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Democracy : a reality check for early childhood development practitioners.

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2009-01-07T07:48:05Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/5922

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> The very eyes with which we see the problem are conditioned by the long traditional habits of our own society. … We do not any longer make the mistake of deriving the morality of our locality and decade directly from the inevitable constitution of human nature. We do not elevate it to the dignity of a first principle. We recognise that morality differs in every society and is a convenient term for socially approved habits. Mankind has always preferred to say, "It is a moral good", rather than, "It is habitual". … But historically, the two phrases are synonymous. The concept of the normal is properly a variant of the concept of the good. It is that which society has approved.
>
> (Benedict, 2000, p.631)

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Generations of South African children were educated and socialised under the apartheid regime and since racial, cultural and language groups were kept apart as much as possible by law, little legitimate interaction was possible. Steve Biko wrote in his book, *I Write what I like* (Printed in 1996, p.27) that he had lived all his conscious life in the framework of institutionalised separate development; that his friendships, love, education, thinking and every other facet of his life had been carved and shaped within the context of separate development. This is true for almost every South African born in these times.

The thirty plus years of discriminatory practices under apartheid rule, therefore had profound effects on the socialisation of most South Africans, some effects more far-reaching than others. Socialisation is the process whereby an individuals' behaviour is modified to conform to that of the society in which he or she lives (Eagle, 1988). This is supported by Hammond (1989, p.110) who proposes that "Truth can never be value–free. It will always be someone's truth and someone else's lies, depending on personal and political values". It could therefore be argued that the development of democratic character and *agency was undermined by the influences of the apartheid era.

Agency - the ability to make independent and unbiased decisions and judgments.

Eagle (1988, p.1) defines socialisation as the process:

> Whereby an individual acquires the knowledge, values, facility with language, social skills and social sensitivity that enables him or her to become integrated into and to behave adaptively within a society …the dominant usage of the term is with respect to the processes through which the child becomes inculcated with society's values and his or her own social roles.

One of the most devastating impacts of the apartheid era was that affecting education and educational practices. "Today new school books show the future of SA history with a detailed apartheid history. Historians said that the most startling thing about the new syllabus was that it did not prescribe 'one truth' but rather encouraged pupils to make up their own minds about the past" (Jordan, 2007, p.6). But this approach was not predominant under apartheid rule and the majority of educational practitioners practicing today were either educated under the apartheid regime - or experienced a post apartheid education that was given by people socialised under the apartheid regime. Therefore, despite the fact that post apartheid South Africa is constitutionally a Liberal Democracy, there is a strong possibility that democratic practice in schools is compromised due to the socialisation of the practitioners.

According to Hall (1987, pp.184-185) there are three components to developing a liberal democracy. The first is the secure provision of the basic necessities of food and health, the second is the provision of a society in which every person has a space in which to develop and the third is that of the right of the people to control political power by democratic means. Gould (1988, p.283) expands on this by holding that "democracy is essentially a government of laws, not of men." Young (2000, p.28) provides a useful way to "conceive of a democracy, and that is as a process in which a large collective discusses problems that they face together, and try to arrive peaceably at solutions in whose implementation everyone will co-operate". Liberalism therefore respects the individual but accommodates diversity.

Hammond (1989, p.110) attests that a history of racial discrimination often results in an attitude of bias since our "history, ethics, interests, ideologies, values, and flaws" have been moulded by our socialisation. This is supported by Pajares & Kagan (in Colgan, Linington & Excell (2005, p.2) who state that "teachers' belief systems are influenced by affective social and cultural factors which arise directly and indirectly from the contexts in which teachers themselves grew up and trained". Adams (2008, p.27) reports that still in America today "teachers (93% of whom are not African American) have lower expectations when it comes to African American and other children of color". Many Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners in South Africa 'grew up and trained' during the apartheid era. In the light of this my study aims to explore the implications of these socialising influences. Furthermore, exploring early childhood development (ECD) practitioners' perceptions and attitudes towards democracy may provide insight into how democratic practices could be best implemented in an educational environment.

1.2 Rationale

Although I am an ECD educator, I am also a principal of a multicultural pre-school and a committee member of the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA). I had personal motivation for choosing this topic, since in my line of work I have interaction with hundreds of people every week, more and more of whom come from diverse backgrounds. I am exposed to a variety of attitudes. Attitudes that range from outright racism to boundless '*ubuntu'* – "a person is only a person because of other people" (Boon, 1996, p.32), and my experience supports the notion that "teaching can never be innocent" (Brookfield, 1995, p.1). ECD educators with well-established attitudes, beliefs and patterns of thinking need to become more aware of the potential they have in shaping the lives of young learners and in influencing the adults, both colleagues and parents, for better or for worse. The field of ECD is relevant in this study as it is during this period that children develop their critical thinking skills, where they "question, think about and explore how things happen and why, contemplate and talk about what's fair and unfair, true and untrue, as they learn to identify stereotypes and question their meaning" (Jones & Mules, 2001, p.192). Therefore the socialising influences of the ECD educator can influence the perspective, and have a profound influence on, the learner's socialisation processes.

1.3 Purpose Statement

This study explores ECD practitioners' perceptions on democracy and examines how ECD practitioners can implement democratic practices in their workplace in order to create a working environment for themselves and, through their actions, develop a teaching and learning environment for themselves, their colleagues and the children that will promote the values of a liberal democracy.

1.4 Research Questions

The main research question:

Has the advent of democracy had any meaningful impact on ECD educators, and if so, in what ways?

To answer the main question, several sub-questions were addressed:

1 What are ECD practitioners' understanding and perceptions of the concept of democracy?

2 What are ECD practitioners' understanding and perceptions of democratic issues such as diversity and transformation?

3 Have ECD practitioners' perceptions of their practices changed since the advent of democracy?
If so, in what ways?

4 What do ECD practitioners perceive to be the factors that influence the implementation of change?

1.5 Research Aims

The aim of this research study is to:

- explore the ECD practitioners' understanding of 'democracy'.
- determine the ECD practitioners' perceptions regarding transformation.
- establish the socialising factors that influence ECD practitioners both personally and in the workplace.
- investigate what factors hinder or assist implementing change in the workplace.
- determine if the advent of democracy has led to any personal or professional changes in the ECD practitioners.

1.6 Significance

In line with the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Department of Education [DoE], 2001a)**,** all practitioners are now tasked with promoting the values of a liberal democracy. Since many were educated and socialised under the apartheid regime, the study will focus on the ECD practitioners' perceptions and attitudes towards change regarding democracy and diversity issues in their working environment. Understanding the factors that promote democratic principles, such as cultural interaction, diversity, etc. will, in turn, help both the participants of this study and other ECD practitioners in creating and promoting legitimate democratic practice in the workplace.

1.7 Outline of the Research Report.

Chapter One provides the rationale for the research, poses the research questions and provides an overview and background of the issues regarding democratic practice and ECD practitioners. *Chapter Two* contains the Literature Review while *Chapter Three* introduces the Research Design of this study. *Chapter Four* comprises the findings of the study pertaining to the research questions and discusses the findings in relation to the literature review and research questions. *Chapter Five* contains discussions, recommendations and conclusions of the study including my insights and possible avenues for further study in this field.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review explores topics such as the influences of socialisation, the development of democratic principles, adult learning and leadership. These topics aim to illuminate issues concerning educational practitioners when attempting to understand the dynamics of democracy, initiate change and improve practice, with particular emphasis on developing liberal democratic principles.

2.2 Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy

In its attempt to implement democratic practices, negate the compromised influences of the past and uphold the Constitution in South Africa's learners, the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy lists ten fundamental values (DoE, 2001a, pp.12-15). All these values are, to a greater or lesser degree, pertinent to this study and are therefore being used to guide the literature review. The values are:

- Democracy
- Social Justice and Equity
- Equality
- Non-Racism and Non-Sexism
- Ubuntu *Ubuntu:- Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (Zulu) A person is only another person because of other people.
- An Open Society
- Accountability
- Respect
- The Rule of Law
- Reconciliation

Upholding these values is directly linked to education, since education develops the functions to maximize the utilization of the individual's capabilities. Within every value is the inherent aspect of equality with a vision that aims to make South Africa a liberal democracy.

One of prime directives within the manifesto is that of celebrating diversity. This concept is further explained in the following statement:

> Valuing diversity simply means that we are comfortable with who we are as individuals and are able to accept and appreciate the differences of ourselves and of others. Through valuing diversity, we learn to expect, respect and accept differences from others.
> (The Southern Early Childhood Association, 2007, p.1)

However, due to several reasons, many citizens in South Africa's new democracy have not been able to benefit from equal status or to exercise their freedom. Poverty, health issues, corruption, crime, cultural diversity and socialising influences are all contributors to the problem and the present regime is still grappling with the legacy of the past.

2.3 Sociological Historical Perspective of South Africa

Throughout the seventeenth century a diverse mix of people assembled in South Africa. This mix, driven by the forces of socialisation, had varying agendas and aspirations. The historical perspective shows that the issues between black and white people were not the issue. The issue was between Briton and Dutchman, and the rights of the native population were not merely sidelined, they were unconsidered. Marquard (1969, p.12) when discussing policies developed by whites of Dutch descent, demonstrates in the following passage, how social and cultural norms can influence personal perspective, and particularly in this case, perspectives regarding 'democracy'.

> The constitution of the Orange Free State is a good example of what one might call natural democracy. A group of people with practically no book learning, many of them semiliterate, with few examples in the 1850's of democratic constitutions to guide them, with a strong sense of individual liberty, and a rough economic and social equality, set up an efficient democratic constitution that contained many of the principles of sound constitutional government. By 1968 there were signs that English and Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans were beginning to shed some of their exclusiveness towards each other; but the more they did so the more exclusive did each become towards the non-whites.
> (Marquard, 1969, p.12)

Forty years later the situation had not improved and, as Marquard (1969, p.28) observes, "The expression 'a house divided against itself' is more applicable to South

Africa than it is to any other country. There is no single instance where the population of South Africa was united during a great crisis". Marquard discusses the policies of the time in a factual and dispassionate manner, at no time giving any inkling that any of these policies were contravening the basic human rights of the "native" and "coloured" population. Wright (1929, p. 233) observes that "Many South Africans persist stating that South Africa is a white man's country" and that this "slogan is as incorrect as it is stupid". However in spite of this refers to the presence of the black and coloured population as a "situation" and a "problem" and discusses it with issues such as the shortage of water in the country.

Furthermore, his passionate, and for his time, far sighted view, also excludes other racial groups:

> The principal impression that remains is that South Africa's greatest and most urgent need is a teacher who can not only preach, but knows how to inculcate, the spirit of goodwill among mankind. This spirit of goodwill is sadly lacking in the Union of South Africa. If there were a real University of South Africa where the youth of the country could go….it is safe to prophesy that many of the points of difference between Briton and Dutchman would undergo a radical change and friendly toleration would be established.
>
> (Wright, 1929, p.231)

This is in sharp contrast to Thompson's (2006, p.31) view, written nearly forty years later, where he refers to the whites as "Invaders".

2.4 Educational Perspective.

That educators understand that education can seldom be separated from political agendas is particularly relevant in the South African context. According to Farquhar & Fitsimons (2007, p. 225) "intensified government involvement in educational institutions and increasing standardization of curricula suggest that education during early childhood has taken on a new social and political significance". Gaining insight into the trends that moulded educational policies in the past should assist in illuminating the current perspective of many South Africans at present.

The following highlights some of the aims and positions of the 'main educational players' pre-1994.

Pre-1948 - Mission Schools: The Mission schools primary function was to educate and "convert the heathen". There academic curriculum was seen as a threat to white supremacy by the authorities and the emphasis on Christianity was opposed, as the white government officials at the time said it was "contradictory to tribal culture and traditions" (Rose & Tunmer, 1975, p. 252).

1948 – The Eiselen Commision Implementations: The emphasis was on:- education for all children, cultural traditions, Christianity and Vocational Education and Training (VET) and economic purpose of education. There was some indication that children should become "entrepreneurs and critical thinkers" (Kraak, 2002, p.79).

1953 - Bantu Education and Christian National Education (CNE): Hartshorne (1999, p.74) reports that the curriculum guiding Bantu Education was primarily concerned with ensuring a widespread education for a few years to ensure basic literacy and a population that would have enough skills to be useful to industry. Christianity was now deemed an essential component and the issue of tribal culture and traditions sidelined. Christian National Education was aimed at the white population and also controlled with an iron fist to provide educational advantages for the whites, rich and poor and, at the same time, promote an ideology of white, and particularly white Afrikaner, supremacy. Educational content was strictly controlled to circumvent 'critical thinking' and Christianity was deemed an essential component.

After the elections in 1994, with the African National Congress achieving a resounding victory and South Africa being declared a Liberal Democracy, Sibusisu Bengu, the new Minister of Education was tasked with spearheading the initiative to introduce a new curriculum based on a constitution that embodies equal rights for every person. Norris (2000, p.1) maintains that "this requires a transformation process that will necessitate the management of cultural diversity, and organisational changes within our institution". However, as Thompson (2006, p.277) reports, although the previous "system was formally desegregated … little meaningful change occurred during this period":

> The Mandela government inherited a particularly intractable education situation: 19 separate education departments – one for each race and one for each Homeland, and so on; immense disparities between the buildings and the equipment in schools created for whites and those created for blacks; a dearth of qualified teachers; and the inordinate cost of raising the 'black' schools to anything like the level of the 'white' schools. Moreover, the established syllabi and textbooks were devised under the apartheid regime, and there was an imbalance between the focus on the humanities and the national need for industrial skills. The higher education system had similar disparities and imbalances. The universities that the apartheid government created for African students were grossly inadequate. In 1994, 24 percent of the adult African population had no schooling at all, 37 percent had attended only primary school, 22 percent had some secondary education, and only 6 percent had some higher education. Africans had gained the dignity of full citizenship, but most of them were not equipped to prosper in the country where they now formed the political majority.
>
> (Thompson, 2006, p.258)

In an attempt to redress these imbalances various strategies were implemented. For example, the DoE commissioned the White Paper on Education and Training (DoE,1995a). The National Education Policy Act (DoE, 1996a), and South African Schools Act (DoE, 1996b), were introduced shortly thereafter. The concept of Outcomes Based Education was introduced in late 1996 - and with it - Curriculum 2005/21 (DoE, 1996c). Schooling in South Africa is based on the 1996 Constitutional principles of equity, human rights and democracy, and explicitly focuses on remedial measures intended to address the impact on students and youth of years of violence associated with the anti-apartheid struggle. Curriculum 2005/21 (DoE, 1996c), followed by the National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 1996d), reflects the principles in the Constitution and is loaded with value statements and therefore has a strong emphasis on promoting democratic issues such as diversity and equality.

