 14.
17. Enslin 1993, 4-5.

18. While emphasising the importance of the analysis of concepts in philosophy of education, the early work of Peters, which Cross assumes to have exemplified such an approach, was not concerned purely with conceptual issues. See P. Hirst "Richard Peters's Contribution to the Philosophy of Education" in D. Cooper (ed.), *Education, Values and Mind: Essays for RS Peters* (London: Routledge, 1986).
19. *Ibid.*, 2-5.
20. Cross & Leroke, 331.
21. *Ibid.*, fn. 15.
22. *Ibid.*, 331-2.
23. Enslin 1994(a), 27-29, 34. To suggest that the consideration of criteria, of nationalism in this instance, is a distinguishing ailment of analytical philosophy (of education) is quite wrong. Joseph Stalin, not commonly regarded as an analytical philosopher, argued that: "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological makeup manifested in a common culture", to which he added: "It is only when all these characteristics are present together that we have a nation". See J. Stalin, "The Nation", reprinted in J. Hutchinson & A. Smith (eds.), *Nationalism* (Oxford University Press, 1994, 18-21). Stalin might have made stringent requirements for nationhood, but he was correct in the assumption that, if we are to describe a group of people as a nation – rather than say a bridge club, a family or a church – we can only meaningfully do so in terms of some common features that we attribute to them and other similar groups, or they to themselves.
24. This should be noted in conjunction with the absence from Cross and Leroke's paper of an explanation – as defenders of nationhood and nation-building – either of what makes South Africa a nation or what nation-building would be; except that it should involve myths.
25. Enslin 1993, 3. In their caricature of Enslin's "method" Cross and Leroke make much of her supposed failure to realize that concepts are contested. The emphasis she places on contestation as a feature of philosophy and the aims of education has been pointed out above. Enslin's feminist critique of education for nation-building discusses and is an attempt to contest the meaning of concepts like democracy.
26. *Ibid.*, 4, 7.
27. Cross & Leroke, *ibid.*, 332. Enslin does not embrace "universal categories". In fact, part of her feminist argument is that nationalism imposes universal categories, in terms of which women are excluded. (1993/4, 18)
28. Enslin 1993/4, 19-22.
29. Even if education were alluded to in attributing this to Enslin, it is still not an accurate account of her argument.
30. Another useful trick, and yet another variation on the misrepresentation by decontextualisation strategy, is *argument by scare quotes*. Here one places a term used in an opponent's argument between quotation marks repeatedly, suggesting that the term goes unexplained but ignoring the author's account of the term and the context in which it is used. Cross and Leroke put this tactic to use in respect of the phrase "democratic political participation" (*ibid.*). Repeated five times in the space of two paragraphs for good effect, in the course of attributing to Enslin the assumption that concepts are uncontested, universal and unchanging in meaning regardless of context (neither alleged nor assumed by Enslin) Cross and Leroke are able to suggest absurdity and to claim lack of clarity about the meaning of the term without either examining it in context or actually arguing that its use is problematic. The reader need not be told that the term in question, 'democratic political participation' is used in the context of arguing that nationalism encourages *vicarious* participation in the life of the community, but typically lacks a commitment to democratic political participation. To read Enslin's term fully in its context the reader would also need to locate it in her discussion of democratic participation as a third feature of autonomy, where the importance of democratic participation "both in broad political terms and in all

institutions, especially in the workplace" (1994, 25) is asserted. But the reader need not be told this, in the interests of countering Enslin's argument by decontextualising and ridiculing it.

31. Cross & Leroke, fn. 17.
32. *Ibid.*, and p.331. For an informed discussion of the significance of Peters's 1979 paper, "Democratic Values and Educational Aims" see Hirst, *ibid.*, 26-30.
33. The many introductory texts in the analytical tradition on what philosophy is, the kinds of questions it asks and the procedures it follows will reveal just how wide of the mark is Cross's dismissal of analytical philosophy of education. While there are many such texts available, here are three: P. Strawson, *Analysis and Metaphysics: An Introduction to Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 1992) especially ch. 1 and 2; I. Berlin, "The Purpose of Philosophy", in *Concepts and Categories* (New York: Viking Press, 1979); S. Miller & I. Macdonald, "The Role of Philosophy in South Africa" *Theoria* LXXIII, May 1989, 11-18.
34. Cross and Leroke give new meaning to special pleading; criticism not only by Enslin but also by other participants in the research seminar at which they first presented the earlier and nearly identical version of this article has, with few exceptions, been ignored. This gambit works especially well when deployed in tandem with throwing as many objections at their opponent as they can possibly muster, regardless of their aptness to her actual arguments.
35. Cross & Leroke, 336.
36. *Ibid.*, 330, 331.
37. *Ibid.*, 330.
38. Enslin 1993/4, 18.
39. Cross & Leroke, 322.
40. *Ibid.*, 330.
41. *Ibid.*, 337-8.
42. Enslin 1994, 30-32.
43. Cross and Leroke absolve themselves of any obligation to give an account of nation-building, with the disingenuous comment: "it is not our main concern to grapple with the meaning and interpretation of nation-building" (p.330) – a misleading statement since they do not grapple with its meaning at all. By responding as debaters they could have commented on the attempt Enslin makes (1994a, 26-7), but they do not, to suggest what education for nation-building might do. Do they agree or disagree with the three related features which she suggests would comprise education for nation-building?

REPORT

Coping with Street Mathematics? A Case Study with Hillbrow Street Vendors

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Mathematics is a stumbling block in school for many children, yet the same children seem to acquire considerable mathematical knowledge without systematic teaching in everyday life. How can this discrepancy in performance be understood?¹

This report examines the nature of out-of-school problem solving activities among a selected sample of street sellers in the Hillbrow area of Johannesburg. It briefly documents some of the practices that go along with the selling processes such as purchasing, preparing to sell, and marking up prices of items for sale. The price system accompanying the selling process is investigated and briefly discussed in relation to the engaging activities among the sellers, as well as in relation to the nature of out-of-school problem solving in general. The findings reflect the situationally specific characterisation of everyday problem solving practices. The possible implications to mathematics education are cited.

INTRODUCTION

Brief literature review

How does schooling shape arithmetic in everyday situations? ... How does arithmetic unfold in action in everyday settings? Does it matter whether it is a major or minor aspect of ongoing activity? Are there differences in arithmetic procedures between situations in school (e.g. taking a maths test) and situations far removed from school scenarios (in the kitchen or supermarket)?²

These questions have been investigated by a number of research studies.³ In addition, Carraher⁴ poses the question "how extensive, flexible, unified, general, explicit, precise, abstract and powerful is mathematical knowledge acquired in out-of-school settings?"

Most of these studies have demonstrated the existence of a gap or discontinuities in problem-solving processes between in-school and out-of-school (everyday) situations, and that school mathematics does not map unproblematically on to street practices. It is found that people who know how to solve a problem in one situation do not know how to solve the same problem in another situation. Research has then

attempted to answer the question "where is school mathematics failing?"⁵ An indication has been given of some of the reasons behind this failure. The reasons fall in the area of "situated cognition", a theoretical perspective which claims that "the nature of a person's knowledge of mathematics is inextricably tied to the situation in which that knowledge was acquired".⁶ In other words, the nature of a person's knowledge is very much tied to the social, physical (and also psychological) situations in which that knowledge came about. The meanings of that knowledge are derived from the circumstances and activities which produced it. A detailed account of the theory of situated cognition would perhaps constitute another paper. For the purposes of this paper, it is acknowledged that the theory of situated cognition provides a framework in which to discuss the discrepancy between in-school knowledge and out-of-school problem-solving.

Briefly, in-school mathematics is acquired largely through formal instruction. It involves the acquisition of rules, symbols, conventions and algorithmic procedures. The dominant mode of instruction constitutes a "taken-for-granted world of problem solving, learning transfer, expert knowledge and everyday cognition".⁷ In the school situation, written calculation is required and there is a tendency for teachers to penalise correct numerical answers which do not have *the proper* written calculation. The teacher is significantly more in control of the learning situation than the pupils. School creates contexts in which learners experience themselves as 'objects'⁸ with no control over problems or choice about problem solving processes.

In contrast, in out-of-school situations, individuals experience themselves as in control of their activities, interacting with the setting, generating problems related to the setting, and monitoring and controlling their own problem solving processes.⁹ Consequently, it is possible for individuals to look for and exercise alternatives to solving a particular problem, abandoning arithmetic for some other kind of solution. The outcome is not failure, but a different way of looking at the same problem. Out-of-school mathematics is carried out in informal settings which are context dependent. There are no pre-determined goals, rules or conventions, but rather the goals *emerge* as the problem situation arises.¹⁰

Origin and aim of the project

Street selling is one of the everyday activities in which individuals exercise control of their practices. The selling involves participants of different age brackets and educational backgrounds. Several studies¹¹ have focused on children (school-going and drop-outs) as they engage in the act of selling different types of items. The study to be reported here has as its origins the ideas generated from previous research findings in the area of situated cognition. These ideas, coupled with the researcher's own observations about street selling practices in the Hillbrow area of Johannesburg, motivated the researcher to investigate the nature of practices

embedded in street selling. From a preliminary look at the selling practices among Hillbrow street vendors, it was observed that the sellers sell all their items in small plates or packs at a price of R1.00. The question that clicked was: *"Why should sellers fix all their items at R1.00 a pack? Could this have anything to do with the sellers' arithmetical competencies?"*

The aim of this project, therefore, was to investigate some of the issues that could be behind the sellers fixing their items at R1.00 a pack. Saxe's¹² four phase model of street selling, namely the "prepare-to-purchase phase, purchase phase, prepare-to-sell phase, selling phase" was adopted in this investigation. The informal interview approach was used in the data collection. No tape recording or formal testing was administered.

The report indicates that there is much to be learnt from street selling practices. It indicates some of the characteristics of knowledge acquired in out-of-school settings. It does not, however, explicitly show whether people can or do learn mathematics out-of-school, nor does it show clearly whether there is substantial evidence of transfer of learning from in-school to out-of-school settings. Fixing items at R1.00 a pack has more to do with convention than with the arithmetical capabilities of sellers, although there is some indication that the latter may be the case as well.

RESEARCH METHOD

Subjects

In this small-scale study, four subjects were interviewed. All of them were male. Two were young men aged twenty four and twenty five; the other two were boys aged seventeen and nineteen. One of the boys was an assistant to one of the men while the other boy was an assistant to a brother not interviewed in this study. All the subjects were street vendors in the Hillbrow area.

No women were interviewed in this study because most women involved in the selling in Hillbrow area were observed to be found outside the OK Bazaars and it was difficult to talk to them because they usually had a lot of people buying their items. One woman at the OK was approached. She was selling together with a man. The researcher was not able to interview her, however, because the man said that the items belonged to somebody else – they were selling for someone else.

The following table shows the biographical data of the subjects involved in this study.

SELLER	AGE	LEVEL OF SCHOOLING	SALES' EXPERIENCE
L	25	Std 10 + Agric. course	4 yrs
P	24	A-levels (Zimbabwe)	2 yrs
G	17	Std 7	1 yr
M	19	Std 10	Sporadic selling

L, one of the young men, had been in school up to form four (about standard 10), and had done some agricultural course. He started selling in the streets in 1989. The other man, P, had A-levels (from Zimbabwe) and had worked as a panel beater before starting selling in the streets in 1991. G, an assistant to P, went up to standard seven and joined G in 1993. M was writing matric examinations at the time of the study. He was helping his brother with the sales after school hours.

Although it may have been more appropriate to ask the sellers' level of mathematics, it could also probably have caused a negative reaction especially if the seller had a 'phobia' for school mathematics, and his past mathematical history was not good. The researcher did ask seller G about how the mathematical knowledge he learned in school helped him in his selling.

Procedure

Subjects were interviewed in their working environments. The two men, L and P, were first approached informally to familiarise them with the researcher and to find out how they were going about their business. The approach usually started with the researcher buying one or two of their items and then proceeding to ask questions about the purchase. The researcher also explained the purpose of the questioning i.e. that it was part of the researcher's studies at Wits University. Frequent visits to the sellers by the researcher made them familiar with the researcher and hence more open with him. The following questions were asked:

1. *For the items that you sell (eg onions) how much does a bag cost you when you are buying?*
2. (a) *How do you divide a bag of onions when you are preparing to sell?*
(b) *Why do you divide a bag of onions in the way that you have described?*
3. *Is there any reason why you sell your items at R1.00 per plate and not at some other price?*

The subjects answered these questions orally. In addition, the researcher probed through more general questions and questions related to the responses of each subject. The researcher made notes immediately after the interview, in the absence of the interviewees. No tape recording was made of the interviews and the subjects were not formally tested.