The new educational system was implemented with varying degrees of success by educational practitioners. The majority of whom, as previously stated, were either educated and socialised under the apartheid regime or experienced a post apartheid education that was given by people educated, trained and socialised under the apartheid regime. In a recent article on democratic practices, Colgan, Linington &

Excell (2007, p.2) state that "teachers' belief systems are influenced by affective, social and cultural factors which arise directly and indirectly from the contexts in which teachers themselves grew up and trained". It is therefore highly probable due to socialising influences that there is a discrepancy between what Argyris & Schoen (1974, p.82) term *"espoused theories*" which is what practitioners claim to do or want to do and "*theories-in-use"* which is what practitioners actually do – in this case with relation to democracy, democratic practices and developing liberal democratic characters. However, Goldman (1998, p.441) proposes that it is important to ask – "when does a teacher have an epistemic right to regard herself as sufficiently expert to present her opinions as truths?" And when people "claim to be experts, how should a community decide whether they are?" Educators have to be aware that "attitudes and beliefs about what is best for children and specific child-rearing practices vary in many ways according to complex influences" (Klein & Chen 2001, p.58).
Covey (1992, p.29) advises that:

> The more aware we are of our basic paradigms, maps, or assumption, and the extent to which we have been influenced by our experience, the more we can take responsibility for those paradigms, examine them, test them against reality, listen to others and be open to their perceptions, thereby getting a large picture and a far more objective view.

2.5 Socialisation and Culture

One of the challenges in this study is to recognise that the social, political and economic factors that influenced our practitioners in the past are very likely to still be factoring in their present. That is, practitioners who may well be still cementing their understanding of democracy under new socialising influence, have to adopt varying perspectives in order to develop, as Robertson (1978, p.66) states, the "ability to achieve a full understanding of another culture".

As previously discussed, through a process of socialisation we 'learn' what the other members of our society accept as 'normal' and adopt those norms.

Eagle (1988, p.1) explains:

> Socialisation is a kind of training to fit into society. This training is not structured in the same way as formal education or schooling. It stems from many influences that we are not aware of, e.g. the media, the family, etc. Socialisation is common to all societies and has existed for as long as the human race. But the way socialisation occurs and what it means differs over time and from one society to another. The point of socialisation is to perpetuate the existing structures.

The way communities perpetuate the existing structures is by moulding and influencing members basic personalities with the values, attitudes and opinions of the society and its cultural norms – as illustrated in the following figure:

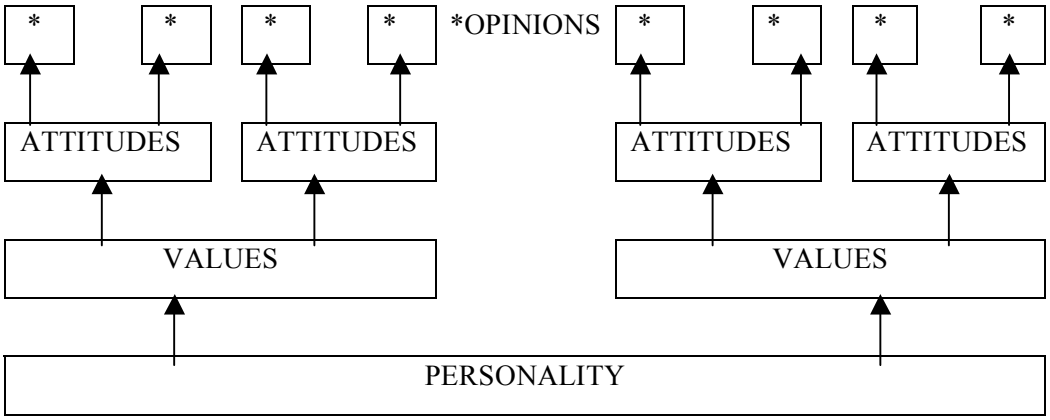


Figure 2.1 Socialisation Tree (Adapted from Oppenheim, 1992, p.177)

Culture and society closely interrelate. As Robertson, (1978, pp.51-55) posits, "A society could not exist without culture, for it would simply disintegrate. A culture cannot exist without a society to maintain it". Human beings have survived against all odds by being flexible, but contrarily our minds are bound by what we call norms. Furthermore, Robertson (1978, p.65) maintains that "Ethnocentrism provides faith and confidence in one's own cultural tradition, discourages penetration by outsiders, and this ensures the solidarity and unity of the group". But the negative side of this is that it can lead to undesirable effects such as racism.

For instance, Groenewald (1996, p.19) explains that:

> In South Africa exaggerated ethnocentrism of whites towards blacks and other people of colour is a product of centuries of stereotypes and prejudices. This sharp edge to ethnocentrism makes the complicated blend of beliefs and attitudes a very difficult problem to handle in intercultural relations.

This is especially relevant in South Africa with its' diverse population. Bilton (1987, p.132) confirms this view by stating that "Many people see racial discrimination and racist ideologies as the result of blind and irrational prejudice against 'outsider' groups by individuals of intolerant or bigoted disposition, ... who cannot cope with the 'strange' cultural characteristics of different racial groups".

A further challenge to educators is that massive global social transformation has taken place in the last two centuries. According to Giddens (1982, p.4) globalisation has "all but dissolved the forms of social organisation in which humankind had lived for thousands of years in its previous history," therefore, managing diversity will be one of the biggest challenges faced by education institutions in the future.

2.6 Diversity in the ECD Context

> If we aim to transcend ethnic strife, we would be wise to understand the role that perfectly normal human psychology plays in producing it. If the seeds of racism are in our nature, so too are the seeds of tolerance and empathy. By better understanding what sorts of situations and environments are conducive to both, we may be able to promote our better nature.
>
> (Buchanan, 2007, p.41).

Diversity has many dimensions as the following figure illustrates:

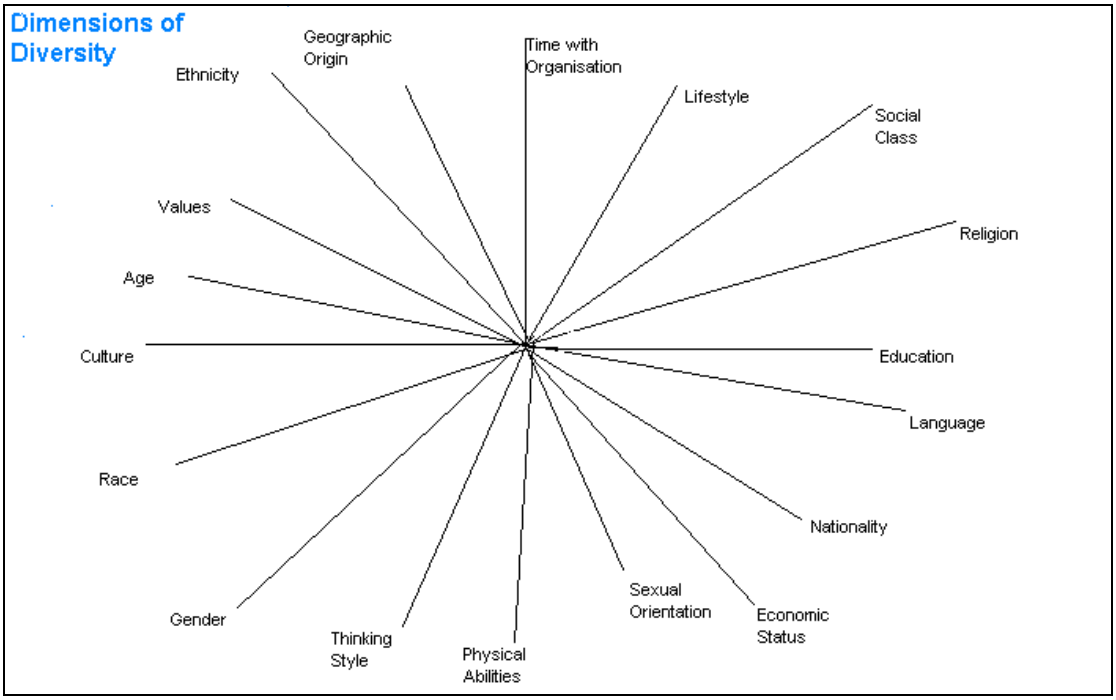


Figure 2.2 Diversity (Rijamampianina & Carmichael, 2003, p.17)

The authors explain that:

> These may intertwine to produce unique syntheses of human profiles, made up of both differences and similarities. The dimensions interact with and influence one another, and are displayed differently in different contexts, environments and circumstances, making analysis and management complex.

Furthermore, Rijamampianina & Carmichael (2003, p.19) argue that "diversity does not directly influence the group and/or organisational performance, but rather impacts the management system at the level of the four main organisational processes – namely, motivational, interaction, visioning and learning processes". When the workplace is diverse, the different talents and skills, interest, needs and backgrounds, as well as power and opportunity differences can be harnessed to benefit all.

According to Glover (in Dau, 2001, p.2) many adults believe that young children are innocent and free from bias and prejudice and don't make evaluative judgments about people different from themselves. However, Glover (in Dau, 2001, p.2) continues,

growing research evidence contradicts these beliefs by showing that young children "*do notice* and *do care about the difference"*.

This Australian study observed that children as young as two and three years old:-

- Noticed skin and eye colour and colour and texture of hair
- Used racial cues to identify and classify themselves and others
- Often overgeneralised when practicing their categorisation and classification skills using race as a basis
- Explored various aspects of race, particularly skin colour, and the relationship between race and gender
- Showed same-race preference when selecting toys such as dolls

Furthermore, some young children were observed "exhibiting behaviours which clearly indicated the beginnings of negative racial attitudes, such as refusing to hold different-race children's hands" (Glover in Dau, 2001, pp.2-3). However, Glover (in Dau, 2001, p.5) reassures, that "children are not born with biases" and "do not come into the world already discriminating against certain individuals and groups". Children learn to be biased, and much of this learning occurs during their early "socialisation and enculturation" (Glover in Dau, 2001, p.5). Klein & Chen (2001, p.5) support this in their statement that "young children learn how to behave, what to value and believe, and about roles and relationships through observation, participation, and interaction with their families and communities". Glover continues by confirming that centers that care for young children "contribute significantly to the development of attitudes and bias" (in Dau, 2001, p.6). Thomson (1993, p.133) emphasises that "it is important that teachers of young children use activities that address issues of prejudice and discrimination" because "children notice differences among people and they accept the social attitudes of adults in their lives so we must build beyond multicultural education in which children are taught respect for other peoples and cultures". This is further supported by Robinson & Jones Diaz (2007, p.169) who propose that in many ways "early childhood education, as a microcosm of the broader society, operates to perpetuate the status quo in society; that is, through everyday practices it maintains the social order or power relations that currently exist in the world".

Thus the role of ECD institutions and educators is vital in developing unbiased, liberal democratic citizens is clear. However, due to the diversity of our society, many challenges are present. Klein & Chen (2001, pp.188-189) suggest that "early childhood professionals should be aware of the difficulties young children from diverse cultural backgrounds face as they begin schooling" and that "they can do much to make the children's first experiences with the classroom positive ones".

However, as (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2007, p.63) warn "It's more than black dolls and brown paint". This has been recognised internationally, "since the late 1980's, and accordingly there has been a significant increase in awareness of the importance of early childhood education policies, practices and curriculum that positively reflect the diverse cultural identities of children and their families" (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2006, pp.1-2). This is primarily due to the multicultural societies that have developed in their communities.

To name a few:

- Australia's social legislation, since the 1970's, has caused a shift in thinking "that expected all cultural and racial minority groups to take up dominant Anglo-Saxon mainstream social practices and identities; to more liberal discourses of pluralism where cultural, social, language and religious differences coexist" (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2007, p.63).

- The San Francisco Foundation in 1994 convened a meeting with a broad spectrum of ECD leaders "that would begin to address some of the key issues in diversity training" (2006. p.1. www.bandtec.org/index.html).

- The University of North Carolina, according to FPG Snapshot (2007. p.1. FPGpublication@unc.edu) developed various strategies to counter the problems occurring due to "43% of children in the United States under the age five of being of a race or ethnicity other than white" while their educators remain predominantly white.

Strategies such as:

1. Infusion of cultural diversity into the curriculum
2. Field experiences providing opportunities to work with diverse children and families
3. Learning experiences designed for students to confront their biases, values and culture

In South Africa much has been written and researched about the topic of democracy and diversity, however, there is a gap in the area of ECD. The Education White Paper 5 (DoE, 2001b, p.9) in response to the need for education for children under four years states that it will "prioritise the development of a strategic plan for inter-sectoral collaboration" which will "focus on the delivery of appropriate, inclusive and integrated programmes ….. with a special programme targeting four year old children from poor families with special needs and those infected with HIV/AIDS". This plan has yet to be fully developed or implemented and vast numbers of children under the age of five are still in the same position they were prior to the publication of the White Paper 5.

This is in spite of the fact that:

> It is now widely acknowledged that the effects of what happen during the earliest months and years of a child's life can last a lifetime. This is because the kind of early care a child receives from parents, pre-school teachers and caregivers determines how a child learns and relates in school and life in general. It is during early care that a child develops all the key elements of emotional intelligence, namely: confidence, curiosity, purposefulness, self-control, connectedness, capacity to communicate and co-operativeness. The early years are also critical for the acquisition of the concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. Intervening in the earliest years helps to reduce the social and economic disparities and race and gender inequalities that divide our society.
>
> (DoE, 2001b)

Since 1994 "political, cultural and socio-economic changes increased the need for ECD provisioning for all racial groups (DoE, 2001c & Porteus, 2004). Although the fundamental values of The Constitution are part and parcel of this process, the emphasis was put on developing and providing basic training to practitioners. In spite

of this, ECD practitioners continue to be marginalized. According to Porteus (2004), 23% of ECD practitioners have no training and 88% have qualifications that are not recognised by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The result is often poor career opportunities, low pay and unmotivated practitioners. These factors could undermine the development of liberal democratic character and therefore the development of democratic characteristics in the learners. The development and nature of morally democratic characters is discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.7 Liberty, Human Rights and Democracy

With the advent of the elections in 1994 South Africa became a liberal democracy. For the first time in decades every citizen is considered equal and free. He is "free to the degree to which no human being interferes with his activity" (Berlin,1967, p. 141).

However, as Gutman (1987, p.3) observes

> When citizens rule in a democracy, they determine, among other things, how future citizens will be educated. Democratic education is therefore a political as well as an educational ideal. Education not only sets the stage for democratic politics, it plays a central role in it.

According to Hall (1987, p.184) in order to have legitimate liberty within a democracy, one needs three components. The first component is that of "*the secure provision of the basic necessities of food and health, the absence of which makes life miserable"*. The second is "*A desirable society is one in which every person has space in which to develop*" and the final component of liberty is that of "*The right of the people to control political power by democratic means*". Hall (1987, p.185) continues by stating that a "coherent liberal view of liberty demands that all three elements be present". This is supported by Abraham Maslow (1945) who studied "exemplary people" and developed the "Hierarchy of Needs" (see figure 2.3) wherein he proposes that people can only develop to their full potential if certain needs are met. These needs follow a specific order starting with basic life needs such as air, food, drink etc. These progress onto needs for safety, love, esteem and self-

actualisation and provide the necessary scaffolding for an individual to develop legitimate agency.