All the interviews were conducted in English. While all the subjects understood what the researcher wanted to find out, in one case (M: Sotho speaking, prospective matriculant) the researcher suspects that the subject did not clearly understand what one of the questions implied. In this case a translation from English to Sotho would have helped clarify the question.

RESULTS

Purchasing from wholesalers

Saxe¹³ refers to the process of buying from wholesalers as "the purchase phase". Regarding the phase, subjects were asked: "How much does a bag of (onions, oranges, apples ...) cost you when you are buying?" Although L and P buy their items from different wholesalers, the items they buy are of similar size and quality. L buys a bag of oranges at R5.00 while P buys a similar bag for R8.00. It was interesting to find out to what L and P attribute the different prices. L's explanation was that wholesalers give a discount to anyone buying a lot. So, L bought in bulk in order to qualify for a discount. For L, who was making a greater profit than P, the purchasing phase of his business was crucial for it determined the potential profit to be made during the selling phase. P buys smaller quantities than L. He admitted that he was at loggerheads with L. P confided that L "puts too much on a plate. He buys too much and puts too much in a plate. So lots of customers go to his place".

Dividing the bag in preparation for sale

Saxe¹⁴ calls this phase the "prepare-to-sell phase". The sellers interviewed in this study all divide a bag of items onto small plastic plates, except in the case of leafy vegetables such as cabbages and spinach. The quantities of items vary among plates. For instance, L puts five, six or seven oranges on different plates. He gave two reasons for this:

- a *It depends on the sizes of the items. "If the items are big, then I put less in a plate than when the items are small".*
- b *To speed up the sales. "I put many oranges in a plate to sell fast. If I want to go out for a weekend, I put more in a plate so that I sell all of them".*

P has a relatively more systematic way of dividing a bag of items into plates. He categorises oranges, for example, into three: small, medium and large. For large oranges, he puts four in a plate, for medium he puts five and for small he puts six in a plate. Also, he classifies tomatoes into three grades: one, two and three, and the number of tomatoes he puts in a plate is two, three and four respectively.

The differing criteria that L and P use to divide a bag also affects how many plates each gets per bag. For example, because L puts more oranges in a plate than P, L ends up with ten plates per bag whereas P ends up with fifteen plates per bag. The net profit per bag for L is R5.00 while for P is R7.00. However, although L's net profit per bag is comparatively less than that of P, L's approach yields more profit at the end of the day because he gains substantially more sales than does P.

It can be seen that although P is a less successful seller than L, his way of operating is more systematic and formal.

In a separate conversation, G (assistant to P) was asked to explain why he had put one large sweet potato in one plate and two potatoes (one relatively large, and one small) in another plate, both at the same cost of R1.00. His response was "to balance the equation". This response came as a surprise because earlier on G had described the ideas he had got from school as "useless". "School is no good. Not helpful".

The 'prepare-to-sell' phase also involves marking up prices. In this study all items were marked at R1.00. The sellers were then asked why they fix all their items at R1.00.

P *It is an amount anyone can afford, even those from the village.*

L *It's cheap. We can't go lower than R1.00. We can't go higher. R1.50 is too much. That is super market price.*

M *No precise reason.*

The researcher also had short conversations with other sellers about the fixing of the price. In general, it was noted that marking items at R1.00 per plate/pack simplifies their operations. One seller, a woman, said "it is easier for me and the customer". In fact, it was observed that during sales the sellers did not have any problems giving out change most likely because of this simplification. The customer did not even have to ask what the prices were because they already knew.

One of the underlying hypothesis of this study was that marking items at R1.00 may well have something to do with the sellers' mathematical abilities. As an informal test of this hypothesis, L and M were asked to figure out the cost of a single item given that the whole plate was worth R1.00.

Question *If the whole plate (with seven apples) costs R1.00, what then is the cost of each apple?*

L *(very quickly) about 12 cents.*

Question *How did you arrive at cents?*

L *I divided.*

L was asked a similar question on another occasion:

- Question *If the whole plate (with six onions) costs R1.00, what then is the cost of each onion?*
- L *We don't sell singles. We sell in bulk.*

What can be seen from this scenario is that while L is able (to some extent) to figure out the cost per apple/onion, knowledge about unit cost particularly important to L.

The following shows how M responded to the issue of unit cost:

- Question *If the whole pate (with four oranges) costs R1.00, what then is the cost of each orange?*
- M *(very quickly) 30 cents.*
- Question *Why 30 cents?*
- M *One orange is 30 cents.*

There is a possibility that M did not understand the question as can be seen from his responses. It is also possible that M was instructed to sell individual oranges at 30 cents if a customer wanted a single orange. This instruction may have interfered with M's understanding of what the researcher had asked him to do.

DISCUSSION

The question that one can ask from these results is whether there is any evidence of transfer of learning from in-school knowledge to out-of-school situations. In other words, do any of the ideas that the sellers learnt in school help them in their sales. In what way, if at all, does in-school knowledge seem to help the sellers in this study?

One might begin by examining the way L and P engage in the purchase process of buying items from wholesalers. How is it that L (who spent relatively less time in school than P) is able to manipulate the purchasing so that he gets more profit from it than P? One would think that P, having more years of schooling than L, should be able to be more successful than L. It could be argued, based on this scenario, that educational experience is not a necessary factor of success in out-of-school problem-solving. However, it could be that L is more successful than P because L has spent more years selling than P. If so, this highlights the practical and context-dependent nature of out-of-school practices. L's experience in sales has probably guided him to come to realise that more purchases will give him more discount and hence more profit in selling. This goal of *purchasing more* has 'emerged'¹⁵ due to the situational problems in which L is caught. The overall goal (i.e. making more profit through large purchases with large discount) is an accepted goal of the person engaged in the activity of selling. The person knows and owns this goal, and he/she is in total control of the process leading to the achievement of this goal.

People in out-of-school situations are at liberty to use not only strategies with which they feel more competent¹⁶ but also strategies with which they feel more satisfied and confident. It is in this sense that L is seen to have chosen to put more items in a plate so that he attracts more sales in the least possible amount of time and hence gets more profit. L is in control of his own process of selling. There are clearly no external rules which led L to operate in this manner. In general, L invents his own rules of the game of selling; he has the freedom to alter them depending on the circumstances, without any threat or impositions from anyone.

While L is seen to be more successful in the process of selling than P, it is interesting to note the differences in the language of conceptual frameworks in which they operate. This is particularly evident in the way they classify their items. L uses the classes small and large, whereas P uses a three-point categorisation. The classification approach that P uses is clearly more defined and rigorous, slightly more structural and hierarchical than that of L. It could be that P has a more defined way of operating because of his more advanced level of schooling. Since in-school procedures emphasise that one should be more systematic, defining clearly the modes of operation, it could be argued that this knowledge has had more impact on P than on L. At this point then, one could probably talk of some kind of transfer of learning as far as this situation is concerned.

One could probably relate P and L's case to Carraher's¹⁷ case of students and farmers. Farmers were more able to solve area problems than students. The farmers were able to make meaning of calculations involving pieces of land because they were more familiar with pieces of land than were students. However, because students had been exposed to algorithms for area calculations, their strategies reflected this knowledge. It could then be argued that L has comparatively less systematic way of operating than P because L has a lower level of schooling than P.

The fixing of items at R1.00 points to the practical nature of street mathematics. Street selling can be a very busy and demanding activity, especially when the seller has a lot of customers during peak hours. Apart from getting friends to help in the sales, sellers will usually simplify part of their sale burden by standardising the price system in such a way that they carry out their selling activities in the least possible time without loss of profit. This is typically the case with Hillbrow street vendors. Most of their items are marked at R1.00 a plate or pack. This standardisation does simplify their sales a lot because the seller rarely has change problems. It was observed that most customers produced exact amounts. The customer expects that the items are worth R1.00 and proceeds to pick up his/her choice without asking how much it is.

In order to check whether the marking of items at R1.00 has anything to do with sellers' mathematical abilities, sellers were asked to figure out the cost of a single item given that a plate of items was worth R1.00. The results indicate that cost per item is not particularly useful information as far as sellers in this study are concerned. This concurs with research results from other studies.¹⁸ Calculating the

cost per single item is not part of the sellers' engaging and 'leading' activities. This probably explains why seller M could not calculate (mentally) the cost of one orange given that four of them are worth R1.00. In other words, the price that the sellers use is a *practical* price. It does seem that, at least for M, there is a conflict between practical price (actual or fixed price) and the *theoretical* (price per item given that a number of them are worth R1.00). This underlines the practical nature of street knowledge and problem-solving. However, the case of seller M does not necessarily prove that there is a problem with the transfer of learning from the in-school domain to the out-of-school domain, although other more extensive research has demonstrated that this transfer is quite problematic.¹⁹ Because no formal testing was used in this study (to check whether sellers were competent with division algorithms, for instance), and because there was less problem-solving investigation than had been planned, it cannot be explicitly concluded that the sellers (M in particular) cannot use division procedures correctly to calculate cost per single item. More work is needed to check this possibility in the Hillbrow case. However, it is more likely that the reasons behind fixing items at R1.00 are more conventionally linked than otherwise. It is still a possibility that some of the sellers may well have arithmetical problems, i.e. may face difficulties when called upon to manipulate prices arithmetically, a possibility which was to be explored in this project. More depth in relation to this component of the study is needed to avoid making erroneous conclusions.

IMPLICATIONS

To conclude this report, it is necessary to look at what implications the afore-mentioned results may have for mathematics education.

Is there anything from the results that can be used to inform mathematics education? Consider first the methods sellers use to divide their plates. Although they do not have measuring instruments, the method of dividing items into plates ensures that there are roughly equal quantities on each plate. In fact, it is quite difficult for customers to choose the 'best buy' or 'right' plate among the many plates on display. Although sellers do not have precise devices, their own methods of measuring give practically fairly precise results. The dieters in Lave's study²⁰ also used their own ways of measuring food portions, this they did with reasonable precision.

It may be possible to incorporate some of these informal methods into classroom practice. Bishop and Pompeu Jr²¹ propose an ethnomathematical approach for teachers which elicits different human activities which could be mathematically interpreted in the classroom. However, a simple shift from one approach to another is not enough to guarantee better results in mathematics teaching. Nevertheless, mathematics educators should be encouraged to look more carefully at school mathematics, keeping an eye on the pupils' point of view. This approach would

make it possible to create the kind of "knowledge environment"²² most suitable for them.

Fixing items at R1.00 helps sellers in this study to 'cope' with their everyday selling demands. This could be cited as one way in which a specific group of people try to function effectively in their environment by inventing their own ways of solving problems. Lave's cases of dieters and Vai pupils in Liberian schools provide an example at this point. It can, therefore, be deduced that society is capable of inventing its own standards, which are not only useful and meaningful, but also acceptable to a particular group in a particular society.

From the empiricist's view, it is worth considering that the environment (the street selling environment, in this case) is a "source of knowledge".²³ Because children are part of the general environment and interact physically and mentally with it, it may well be that children's pre-knowledge reflect their interactions with their environment. It is up to the teacher to capitalise on children's pre-knowledge, the knowledge from the environment that they bring to the classroom, so as to minimise the discontinuities which currently exist between in-school and out-of-school situations. Although there is already an effort being made in this regard, a considerably greater effort is needed to bridge the gap between in-school knowledge and out-of-school problem settings.

It is not the aim of this report to probe in detail how out-of-school practices can be embedded in classroom instruction. Nor is its aim to show how and whether such embedding will improve mathematics education. However, from an ethnomathematical point of view, bringing into the classroom more out-of-school practice points a way forward. Perhaps the teacher could tap ideas from 'knowledge environments' of which the pupil is a part. This could help to create suitable problem-solving activities related to the environment with which children interact or are made to interact. As part of on-going instruction, the teacher could find out which children in the class buy thins from the streets. The teacher could then ask what they observe in the buying and selling process. The teacher could then design some small-scale project on 'street mathematics' for children to investigate how sellers use mathematics and how they cope with mathematical problems.

Successful incorporation of relevant and familiar bits of out-of-school knowledge into the classroom situation should probably mediate learning and teaching, and hence assist to bridge the gap between in-school and out-of-school practices.

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DISCUSSION

Teacher Appraisal and Professional Accountability in South African Education

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The furore over education in South Africa has prepared the way for a reparations programme that will hopefully rectify the inequities present in the education systems of South Africa. The following discussion aims at providing suggestions for the 'South African Situation' based largely upon Linda Darling-Hammond's article on the general professional accountability of teachers.¹ My discussion will focus more specifically on teacher appraisal in South Africa. My essay will also include some personal 'anecdotes' in order to provide examples of the proposal I support.