Figure 2.3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, Wikipaedia, 2001,p.1)

The challenge facing South African policy makers and educational practitioners is to counteract the socialising factors of the past which deprived the majority of South Africans of true liberty and of a democratic education. It is possible that all South Africans did not have their needs fulfilled and were therefore deprived of true liberty and are what John Stuart Mills (in Gould, 1988, p.290) terms "lamentably deficient in goodness and wisdom".

But Gutman (1987, p.49) argues that "even a lamentably deficient generation is perfectly well able to make the rising generation, as a whole as good as, and a little better than, itself". I would argue that many of the present generation of educators have enough "goodness" or *ubuntu,* but due to the highly censored and controlled education they received under the apartheid regime, may well be deficient when it comes to understanding the intricacies of liberty, human rights and democracy. Therefore education is vital as it provides the catalyst to think critically and make rational decisions.

It enhances the ability to achieve the "capabilities" which Nussbaum (2000, p.78) defines as:

- Life – being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.
- Bodily Health – including nourishment, reproductive health and shelter.
- Bodily Integrity – being able to move freely from place to place and having one's bodily boundaries treated as sovereign.
- Senses, Imagination, and Thought – being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason in an informed and unrestricted way.
- Emotions – being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves. Not having one's emotional development blighted by overwhelming fear and anxiety or by traumatic events of abuse or neglect.
- Practical Reason – being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life.
- Affiliation A – being able to live with and toward others, to recognise and show concern for others, have compassion, have the capability for both justice and friendship. Affiliation B – having the social bases of self-respect.
- Other Species – being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature.
- Play – being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.
- Control over One's Environment. A Political – have franchise with protection of free speech and association. B Material – be able to hold property and have the freedom of unwarranted search and seizure.

So although The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948, p.5) states that "education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms," the reality is that far too many South Africans still live in severely compromised circumstances. That is, the baseline or threshold of living conditions for every individual has not been achieved. This threshold needs to be achieved in order that every individual may be considered what Hall (1987, p.184) terms "*worthy",* i.e. gain the status of being truly human and be able to function in order to have the opportunity to benefit from living in a liberal democracy and exercise his constitutional rights. A situation difficult to

achieve when considering factors such as under the apartheid regime anyone not 'white', not only had a censored education but one that was deficient of basic teaching expertise and resources. To illustrate – in 1953 the newly elected National Party allocated only R13 million a year to 'Bantu Education'. This meant that for every R1 spent on a black child, between R4 to R8 was spent on white children over the same period of time.

Table 2.1: Per capita expenditure on education in South Africa in ratio form RESA SAIRR Surveys

Year	African	Coloured	Indian	White
1953-4	R1	R2.35	R2.35	R7.53
1969-70	1	4.29	4.76	16.59
1965-6	1	3.33	4.52	14.07
1977-8	1	3.43	5.11	12.17
1980-1	1	1.82	3.69	6.57
1982-3	1	3.4	4.86	8.27
1984-5	1	2.81	4.90	7.50
1986-7	1	2.4	4.64	6.23
1988-9	1	1.86	3.15	4.39

Referring to the per capita expenditure on education, in spite of inflation, this amount was not increased until the early 1970's. After this there were a series of increases but none were enough to redress the imbalances caused by the minimal spending in the past, cover expenses of the present or provide education of any quality for the future. The resultant disempowerment of the 'non white' people of South Africa resulted in a liturgy of problems, one of the greatest being that of poverty and its associated issues. "According to a United Nations Development Programme report released in May 2004, nearly 22 million South Africans (58.5% of the population) fell below the poverty line" (Spreen & Vally, 2006, p.354).

This is still an issue in South Africa, as can be seen by an article written by Govender,S. (2007, p.11) where he reports that

> Poverty pushes children to leave school and toil on farms. Poverty was the dominant cause of child labour in agriculture. Children working in agriculture were found to have fewer assets, more hunger, higher parental unemployment and lower educational status.

Poverty, with all its attending problems, is resulting in an administrative nightmare and is a root cause of the failure to implement effective educational changes across the board. Kader Asmal, the second Minister of Education under the Mbeki cabinet, told reporters - "the educational condition of the majority of people in this country amounts to a national emergency" (Thompson, 2006, p.278). At present, nearly 16 % of South African children don't go to school and this is in spite of the fact that the Constitution enshrines the right of children to be educated and educational policies state that education is compulsory for all children from the ages of six to fifteen. The reasons for this are numerous. Felice, (in Spreen & Vally, 2006, pp.352-3) describes the discrepancy between the existing normative framework of society and its reality. He points out that the "ruling ideology, often in the form of rights, disguises reality, blurs perceptions and creates illusions". This seems to be the case in South Africa where children often don't go to school or drop out of school because of poverty related issues.

Issues such as:

- prohibitive transport costs
- lack of funds for fees, uniforms, stationery, etc.
- illness
- hunger
- lack of, or poor facilities (buildings, running water, toilets, etc).
- absent caregivers
- having to work to help support family
- illiterate/uninformed caregivers
- shortage of educators and educational equipment
- under qualified educators
- HIV/Aids

Just over half of all children who start school at age six complete their schooling. Forty eight percent drop out at some stage. Within all the factors mentioned above are multiple circumstances, each causing complications and problems of their own which provide enormous challenges in multiple ways when considering the implementation of educational policies. One of the major problems is that concerning health. For administrators attempting to implement educational policies, the HIV/AIDS issue alone, is a multi-faceted nightmare and the impact on educators and learners is daunting.

Therefore, although the Constitution enshrines basic human rights, the reality is that issues such as a backlog of uneducated people due to apartheid policies, and the resultant poverty, make issues such as ensuring diversity, secondary to uplifting the basic living conditions of many of the people. That is, uplifting the basic living conditions in order that the "*capabilities*" may be attained and citizens are able to become "*worthy*" liberal democratic characters.

2.8 Morality, Ubuntu, Human Rights

Nussbaum (2000, p.40) proposes that morally well-educated people with liberal democratic personalities can accommodate cultural diversity as they are "sufficiently flexible to enable us to do justice to the human variety we find". Constant interaction between societies and individuals in societies and how they interpret and act out their practices, ensures a fluidity in cultures and between cultures where paradigms are constantly shifting and evolving. The morally well-educated person with a democratic personality would understand that the world is diverse and would genuinely respect and value this diversity. There would be a firm understanding of universal values and a developed capability to make rational decisions based on these values. Furthermore, according to Carr (2002, p.75) the morally well-educated person would have a true understanding of the value of reciprocity, particularly when it comes to justice and when dealing with others and would understand "the grounds of moral claims". The moral democratic character would appreciate that there are few easy answers when it comes to making moral decisions and would be able to act impartially. There would be a deep awareness of strengths and weaknesses. Socrates

(in Carr, 2002, p.75) claims that the moral democratic character would know how he ought to live - know "what constitutes a flourishing human life" and be "governed by a knowledge of what is right and true". This could present difficulties for many South Africans, who are unable to live their lives with dignity due to poverty, etc. and may be regularly reading headlines and articles about alleged corruption and greed by the leaders of the country, who themselves more than likely had compromised educations. Headlines such as "OVERPAID MPS BEG FOR MORE - MP's are earning average annual salaries of approximately R643 800" (Mafela & Mkhabela, 2007, p.1) and "Judge investigated for benefiting from bursary schemes meant to aid disadvantaged students – by his greed he has betrayed us" (Rademeyer, 2007, p.17).

This is supported by Seligman (2006, p.12) who writes that:

> Today's youth are ten times more likely than their grandparents to suffer depression. The one answer as to why is that U.S. culture has encouraged people to think about themselves more than they think about others which, although in one way empowers them to make internal changes, in another leads to a greater expectation and demand for personal control. Spurred by commercialism the individual's sense of internal wealth becomes linked to his or her degree of consumption. At the same time, the sense of community and commonality is shrinking. With no sense of commitment to larger issues, the lone self is easy prey to depression and blame. To reverse this trend individuals must decide to invest some attention and passion in rebuilding the common good. Parents can begin by imbuing their children with hope for a positive future.

Two of the critical outcomes in South Africa's educational policy which promote what is "right and true" and the spirit of "ubuntu" are: "*Participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities"* and *"being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts"* (Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, [DoE], 2002, p.8). The spirit of ubuntu is claimed by Boon (1996, p.31) to be an intrinsic part of African culture:

> The heritage of the philosophy that comes to us through our traditional African roots is *ubuntu:* morality, humaneness, compassion, care, understanding and empathy. It is one of sharing and hospitality, of honesty and humility. Simply put, it is the ethic and interaction that occurs in the extended family. In Africa, it draws in all of the people. In this 'family' there is a community of shared values and equality.

Problematically, ubuntu is proposed to be a uniquely African concept. Admittedly, the term *ubuntu* is uniquely African, but the basic humanitarian views it embodies are found in all worldviews. The boast that 'spirit of ubuntu' is predominantly present in every African and every African country, is debatable. As with many other parts of the world, there are reported regular incidents of genocide, raping of the natural resources and a neglect of basic human rights.

Few argue that the characteristics making up ubuntu are admirable and as with all humanitarian views, should be encompassed in educational programmes but only, as Horsthemke proposes, as "part of an ideal democratic model for South Africa" (2004, p.549).

> Apart from providing a basic framework for grounding the need for education and cognitive emancipation, as well as in terms of intellectual property rights, the language of rights is both rich and subtle enough to do justice to a multiplicity of (African) identities, to accommodate particular requirements, different intelligences and differential ways of learning, to ensure personal opportunities, availability of resources, and to safeguard the continuing survival of those features, customs, practices and norms of African cultures that deserve respect. Just as the notions of uniquely and distinctly African knowledge and African truth are problematic, there is no specifically African notion of 'human rights'.
>
> (Horsthemke, 2004, p.78).

However the prevailing view is that Africa has a special contribution to make to the world in the field of human relationships. Binedell agrees with this opinion: -

> South Africa is fuelled by its human interactions; the heart of our journey is a human journey. Schools are essential for this journey because they can empower individual children to take their place in this world and let them learn what it means to be South African. It is all about values – 'why' before 'how'.
>
> (Binedell, 2003, p.27).

The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (DoE, 2001a)**,** aims to negate the influences of the past and develop characteristics in learners that would develop liberal democratic characters who would become in the future, moral and ethical leaders. However Carr (2002, p.68) asks "to what extent should education and teaching be regarded as implicated in the wider moral development and formation of young people?" Gutman (1987, p.49) posits that "education, in a great measure, forms the moral character of citizens, and moral character along with laws and institutions

forms the basis of democratic government". Educators are therefore seen as a primary force in developing learners with a democratic character. According to Gould (1988, p.285), "one of the principal requirements for a fully developed form of democracy is that the participants must be active in the process of decision-making as well as in the execution of such decisions", that is the participants have "*agency"*. This is supported by Carr (2002, p.4) who posits that "education concerns the initiation of human agents into the rational capacities, values and virtues that warrant our ascription to them of the status of *persons*".

Gould (1988, p.290) continues by stating that a further "basic character trait of the democratic personality is what one may call a disposition to reciprocity……an ability to understand the perspective of the other as equivalent to one's own, and a readiness to act with respect to the other in ways that are equivalent to the others' actions with respect to oneself, as well as to have an expectation that the other will understand and act similarly". If this were done, education would be seen as a universal right and not as a privilege. A rights based approach recognises, and to use Horsthemke's word – *affirms* - the right every learner has to an education regardless of ethnic background, social status or economic conditions (2004, p.72). Spreen & Vally (2006, p.354) use the rights framework to recognise the link between education rights and other human rights. They state that they "believe that education operates as a multiplier, enhancing the enjoyment of all individual rights and freedoms where the right to education is effectively guaranteed". The task facing policy makers and educators is how to do this so that every learner is afforded his/her democratic rights. A curriculum based on universal values could accommodate cultural diversity and indigenous knowledge and would promote open societies. Open societies which as Arnold (2005, p.820) explains:

> are the vital ones and that human development may make people worse subjects, but wonderfully better citizens and that democracy has to be fought for every day.

Having an "open society" that will make "wonderfully better citizens" is the aim of a liberal democratic society and one which is promoted by the educational system. However the influence of crime and violence in South Africa are having a devastating effect on this process. Citizens are constantly bombarded with headlines such as:

"Criminals rule the roost, cops admit" (Govender,P. 2007, p.5) and "Thugs hit Aids orphans – Robbers target child-headed households" (Khupiso, 2007, p.1).

> For a democracy, South Africa's relationship to crime is an odd one. In most democratic countries, when the populace is convinced that it is living through a crime wave of heart-stopping proportions, its government not only acknowledges the crisis, but takes advantage of public panic to write new laws onto the books, in the process granting itself increasingly robust, sometimes sinister powers.
>
> (Altbeker, 2007, p.11)

Such measures have recently been taken in the past by democracies such as Great Britain and the United States of America, and South Africa is now doing the same but at the same time dismissing fears as irrational and even racist. However, "every piece of reliable data tells us that South Africa ranks at the very top of the world's league for violent crime – suggesting – that we are an exceptionally, possibly uniquely, violent society" (Altbeker, 2007, p.12).

Dealing with crime means changing the social climate and the key issue is one of values. "Government has long recognised that some of the values held by South Africans are among the many causes of crime. Thus, to the question "what makes people good" – we are offered a disarmingly simple answer: "people are to be made good through a better education" (Altbeker, 2007, p.157). Schools and teachers are often given the responsibility of developing moral and social responsibility in their learners and, as Carr (2002, p.69 p.70) relates, "frequently criticised by politicians and the general public whenever pupils apparently fail to acquire capacities for morally positive interpersonal association". The author continues by stating that for any school or human social institution, "effective teaching is itself difficult to pursue in the absence of any basic moral order". Basic moral order being that there is "basic recognition that it is wrong to lie, to steal, to bully, to discriminate against others on the grounds of gender, race or physical handicap, and so on".

The critical and developmental educational values derived from the Constitution contained in the South African Qualifications Act (DoE, 1995a, p.12) support this view. They describe the kind of citizen the education and training system should aim to create.

For example:

1. Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation, community.

2. Participating as a responsible citizen in the life of local, national and global communities.

3. Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts.

Furthermore the National Curriculum Statement seeks to promote human rights, and incorporates within this, social and environmental justice and is based on the 1996 Constitutional principles of equity, human rights and democracy. It explicitly focuses on remedial measures intended to address the impact of violence on students and youth caused by years of violence associated with the anti-apartheid struggle. It was reported on Classic F.M. 7 a.m. news Thursday 7th Feb 2008 that only 23% of school children feel safe at school and this is the lowest percentage recorded worldwide.