Accountability is provided by rigorous training and careful selection ... internships for beginners meaningful evaluation ... and ongoing review of practice.²

The present system of teacher appraisal in South Africa cannot be addressed without addressing the concept of professionalism in teaching, the role of the teacher in the wider community, and the training programme for prospective teachers, as each of these factors influences the teacher-assessment procedure.

South Africa has, for too long, relegated its teachers to the realm of civil servitude, and as a result, is discovering that in the developing 'new and democratic nation,' there is a great dichotomy between education policies and theories being purported, and the existent education system. And it is the teacher who is caught in the middle – unsure of either status and accountability.

South African education during the Apartheid era did not only disadvantage those pupils trapped in the system at the time, but also those pupils who would follow in the future. Education is an ongoing phenomenon requiring skilled practitioners to promote its obvious advantages. During the latter half of this century, South Africa ensured that Black education was crippled from within by the policies the Government employed with regard to Bantu education.

Segregation in education was possibly the most divisive factor for the youth of this country. To withhold a secure and sound education from any sector of the community is criminal, but even more so when one sabotages any possibility of

gaining such an education by ensuring that the educators one provides are themselves of an uncertain education opportunity.

Black teachers were employed to teach black pupils. Invariably those teachers did not have the necessary training to fill their posts adequately: the majority of the teachers had been processed by the very system in which they were to teach. And they inculcated their poor education in the future of this nation. Apartheid policies prevented the proper teacher-training necessary for effective teaching. 'Teachers' who did not have Matriculation Certificates were employed to teach Matriculation candidates; or were required to teach subjects for which they were not qualified. Poor education was entrenched through poor education. This abomination was ignored, and even exacerbated when a number of black teacher-training colleges were closed in the early 1990s.

Linda Darling-Hammond's article has immediate implications for the South African system of teacher appraisal. The positive factor being that teachers will have higher standards than they do at present as they will be regarded as a professional body, and thus more will be expected of them. Also, those higher standards will be standardized. These suggestions cannot be implemented overnight, and it is in this regard that South Africa will have to be patient. South Africa has a teacher shortage that requires an immediate solution. If teachers are going to be better educated themselves and capable of providing a better education system, it will take time, and thus it will be unlikely that there will be enough teachers to address the present shortage. Change, even if implemented now, will take anything up to twenty years to have permeated the entire system – although it will alleviate some of the present problems. However, there are possible solutions to this problem discussed later in the essay.

In her article, Darling-Hammond argues that it is as professionals that teachers should be assessed. This assessment should be related to accountability, of which there are several areas (bureaucratic, public and professional accountability), each dealing with a different aspect of a teacher's practice. However her basic premise about the system of accountability is fundamental in my view. To set standards and expectations, to implement those standards and to maintain those standards is vital, but is the objective of the exercise that is even more essential: to ensure that students are educated in the best possible manner.

She describes a system prevalent in present South African education: because teachers have had their decision-making rights appropriated by a 'higher authority' with regards learning theory, child development, curriculum and assessment, it seems teacher have not needed to be highly informed in these spheres. If this continues, teachers will continue to occupy the same level in society as they do at present: as civil servants who are expected to 'toe the party line' because 'the party' pays them. Other professionals are assessed on their knowledge of their field of expertise, and, a teacher's field of expertise is the practical dissemination of knowledge to his/her pupils – therefore, surely a highly developed sense of theory is

necessary to inform that practice. However, I do not only feel that the onus is on the government to create the professional guidelines for teaching. As professionals, teachers should accept responsibility for the improvement of their profession by that professional teachers should belong to a self-regulating processes of selection, training and evaluative practices for teachers: and Institute of Teachers.

Darling-Hammond proposes a method of

... completing the initial education of prospective teachers, by ensuring that they have the tools to apply theory in practice and by socializing them to the professional norms and ethics.³

This method would be achieved within a Professional Practice School. This apprenticeship would be undertaken by every novice teacher under the guidance of a 'professional teacher' who is chosen for his/her degree of professionalism and accountability as a good role-model for a prospective teacher. A variation on In-service training (INSET), this does not negate pre-service training (PRESET) in any way, but augments the skills and theoretical scenarios dealt with in the pre-service training in a more practical context.

I am not convinced that a structured system of Professional Practice Schools are the solution to South Africa's problems of teacher qualifications and training. A number of Darling-Hammond's suggestions, however, strike me as integral to the improvement of the education system. The first of these issues is evaluation through a 'professional accrediting body' and certification examinations. This would have to determine levels of competency and admission requirements for teacher-training; and the second once the student-teacher has experienced a school environment. 'Mentor-teaching' is highly beneficial as long as it is not only one mentor for the entire school experience. As, if this is the case, the student-teacher invariably absorbs one mentor's ethos and style, and attempts (whether consciously or not) to imitate that teacher. A dangerous process; not only disadvantageous to the student-teacher, but also the pupils he/she will teach. A teacher who is not original and who cannot develop a personal style cannot be flexible enough to change his or her approach when necessary.

Darling-Hammond makes an interesting point about "beginning teachers" or novices not being given sole responsibility for a standard teaching load. I find the rationale behind this recommendation difficult to accept. During a two week teaching experience which I completed in mid-1993, a number of teachers were ill, two of whom taught my future subjects. I took sole responsibility for their classes and was fully integrated into the school for those two weeks. And although I do not think that I had a full teaching load, it was not merely a token load supervised by another teacher. I had autonomy in the classroom, and yet I was free to call on other teachers for guidance. The headmaster's support was very evident. Thus I do not think that a new teacher should 'shirk' professional responsibility – being 'thrown' in at the deep end' has its merits – one can assess a person's capacity for adaptation and flexibility, their ability to cope with the stress of the unknown, and

their willingness to accept responsibility for their teaching. The situation also allows for the student-teacher to evaluate the teaching profession in a more realistic manner (which in itself would produce a personal 'weeding-out' programme).

The assessment I received at the school was positive and developmental in that it was not judgemental and was approached as a 'by-product' (or extra product) of my experience. There was no sense that another teacher observing my lesson was present for any other reason beyond an interest in what I was teaching, or as a 'collaborator' upon whom I could call if necessary. I was treated as an equal at all times, and sometimes my area of expertise (film) was relied upon by 'experienced' teachers. I experienced a version of 'mentor-teaching', albeit a very loosely structured approach. The onus was on me to choose a mentor (or a number of mentors) whom I considered to be the most 'qualified' for my particular needs at the time. It was also up to me to take responsibility for myself – as I understand it now, having this freedom of choice was in itself an evaluation process of my approach to teaching. As a result, I think that mentor-teaching should be an integral part in the assessment of teachers. But this mentor-teaching need not entail a designated Professional Practice School – which would not be economically viable. Extending the usual eight week teaching experience, required for South Africa teaching qualifications, to approximately six months (divided amongst two to three different schools) would probably suffice.

Mentor-teaching can also lead to another essential area of teacher-assessment: self-evaluation. Self-evaluation appears to have been under-estimated and therefore under-developed in teaching. For me there are two methods of self-assessment: the first being a personal evaluation of one's performance. By this I do not mean a superficial decision based on pupil results at the end of the term or year as to whether or not one's methods seem to have worked, but rather a frequent and regular assessment of pupil interest and behaviour during the lesson. And through this ascertaining the value of style and method; and if the system failed, determining the reason for its failure and then a solution to the problem. The second method is a pupil assessment. While on teaching experience I prepared a questionnaire (similar to the lecturer evaluation completed at university) for my pupils to complete. They revelled in their position as 'assessors', and it showed me where I had gone wrong and also confirmed some of the methods I had employed. Feedback allows you to draw on others' expertise (teachers, lecturers and pupils) to determine whether or not your approach to a particular situation is viable. During my teaching experience this year I hope to use the questionnaire system of evaluation once again (in the senior secondary school) and also institute a weekly evaluation asking the question "What have you learned this week?" in the lower standards (e.g.: Std 6). Hopefully, by finding out what they got from my lessons, I'll know if my aims are being achieved and if my methods work. Self-evaluation is not only applicable to student-teachers's career as a 'map of development'. However, this system only works if instituted by the teacher as a means of

assessment – and this relates to the arena of accountability that Darling-Hammond discussed. Not only are we accountable to our clients, but also to ourselves as professionals.

Self-evaluation and mentor-teaching are not enough to ensure that one is capable of being called a teacher, or a professional. There must be a formal evaluation of a student-teacher's abilities which should accord with national criteria and be conducted by several different assessors. In this regard I think that the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) system is valid, although I would extend the evaluative board to include other student-teachers. In effect, extending the concept of micro-teaching Education course (for example) – in which one is evaluated by one's peers – into the 'real' classroom. Micro-teaching involves a small group of university students imitating the atmosphere of a classroom scenario; one student teaches the 'class'. This teaching experience is video-taped, and is then 'teacher' and the 'teacher's' peers. Introducing this concept into the real classroom ensures that the evaluative feedback while on long teaching practical comes from a variety of quarters instead of only from a position of "authority". No matter how often a student-teacher is assured that their evaluation is not meant to be a student-teacher is assured that their evaluation is not meant to be an 'anxiety-inducing' exercise, there is the very real fear of being judged – and being judged in an isolated context. Although an impossible alternative to evaluative visits (due to a lack of economic viability), I would propose that student-teachers be videotaped in their lessons over a period of time (e.g.: one week), and that videotape be presented to the assessor/s. In this manner a more representative picture of the student-teacher's abilities could be illustrated.

What I have discussed are practical methods of assessment, however the theory behind assessment is also vital. I view teaching as a profession, and thus, as a teacher, I expect to have professional 'status' – to be accountable to my clients, and be responsible for my profession. For this I need to know who my client is. Darling-Hammond's discussion of professional accountability provides for the determination of a "client", and in my view that client is not only a single group, but a number of interest groups. The immediate (or direct) client is the pupil, and thus our primary objective is the welfare of the student. To ensure that we succeed in this area, there must be an intensive programme of education and training for student teachers before they are allowed to use their position as authority figure, *in loco parentis* and role model to influence their pupils. The second client is the employer (state or private organization) and the third the community at large. As clients, they have the right to evaluate one's performance. The initial evaluation will be according to one's employer's guidelines which are informed indirectly by the community's needs. This assessment should be grounded in the teacher's knowledge of educational theory and the subsequent application of that theory. However, once classified as a 'teacher', the categories of evaluation will increase – pupils will assess the educator daily, based on their enjoyment of the lesson, and

what they have learned. This in turn will be the foundation upon which parents evaluate the teacher. Within the community at large, then, one will eventually be judged (albeit indirectly) by the pupils' employers or tertiary educators. Consequently, before one can be evaluated externally, a teacher should be required to pass an intensive internal assessment conducted by one's 'peers'. (This relates to the earlier point concerning a professional teaching association).

Much teacher appraisal depends upon the role of teachers in the community. The idea that teachers are seen either as state functionaries or as a force which shapes lives illustrates two extreme views of teachers' roles. And it is on these grounds that teachers will be judged. In South Africa teachers have been relegated to the role of passive civil servants and portrayed as 'mindless baby-sitters', and as a result the influence of teachers on their pupils has been greatly under-estimated. The Government Gazette's Code of Conduct is very much context-bound, and due to its historical context it promotes a certain policy which allows for very little professional initiative on the part of the teacher. Section 6.1 and 7.2 of the code are perfect examples of teachers being designated state functionaries, and as such are obligated to serve the state's aims. And so long as teachers' views are in conjunction with those of the state, teachers shall not be expected to suppress them. This basis for an assessment of ability reduces teaching to an occupation that requires little formal training, no professional skill, and no independence in education. Although Section 3.5 of the code states that the student is to be recognized as an individual, and that the teacher must "foster a healthy environment for education and learning," this aim is negated by the fact that teachers are to conduct "professional business through the proper channels only" (stress added) and accept "the authority and instructions of those who are placed in a position of authority..." These statements ensure the creation of automatons that do not foster education, questioning and understanding, but rather unquestioning obedience to the state. This code removes much of a teacher's authority – as a professional and a contributing member of the community – and also ensures that our assessment is conducted only by the state for its own means. The state needs to revise its 'exploitation' of teachers – involve teachers and the larger community is extorting its needs in the most beneficial way. Supply and demand is a basic tenet in the economic sector, and teacher should therefore be assessed along those lines – in this way, education is prevented from becoming static and teachers are forced to keep pace with wider social demands. Isolation in education has led to a narrow system of teacher appraisal, and by involving the business sector in the assessment of teachers ('inter-professionalism') for their own ends ensures teaching as a profession will attract a high calibre of teacher due to its pivotal status in the community (instead of the generalization that teachers are of the school "if you can't do, teach").

The documents by SADTU and the African National Congress (ANC) criticise a number of aspects in the present appraisal system. First and foremost for its closed

and rigid nature which does not take into account a teacher's background and prior experience. The approach to teacher-training has been informed by the apartheid system and thus white teachers colleges have been far better equipped than those of black colleges. These factors impact on the type of teacher emerging from teacher-training – in terms of opportunities of study, and also on the job market. The diversity of qualifications is also a disadvantage to new teachers, thus the ANC and SADTU promote a national qualification which deals with local factors and contexts. Both articles promulgated teacher appraisal linked to the 'professional development of teachers' rather than the present bureaucratic and judgemental system of evaluation. The ANC also criticized the present link between a formal education and 'progress' as a teacher, stating that the formal study engaged in, and expected of teachers is unrelated to their actual profession and occupation. Although I can understand the point, I do not feel that formal study should be de-emphasized – being a professional means being an expert in a field of knowledge, and thus any further study in that field will be of benefit to your 'client' and should also be rewarded by your employer. However, the access to further study should be made available to any teacher who wants to pursue a particular field. To be a professional, one must abide by the ethos of the profession, and economic incentive and education are intrinsic to the status of 'professional'.

SADTUs opinion that the appraisal system is too narrow is justified, and the proposed solution to broaden the process is valid. I would however extend the three groups (subject expert, pupils and management team) to include fellow student-teachers in the initial phase of evaluation. The process can also be extended once qualified by making use of the pupils and management team as one's evaluators. A further criticism was that the subject expert does not visit the student-teacher on a regular basis so as to obtain an overall perception of the teachers ability, but rather bases the assessment on one or two isolated interactions.

An area not properly dealt with beyond the ANC's document is that to the admission structure for teacher-training. The ANC criticizes the disparities between teacher-training facilities – in terms of resource allocation and entrance requirements. Beyond a basic criteria for admission to training (a first degree with an average of 65-70% in two teaching subjects, and an ability to speak two to three official languages) – which can only be phased in the future – there should be (as the ANC states) some consideration and evaluation of prior experience. In addition, although I have been informed that a procedure such as psychological evaluation would negate individual rights, I tested in a similar manner to the assessments undergone by pilots and air traffic controllers. This evaluation procedure would be designed to assess a teachers ability to cope with stress and specific situations at school. On the other hand, this could be deemed prejudicial as it could be used to 'weed out' those who do not fit the approved 'bill of health'. Although there are concerns about invasions of privacy, I do think it has some merit in developing a

support system for teachers and other members of the teaching profession to understand the impact of certain types of education.

Another aspect of evaluation is the qualifications of the assessor. A teaching degree and experience should be the most basic of requirements for this position in terms of the subject expert and management team. Beyond this, I would promulgate that the subject expert swap places with a teacher of the same subject for six months to a year every five years. This would ensure that the evaluator stays in touch with education at a practical level so as to ensure his/her approach to student-teachers to come into contact with a teacher 'fresh from the field' who can provide them with practical applications for their educational theory, and a 'sounding board' for teaching methods.

The suggestions I have discussed in this essay are on a practical rather than an ideological level, as it is practical adaptations that need to be made whether ideological concerns change or remain static.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. L. Darling-Hammond, "Accountability for Professional Practice", *Teachers College Record*, 91 (1989).
2. *Ibid.*, 27.
3. *Ibid.*, 22.

NOTES

Monitoring the 1994 Senior Certificate/Matriculation Examination

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Through the eighties about half of all African Std 10 pupils failed to gain any kind of secondary school leaving certificate. Each year the examination results were marked by the stark contrasts between those of black candidates and those of their white compatriots (typically a pass rate of at least 95%). The results each year were the clearest indicator of continuing discrimination in the field of education.

However, there was more at stake than poor results: the examination itself had come to have almost no credibility and was surrounded by perceptions and suspicions that it was administered in such a way that black youngsters were prevented from competing on an equal basis with their white counterparts. Particularly in respect of entry to tertiary institutions and the workplace.

In 1994 it was soon clear that the senior certificate examination at the end of the year would have to be administered on the old basis of separate ethnic departments as the new proposed structures were not in place. In considering the implications of this, the National Education and Training Forum (NETF), through its Curriculum Technical Sub-committee, decided to propose to the new Education Ministry

the establishment of a small team of assessment specialists who enjoy credibility, in order to win the confidence of teachers and other stakeholders. Their primary task would be to oversee examination procedures in an attempt to improve the quality of examinations for all.

The NETF conceived of this Independent Examinations Commission as being in place by May 1994. However, in the outcome, it was October 1994 before the Ministry set up what is designated an "Examinations Monitoring Committee", under the chairmanship of Professor Bax Nomvete, Executive Director of the African Institute for Policy Analysis, Cape Town.¹

The original terms of reference were set out as follows:

The functions of the EMC shall be to monitor

- * the appointment of examiners
- * the security of examination material
- * the writing of examinations
- * the marking of scripts
- * the standardisation of marks, and
- * the release of results.

Since the Committee was able to start its work only in November 1994, it found itself in the position of having to concentrate on the latter three of the above functions. These became the emphasis of the revised terms of reference submitted to the Ministry, together with a proposed mode of operation, which the committee – renamed the Independent Examinations Monitoring Committee (IEMC) – summarised as follows:

liaise with and investigate the various examining bodies at all levels. This will include – at the examination writing stage, the visiting of selected examination writing centres, and assessment of the appointment and functioning of invigilators, internal monitoring mechanisms, and the treatment of irregularities;

at the marking and moderation stage, visits to the exam marking centres, and the monitoring of selected officials, which could include centre managers, moderators, chief examiners, senior examiners, markers, exam assistants and security personnel;

review and assessment of the methods employed by the examining bodies to ensure the integrity of examination. This will include

meetings with departmental officials;

assessing the security of the procedures relating to the storage, provision and packing and transportation of question papers and answer scripts;

monitoring the application of norms to the 'raw marks' provided by the examiners;

advice to the Minister on a possible date for the simultaneous release of all exam results;²

and evaluation of the accuracy and fairness of the exam system and its outcome.

Because of the constraints of time, the number of examining bodies, and the smallness of the committee, the only way to carry out these proposals was to divide the work among individual members and small groups, and to investigate a representative cross-section of centres. However, all the examining bodies and all the provinces were represented in the final outcome.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The writing centres

Members of the committee were concerned about the safety of question papers and examination material at many school centres and recommended that these should not be delivered at the school long before the examination time but on a day-to-day basis during the exam. Where this was not possible, strict monitoring and spot checks should be carried out to ensure that papers were kept under absolutely safe and confidential conditions.

While on the whole there were few criticisms of the standards of invigilation, the IEMC recommended that, in the interests of transparency and credibility, external invigilators were to be preferred to the use of teachers in the schools.

The IEMC found that overcrowding still existed in ex-DET school centres and recommended that over-all "space norms and criteria" should be laid down for all centres before they were approved.

All examining bodies needed to tighten up on their despatch and distribution procedures to ensure that centres received the correct subjects, grades and numbers of question papers and ancillary materials.

The marking centres

Taking all the examining bodies³ into consideration, there were eighty-nine marking centres with over 23 000 markers, scattered across the country. Each examining body had its own set of regulations for the appointment of markers and marking procedures. While they had much in common, one issue that caused a great deal of dissatisfaction was that markers were recompensed on different scales of tariffs according to the department for which they were marking. The IEMC therefore recommended one scale for everyone concerned with marking senior certificate papers.

The IEMC discovered that regulations laid down for the appointment of markers were not always followed and that unsuitably qualified markers were found in action at some centres. Most often this was because approved markers did not turn up for duty, necessitating last minute replacements who often did not satisfy the requirements laid down.

Another matter in question was that of the examination assistants, who dealt with routine tasks such as the totalling of marks. In most cases tertiary students were used for this purpose, but at some centres they had not been selected on merit and capability because the SRC at the college being used as a centre had insisted on

nominating their own list for appointment. The IEMC found this to be completely unacceptable and recommended that this practice be discontinued.

Most centres offered acceptable levels of accommodation and meals for the teachers doing the marking, but the IEMC found that where ordinary schools, and not tertiary institutions were used for this purpose, this was not the case and therefore recommended that stricter criteria be used in the selection of venues for marking.

In general it was felt that there could be a tightening up of security at the marking centres and recommended that a central control room be set up at each centre to monitor the movement of scripts in and out of the centre, as well as within the centre. This is particularly necessary where more than one subject is being marked in the same centre, and also where many different rooms are being used.

IEMC member found that in general marking was carried out with a very satisfactory level of responsibility and professionalism. It is an experience to which all Std 10 teachers should be exposed at some point in their careers when they have gained adequate experience.

Statistical control and 'standardisation' of marks

For many years arguments have raged over this procedure, which has been viewed with grave suspicion by black teachers and parents. What was clear to the IEMC members who attended all the meetings of the examining bodies when this procedure was applied was that the major problem was a lack of transparency. As in the past, they were closed, bureaucratic meetings, in which a much wider representation of non-departmental interests, particularly teachers' organisations, was urgently and highly necessary.

At the 1994 meetings, however, the IEMC did not find any evidence that marks were 'manipulated', although it was clear that the norms used need to be reviewed much more frequently in the light of the actual 'raw marks' provided by the schools. The latter, which only some examining bodies make use of, should be provided for all candidates.

The major 'external presence' at all the standardisation meetings, apart from IEMC members, was that of representatives of The SA Certification Council (SAFCERT).

SAFCERT

Because of the important role played by SAFCERT, the IEMC decided to give consideration to this body, although there was no mention of it in the brief from the Ministry. Discussions about the role of SAFCERT were held itself and with the examining bodies.

What emerged was general agreement that a mechanism of this kind was necessary but SAFCERT, a product of the old dispensation, needed to be re-structured and re-constituted, especially in the light of the setting up of provincial education departments. In the longer term the functions of SAFCERT should be taken up by a sub-section of the proposed SA Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

Other, general recommendations

The major longer term recommendation was that from 1995 onwards the senior certificate/matriculation examination should be administered by provincial education departments, with each setting up an examinations council representative of the interests concerned, and that the policies and mechanisms necessary for this should be put in place in the first quarter of 1995.

An area that is fundamental, but which was outside of the scope of the IEMC, is that of the *curriculum* that the examination is supposed to assess and examine. Clearly it is crucial that there should be strong links between developments in the broader area of curriculum and the more specific area of examinations. The latter cannot be allowed to become a mere technical, instrumental concern, isolated from the more important issues of relevance and quality in what learners are to learn and teachers are to teach under the new circumstances obtaining in South Africa.

In this respect one of the first steps that needs to be taken is the creation of a common curriculum for all South Africans, on which examinations administered by the provinces can be based.

CONCLUSION

While the appointment of the IEMC would appear to have had a healthy effect on the examination process in 1994, it was not able to eliminate the essential inequalities in the education system which resulted in the outcomes of the 1994 examination being much the same as for the previous ten years (see Table below)

Table 1: Senior Certificate/Matriculation Examination 1994.⁴

Group	Candidates	SC Passes	%	Matric Passes	%	Total Passes	%
White	62507	34764	55.6	26057	41.7	60821	97.3
Indian	15092	8419	55.8	5562	36.9	13981	92.7
Coloured	25375	14662	57.8	7639	30.1	22201	87.9
African	392434	141101	36.0	49239	12.5	190340	48.5
TOTAL	495408	198946	40.2	88497	17.8	287343	58.0

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1. The other members of the Committee were: Mr T W Kambule, now Principal, ORT College of Technology, Midrand, Dr M P Mncwabe, Rector, Elijah Mango College of Education, Nelspruit, Dr Ken Hartshorne, Education Consultant to the Centre for Continuing Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Ms S M Mmotla, Acting Associate Head of Department, East Rand College of Education, Ms C Regnart (Substantive Secretary), Marketing Director of Book Promotions, Cape Town, formerly Head of Department Westerford High School, Rondebosch, Mr J A V Bhali (Logistics Secretary and Liaison Officer), seconded from the Department of Education and Training.
2. As is now generally known, the compromise that was reached with all the examining bodies was that all results would be released in the last week of December 1994.
3. The examining bodies concerned were as follows: National; Department of Education and Training, Pretoria, including the former self-governing territories and Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. National Senior Certificate, ex House of Assembly, Pretoria ex-House of Delegates, Durban ex-House of Representatives, Cape Town. Provincial; Cape Education Department, Cape Town Transvaal Education Department, Pretoria, Orange Free State Department, Bloemfontein, Natal Education Department, Pietermaritzburg, Transkei Education Department, Umtata. Non-Departmental; Independent Examinations Board, Johannesburg
4. EduSource, *Data News*, (Education Foundation: Johannesburg, 1995), 11. The number of candidates registered for the examination was 559 207, of whom nearly 64 000 did not write. The pass rate of African candidates varied considerably from province to province. For example North West %, Kwazulu-Natal 60.8%, Eastern Transvaal 41.7% and Gauteng 41.6%.