According to the White Paper on Education and Training (DoE, 1995b)

> The educational system must counter the legacy of violence by promoting the values underlying the democratic process and the charter of fundamental rights, the importance of due process of law and the exercise of civic responsibility, and by teaching values and skills for conflict management and conflict resolution, the importance of mediation, and the benefits of toleration and co-operation. Thus peace and stability will become the normal condition of our schools and colleges, and citizens will be empowered to participate confidently and constructively in social and civic life.
>
> (in Roper, Crime Prevention Partnerships, 2002, p.67)

However remediation is of little value if leaders have no training in implementing strategies and managing change.

2.9 Change

Under the apartheid regime critical reflection and decision-making was on the whole actively discouraged and the educational system entrenched several generations, of all races, in a culture of being seen but not heard, resulting in a generation of "citizens whose religious, political, and social commitments have already been shaped by their early education" (Gutman, 1987, p.49). The sense of security that this engendered is difficult to shift and many adult learners resist knowledge and learning that promotes change. Many South Africans may well find themselves in this position, which would undoubtedly affect their ability to make liberal democratic decisions and develop such liberal democratic characteristics in others.

However, education can be a powerful tool when attempting to implement new initiatives and promote change. Before this can be done effectively, the educators and practitioners themselves may well have to be re-educated in order to understand their strengths and limitations and where necessary, develop or change them. This is particularly relevant in the ECD phase as Colgan, Linington & Excell (2005, p.1) explain:

> South Africa's Constitution emphasises the role of human rights in the enhancement of democracy. If these rights are to be both understood and appropriated by citizens, it is essential that preschool educators become both targets and agents of change because it is in the preschool phase that attitudes and values that underpin holistic development are forged. It is the preschool child of today who will breathe life into our constitution tomorrow.

An essential component of educating adults is providing circumstances and an environment in which a process, that Mezirow (1990, p.103) terms "transformative learning", can take place and paradigm shifts can occur. A concept that is particularly relevant to South African educators where, under the previous regime, obedience and toeing the party line was enforced – particularly in so-called learning institutions whether they were a poor 'bantu' school or a wealthy 'white' school. However, to counteract the situation that "people do not resist change; people resist being changed", Beckhard (in Leatt, 2000, p.48) indicates that effective leaders with effective strategies need to be in place.

2.10 Leadership and Management

In a Nationwide survey about leadership characteristics Kouzes & Posner (in Leatt, 2003, p.67) emphasise several characteristics which employees found most admirable in leaders and these were *Honesty, Competence, Being forward-looking and Inspirational.* However, Kotter finds that "effective leadership is the scarcest resource of any organisation – in fact any sphere of human endeavour" (in Charlton, 2000, p.160). School leaders, i.e. principals, are in a particularly challenging position as they, like the practitioners in their schools, were socialised and educated under the apartheid regime yet they have to implement and manage effective change strategies. Principals of schools which are Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's) or Public Benefit Organisations (PBO's) such as the ones in this study, are in a unique position. They are appointed by a board of governors to lead the school and are answerable to the board of governors. However, the parent body and the learners often see the principal as the sole leader, answerable only to him or herself. Unpopular and/or poor decisions, made by the board of governors are often blamed on the principal. Good decisions often go unnoticed. Another aspect is that a percentage of the learner and parent body move out of the system every year, and are replaced by new people. New people with new ideas, expectations and demands.

Binedell (2003, p.27) proposes that "heads of schools have to be politically shrewd, because they are balancing out their stakeholders and the voices in their schools and the resources and the decision-making that has to go into managing a complex organisation". Therefore, the principal's position as leader becomes one of juggling the needs and wants of several groups of people and also implementing policies that he/she feels necessary. The principal has to develop a credible relationship with every group. Not doing so is detrimental to the school. He/she cannot assume that all involved in the "execution accept the rationality of the process and outcomes" West-Burnham in Leatt, 2000, p.211). It takes a special kind of person to enjoy and benefit from the challenges facing leaders today. Challenges such as becoming a liberal democratic character and, in turn, encouraging the development of liberal democratic characters in both the educational practitioners and in the school learners.

2.11 Adult Learning and Knowledge Acquisition

In order to effect change and develop effective leaders it is important to understand how adults learn and acquire knowledge. According to Mezirow (1990, p.361), "the essence of adult education consists of helping adults construe experience in a way in which they will more clearly understand the reasons for their problems and the options open to them, so they may assume responsibility for decision-making". A process which he terms "transformative learning" wherein "a person develops a sense of social responsibility" and where "the way in which we know and make meaning" shifts (1990, p.103). Furthermore Mezirow adds that "learning may be defined as the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation, and action" and that "it is not possible to understand the nature of adult learning or education without taking into account the cardinal role played by these habits of making meaning" (1990, p.103).

Mezirow also proposes that "perhaps even more central to adult learning than elaborating established meaning schemes is the process of reflecting back on prior learning to determine whether what we have learned is justified under present circumstance" (1989, p.5). Sociocultural distortions were rife under the apartheid regime in South Africa. The notion that 'West is Best' was accepted by many and self-fulfilling and self-validating beliefs prevailed. For example:

> Black people were exposed to the same indoctrination as white people. Thus, they too learned (to a greater or lesser extent) that "White is superior to Black". Most forms of internalised oppression had their origins in situations of old fashioned racism in which these responsive behaviours were necessary for physical and psychological survival. They prevent black people from achieving their full potential, playing a meaningful and significant role in transforming South Africa as well as taking up their legitimate place in this country.
>
> (Koopman, 1997, p.22)

Knowledge acquisition is more than "purely cognitive", in the sense that it takes place "through interaction within social and cultural contexts that are embedded in the larger cultural-historical setting" (Saljo, in Hatano, 1996, p.205). Because we are

products of our history and our cultural models are imprinted on our minds our existing knowledge and perspectives can be a barrier to learning. Many adult South African learners, due mainly to Christian National Education (CNE) and Bantu Education, were comfortable and familiar with the banking method of learning described by Paolo Freire (1985, p.2) where learners remember and repeat, accept the status quo and conform. Legitimate dialogue and communication was actively discouraged. Supporting this, Gravett (2001, p.46) states that "the experience of adults is sometimes an obstacle to learning because they may find it difficult to distance themselves from established convictions and thinking patterns of experience and knowledge".

None-the-less, according to Mezirow, learners existing knowledge is crucial and their views can be used as a base for learning. In his transformational learning theory he defines learning as a social process of using "prior interpretation to construe and appropriate a new or revised interpretation of meaning of one's experience in order to guide future action" (1990, p.150).

The 3 central themes in Mezirow's theory (1990, p.152) are:-

1. The learner's existing meaning structures are used to develop new learning.
2. Critical reflection, which includes critical reflection on assumptions and critical self-reflection on assumptions, as it relates to meaning transformation.
3. The verification of beliefs through rational discourse. A special function of dialogue devoted to presenting and assessing the validity of reasons by critically examining the widest possible range of evidence and arguments in the context of attempting to find understanding and agreement on the justifications of beliefs

Kolb's theory of learning and identification of learning styles supports this view as Kolb "saw learning as a circular process in which Concrete Experience is followed by Reflection and Observation; this in turn leads to the formulation of Abstract Concepts and Generalisations, the implications of which are tested in new situations through Active Experimentation" (in Honey & Mumford, 1982, p. 96).

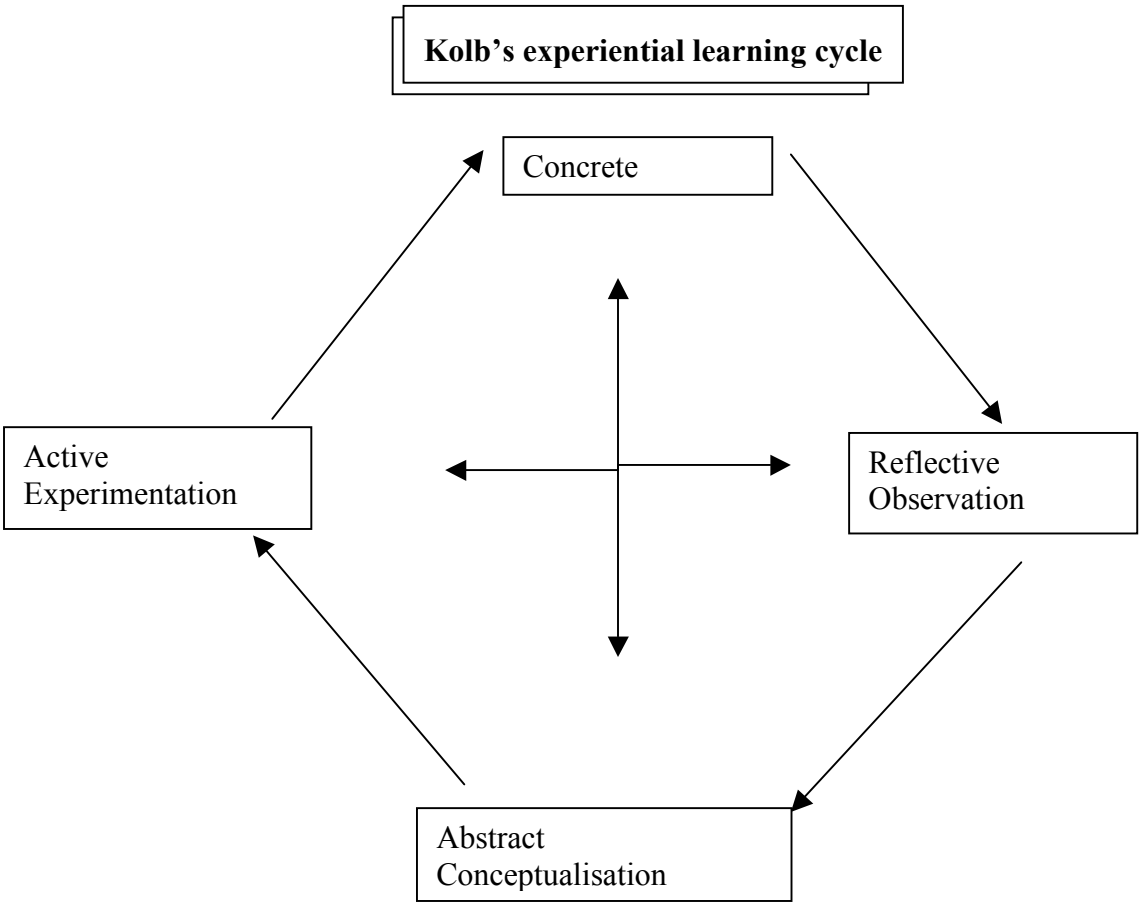


Figure 2.4 Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (in Honey & Mumford, 1982, p. 96)

With particular reference to this study, Mezirow and Kolb (in Honey & Mumford, 1982, p. 96) agree that education, taking into account the afore mentioned 3 central themes, helps the learner challenge perceptions, develop new understanding and react appropriately within new circumstances. The educational practitioner today is in a very challenging position when trying to create an effective learning environment as he/she is faced with educating learners from very different cultural backgrounds, many of whom were deprived of 'true liberty' and therefore have compromised capabilities and agency.

> The educator has to be aware of her learners cultural and sociological background in order to provide a learning environment that challenges the interpretation of each learner's meaning perspective. However, the ability to achieve a full understanding of another culture depends largely on one's willingness to adopt the position of *cultural relatives*, the recognition that one culture cannot be arbitrarily judged by the standards of another.
>
> (Robertson, 1978, p.66)

2.12 The Dialogic Approach

The dialogic approach to adult learning is being emphasised as having particular relevance in this study since it has many aspects that promote communication and negate the aspects of the banking method of learning mentioned previously. The dialogic approach is multi-pronged, incorporating many aspects, such as co-operative learning, critical reflection and self-directed learning.

To explain further:

- Its purpose is to break through to new insights.
- It implies co-operative and reciprocal inquiry that forms a continuous and developmental sequence.
- It requires commitment to dialogue that fosters engagement.
- It is marked by an attitude of reciprocity among participants even when disagreeing or encountering misunderstandings.

(Gravett, 2001, p.36)

As depicted in figure 2.5, in dialogic teaching, the educator, the learner, and knowledge work in "dynamic reciprocal unity" so consequently, dialogic teaching is learning-centred.

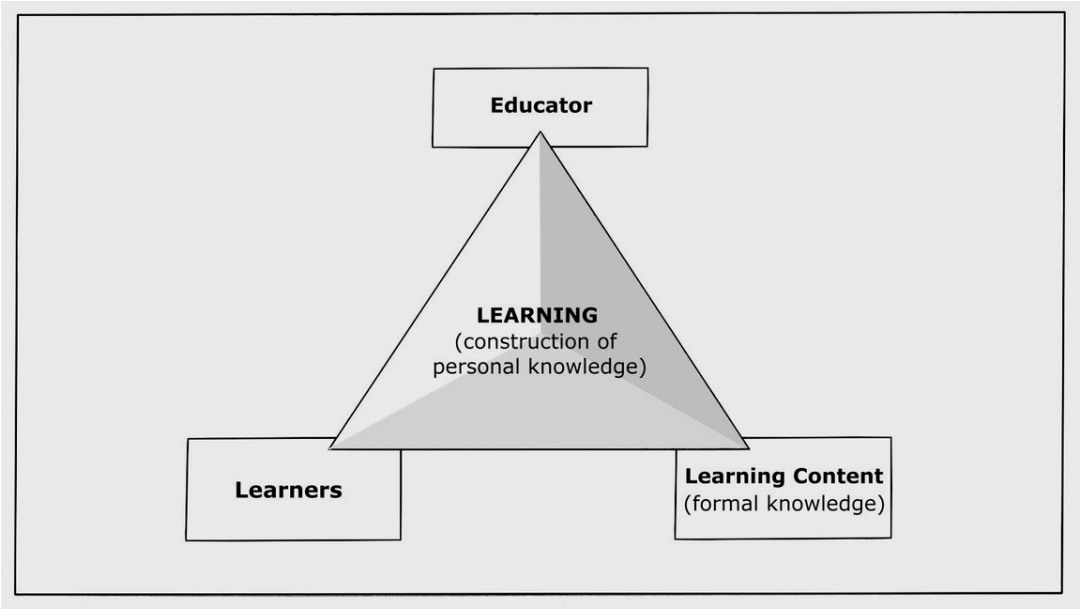


Figure 2.5 Learning-centred Teaching (Gravett, 2001, p.36)

In addition the dialogic approach promotes communication which is the key to the success of any project requiring change in organisational structure. Effective

communication enrols stakeholders and promotes ownership by specifying roles in making change happen and generating enthusiasm for the strategy.

2.1.3 Conclusion

The literature review explored the various aspects pertinent to the education of adults with particular regard to developing liberal democratic characteristics. The dynamics of adult education, management and leadership are discussed, as developing these skills in educators should promote the understanding of the dynamics of change. This in turn should enable educators to develop the tools to understand and hopefully negate influences and consequences of the past caused by apartheid socialisation and policies. Thereby promoting the development of liberal democratic moral characteristics both in themselves and their learners. In the following chapter I will outline the qualitative research methods and practices used in this research study and discuss how ethical and validity issues were addressed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN

Chapter Three outlines the qualitative research methods and practices used in this research study and how ethical and validity issues were addressed.