CONFERENCE REPORT

National Conference on Teacher Development: A Teacher's Perspective

August 1995

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INTRODUCTION

As an inservice teacher in a secondary school, it was immensely exciting, motivating and illuminating to be part of such an historic occasion – the first ever national conference on teacher development. This was certainly a milestone in the struggle for equal and democratic education in South Africa. Representatives from a broad spectrum of education (university and college lecturers, teachers, international educationists, subject advisors, inspectors, non-governmental organisations and delegates from the national education ministry) were actively engaged in two days of discussion and debate. Conference themes were Preservice Teacher Education (PRESET) Curriculum, the Nature and Role of Colleges of Education, Teacher Appraisal and Inservice Education of Teachers (INSET). Conference policy proposals will help to inform the National Education Ministry in its reconstruction of the education system.

This report reflects my own impressions, feelings and frustrations. It also reflects my analysis of the inputs of both local and international speakers, of the group discussions and consequent policy proposals and how they affect me as a South African teacher.

The format of the conference was excellent and provided a healthy environment for interaction, discussion and sharing of ideas and experiences. However, I felt that teachers were under-represented especially since what was discussed affected them directly. A lot of the confusion and disillusionment teachers feel about the education system at present stems from the fact that they are once again being left out of the decision-making process which affects them and, ultimately, the learner. Very little of what is happening in the educational transformation process filters down to the teacher on the ground and I hoped to get some clarity in this regard. Although the conference did not provide clear-cut answers, at least it put educational development in perspective for me. Education policies are in the

process of being developed and relevant role players need to be invited to participate in this process.

The conference aptly saw In-service Teacher Education as the cornerstone of educational reform in this country. The vast majority of teachers are presently in the school system. Educational reform will therefore necessitate retraining of teachers to adopt new teaching approaches to provide South African society with skilled, competent and confident learners.

The National Teacher Education Audit presented by Dr Jane Hofmeyr¹ provided a quantitative and qualitative perspective on inadequacies present in our preservice education system. These inadequacies perpetuate problems experienced in our schools. Educational reform therefore needs to link reform in INSET to reform in PRESET.

In my view the conference did not draw a strong enough link between teacher appraisal and staff development. If teacher appraisal is not done in an atmosphere where it will be favourably accepted as a necessary part of professional and whole school development, it is doomed to failure. The only speaker who touched on this was Sue Davidoff² of IPI Western Cape when she presented the Western Cape conference report.

The conference also failed to draw a link between teacher development and relevant curriculum development as a means of motivating teachers. Curricula have to be made more relevant to the South African learner and teachers need to be involved in this process to make them more receptive to these changes.

Despite its limitations, I found the conference to be immensely motivating to me as a teacher. It was great to be included in discussions and making of proposals that affect me so directly. If more teachers could be involved in such processes it would go far in motivating teachers and bring about much faster transformation in the mindset of the teacher and much greater progress in the transformation of education in this country.

CONFERENCE FORMAT

Each thematic session opened with a panel of local and international speakers who relayed information about international and local practices, experiences and developments relating to the theme under discussion. This proved to be valuable in setting the tone and facilitating the group discussion workshop which followed. Group discussions brought forth a broad spectrum of educational perspectives and sharing of experiences and ideas.

However, I felt that teachers were under-represented. Since teachers are directly involved with the learner, who is the nucleus of all educative processes, it is imperative to involve teachers as key role players in the decision-making process if educational change is to be effective. If teachers feel that they are part of bringing

about change they will be more ready to accept the change, irrespective of their political ideologies.

LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

I came to the conference hoping to be the voice of teachers. I intended to express the frustrations, demotivation and disempowerment felt by teachers for once again being left out of the decision-making process. Teachers are asking questions like: Why are syllabus changes being brought about without consulting teachers? Why are teachers not being given a voice in forums where decisions about future policies are being made? Why are directives such as continuous evaluation being passed from the top down without any support system to go with it?

I did not get clear-cut answers but I realised that there are none. The conference gave me a new perspective on what is happening in the education system in our country at present. Input from local speakers made me aware of all the research and rethinking presently taking place in education. The education system is very much in a state of flux and experimentation, with many pilot studies being conducted. Guidance is sought from international models and successes to see what can be applied in the South African context. The state is treading very carefully because there is a lot at stake both financially and in terms of human resources.

I found all this very revealing and almost surprising because so little of what happens in education filters down to the teacher on the ground. This gives rise to a sense of bewilderment and insecurity on the part of teachers every time a new directive comes from the department about some or the other policy which has to be implemented (and which is usually not accompanied by any guidance or support system), or when rumours of changes in the education system make the rounds.

I also realised that there is a lot of duplication in the research work conducted by different government and non-government organisations (NGOs). These efforts need to be coordinated so that government institutions and NGO's work as collectively in the interest of progress. We are not in competition, we are working for a common goal – to give the learner the best education possible.

Inservice education of teachers

Dr Eric Bolton argued that "Whenever the question of effective education is considered the single most important determiner of high quality learning to emerge is high quality teaching."³ However, INSET alone is not enough. Teachers are faced with: having to teach a curriculum which is completely irrelevant to the pupils' lives and much too vast and exam orientated; ill equipped schools; spiralling discipline problems; deteriorating teacher-pupil relations; lack of parental involvement; disinterested pupils; internal staff conflict; outdated and ineffective

teaching methods; and exclusion from decision-making about curriculum changes. All this leads to a teaching force which is demoralised, demotivated, disinterested, stressed and insecure.

Without an effective teaching force which is motivated and able to tackle the challenges of a new education system; which accepts new innovations and teaching methods and approaches; and which truly knows how to prepare the learner to face to challenges of our present society – even the grandest of education policies will fall flat.

The international perspectives by Ms. Marian Shaw⁴ and Prof. Lelf Moos⁵ showed how, in both the British and Danish models, continued inservice training of teachers is an inherent and necessary part. This allows teachers to continually learn about new approaches and developments in education and to maintain a high level of motivation. To this effect the British system⁶ has five full days per annum given to schools for ongoing teacher training and sufficient funds are provided for this purpose. I was particularly impressed by the Danish system⁷ of teachers' centres which deal with ongoing inservice teacher training across the country. Teachers spend much time attending either full time or part time inservice training courses which form an inherent part of their service contract. Schools identify their inservice needs and consult trained professionals at these centres within prescribed curriculum times as part of their training programme.

In South Africa teachers have been made to believe, by past apartheid education practices, that their training stops at the teacher training centres. This has led to stagnation in their way of thinking, teaching methods, managerial styles, interaction with pupils and colleagues, and their view of their role as teachers and how they view the learner. It has also made teachers suspicious of and resistant to new ideas and innovations which are presented to them. These are seen as challenging their teaching abilities and autonomy in the classroom and has created an atmosphere of insecurity where teachers work in isolation for fear of exposing their weaknesses.

This conference stressed the need for a teacher to be 'forever the learner'. This can only be done by a countrywide programme of INSET for teachers and teacher educators. As Dr. Wendy Flanagan⁸ said, "The biggest challenge to education in this country is to get away from *rote learning and rote teaching*".

INSET is already being done on a limited scale by some schools. On a broader scale there is not enough motivation from teachers and principals. We need to learn to develop the whole school to create an environment in which the child can prosper and become a 'whole' person.

Another battle to be waged, once the need for further training of teachers is realised, is when should this be done. Conference papers stressed that the only time teacher enrichment attempts are effective is when time is made within normal school hours. Teaching is a very tiring and stressful profession especially in the South African townships with their overwhelming social problems. Teaching does not stop when the last siren wails. We therefore need to be given time off from

teaching to develop ourselves professionally if any INSET programme is to be effective.

Our legacy of apartheid has conditioned teachers to adopt ideas only if they are a directive from the education department. Hence, the conference strongly emphasised the need to make INSET a compulsory and inherent part of our future education system. It was felt that time given for the development of teachers would improve the educational opportunities for learners and would therefore justify the time spent.

The state should provide broad guidelines for the implementation of INSET but institutions should determine their own development needs. As Sue Davidoff said, "schools are the locus of change". Schools should take over the process of change and assess and develop their own needs and implement the necessary programmes to deal appropriately with these. This would give teachers (and pupils) a greater say in their own development and hence go far in creating the kind of recommitment and accountability our education system needs.

Coupled with broad national policies on INSET, the state should provide an effective support system for schools when they embark on INSET programmes. The proposed support together with keeping financial constraints in perspective could be provided by various teachers centres in the respective provinces. These centres could provide the support base with appropriate NGO's providing the training and support, either at the centre or at the schools. The IPI Western Cape conference paper as presented by Sue Davidoff outlined a strategy for co-ordinating Provincial INSET structures. Co-ordination by circuit and regional structures need to be implemented so that meaningful and appropriate INSET can take place at all times.

The role of curriculum development in inservice teacher education and motivation was barely mentioned in the conference. In my view, the present school curriculum is too content-based and does not teach pupils the needed to succeed in everyday life. Although discussion of curriculum development was perhaps outside of the scope of this conference, attention should have been given to linking teacher development and curriculum development. Appropriate curriculum lies at the core of creating a stimulating and healthy school environment and forms an intrinsic part of teacher development. You cannot motivate and develop teachers if no attention is paid to what they are expected to teach. "There is a sharp distinction between curriculum conceptualisers (thinkers) and curriculum implementors (teachers). A new curriculum is going to be implemented in 1996 but the role players at the chalkboard have not been involved".⁹ Teachers need to be involved in the curriculum development process since they are in contact with the learner and would have a clearer perspective on what interests the child.

TEACHER APPRAISAL

Teacher appraisal is a necessary part of all educative processes. To create accountability and to promote the professional development of individual teachers, particular attention has to be drawn to teacher appraisal since it is an imperative part of educational development. But, as Professor John Hoyle said, "Teachers anywhere in the world don't like to be evaluated; but it is absolutely imperative to improve the opportunities and chance for success for the child".¹⁰

This is especially true of the South African teacher who has great resistance and suspicion about being evaluated (or appraised), and with good reason. In the past, teacher evaluation was used by the Apartheid structures not as a mechanism for development but to control the teacher. Teachers were judged on a once-off evaluation, by an inspector or subject advisor or principal, as being either a good or a bad teacher. As long as the teacher's administrative work and pupils' notebooks were neat and up to date, and teachers delivered a good rote-learning lesson on that day, the teacher was judged positively. What the teacher did otherwise was not of importance. Evaluation was entirely for promotion purposes or to judge teachers so that principals and inspectors could have a means of controlling teachers.

For an appraisal system to serve the purpose of development and not judgement it should form part of a whole school development programme. I see teacher appraisal as part of a team building process. This should develop out of a staff development programme which forms part of whole school development. If Staff Development programme is tailored to the schools needs and run properly it should create a climate of mutual respect where the sharing of ideas and experiences takes place so that teachers can assist one another in their professional development. It should create an atmosphere where team teaching, self evaluation and team evaluation is seen as an inherent part of our development as teachers.

Conference policy proposals and theme reports failed to draw this link between teacher appraisal and whole school development. The only speaker that even mentioned this link was Sue Davidoff when she presented the Western Cape conference report. Appraisal was discussed in isolation as a mechanism to create accountability and commitment to teaching. If we fail to draw this link a national appraisal system, however well intended, is doomed to failure.

PRESET AND COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

Presentations on the preliminary findings of the National Teacher Education Audit showed the inadequacies in our preservice education system. Teacher training institutions produce teachers who are ill equipped to deal with pressures and realities of the present education system. Many lecturers are out of touch with

realities of the South African classroom and thus do not provide adequate theoretical or practical training for new teachers to deal with problems they might encounter. Student teachers get little practical training and the theory and teaching methods they are taught are outdated and ineffective in the South African school. The conference highlighted the need for teachers to spend more time doing practical training in school, in the form of an internship. New teachers have no support base to return to after having these institutions and hence quickly get demotivated by the situation in our schools. The Preservice education system thus continues to churn out new teachers who perpetuate the inadequate teacher centered chalk and talk teaching that pervades our schools.