3.1 Research Paradigm

The study used the Interpretative Social Science (ISS) paradigm since this type of research is rooted in an empathetic understanding of the "everyday lived experience of people in specific historical settings" (Neuman, 2006, p.87). Neuman continues by explaining that there are several varieties of ISS, one of which will have particular relevance to this research - namely *phenomenology*. The phenomenological approach is "an attempt to understand empirical matters from the perspective of those being studied by entering into their field of perception in order to see life as these individuals see it" (Creswell, 1998, p.275). It also "explores the meaning of several people's lived experiences around a specific issue or phenomenon" (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p.9). Furthermore, Cohen & Manion (1994, p.29) view phenomenology as "a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value and one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality".

However, due to the nature of this study, the research design incorporated certain elements of ethnographic and biographical studies. For example, an *ethnographic* approach was used to "investigate intact cultural or social groups to find and describe beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behaviour, language, and interactions of the group" (Cohen & Manion 1994, p.29). Similarly, *biographical studies* enabled the researcher to experience "being there" (i.e. verisimilitude) as participants related their life and oral histories.

3.2 Sources of Information

3.2.1 Sample Population

The research took place in four pre-schools of similar economic status, based in close proximity in the Northern Suburbs of Johannesburg. The study was limited to these schools due to the time constraints of this research and the accessibility of these pre-schools. I acknowledge that a limitation of this study is that the findings cannot be generalised to other broader contexts. The schools have staff, all female, from diverse economic and racial backgrounds ranging in age from 21 years to 58 years who hold the positions of teachers or teacher assistants. Permission was obtained from the managers/principals of the relevant pre-schools to use these pre-schools in the study, followed by permission from the ECD practitioners working in the schools.

3.2.2 Data Collection

A survey-type questionnaire (See Appendix A) was issued personally to each of the 38 participants. Following data analysis of completed questionnaires, respondents were purposefully selected for focus group discussions (FGD) and personal interviews (See Appendix B). Critical incidents were used to highlight events that impacted on the participants' lives (See Appendix C). Document analysis included material from The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, [DoE], 2002), The South African Schools Act, No, 86 (DoE, 1996b), Curriculum material courtesy of Bluebird Pre-Primary, The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), The Peoples and Policies of South Africa and The South African Council for Educators (SACE) booklet "Towards Excellence in Education" (2005). The following figure depicts the schedule that was followed to collect data.

DATA COLLECTION SCHEDULE

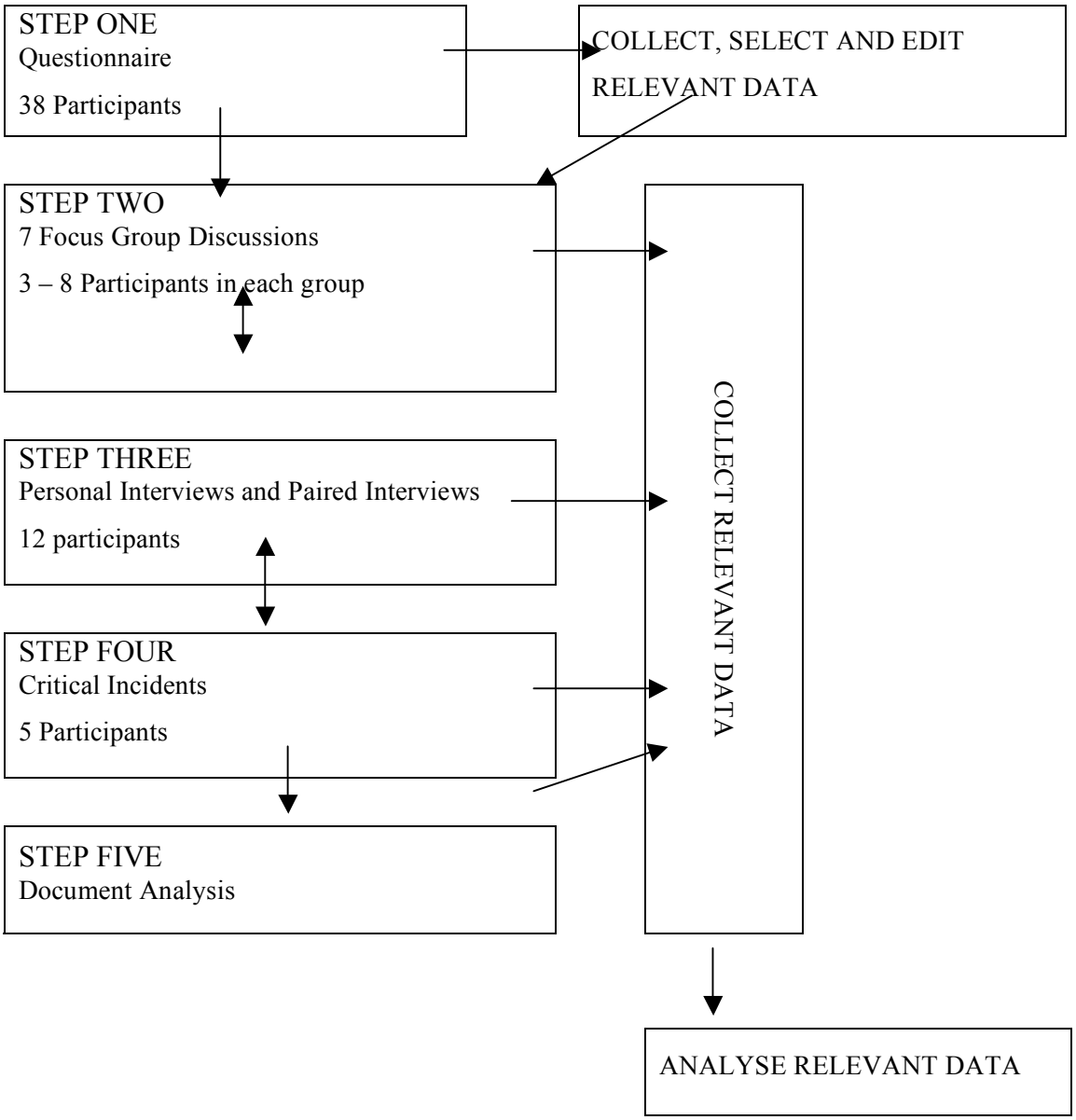


Figure 3.1 Data Collection Schedule.

3.3 Methodology

This empirical study used descriptive, qualitative methods to explore ECD practitioners' perceptions and attitudes towards democracy. Qualitative research as defined by Creswell (1998, p.15) is "an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem". A mixed method approach was used in order to build a "complex, holistic picture, analyse words, reports, detailed views of information and conduct the study in a natural setting". As maintained by Denzin and Lincoln (in Creswell, 1998, p. 84),

methods such as personal experience, biographies, interviews, and visual texts help to describe routine and problematic events in individuals' lives.

3.4 Methods

The study adopts a dialogic, participatory approach by engaging its participants in a willing and co-operative partnership (Burbules, in Gravett, 2001, p.35), and one which suits the qualitative researcher ethos and the spirit of democratic practice. The ECD Practitioners participated in semi-structured interviews and focused group discussions and by filling in questionnaires and writing critical incidents.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire using a combination of open and closed questions was developed. Open-ended questions enabled the respondents to "let their thoughts roam freely, unencumbered by a prepared set of replies" (Oppenheim, 1992, p.113) and allowed for the use of their own language and spontaneity. However, open-ended questions needed to be carefully posed as there is the danger that the respondents may answer with what happens to be uppermost in their minds. Closed questions were used as they "are easier and quicker to answer; they require no writing, and quantification is straightforward". However, the disadvantages of closed questions are "the loss of spontaneity and expressiveness" and "perhaps the introduction of bias by forcing them to choose between given alternatives and by making them focus on alternatives that might not have occurred to them" (Oppenheim, 1992, p.114).

Questionnaires also have the advantage of enabling the participants to cogitate over the issues concerned and allow the less vocal participants the opportunity to voice their opinions in a written format. The questionnaire, if correctly administered, also "ensures a high response rate, accurate sampling and a minimum of interviewer bias, while permitting interviewer assessments, providing necessary explanations and giving the benefit of a degree of personal contact" (Oppenheim, 1992, p.103).

Questionnaires however do have certain potential disadvantages. For example, low response rate, lack of interest from participants, poor literacy levels, time pressures and ambiguous wording may lead to misunderstandings. This in turn can lead to

questionnaires not being completed fully, or being filled in and completed by someone else altogether who may have no relevance to the study.

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGD) allowed for groups of people to "discuss potential changes or shared impressions" and "bring together a group of people who have experienced the same problem" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p.139). There were approximately 7 guiding questions and the FGD did not last longer than 90 minutes as the topic is potentially "emotionally charged" and could "create cognitive fatigue" which could "exhaust participants more quickly" (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, p.62). Although these researchers give a number of reasons why FGD are advantageous, the following are applicable to my study:

1. obtaining general background information about a topic of interest
2. stimulating new ideas and creative concepts

There are however limitations to FGD. For example, the small numbers used in this study "significantly limit generalisation to a larger population". This has been noted in the section 3.6 Limitations. Other disadvantages include the open-ended nature of responses often makes summarisation and interpretation of results difficult and I, as moderator, "may bias results by, knowingly or unknowingly, provide cues about what types of responses and answers are desirable" (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, p.63).

3.4.3 Personal Interviews

Personal interviews are effective when working with small, localised groups of participants. Because of the diversity of our population in South Africa they are a good method of eliciting information because they enable the researcher to rephrase questions and probe for deeper understanding. Furthermore, "in qualitative interviewing, the researcher is not neutral, distant, or emotionally uninvolved" and is therefore more likely to elicit an "openness from the interviewees" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p.12). It also allows for interviewees to "share in the work of the interview, sometimes guiding it in channels of their own choosing. They are treated as *partners* rather than objects of research" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p.10). However, it is important to be aware of interviewer bias as well as the factors mentioned in the section on limitations.

3.4.4 Critical Incidents

Critical incidents are "a story or case study of an action or event which holds some emotional significance for the person who experiences it" (Castle, 2003, p. 62).

> Critical incident technique identifies the significance – especially the emotional significance - of actions and events on people as they carry out tasks related to education, training and work. People are asked to report positive and negative outcomes of certain actions, and to identify those acts and events (the 'critical incidents') which seem to have triggered these outcomes. In this way, opportunities are created for people to become interpreters of their own experience.
>
> (Castle, 2003, p.41)

Therefore, in this study which aimed to elicit from the participants a deeper understanding of the significance their socialisation has on their personal lives and their practice, the use of the critical incident technique provided valuable insights both for the researcher and the respondents. It is necessary to be aware however that the use of critical incidents requires the researcher to show sensitivity to participants' "fears and hopes, their beliefs, their ways of making sense of their experience, their practical knowledge, and their ways of solving problems" (Castle, 2003, p.41).

3.4.5 Document Review

Due to confidentiality issues, reports written by the participants relating to their work may not be used. However, curriculum documents relating to democracy issues, as prescribed by the DoE, were used as a tool to guide discussion topics.

Clark (in Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p.53) suggests asking the following questions regarding documents reviewed when doing research.

- Where has the document been and what is its history?
- How did the document become available – public domain, special considerations?
- What guarantee exists that the document is appropriate, accurate and timely?
- Is the integrity of the document without concern?
- Has the document been changed in any way?
- Is the document representative under the conditions and for the purposes it was produced?

- Who created the document and with what intention – potential bias?
- What were the sources of information used to create the document?
- Do other sources exist that can be used to confirm the information in the document?

I feel these questions are particularly pertinent to this study, considering the varied players involved in document formation due to the political changes that have taken place in post apartheid South Africa.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

The mixed method approach (Questionnaires, FGD, Personal Interviews, Critical Incidents and Document Review) was used in order to collect and triangulate data to ensure the maximum validity and reliability. According to Cohen & Manion (1994, p.235) triangulation is "characterised by a multi-method approach to a problem" – a characteristic of this particular study. The researchers further describe certain types of triangulation, several of which are pertinent to this study, namely:

- *Combined levels of triangulation* which use more than one level of analysis – the individual level, the interactive level (groups) and the level of collectivities (organisational, cultural or societal). This allows for a more meaningful picture to emerge as they characterise the collective as a whole.
- *Theoretical triangulation* which draws upon alternative or competing theories in preference to utilising one viewpoint only. This allows for competing theories to be tested and more confidence in the data analysis since it is more orientated towards the testing of rival hypotheses.
- *Methodological triangulation* which uses either the same method on different occasions or different methods on the same object of study. As a check on validity, this approach embraces the notion of convergence between independent measures of the same objective.

Further advantages of triangulation in the educational setting are that it provides a more holistic view of the situation and illuminates possible outcomes – "allowing for increased reliability in evaluation and representation of differing and conflicting viewpoints" (Cohen & Manion, 1994, p.235). Maxwell (1996, p.23) advises that to

ensure maximum validity, whenever possible, record and transcribe interviews and interactions with the participants and that it is also important to remember not to impose one's own perspectives, biases, prejudices, anxieties, meanings and existing theories on the data collected.

3.6 Limitations

Since I am the principal of a school in the area and am professionally involved with the other principals of participating schools, I had to be aware that the participants, who are practitioners at these schools, may have felt apprehensive about openly expressing their views and opinions. This could have "considerable effects on the nature of the data produced" (Hammond, 1989, p.109). However, each school participating in the study was given a copy of the full report and the participants' approval gained before this study was submitted for examination. A report back on the examiners' comments and suggestions has also been promised to the four participating schools.

In small-scale studies such as this one, there is a trade-off between local relevance and population generalisability, as I have already acknowledged. The sample design intentionally targets ECD practitioners in 4 pre-schools. Since the socio-economic conditions in these schools are very similar to other schools in the district, I believe that it is feasible to apply the outcomes of this study to other pre-schools in the Northern suburbs.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Various specific ethical considerations can provide many dilemmas and so need to be considered when doing a study in the field of social science. Although this study strove to attain valid and reliable data, the rights of the participants were paramount at all times. Since I had sole access to the data, privacy and confidentiality was assured and efforts made to restrict possible emotional distress. All data collected will be kept for a period of five years. The needs and well-being of the participants were foremost. Participants were informed of the right to withdraw at any stage, without prejudice and with no personal consequences to themselves. Furthermore, efforts were made to ensure that the insider role of myself as researcher did not impact on the study in any

way, and that the participants saw participation as voluntary, rather than that of duty. Care was taken to ensure that each participant was fully informed verbally and in writing of the nature of the research and was given a Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form (See Appendix D and E). Letters of permission were obtained from the four venues (See Appendix F). An ethics application form was submitted to the Human Research Ethic committee at the University of the Witwatersrand and approved. Each school participating in the study was given a copy of Chapter Four (i.e. the Results of the Research), and the participants' approval gained before this study was submitted for examination.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSES

Summary of research questions.

Main question:

- Has the advent of democracy had any meaningful impact on ECD educators, and if so, in what ways?

Sub-questions:

- What are ECD practitioners' understanding and perceptions of the concept of democracy and understanding and perceptions of democratic issues such as diversity and transformation?
- Have ECD practitioners' perceptions of their practices changed since the advent of democracy and if so, in what ways?
- What do ECD practitioners perceive to be the factors that influence the implementation of change?

Chapter Four contains summarisations and analyses of the results obtained from the study.

Section 4.1 concentrates on the practitioners' profiles and perceptions in relation to democracy.

Section 4.2 explores the emerging themes in the research.

Section 4.3 discusses the socialising and other factors that affect ECD practice.

Section 4.4 relates to issues around the implementation of change.

Figure 4.1 below illustrates the type of data collected and the number of practitioners who participated in each.

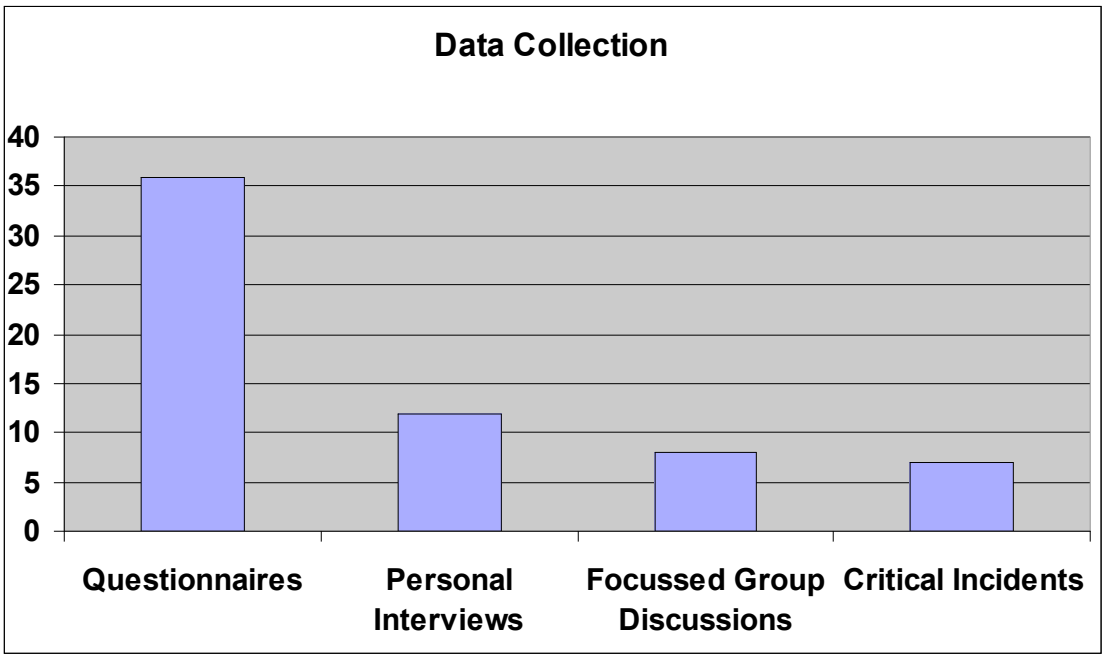


Figure 4.1 Data Collection Bar Graph

SECTION 4.1 Participant Profile & Perceptions regarding Democracy

This study sample consisted of 38 female participants. Thirty five percent of the participants were black and 65 % of the participants were white. Their ages ranged from 21 – 58 years. Forty two percent of all the participants were under 30 years of age and the remainder were between 30 and 58 years of age.

Figure 4.2 depicts the participants' place of origin. The majority were from the Gauteng Province.

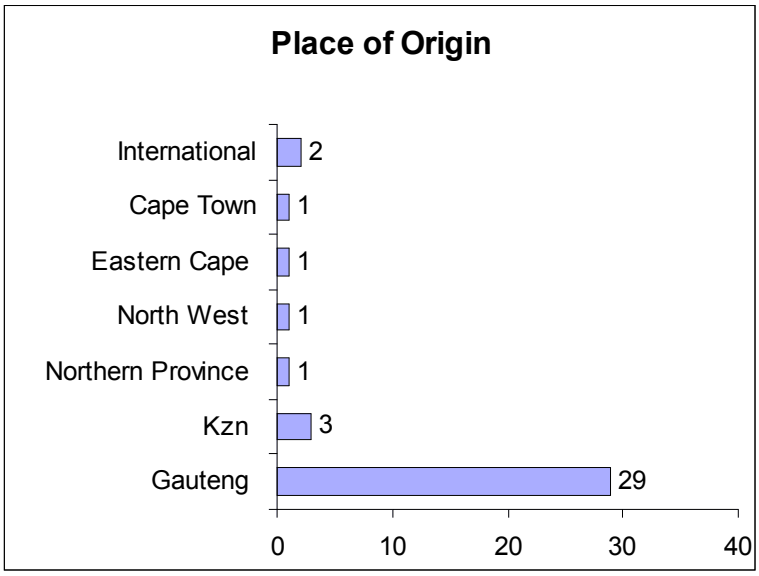


Figure 4.2 Participants Place of Origin

Figure 4.3 below presents the type of tertiary education the participants received. Their qualifications included degrees, diplomas and 'in house' training. All but 2 participants received their training in South Africa.

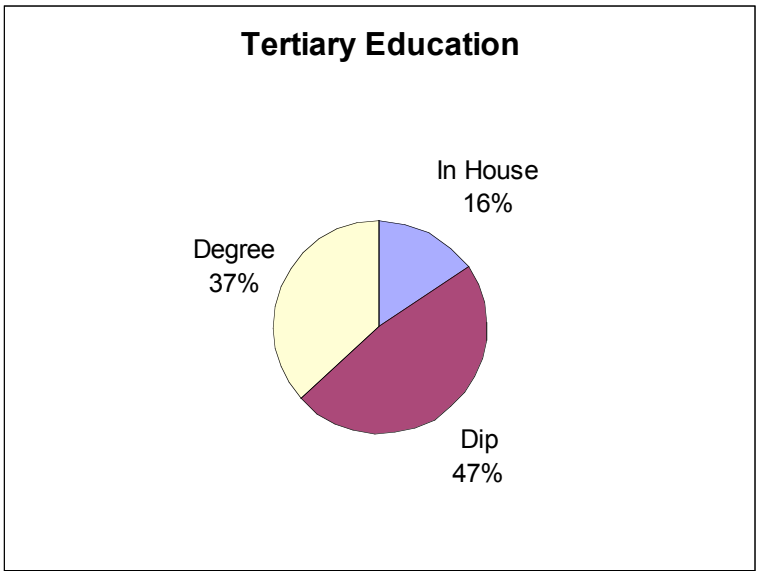


Figure 4.3 Tertiary Education of Participants

As can be seen in figure 4.4, the participants' years of experience in the field of ECD ranged from 1 year to 40 years. The majority have 10 or less years' experience.

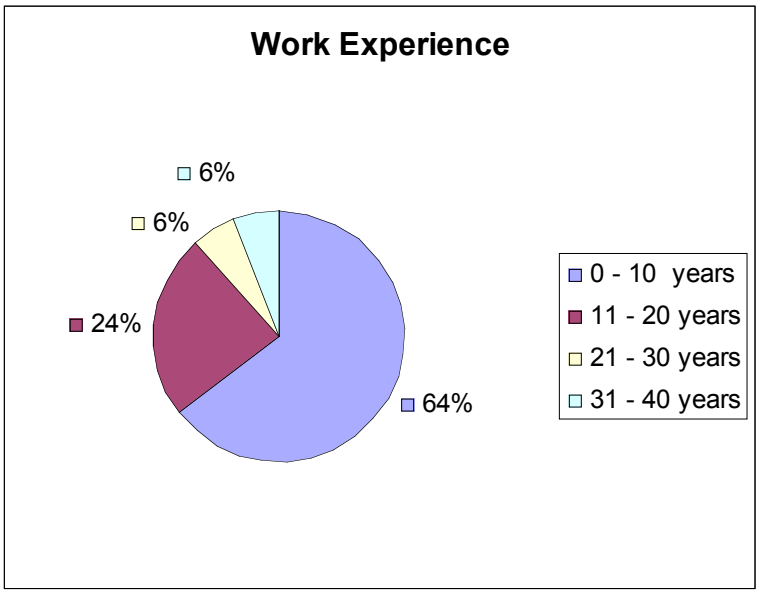


Figure 4.4 Work Experience Of Participants

SECTION 4.2 Emerging Themes

Several themes and issues emerged during the research process. As can be seen in figure 4.5, themes such as equality, franchise, affirmative action, freedom, ubuntu, and opportunities surfaced in the questionnaires, FGD's and Personal interviews. Issues such as crime, corruption and the Children's Act only emerged later in FGD's and Personal Interviews. In all but one case, the relating of the critical incidents occurred spontaneously in response to the interview questions relating to the efficacy of democracy in this country and socialising influences, past and present. Although this study did not specifically aim to investigate differing perceptions between black and white participants regarding issues surrounding democracy, this naturally occurred in many of the findings. These are discussed in more detail in the following sections. I have identified the predominant issues in Figure 4.5 and they will be discussed in full, either individually or in context with each other, with regard to how they affect and relate to this study.

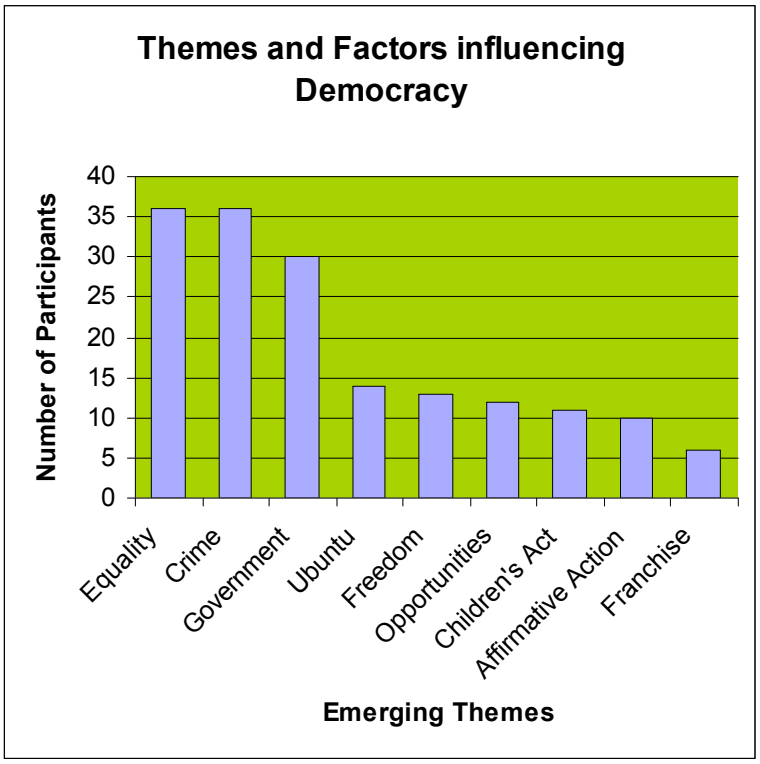


Figure 4.5 Themes and factors influencing democratic practice.

4.2.1 Equality

The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (DoE, 2001a), in its vision that aims to make South Africa a liberal democracy, lists ten values – the third of which is "Equality". This is supported by Curriculum 2005/21 (DoE, 1996c), the National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 1996d), which reflects the principles in the Constitution. Both documents strongly emphasise democratic issues such as diversity and equality.

All 36 participants used the words "equal" or "equality" when discussing their definitions, perceptions and understanding of the concept of a liberal democracy, democratic issues, transformation and diversity. As can be seen in figure 4.6, a large proportion of the participants saw democracy as having "*equal opportunities*, *equal rights"* and being seen as "*equal in the eyes of society"*.

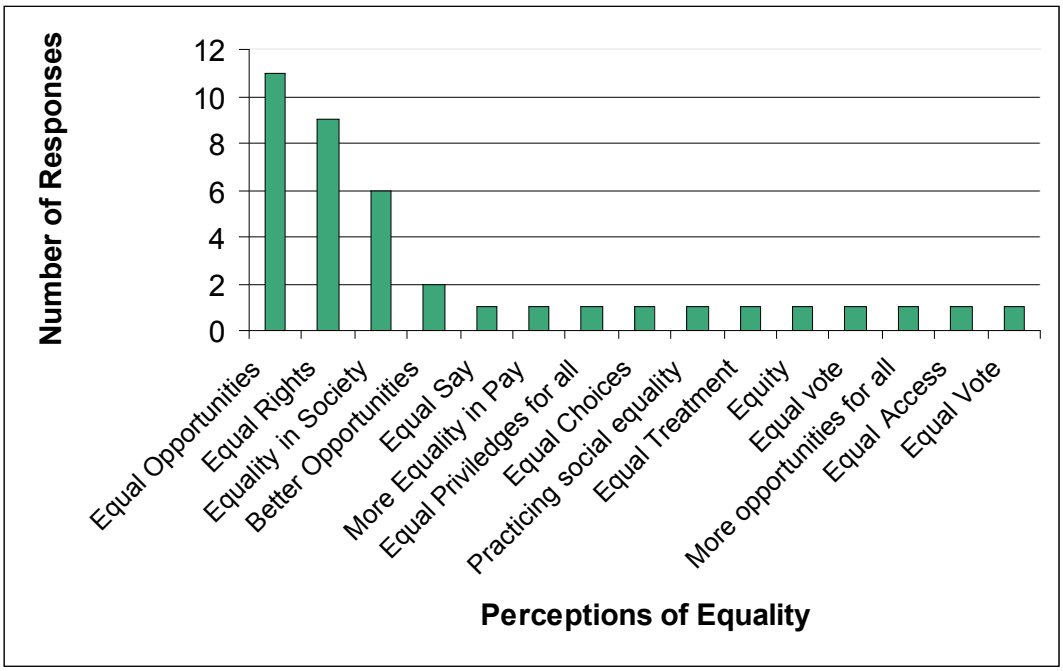


Figure 4.6 Participants Perception of 'Equality'

The participants understanding and perceptions of equality and equal rights in many cases overlapped. There was a general understanding that democracy brought about equal rights and should eliminate discrimination in all areas. There was a "*feeling*" that democracy had allowed for a "*freedom*" to exercise those rights and to "*fight against*" discrimination without negative repercussions. There was also a general understanding of the right to social equality. However, there were also some notable differences and perceptions. For instance, although voicing the same or similar sentiments, there was a greater depth of understanding about 'face to face' issues regarding democracy in many of the black participants, and a more 'global' understanding about these issues in many of the white participants. To illustrate, the majority of black participants, when asked to explain and expand upon their perceptions of equality with regard to democracy, transformation and diversity, spoke joyfully about the fact that they could talk to, and work with whites as equals and without fear of reprisals. They mentioned with feeling that they could now use the same crockery and cutlery as the whites. *"We can share everything with a white – you can talk to them, share a plate, a cup, a bed".* Several participants expressed joy that they could now freely "*hug*" other races. They showed true appreciation of the fact that they can, on an equal basis, ask anyone for assistance in shops, on the street and so on.