Even those teachers who arrive at schools with the ideas for doing things differently quickly become demotivated and fall into the rut of the present school system. There is also not adequate linkage and support between the schools and teacher training institutions so that students are often seen more as a burden and treated accordingly by teachers. For this reason we need to have a mentor development programme with structured linkage partnership between schools and teacher training institutions. However, before this can be done we need to develop appropriate preservice training coupled with inservice training of mentor teachers who could serve as role models for the student teachers. The conference theme reports stressed the need to couple INSET for both lecturers and teachers with relevant and balanced PRESET of student teachers.

Several conference participants stressed the importance of considering more stringent selection criteria for accepting prospective teachers into teacher training institutions. Too often we find people who see teaching only as a job and not as a profession and are therefore least committed to enhance their teaching. The Danish PRESET model, as presented by Dr. Jespersen,¹⁰ which uses much more stringent selection criteria and provides more intensive practical training, produces high quality and well trained teachers.

CONCLUSION

My involvement in this conference has encouraged me to continue improving my own teaching and to initiate a staff development programme in the school where I teach. If more teachers could be involved in this kind of decision-making process we might experience more rapid transformation in the education process. Teachers need to feel good about themselves again and realise that important role they play in the lives of the learner. Only with this kind of belief will teachers be prepared to always deliver their best. Dr. John Hoyle¹⁰ summed it up by saying that we should hold our heads up high and be proud to say we are teachers. However such a level of commitment by teachers can only be achieved if INSET programmes become a compulsory and integral part of the curricula of all educational institutions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to Shirley Pendlebury for inviting me to write this report. The time for teachers to be heard is long overdue. We are the ones who are daily involved with the learner around whom all educative processes revolve and yet we have had so little say in the whole process.

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REVIEW

They Fought for Freedom Series: An Introduction

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According to the series editor, John Pampallis, these biographies aim to restore "southern African leaders ..who struggled for freedom ... to their rightful place in history". It has become almost a cliché to talk about recovering lost or silenced voices from South Africa's past, but few mainstream publishers have tried to do so until recently. At a History Workshop Teachers conference at the University of the Witwatersrand in May this year, the two hundred or so teachers who attended were clearly delighted by the array of new and affordable material displayed by publishers. Books from the *They Fought For Freedom Series* were snapped up.

It is gratifying to see publishers' commitment to redressing imbalances in historical material. The titles in this series of biographies could have wide range of appeal both in and outside formal education, but it is the concern of this article to survey history teachers responses to five titles, focusing on their possible use in the classroom. History educators with a number of years of experience in secondary schooling were asked to consider both the content and approach of one biography each. Their individual views are reproduced after this article.

Recent literature and personal classroom observation indicate that a strong narrative in History both appeals to pupils and anchors them when they move on to working with historical sources. It also helps them develop their own historical narratives.¹ This does not mean that the teacher should set up the initial narrative as fixed and authoritative. Indeed, by creating new stories from sources which would include their own family and community histories, pupils can see how narratives change and how history is constructed.

Biographies provide a particular kind of narrative which can be a springboard for considering broader historical contexts – a way of moving from the particular and personal to the general. These particular biographies provide the history teacher with both a strong narrative and a selection of primary sources which include actual voices of the protagonists, as well as extracts from documents of the time. In the

hands of a creative teacher, a set of these biographies could provide the raw material for teaching a sizable chunk of the South African section of the Interim History syllabus from Standard Four to Standard Ten. The books could also provide opportunities for cross curricular work with English and other language teachers.

Historical biographies, as much as any historical text, are interpretative, reflecting the concerns of the authors. Reviewing teachers were aware of this aspect. Citing EH Carr's injunction to study the historian, David Kgopa calls for the credentials of the authors to be made explicit, and takes issue with the "great man single handedly changing history" approach implicit in the *Hani* biography. He also feels that sensitive issues are not dealt with head on. In general there was a feeling among the reviewers that the biographies were sometimes rather bland in their treatment of issues like ethnicity, religion, racism, gender, sexism as well as ANC camp atrocities.

Indeed, the style in the *ZK Matthews* biography sometimes resembles a Sunday school text. Other titles are not quite so preachy, particularly those on Plaatje and Biko. Kerry Devine makes a general plea for not patronising or underestimating a teenage audience. "Simply putting people back into History does not make them more interesting to children Books have to be performers." Thembeke Orie laments the lack of "a distinct African flavour" in the book on Plaatje.

In terms of packaging, the book covers are colourful and attractive, and the pocket book size and length encourage reluctant readers to tackle the story. However, reviewers felt the illustrations are disappointingly patchy. Photographs tend to be rather muddy, predominantly formal portraits of men which do not serve to enhance or compliment the text. Useful maps are provided but Thembeke Orie and June Bam make the point that more use could have been made of them, particularly in terms of locating the narrative.

Women are noticeably absent in the text and in photographs. A major theme running through these books is the sacrifice made by the wives of the subjects but this is never foregrounded. When the series was first launched, and given to the journal to review, not one woman featured in the selection. Since then two biographies have come out and others are planned.² However, first impressions do count for a great deal !

Teachers reviewing the books were not quite sure at what level to use the books, possibly because it is not clear what the target audience of the series is. The exercises at the end of each book are not helpful here as they are extremely uneven in what they test and have been added on without a great deal of thought. This point will be explored in more detail later. Teachers felt that junior secondary pupils could cope with the language level and welcomed the glossary for difficult words. However, two reviewers felt that the glossary was not done thoroughly enough, leaving a number of difficult words without explanation.

It would seem that, as was argued above, teachers would use all or part of each book depending on the age and abilities of their pupils. Instead of the rather

indifferent exercises at the end, a section on suggestions for classroom use should have been included. Given the financial constraints operating in schools at the moment, it is unlikely that schools will purchase copies for individual pupils. Instead a history department or library might wish to purchase a set which could be borrowed by different classes. A section providing guidelines for teachers would be an appropriate addition.

Assessment of pupils' work is one of the most serious problems faced by teachers who want to teach history as a process of investigation. Basically there is a gap between what we say we aim to teach and how we assess whether we have done so or not. Kallaway et al argue that exercises, tests and examinations are also historical texts and can tell us a lot about how their authors understand the discipline of history.³ In general, the exercises provided in the books simply reproduce the style of questions which characterised apartheid classrooms for many years. Multiple choice or fill in the missing word type questions test recall of information and ultimately encourage pupils to think that History is about remembering a fixed body of facts. Both Thembeke Orié and June Bam caution against this type of approach. In each set of exercises, there are other types of questions but it is clear that there is little overall rationale for them. Kallaway et al make the point that, in order to transform the history teaching, we have to transform the ways we test pupils.⁴ This series does not provide much guidance for teachers in the area of assessment. Rather, it tends to reinforce existing practices using new content. In their reviews, June Bam and Kerry Devine make a number of interesting suggestions in this regard.

At the end of the day, it takes courage to "publish and be damned", particularly in a context where, given lack of clarity about new curricula, writers and publishers are venturing into uncharted terrain. Underlying all these reviews is a sense of pleasure in the recovery of hidden history. I am sure many teachers share this feeling and welcome the publication of the series as a milestone in finding our way into a past which has long been denied us and our pupils. At the History Workshop conference in May one teacher pointed out that Maskew-Millar Longman is still selling its notorious *Timelines* Series side by side with its new material. Will Maskew-Millar Longman have the courage to stop selling a series which has played a role in reinforcing an Apartheid account of our past?

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See J Holt, *Thinking Historically: Narrative, Imagination and Understanding* (1990).
2. Ruth First and Dora Tamana are the subjects of two new biographies in this series.
3. P Kallaway, R Sieborger, J Bottaro and D Hiscock, "Sub Report C: The Assessment of History in the Senior Secondary Phase" in *The Teaching of History in the RSA* (HSRC Education Research Programme No 27, 1992), 6.
4. *Ibid.*,

Sol Plaatje

John Pampallis, Maskew-Millar Longman, Cape Town

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This book is a life history of Tshekiso Solomon Plaatje. It begins by providing a sketch of the political conditions in South Africa during the early period of this century. Particular reference is made to the 1910 establishment of the Union of South Africa, which excluded the black majority from government and to the consequent foundation, in 1912, of the Native National Congress. Sol Plaatje was a founding member of the Congress. There follows a map of the world which indicates the places and periods of Sol Plaatje's travels, during his political career. Perhaps another map which locates Doornfontein, his town of birth, would have been appropriate in terms of tracing his roots.

The book is then divided into fourteen chapters as well as sections containing educational exercises and references to other books about Plaatje. The lay-out of the chapters is chronological, in line with Plaatje's political and social life.

The first chapter deals with his formative years and his family life. Its humorous opening tells how Selogilwe Mogodi with his plat – flat – looking head acquired his Dutch surname, Plaatje, as his landlord, a Dutch farmer could not pronounce his name. Mogodi was a member of the Tswana speaking Barolong people and he was Sol Plaatje's grandfather. Plaatje's family was Christian and they lived on mission land. He had a happy childhood and learnt a lot about his family and ethnic history orally from his extended family. Plaatje loved school which enabled him to be literate. He also faced hardships as he had to leave school and go to work as a herdbooy for a mean white farmer. This was his first encounter with racism and prejudice, as Plaatje grew up in an environment where Black and White people, such as the German missionaries, lived together amicably. We witness his wit during his brief working experience with the cunning farmer about the missing sheep, and later on, when he goes back to school where he became a pupil teacher at an early age. The chapter also uncovers the roots of this political consciousness in his thoughts when an African chief heard and settled a dispute between two Africans without any White intervention or assistance.

Chapter two highlights the financial problems Plaatje experienced as a result of which he had to leave school and his family to go look for employment in the city of Kimberley. Here he met new friends and he associated with people who had a

similar mission education background. There were members of an emerging African middle class who were concerned to extend the Cape franchise to Africans in other provinces. We see a progression in Plaatje's studies and his development as an artist and writer. As a social being, Plaatje fell in love and this is the subject of the next chapter.

Plaatje married a Xhosa teacher from a mission school. The chapter throws light on ethnic chauvinism, as their families disapproved of their marriage simply because they were from different ethnic groups. Plaatje had been exposed to people from various ethnic groups working together in the urban areas. His dream was to see unity amongst his people as Africans and to fight the injustices imposed by the colonial government. Plaatje became a father and a court interpreter in Mafikeng.

The fourth chapter provides Plaatje's account of what took place during the Siege of Mafeking and the Anglo Boer War. Plaatje retained his sense of humour even when African people were discriminated against, marginalised and betrayed by the Britons and Boers during this time. This is illustrated when he was asked to interpret in a meeting about the safety of the Barolong between Chief Montshiwa with his advisors and Charles Bell, the magistrate. The former crouched behind the latter's chair in a desperate attempt to make their point about their insecurity in the event of a Boer attack, if they were unarmed. Then Bell asked Plaatje to interpret what they were doing, Plaatje agreed only to interpret what the Chief and his advisors were saying as Bell could see what they were doing.

We see Plaatje as a full-time editor of *Koranta*, which was a rare position for Africans in media at the time. His newspaper carried news about the discrimination and harassment of Africans in the form of pass laws. Plaatje advocated non-racialism, equality for all and the extension of voting rights to Africans in other regions. The illiteracy of the Tswanas became a major problem that led to drop in sales of the *Koranta* and subsequently its closure. However, his newspaper had been widely read and Plaatje remained a respected journalist who wrote and published educational articles including news about African-Americans.

Chapter six highlights Plaatje's new job as a recruiting agent for the coal mine owners who subjected African miners to terrible working conditions. The exclusion of Black people from the compromise pushed leading Africans, including Plaatje, to form a delegation to Britain to protest this exclusion from government. However, their protest fell on deaf ears. The main substance of this chapter is the unification of Africans after the formation of the racist Union of South Africa in 1910. The Union meant more misery and ill treatment of Africans which necessitated a common and strong African voice to fight the ills of racism. The South African Native National Congress was thus born in 1912. Plaatje played a significant role negotiating for justice on behalf of Africans as well as through his newspaper, *Tsala ea Batho* which promoted unity among Africans. During this period Plaatje and his wife had two daughters and a son who died in his early childhood.

The act of cruelty depicted in the seventh chapter refers to the horrendous effects of the 1913 Land Act on African people. This led to the second delegation to England by the Congress, to protest this Act. Plaatje was among the delegation and on the ship he wrote a book about how Africans were suffering under this Land Act. Their mission in England was unfortunately unsuccessful as Britain was not keen to spoil her relationship with White South Africans. Plaatje and the other delegates refused to accept defeat and they then exposed the cruelty of the Land Act in London through meetings with the Brotherhood movement and the Press.

Plaatje stayed on after the other delegates returned in order to expose the sufferings of Africans in South Africa and to write about this. Here, we see the proliferation of his writing: *Native Life in South Africa*; the *Sechuana Proverbs with Literal Translations and their European Equivalents*, a Sechuana Reader and articles for books. Whilst in Britain, his newspaper at home closed down because of financial problems. On a positive note, his son won a scholarship to study at Lovedale college and Plaatje returned home.