The difference in perceptions and interpretation of equality in a liberal democratic society between the black and white participants could perhaps be traced back to the socialising influences of their pasts. To a large extent, whites had the choice to participate in many of the activities in which the black participants now enjoy participating. For example, as one participant stressed, a white person would not have feared severe repercussions if they had hugged a black person. *"Many whites also had the means to leave the country and follow their ideals if they were not happy with the situation in South Africa. They also had the means to use what legal processes were in place and those legal processes afforded them a greater choice in many areas".*

So many of the aspects of equality so cherished by the black participants post 1994, were taken for granted by the whites pre 1994. However the opposite was true for the majority of black South Africans under the apartheid regime. Their socialisation taught them to be hyper-vigilant with concern to the wishes of the white man's laws and wishes and to learn to accept that they were to obey those laws and wishes or could suffer dire consequences. They were taught young that in no way were they considered equal to the whites.

Several black participants discussed their empowerment as women and the sense of increased freedom this engendered and the fact that they can take part freely in any activity in order to make a positive contribution to their lives and those around them and have recourse to legal aid when needed. This sentiment is captured in the following critical incident:

> *I had a husband who abused me I stayed with him for 14 years. No one would help me and I hoped it would change but he would not talk and would only talk when he was not sober. I had no one to talk to me, I was very alone. In my culture when you fight you go to your in-laws you don't go back to your family. They talk to him but he start again.*

> *After democracy there was a social worker and she help me and when he hit me they got me a lawyer. I could never could do this before but now they try to help me now. Now I don't trust any men. I just think. I now have more power, I can say whatever I want to say. The social worker helped me so much, gave me power to talk it out, I won't just keep it in. Before I could not do this. No one would help me but democracy has new rules and they help me with my rights.*

The issue of equality with regard to education was mentioned by several participants but with differing perspectives. Many of the white participants discussed it with regard to improving educational status but not for themselves but for the previously disadvantaged. Only one black participant discussed education in this light saying *"We will have to work very hard to make it work. We need to increase our knowledge, get educated so we can get to know what is happening and education can open the doors to everything"*. However several participants discussed it in the light of providing equal opportunities for the children. The black participants felt that getting a good education for their children is a vision that is possible, but seem to lack the same confidence about gaining a better education for themselves. This is likely to be due to disempowering influences brought about by their socialisation under the apartheid era. Robinson & Jones Diaz (2007, p.169) propose that in many ways early childhood education, is a microcosm of the broader society which operates to perpetuate the status quo in society, that is, through everyday practices it maintains the social order or power relations that currently exist in the world. The challenge for ECD practitioners is to overcome past negative socialising influences and question the status quo in society in order that they see themselves as empowered as educational practitioners and can role model this empowerment to the learners, thereby breaking free of existing stereotypes.

4.2.2 Crime And Violence

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS, [DoE],2002) explicitly focuses on remedial measures intended to address the impact of violence on students and youth caused by years of violence associated with the anti-apartheid struggle and three of the values listed in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (DoE, 2001a) are Accountability, Respect and The Rule of Law. However according to Altbeker (2007, p.12) South Africa has the highest record of violent crime and the highest death rate amongst civilians for a country that is not at war.

Every participant, without exception, was highly concerned about the increase in crime since 1994 and its impact on South Africa, and voiced that it was drastically harming the democratic process and the implementation of legitimate change. They discussed that it was affecting their *"enthusiasm"* about democracy and limiting their choices career wise and in the area of personal safety. Nussbaum, when discussing achieving the capabilities necessary in a liberal democracy, states that people need to be able to freely use "the senses, to imagine, think, and reason in an informed and unrestricted way" (2000, p.78). A participant commented "*We cannot have democracy with increasing crime and it is increasing and increasing and increasing – we are not safe"* and that crime was affecting all areas of their lives. The impact of crime was one of the few areas where there was no difference of opinion or perception between the race groups since everyone had been personally affected by it.

Participants stated that it was difficult for themselves to behave normally, and *"behave like civilised human beings"* with the learners and parents when you feel constantly in danger. This is illustrated by Nussbaum (2000, p.78) who discusses a liberal democratic environment in which citizens can achieve, what she terms, "*the capabilities".* In many cases the ability to achieve these capabilities is being compromised due to crime. For example, the first capability is to be "able to live to the end of a human life of normal length" and the third is to be "able to move freely from place to place and having ones bodily boundaries treated as sovereign". Both of these capabilities are often severely compromised because of high crime levels. Participants were also having to take on an increasing counseling role with the parents

to assist them with personal issues, such as those affecting their children, plus having to be counselors to their learners.

According to many participants, they constantly have to remind parents not to talk inappropriately about crime issues in front of their children and a frightening development is that people, including children, are becoming acclimatised to crime and talking about it and dealing with it as if it were a normal part of life. It's as if their "*practical reason"*, was impacted by constant stress and exposure to crime. "*Practical reason"* being, according to Nussbaum (2000, p.78) having the ability "to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life" and "being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves without having that emotional development blighted by overwhelming fear and anxiety or by traumatic events of abuse or neglect". As one participant commented on the high rate of violence against small children – *"Rape is terrible, especially of small children. How can people do this? Why do the police not stop this?"*

"*We fear for our lives and are scared to approach people who are doing wrong things and we are scared to help people who are victims because the violence is so horrifying. Crime is a huge problem in this democracy. It affects our humanity and every aspect of our life, when you are fearing for your life".* A further case of how Nussbaum's capabilities are being compromised by crime as people are not "able to live with and toward others, to recognise and show concern for others, have compassion, have the capability for both justice and friendship" or are not "able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature" (2000, p.78).

As ECD practitioners, the participants were very concerned about the negative socialising influences crime was having on South Africans and particularly on the children. They expressed that the learners' perceptions of what was right and wrong were being influenced. It was becoming more and more difficult to counteract the negative influences and develop what Carr (2002, p.75) terms "morally democratic characters". Increasing numbers of children were having to go to play therapy and counselling. Nussbaum (2000, p.78) states that people in a liberal democracy should

be "able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities". Many children in South Africa are now having their play activities severely restricted and influenced by crime issues. As one principal explained: *"The games they play now are full of violence and they smash things all the time, hurt each other – they are angry and frightened – they don't play normally anymore – they don't play with innocence"*. The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (DoE, 2001a) lists ten fundamental values. Democracy, Social Justice and Equity, Equality, Non-Racism and Non-Sexism, Ubuntu, An Open Society, Accountability, Respect, The Rule of Law and Reconciliation. Many of the participants, particularly the older ones, were concerned that crime was compromising their ability to act as liberal democratic citizens and that was making it increasing harder to consistently role model appropriate moral behaviour to the children in their care.

All the participants voiced an overall lack of confidence in the authorities to control the crime and were concerned about corruption in the police force. During discussions, many participants voiced concern that crime was driving away foreign investors. *"Now outside people will not come into this country and build businesses which is bad for the country because we need jobs"*. They also felt their personal freedom was drastically compromised because they had to *"be hyper-vigilant all the time"*. The following critical incident (Sept 2007) illustrates the challenges being faced due to crime.

> *After the school concert me and my colleague, – we went up to Jan Smuts at half past seven and we waited and waited for a taxi but they were all full and we were getting worried because it is dangerous. So half past eight we got a taxi but then we had to wait for another one in Yeoville and we had to wait but there were none there it was too late. We knew that at this time even the taxis were not safe because even they were hijacked. It was now ten to nine. When this thing happens to you, you can't believe it will happen to you, it happens to other people. We noticed these guys, two guys but others in groups wait around some this side, some the other. I was hiding one bag under my jersey under my arm but the big bag with change of clothes was in my hand. These guys came back*

> *past – you don't have this thing that something is going to happen and when we were not looking one grabbed my friends bag and one grabbed mine. When it is happening you are not so scared because you are confused and shocked but later I don't sleep thinking they could have killed me. I am still not sleeping well. I am suffering inside, this thing is with you, inside. I am thinking of going to the chemist for sleeping tablets. You can't believe it would happen to you, this trauma.*
>
> *The government should do something, put cameras. I am feeling very unsafe, even in the day. People won't come to your help they scared. It is not the first time. Last year I got off the metro bus and I was answering my phone and this guy came from behind and he showed me he have a gun that only me can see, and saying "oh you are so beautiful just imagine blood all over you, you know what finish up your conversation". He is holding me so people think he knows me, he is my friend but only I can see the gun and my voice is shaking to my friend. Then he take the phone and disappear. Crime is bad. It is everywhere. It is not a colour thing. As long as you have got something that they need. We cannot be free when there is such crime everywhere.*

Despite emphasising crime to such an extent, the participants said that with the advent of democracy, had come increased freedom which had allowed people a greater freedom of choice. However, nearly all participants expressed the opinion that although the previous regime was oppressive, they felt safer as crime was more controlled. One black participant stated, *"With the white government there was not crime. We were not free but there was no crime. In that way we felt safer"*. An opinion often expressed was that South Africa was not a true liberal democracy. As one participant put it *"I do not feel safe so I don't feel free. I can't feel free when I am worried and it restricts me"*. She, along with many others, did not feel she had what Hall (1987, pp.184-185) described as the second component of a liberal democracy, i.e. the provision of a society in which every person has a space in which to develop. The advent of increased crime was therefore, not seen by participants as a natural

product of a liberal democracy, but rather as an indication of a failed, or failing liberal democracy, and they emphasised that it infiltrated all aspects of their lives, including that of their practice.

4.2.3 Country Leaders And Democracy

Poverty, health issues, corruption, crime, cultural diversity and socialising influences are some of the reasons, many citizens in South Africa's new democracy may have not been able to benefit from equal status or to exercise their freedom. Corruption and poor leadership were two of the areas in which both white and black participants generally agreed and all but 2 of the participants voiced disappointment at the situation. One of the black participants laughed when asked about being governed 'by the people'. She said, *"Democracy is not working well. The government is not looking after us. The police are corrupt and public medical care is shocking"*. A white participant said "*The government has not grasped the true concept of democracy and this pertains particularly to those who have gained positions of power and have abused the opportunities afforded to them by democracy*". Other participants supported this by saying that social services were bad and they were not getting the money that they needed to run efficiently and support the people.

Participants understood that in a liberal democracy they should have the power to challenge and even change realities, but many did not feel they could actually do this in South Africa. This may well be due to socialising influences of the past where to question the status quo could have frightening consequences. The whites generally said that if they complained they were accused of being "*racist*" and "*nobody did anything anyway"*, and the blacks still felt "*frightened to complain"* and said also that "*it is not in our culture to question our leaders"*. However, in what they felt was a safe environment, with colleagues and friends, they made the following comments about government and people in positions of power and their handling of democracy, and generally expressed their disappointment:

- *The gravy train is a real issue – people not on it are suffering as the benefits are not filtering down.*

- *I wouldn't say our government is really into democracy. They got a problem. They favour people in parliament and not people like me and you.*

- *People in power* are *getting away with criminal activities which were often far worse than some poor people had done but the poor people just went to jail because they have no money for lawyers*.

- *Policies in the new democracy haven't been done like housing. The people were promised things.*

- *People in power are not doing a good job but are still being supported because of party or tribal connections.*

- *Equality with this government is not here – the politicians are the fat cats and are just doing their own thing. And most of them are black. Where is Ubuntu?*

- *Your rights aren't fully appreciated – you don't get to use them. You don't have access to facilities at grassroots level – particularly the poor. They aren't getting what they need.*

- *People in power - some have not understood their role and responsibility in rendering service and sharing the wealth and have held it to themselves – people in power are abusing that power.*

- *Corruption at government level is bad and their attitude towards issues like Aids and crime is criminal.*

- *Bureaucracy is still a problem. The new black workers in civil positions learnt from the whites and act the same way, not giving service.*

- *14 years later and they are still using apartheid as an excuse. Democracy is positive but everyone has to work together - but you can't take steps back.*

4.2.4 Ubuntu

The spirit of ubuntu is claimed by Boon (1996, p.31) to be "that of morality, humaneness, compassion, care, understanding and empathy. It is one of sharing and hospitality, of honesty and humility".

The concept of 'Ubuntu' occurred on several occasions in answers in the questionnaires, FGD and interviews when discussing the understanding and

perceptions of democracy and within that, transformation and diversity issues. Nearly all the participants portrayed ubuntu in a negative light but mostly in relation to government, civil servants and leaders. However, in contrast, all participants showed an immense capacity and willing readiness to accept change and embrace and celebrate a democratic and diverse society. This was evident in their willingness and openness to share their time and views when participating in this study.
As can be seen by their individual responses in Table 4.1, (in no particular order or significance) that the participants show an in-depth understanding of the concept of *ubuntu.*

Table 4.1 Participants' Perception of the term Ubuntu

Celebrating and enjoying diversity	Being responsible people
Unity	Contributing to life in a positive way
Giving everyone the right to be heard	Accepting everyone
Acknowledging the right of all individuals irrespective of race, creed or religion to co-exist and have a voice	Listening to each other and exchanging views and concerns
No discrimination of race, gender, etc.	Respecting others
Overlooking the past and focusing on the goodness of each individual	Being own person and respect for other people's right of being
Respecting others for their differences	Caring about people
Togetherness	Wanting well-being for other people

The older participants in particular were aware that cultural differences and variability in the way parents raised their children would affect their understanding of the various aspects mentioned in the table above and they as educators would have to be sensitive to these differing perceptions.

Ubuntu was one of the dominant factors that participants felt was necessary to influence the implementation of change and transformation. Particularly evident in the black participants was the capacity and willingness to forgive and forget the past and in the white participants, a willing acceptance that forgiveness was necessary, as

was reparation and an enjoyment of all the paradigm shifts that were happening in their lives. Many of the older white participants discussed *"a lifting of guilt about the past"*. One white participant told of how, when a member of the family died, the black neighbours were the first to come around with food and comfort, and it was black strangers who were also the first to offer help when their car broke down. *"They definitely have a better sense of ubuntu"*.

However during the discussions and personal interviews, many of the participants from both race groups said that "*the common man"* on the whole has not grasped the true concept of democracy. *"Democracy is working to a point but often it is on a superficial level where people lack true understanding of what it means so are just reaping personal benefit". "We see democracy the wrong way – the rich are getting richer and see only things for themselves. They don't have true understanding of democracy. The rich benefit only themselves. They only look after themselves once they have benefited"*.