Chapter ten highlights the warm welcome Plaatje received from his African people and how this served as a further inspiration to serve them. We see him joining others actively fighting the racist 1917 Native Administration Bill which served to perpetuate the undermining of Africans by the White government. Plaatje became the vice president of the Congress and he also introduced the Brotherhood movement in Kimberley, which he hoped would expand into a national movement.

Chapter eleven focuses on African urbanisation. There is reference to the formation of the Industrial Workers Union of Africa in 1917, which was the first trade union representing African workers' grievances against White mine and factory owners. We hear about the challenges the Congress faced from a militant African working class. We also witness another delegation to Britain by the Congress, to argue for the compensation of Africans who participated in World War One. Even more importantly, the delegation went to ask the British government to change the South African constitution so that everybody, Black and White, could have the right to vote.

Once more, we see Plaatje as a delegate in Britain. As was the case on previous occasions, their mission was unsuccessful. Plaatje had an opportunity to write his novel *Mhudi* and also published a pamphlet about the discrimination of Africans in South African law. Plaatje took the opportunity to travel to Canada and the United States where he met with renowned African-Americans such as Marcus Garvey and W E du Bois. He sold many of his books in order to pay for his living and travelling expenses there. Back in England, he wrote more articles for the journals *African World* and *South Africa*. Plaatje also recorded three songs in African languages, including Nkos Sikelele'Afrika. Thereafter he left England for South Africa.

In South Africa, we hear about the hardship Plaatje's wife endured while he was abroad. The Congress and the Brotherhood movement in Kimberley were

moribund. Plaatje continued to participate in the Native Conferences created by the 1920 Native Affairs Act which were used as a platform to criticise the White government's racist policies. He also joined a non-racial temperance organisation, which was opposed to people drinking liquor. This period revealed a decline in Plaatje's political interests and he concentrated more on his writing. He was a prolific writer but he struggled to get many of his works published. *Mhudi* was eventually published in 1930, but the rest of his writings were not. Plaatje fell sick and died in 1932.

The book concludes with educational exercises for learners. The first exercise on Learning words and phrases such as 'ethnic group' is very useful for learners to improve their vocabulary. Perhaps a concrete example of an ethnic group, e.g. Xhosa, Britons would have even been more helpful. Activity One about testing knowledge also helps the learners to know more about other countries. Activity Two about differentiating between objects used in the past and in the present help the learners to appreciate how life was for the people in the past and how it contrasts with modern life. Activity Three attempts to test their comprehension of the story of Plaatje and his fellow Africans during his time by choosing the correct answer to questions asked. Activities Four and Five appeal to the learner's creative skills through designing a poster for a political meeting and interpreting a story or message from a second language to a first language. Learners could easily have fun doing these exercises. Activity Six is an outline of some of the events in the life of Plaatje and requires that the learners fill in the missing information which included names, dates and places. Although it is important to be able to identify the latter, there is a potential danger of reinforcing the stereotypes that History is only about memorising the names of important people and the dates and places of important events. History is about reconstructing and interpreting the past and is concerned with establishing and explaining processes of change in the past.

In sum, the book gives a historical account of Sol Plaatje's political and social life. In doing so, it provides a socio-political commentary of what it was like for African people under colonial rule. It portrays the political challenges that the colonial system imposed on African society. However, Plaatje's story was not always a sad one; it was intermingled with humour as well as being touching and poignant. The evils of colonial rule are sometimes commented on with a wry and subtle humour. Even though the book lacks a distinct African flavour in the sense of depicting typical African symbols or pictures, it represents an indispensable addition of an African voice to modern literature, something that has been overlooked by many authors about the history of this country.

Oliver Tambo

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KERRY DEVINE

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Every society has its heroes in history: great men and women who have excelled in various endeavours and have earned their societies' praise. African-Americans extol the virtues of Martin Luther King, and, in some cases, Malcolm X. For many Chinese Mao Tse Tung is still a man to be emulated. Karl Marx also has a place in the hearts of some Russians.

While for some acclaimed historical figures are considered heroes, for others they are villains. So what does this tell us about societies' heroes? Simply that they should be viewed with a healthy dose of scepticism. Heroes can be carefully constructed perceptions of reality. Take for example the old South African heroes of school textbooks. To qualify as a hero one had to be (with a few exceptions) white, male, preferable Afrikaans and being anti-black and anti-British generally helped. Based on these criteria school history textbooks were and still are filled with the heroic deeds of men such as Jan van Riebeeck, Piet Retief, Paul Kruger and Hendrik Verwoerd.

Black heroes were non-existent and whenever people of different ethnic identities were included in school textbooks they were either causing all the trouble or, as in Shaka's case, conveniently emptying the interior for the arrival of the Voortrekkers. The *They Fought for Freedom* series aims to rectify this imbalance in South African History books. The series tells the life stories of South African leaders who have played important roles in the history of South Africa but which "have been largely ignored by history books".

The story of Oliver Tambo has been explored in one of the series books by Chris Wright and Luli Callinicos. The authors trace the life of Oliver Tambo from his humble beginnings in Bizana in the Cape Province up to and including his death in 1993. It looks at his early educational influences such as St Peter's Secondary School and Fort Hare University. They also concentrate on his participation in the formation of the ANC Youth League and his subsequent rise in the ranks of the ANC culminating in his becoming President of the ANC while in exile. The section dealing with the ANC in exile offers an interesting look at the way in which the ANC operated while outside of South Africa, highlighting a somewhat neglected

aspect of the ANC's history and bringing the leadership of Oliver Tambo to the forefront.

A few points need to be made about the content and the language of the book as well as the practicality of using it in the classroom. To the authors' credit, they have managed to condense an immense amount of information in a clear and succinct fashion. However, inevitably generalisations and sweeping statements creep into the book, one of which should not go unchallenged. Given that young and impressionable minds are presumably going to engage with this book, is it wise to create the impression that migrant labour was a result of young men having to pay lobola or bridewealth?¹ As the migrant labour system is so important in understanding so many facets of South African rural and urban history such a generalisation is inexcusable.

The language is largely accessible to a secondary school pupil. At the end of the book the authors have included a vocabulary section which is useful. A question which bears consideration, however, is why words such as galvanise, inspanning, discriminatory and embargo (among others) did not find their way into the vocabulary section. Many teenagers, including first language English speakers, will battle with this vocabulary.

How practical is this book? In order for it to work in the classroom it has to appeal to its audience – the pupils. Simply putting people back into history does not make them any more interesting to children. In our modern technological age visual images (heroes) are packaged in very appealing ways. Young girls (and women) go to watch a movie starring Brad Pitt not because he is the greatest actor or every film he makes is wonderful but he epitomises many young girls' perception of an idealised reality. Tall, dark and handsome Brad Pitt is a carefully constructed and nicely packaged perception of reality – a modern day hero. In a day and age where books are being sidelined by our youth in favour of TV, videos and films, in order to compete, books have to present heroes in such a way that they come alive on the pages. Books have to be performers.

This series has to become more interactive if it wishes to engage the hearts and minds of its target audience. The book could perhaps be made more visually appealing by putting in more pictures, diagrams and cartoons. Primary and secondary sources could also be used in the book. For example, the chapter on Oliver Tambo's early life could be a dustbin exercise where pupils have to learn about OR's early life using a whole range of sources. Instead of concentrating the activities at the end of the book, greater interest may be gained by dispersing them throughout. The multiple choice section could be more focused. A number of the other exercises showed promise. For example, "Which laws did the Defiance Campaign of 1952 want to break? Why would you have opposed these laws?" These exercises could even be used to develop empathy. Pupils could organise their own defiance campaigns against what they consider unjust laws in their school.

The activity on writing a praise poem could also be augmented by looking at praise poems written on other important South African leaders.

Teachers could use this book as a useful reference book to teach their pupils about Oliver Tambo but it would require a great deal of mediation on their part. Many teachers simply do not have the time to reconstruct heroes in ways in which they become more palatable to their young audiences.

This series is a step in the right direction for South African History. It is important that children learn about leaders such as Oliver Tambo. It is essential, however, to remember the target audience is not a captive one. Heroes are only heroes to children if the constructed perception of reality is one to which they can relate.

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Steve Biko

Linda Price, Maskew Millar Longman, Cape Town

JUNE BAM

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This series is a positive response to the mid-eighties call for People's Education and particularly, People's History. The most characteristic feature of the call for 'relevant' and 'popular' history has been the demand for 'stories of the doings and thoughts of ordinary men and women' and an identification of "the sources of dispossession and oppression and how these were resisted". In this sense, this book will be a welcome resource in most South African high schools. The relevance of this work, in terms of political populism, is succinctly summed up in the following:

... the name Bantu Stephen Biko has remained alive in South Africa over the years along with the other great leaders who have fought apartheid. His spirit is kept alive by the memory of his death in detention, but much more importantly, by the seeds of pride and justice which he sowed in South African soil.¹

This sixty page biography of a fallen South African resistance hero, makes easy and interesting history for both teacher and high school student. Written almost as novel, the text is sensitively written, providing a detailed account of Steve Biko (in

ten short chapters) as father, husband, friend and political activist. A vivid description of Biko's life from his youthful student days to his life as activist and Black consciousness leader is given. The writer provides both an empathetic analysis of and positive presentation of the Black Consciousness philosophy and its contribution to the anti-Apartheid struggle.

Presented also as a workbook, with about one fifth of its content allocated to classroom-based activities, in it the reader finds a list of words and phrases, multiple choice questions, comprehension-focused questions designed in table-type format, a role-play assignment and an exercise in essay writing. The book concludes with an interesting book list for further reading.

In the first chapter, the reader is introduced to Biko's committed Christian family and Biko himself as an intelligent young boy who then already questioned the assumed superiority of White people much younger than his elders in the Ginsberg township. Chapters two and three are devoted to discussion of his educational and political development. The reader is provided with a brief discussion of his involvement in NUSAS and how ideological differences to NUSAS (amongst Biko and friends) gave rise to the establishment of SASO in 1968, culminating in the founding of the Black Peoples Convention in 1972. Chapter three provides most interesting and thought-provoking reading with the discussion of the Black Consciousness philosophy and the important role it played in liberation. In chapter four the reader shares the experience of what it meant to have been a banned person in Apartheid South Africa. The close friendship Biko shared with persons such as Dr Ramphele and Peter Jones is also discussed. Chapters five and six deal with Biko's involvement in the Soweto uprising and his arrest in August 1977. Chapters eight and nine take the reader through the campaigns for an inquest by people such as prominent friend and liberal newspaper editor, Donald Woods, followed by the funeral and the main developments of the inquest proceedings in November 1977. The story ends in 1985 with doctors Lang and Tucker found guilty of unprofessional conduct.

The format in which the book is presented, makes it a user-friendly resource for classroom teaching. This is supported by simple language, short fluently written chapters, vivid descriptions of events with interesting detail. Copies of original extracts from court proceedings and mass meetings are included as well. A shortcoming, in this regard, is the lack of classroom activity around these extracts. Students find working with such sources great fun and they also provide a sound basis for the development of critical skills, such as the ability to extrapolate, judge, synthesise and evaluate.

In terms of vocabulary level, the text is appropriate as a teaching resource for the standard seven English first language student or standard eight English second language student. Besides the list of phrases and difficult words, the hands-on explanation of difficult concepts built into the text, serves as a definite bonus. Examples include: 'Apartheid', 'pass books' and 'postmortem'. The non-Xhosa

reader is also exposed to the acquisition of new words and their meaning, such as: 'amandla Ngawethu', 'Hamba Kakuhle' and 'amarhewu'. A very good explanation of the difference between an inquest, investigation and trial is included in the text. The list of words and phrases include a selection of the following: 'banned', 'discriminate', 'exploitation', 'oppressed' and 'solitary confinement'. Pages where such terms and phrases appear in context are indicated to the reader.

Because most teachers have lived through and experienced Apartheid South Africa, much is usually mistakenly taken for granted regarding the general political knowledge of the younger post-1990 high school generation. In my own teaching of Standard Sevens, I have realised the importance of not overestimating the political awareness of this generation. The author approaches this very simply which makes this publication a most useful history teaching resource.

However, much is going to depend on the resourcefulness of the teacher to maximise the potential of the text as teaching aid. For example, other difficult (or rather foreign) words and phrases remain undefined: 'Afrikaner Nationalist government', 'bantustan', 'independence from colonial rule', 'defiant expression', 'civil rights campaign', 'political vacuum', 'non-racial' as opposed to 'multi-racial', 'liberalism', 'philosophy', 'boycott', 'security police', 'detain' and 'interrogation'. The use of difficult vocabulary and phrases is also found in the extracts: 'institutionalised machinery', 'state of alienation' and 'roots of self-negation'. These would demand some extra work to be invested by the teacher. It is important that a teaching resource of this nature accommodates readers of diverse language, literacy, social and economic backgrounds found in South African classrooms. In spite of the above shortcomings, the writer has attempted to do this.

The oral history exercise on the experience of relatives and neighbours of the Apartheid laws is an excellent base for teachers from which they can design other exciting and creative assignments in oral history on the same topic. The following ideas come to mind:

- What do relatives or neighbours remember about Steve Biko of June 1976?
- What was schooling like at the time? Do they remember the school's first SRC?
- Find out more about events in Southern Africa and the world in the mid-seventies. Draw up a timeline which includes events in Steve Biko's life and what happened in South Africa or Southern Africa.
- The school's own history of that time could be recorded. Other teachers can be interviewed. Student life then can be compared with student life now.

Projects in oral history, with regard to experiences in Apartheid South Africa, prove to be not only a popular assignment with fifteen/sixteen year olds, but also one which is highly motivating and which (with the careful guidance of the teacher) can

provide the opportunity for the development of a multitude of historical skills in the writing and research of 'history on the ground'.

The understanding of history, as a continuous link between past and present is creatively facilitated in activity five where students are required to apply their reading about the Black Community projects to the present needs in their own communities. In this way, knowledge of the past can become an empowerment for the present. The same kind of activity, could for example, be extended to an assignment on SRCs. The dramatisation exercise of activity six can be extended to role play involving a broad spectrum of ideas, such as debate at a NUSAS meeting or classroom discussion during June 1976, for a more complete development of the empathetic and simulation skill. Other activities (to serve this end) could include a question such as: "If you had been a NUSAS student in 1968, how would you have viewed the ideas of SASO?"

It is important that students develop the perception that a variety of role players are involved in historical process. This needs to come out clearly especially in the skills development component of a classroom resource to prevent an unbalanced view of the past. More open-ended activities are needed as supplementary exercises to ensure that the positive aspects of this resource are not negated by narrowly structured teaching. No teaching resource can ever be accepted as 'complete'.

To therefore ensure the effective use of such useful (albeit limited) resources in the classroom, it is imperative that teachers familiarise themselves fully with current developments in history teaching methodology. Cognisance needs to be taken of the fact that, for example, no teaching resource can be used in isolation of others in the history classroom.

Nevertheless, this resource provides an excellent and indispensable base as teaching aid in the absence of a school textbook which deals comprehensively with such a topic in the most accessible and user-friendly format.

Chris Hani

Michele Berger, Maskew-Millar Longman, Cape Town

MAHLANE DAVID KGOPA

Sekhukhune Circuit Subject Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Sekhukhune Circuit Principals' Council, Northern Province.

In a time of political change, it is difficult to write an objective history of a contemporary person. The author should have given us those credentials which may serve as her basis for authority to write about Chris Hani or about the ANC.

According to EH Carr, we have to study the historian before we read his or her work. It is not enough for the author to tell us her name alone. This is important in dealing with recent history.

The book tends to be a success story, as it describes only the good things done by Chris Hani, by the ANC and by Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK). Berger seems to avoid discussing anything wrong done by the ANC or by Hani. She seems to have censored herself. A case in point is her treatment of ANC camps. Berger seems to present the task of dealing with the underground structures in South Africa as the single handed achievement of Hani. When Hani left exile for South Africa, problems arose in the camps and when he returned he found the morale in the training camps very low. The author accuses other ANC leaders of not having visited the camps regularly and of not keeping the soldiers informed of the situation in South Africa. Hani returns, he addresses soldiers and meets them as individuals, and the soldiers are happy once more.

I do not think that Chris Hani would have accepted this idea of hero-worshipping him as an individual. ANC leaders, Hani included, always saw themselves as part of a team. The author behaves like a lawyer defending the ANC in a trial. She seems to be responding to accusations of ANC atrocities in its camps, by the Returned Exiles committee, although this committee is not mentioned in her book. The author exonerates the ANC leadership from blame. She alleges that all experienced leaders of ANC were removed from the troubled camps before trouble started. They were either in other camps where they waited to be sent to South Africa, or they went to help fight UNITA in Angola. The author portrays the ANC as a responsible organisation, but how can such a responsible organisation leave inexperienced leaders in charge of its camps ? If the author is correct, it was negligence on the part of the Organisation (ANC) as a whole, not on individual leaders.

Berger's attempt to explain why ANC formed MK is insufficient. She merely states that ANC leaders formed MK because they realised they would not get anywhere with peaceful methods, but this does not go far enough to explain a violent campaign. The ANC gave explanations for the campaign. Nelson Mandela, commander-in-chief of MK said in an interview that many people felt it was useless and futile to continue talking peace and no -violence against a government whose reply was only savage attacks on unarmed and defenceless people. Chris Hani said in an interview just before his death, that the historical necessity for the formation of MK arose as a result of the violent oppression of black people in this country. Joe Slovo described the campaign as the mildest form of any violent campaign that anyone would imagine, as targets chosen were minor ones like pylons and pass offices at night. According to Slovo, the ANC told the government that it was not too late to prevent the campaign from reaching a point of no return, but the government did not respond. This puts the blame on the government for failing to grab the olive branch passed to it by the ANC.

The author's language would be accessible to most secondary school children, especially the senior ones. On another level, it is a pity she did not give her readers that language which was peculiar to MK cadres in camps or in battle. The youth enjoy this language and the author denied them chance to learn more of it. Without the language actually used by cadres, it might be thought that we read the only the revised edition rather than the original. Such revised editions do not retain all the flavours and tastes of the original.

The concept 'enmity' in the South African politics depends on who you are or on where you stand. Readers who belong to the left of the political spectrum may share the author's label of Rhodesian soldiers as the enemy, but those who belong to the right of the political spectrum, may see Hani and MK soldiers as the enemy. The author seems to take for granted that all her readers will automatically agree with her labelling but this may not always be the case.

Berger defines self-defence units positively as a means by which communities protected themselves and that they were structures which ensured that communities were protected by people they trusted. The author points out that Hani had fought hard for the right of communities to form self defence units and to ensure that SDUs were allowed by the national peace accord. This will reveal to most readers that by attacking SDUs the South African government was sometimes unfaithful to the agreements they have signed.

Berger brings to light the ability of the ANC leadership to control big crowds at the time of Hani's death. The programme of action for that week kept the crowds busy and many people will agree that it helped to channel the people's anger. The ANC warned people not to act violently, as that would be playing into the hands of the assassins, who actually wanted civil war. The ANC leadership was able to calm the people. There is nothing nearer to the truth than the author's statement on page 48, that as compared to the number of people who were mourning Hani's death in and around the stadium, and their anger at Hani's assassination, "the day passed relatively peacefully".

Pupils will enjoy the variety of exercises at the end of the book. In her first exercise the author asks readers to arrange incidents in Hani's life chronologically, which is good as it would help pupils make a summary. Another activity asks readers to imagine some of the demands of the mutineers. This is possible as the book contains an account of some of the problems which caused mutiny. But the author goes on to ask readers to suggest how Hani may have responded to the demands. I feel such imagined responses would be too speculative. The author should instead ask readers to formulate their own possible response to the demands.

Activity Four deals with people who died for human rights, but the author uses Martin Luther King of USA as example, as if we do not have such people in South Africa. There are many people who died in the struggle against apartheid, Solomon Mahlangu, Matthews Goniwe, Peter Nchabelang, Ruth First, Steve Biko, David

Webster and many others. Using an example from USA might make people think human rights in America are more important than those in South Africa.

The quality of a journal depends on the critical judgments and comments of the referees. *Perspectives in Education* thanks the following referees for their reports on manuscripts submitted for publication in Volume 16.

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The 1996 Matthew Goniwe Education Essay Competition

Perspectives in Education has great pleasure in inviting entries to the 1996. Matthew Goniwe Education Essay Competition. Inspired by Matthew Goniwe's name – which symbolises educational and political commitment, courage and enlightenment – the competition is intended to stimulate research and writing on education in Southern Africa from a democratic perspective.

This competition is designed to encourage the publication of research and scholarly writing by black students and is open to students registered at a South African University or College of Education.

Prizes will be awarded in two categories: (i) final year under-graduates and diplomates, (ii) post-graduates up to and including Masters level. Winning essays will be published in *Perspectives in Education*.

Prize details

First prize: R1 000-00

Second prize: R500-00

Third prize: R250-00

Due date for submissions

1 December 1996

Submissions to be sent to

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RULES

1. The Essay Competition will be judged in the two above-mentioned categories.
2. The standing editorial policies of *Perspectives in Education* apply.
3. The essay submitted must be an original piece of work by a single author. All entries must be accompanied by evidence of the entrant's registration for a degree or diploma and a signed declaration that the essay is the entrant's own work.
4. The essay may be conceptual, empirical or both.
5. The length of the essay should not exceed 5 000 (five thousand) words.
6. The referencing format of *Perspectives in Education* must be used (see inside back cover for referencing details).
7. The essay must be related to issues in South African education.
8. An independent panel of judges will adjudicate the essays. The judges decisions are final. The judges reserve the right not to award a prize in cases where no suitable entries are received.
9. Members of the editorial board, regional and associate editors of *Perspectives in Education* are not eligible.

Notes for Contributors

1. Contributions should be typed, doubled-spaced, on one side of an A4 sheet only. Three copies should be submitted and one retained.
2. Title, author's name, full postal address and a biographical note should be typed on a separate sheet.
3. An abstract of 100-200 words should also be typed on a separate sheet.
4. **Discs:** Where copy is submitted on disc, for computer based editing, text should be submitted with no formatting. *i.e. All text to begin flush with left hand margin. No indenting of text. One space (not two) after full stops, between sentences. No line spacing between paragraphs. No line spacing between headings and text. All headings in lower case. Tables without tabs or spacing.* Discs must be accompanied by a typed copy which indicates paragraphing, table formatting and relative importance of headings (A,B), in pencil in the margin. The following word processing programmes are acceptable: ASCII, DOA, MSWord, Multimate, Wordperfect, Wordstar, Xerox Writer, Xywrite.
5. **Typed copy:** Submit typed copy in the style of *Perspectives in Education*.
6. **Text:** Dates thus: 1 January 1989. Double quotation marks only (except for "quotes 'within' quotes") to be used; all quotations of more than 40 words to be on new line without quotation marks (but indicated in pencil in the margin). Abbreviations to be given in full at first, then written without points, for example, United States (US).
7. **Notes and References:** These are always at end of text, in order of appearance and numbered ("...at schools".⁷) No separate bibliography to be given. Please do not use computer generated endnotes.

For reference to a book:

P. Kallaway (ed.), *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans* (Johannesburg Ravan Press, 1984), 2-5.

For a journal reference:

A. Simon and P. Beard, "Discriminatory Factors Affecting Women Teachers in Natal", *Perspectives in Education*, 9, 1 (July 1986): 59.

For a reference to a chapter in a collection:

F. Chikane, "Children in Turmoil: The Effects of the Unrest of Township Children", in S. Berman and P. Reynolds (eds.), *Growing Up in a Divided Society: The Contexts of Childhood in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), 20.

For reference to work listed directly preceding:

Ibid., 20.

For reference to a work listed above, but not directly preceding:

Simon and Beard, 61.

Unpublished sources:

Phillips to J.D. Rheinalt Jones, 10 September 1934, Ray Phillips Papers, A1444-1446, Church of the Province of South Africa, University of the Witwatersrand.

Published government reports:

South African Native Affairs Commission Report, 1903-1905 (Cape Town, 1905), 71.

Newspapers:

The Star, 3 September 1986.

Unpublished theses and papers:

M. Cross, "Capital, State, Missionaries, and the Foundations of a Segregated Schooling System on the Witwatersrand, 1900-1924" (M.Ed. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1985), 1.

Oral interviews:

N. Ncube, teacher at Citrusdal Primary, interview with author, Citrusdal, July 1988.

Proofs: Proofs will be sent to authors if there is sufficient time to do so. They should be corrected and returned to the Production Manager within a week, unless otherwise stated. If authors miss the deadline, publications will go ahead without their corrections. Major alterations to the text cannot be accepted.

Contributions should be sent to The Editors, *Perspectives in Education*, University of the Witwatersrand, Private Bag 3, Wits, 2050, South Africa, or through Regional Associate Editors.

Please note: The editors regret that they will not be able to accept for publication final versions of articles which do not comply with the above conditions.

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