The participants felt that many people in power did not honour the spirit of ubuntu and that it was important that they as ECD educators encouraged the spirit of ubuntu in their learners so as to develop future leaders with morally democratic characteristics, regardless of their race or cultural differences. Socrates (in Carr, 2002, p.75) claims that the moral democratic character would know how he ought to live - know "what constitutes a flourishing human life" and be "governed by a knowledge of what is right and true". The challenge for ECD practitioners is to ensure as far as possible the learners in their care will develop the lifeskills necessary to function as morally democratic citizens. Education policies have attempted to address the situation of developing democratic citizens. For example, two of the critical outcomes in South Africa's Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), which promote what is 'right and true' and the spirit of ubuntu are: "*Participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities* and *being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts"* (DoE, 2002, p.8). The critical and developmental educational values derived from the Constitution contained in the South African Qualifications Act (DoE, 1995a, p.12) support this view. They describe the kind of citizen the education and training system should aim to create.

For example:

- Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation, community.
- Participating as a responsible citizen in the life of local, national and global communities.
- Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts.

4.2.5 Freedom

Many of the black participants made strong use of the word "freedom" when discussing their understanding of the term democracy but would not necessarily agree that in South Africa, Berlin's definition that man is "free to the degree to which no human being interferes with his activity" is really true (1967, p.141). Poverty, crime, corruption and other factors, all they said, affected many aspects of their freedom. However there were many positive responses. They described the relief of *"being free to do whatever we want"* and to take part *"freely in any activity that can make a positive contribution to one's life"*. They spoke first hand with feeling about being free to use any facility, apply for any job, sleep anywhere, eat anywhere, speak to anyone, etc. They spoke of freedom from oppression. The understanding of freedom was that of a gaining of personal liberties as the following critical incident (1981) illustrates

> *When I was young I went to Bryanston with my white friend Haley who my mammie work for her mammie and I go in the door of the shop and my mammie say NO NO not that door and I see a sign which say* ***Whites only*** *and another door* ***Blacks only****. My Mammie was very upset and scared that I went through the white door. I say why but she won't tell me. I was 9 or 10 but I didn't think about it so much then and I didn't feel bad but later I think about it over and over and it worry me after that and I have never forget even to now. I was thinking and looking. Then I start seeing the signs for blacks and whites everywhere on lots of things. I still don't understand why. But in Sandton City there were no signs, I was surprised. No separation. Even before 1994. But now I can see wherever I go there are no signs. I think democracy is*

going to work. When I am looking here at school – the children are all mixing. My son is sleeping at the white house and there is changes - and when the black gets hurt the white help him and kiss him. Yes I can see that democracy is going to work.

The figure below depicts the participants' views and opinions regarding 'freedom'.

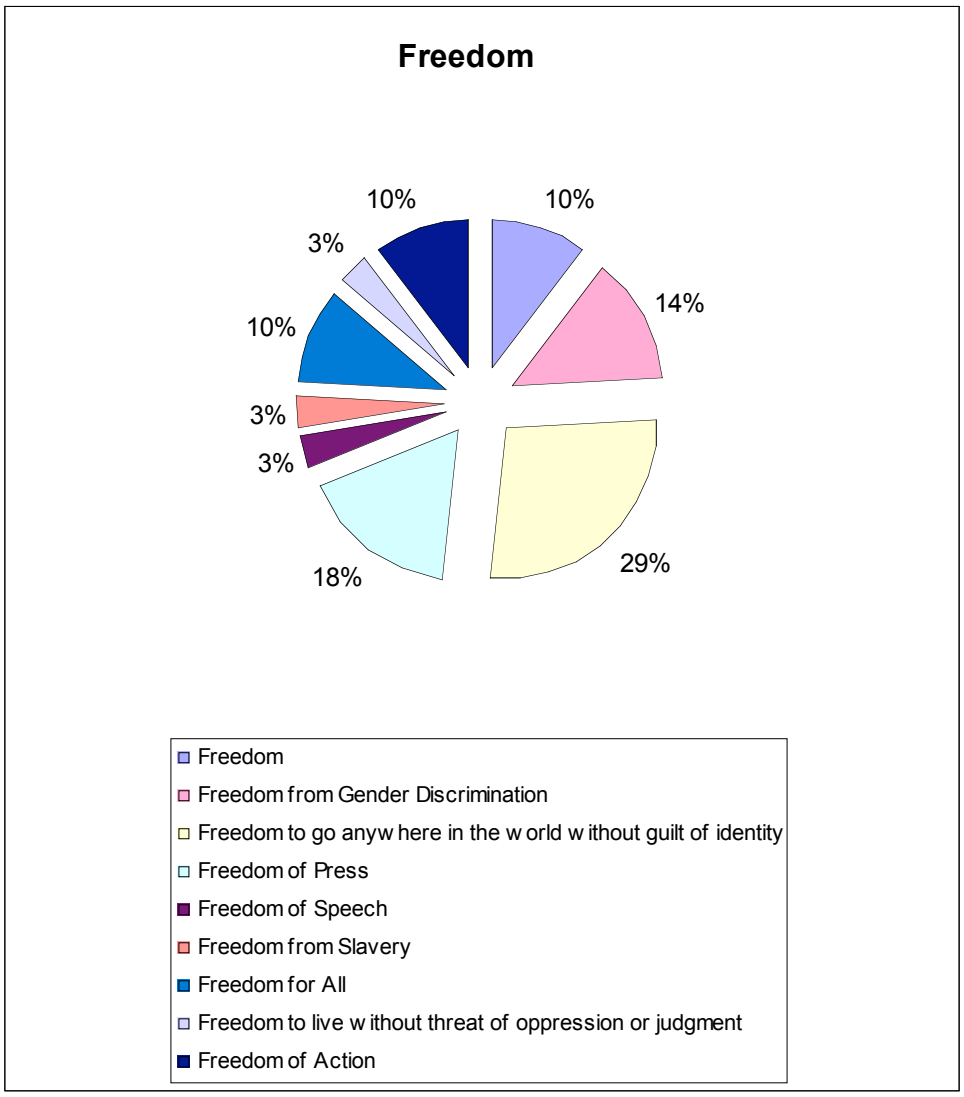


Figure 4.7 Participants Perception of the term 'Freedom'

The white participants, although voicing many of the same sentiments as the black participants, often showed a differing perspective and spoke about freedom in a more general or universal sense. Issues such as the freedom to visit other countries without sanction, the freedom of the press and freedom of opportunity for the "previously disadvantaged" were discussed. They spoke of a growing freedom from guilt and the release of being able to integrate legally with any race group. The whites also predominantly expressed happiness about the changed status of South Africa which allowed for equality, but their feelings were strongly tinged with a sense of relief. As one participant put it, *"I was so tired of feeling guilty about what was happening in South Africa before"*.

Both racial groups mentioned freedom from gender discrimination. However, blacks discussed freedom in relation to career opportunities and human rights such as recourse to legal action when abused whereas the whites, predominantly mentioned freedom from job and wage discrimination – but with reservations. This will be discussed in section 4.2.8 Affirmative Action.

Participants when dealing with the learners voiced that it was at times difficult to interpret for their children what freedom meant as issues such as crime were curtailing their personal freedom. As one participant put it "*Even our own children are fearing our own people now because of crime. We have to teach them to fear. It is terrible"*. All the participants feared for their children's safety and many of the older participants talked about the past, when as children they could *"roam the streets with safety"*. They discussed how on one hand many of the children were more worldly because of globalisation, yet on the other hand how they were more dependent and insular as they had *"never had the chance to walk down the street on their own – parents are now incredibly protective and this spreads into all sorts of areas. They carry their children's bags for example, taking away their feelings of independence and self worth"*. Schools are now having to do increasing parent counseling and training to try counteract this trend. Participants also mention that small freedoms such as being able to get out of the car to open the gate were now often not deemed safe and these increasing and continuous restrictions on children's activities were impacting on the children emotionally, socially and physically - and therefore

cognitively. ECD practitioners were having to find alternate tasks and activities to make the learners feel empowered.

4.2.6 Opportunities

When discussing transformation and diversity issues a few (3 out of 14) of the black participants mentioned improved opportunities. For example: *"We have the opportunity to be educated. We need to read the papers, increase our knowledge, get educated so we can get to know what is happening and education can open the doors to everything".* The majority discussed general opportunities and not particularly educational opportunities for themselves but opportunities such as health benefits and free education for their children. The participants felt to a certain extent, they had the improved opportunity to have what Nussbaum (2000, p.78) termed – "bodily health, nourishment and shelter" but were aware that this was not the case for many South Africans. The reality is that many of the primary stages in Maslow's Hierachy of Needs (Wikipaedia, 2001, p.1) are not being met in many South African communities, i.e. basic life needs such as food, shelter, warmth, security etc. In the ECD sector this can have drastic repercussions as it is at this level that much of children cognitive and physical development occurs.

The issue of equal opportunities with regard to improving educational standards was heavily emphasised by the white participants with a strong inference that it was for previously disadvantaged South Africans. All saw this as a very positive development and something that the country desperately needed in order to run effectively as a liberal democratic society. This sentiment is reflected in the following critical incident in which a participant relates an incident in her past (1980's) which had long reaching educational and personal implications for her.

> *I was the only white staff member at the school and I noticed at tea break that all the other teachers were sitting quietly studying or working on assignments. They all had this drive to improve their qualifications and thereby improving their salaries and their position on the educational career ladder. Just by virtue of being white my basic qualification of the four year diploma, was already superior to the three year basic qualification available to blacks.*

> *When I showed complacency about my achievement and showed no desire to extend it they were shocked but at the same time, encouraged me not to be this way and to study further. I was humbled by their generosity of spirit and the absence of any ill feeling towards me and my white privileged status. A week later a package arrived in the post from UNISA and I found myself being pushed onto a new path which led to opportunities both personal and career wise and not only expanded my boundaries but showed me how limitless they were. I would not be the same person today if it weren't for those dedicated people who by their actions and their encouragement, caused that paradigm shift in my thinking and pushed me out of my state of complacency into a state of awareness.*

However, both in this section, and in the section 4.2.5 Freedom, although the black participants discussed the freedom to pursue career opportunities many were finding the realities of doing this difficult to pursue. This issue is discussed further in section 4.4.3.1 Education.

4.2.7 Children's Act/Children's Rights and Freedom

The impact of the Children's Act was introduced exclusively by black participants when asked to discuss issues concerning change and democracy. Seven of the black participants, all of whom had teenage children of their own, felt it had given their children too much freedom and disempowered them as parents. Participants made the following comments:

- *Children are given too many powers.*
- *They say – we are now free, we can do what we like.*
- *You tell them not to take drugs and drink and to use condoms and they laugh at you.*
- *You cannot control them with discipline, they call out the Childline phone number to you and say – "you cannot tell us what to do – this is a democracy, we have rights, we are free".*
- *I have lost control of my children. Even though you are trying to help them they say you are abusing me. You cannot help them. No respect, no nothing.*

They look at you like you stupid. The high school girls – how are they going to bring up their children?

- *How are they going to run the country. I am very worried about this. There is no control.*

- *The Children's act in the constitution has made us lose control of our children. They no longer respect us and are taking drugs and doing all sorts of bad things. If we try to discipline them they tell us that it is a democracy and that they have rights and they even quote the childline number to us. We are now frightened of our children and scared about the future. They are our future leaders and they are out of control.*

The implications and some solutions regarding this issue are discussed in full in APPENDIX H. However, regarding the ECD sector, it may well be advisable for educators and parents to be aware of the current concerns regarding teenagers and implement some of these same measures in ECD programmes with both educators and parents to avoid present ECD learners from presenting the similar problems and creating the same issues in the future.

4.2.8 Affirmative Action

Affirmative action was mentioned by one black participant when discussing democratic issues such as equal rights and the implementation of change. She felt that *"black people need to work a lot harder to achieve success and the country is suffering because people do not have the necessary skills to do all jobs adequately. It takes time and training"*. However, 50% of the white participants felt that their career and educational opportunities, and those of their family members, were curtailed by affirmative action and they were not being treated with equality. They said that many of their needs, such as Maslow's Safety, Esteem and Self Actualisation Needs (Wikipaedia, 2001, p.1) were not being met and in many cases felt threatened. The whites were particularly concerned about how affirmative action was affecting white men in society and the lack of career opportunities for their children and the resultant flow of "*badly needed"* skills out of the country. They say that the children are being taught about equality and democracy at school but at the same time their parents are losing their jobs because of the colour of their skins. This was resulting in feelings of insecurity and in a feeling of not belonging. They felt that their democratic rights were being abused and that transformation should benefit all South

Africans. One of the participants emigrated to Australia due to her husband being retrenched as a result of affirmative action and she said *"it's hard to keep smiling and looking positive with the children in your class when you are so sad and worried"*. Comments were made such as the following:

- *In a democracy there should be equal opportunities based on abilities.*
- *Affirmative action has taken away equal opportunities for all.*
- *There are better opportunities for all but especially for African people.*
- *Professional people are leaving the country in droves. The brains of the country have left and have made their lives elsewhere.*
- *Rights mean responsibilities and there are times when you have to draw the line between what you feel are your rights and where your rights may be damaging the rights of the people generally – like all these constant strikes. They are damaging the economy. Somewhere along the line they have to draw the line.*
- *I am a black but when I want help in a shop I ask a white because they help you straight away and know what you want.*

4.2.9 Franchise

The black participants did not mention gaining the vote and achieving a democratic government as one of the issues of democracy whereas 7 of the white participants discussed the matter of franchise and how, on one side they knew it was *"the right thing for everyone to have the vote"* yet on the other side, they felt it was not really working for them. On further questioning it appears that the white participants feel powerless as they are a minority group so feel they have no say in government. They do feel the blacks have a say and have some power. However, all but one of the black participants felt equally powerless as they feel that the government is not working for them either. Nussbaum's (2002, p.78) final point in her list of capabilities necessary to be present in a liberal democracy is "Control over One's Environment - have

franchise with protection of free speech and association." This is supported by Hall (1989, p.184) who emphasises "the right of the people to control political power by democratic means". However the participants in this study, were on the whole, not feeling the benefits of having the vote. Both groups feel that the government is fuelled by party, tribal or personal interest and as a result the concept of *"one man one vote is a non-issue as we are not seen equally"*.

As an aside, the caretaker of one of the schools (see section 5.2.1 Research Design and Methods: Strengths and Weaknesses) said to me that tribal stereotypes were very evident in everyday life for the black people and even portrayed on TV. He himself is 'Pedi', and said that 'Pedi'people were often portrayed as stupid and ones "*who washed under a tap"*. He explained that this was a way of inferring that they were considered inferior. "*Superior people washed in a bathroom"*.

In Conclusion – Reflections of the Past

This section concentrates particularly on reflections made by a participant who would have been 33 years old in 1994. She encapsulates much of what the other participates voiced in more general manner when asked if democratic behaviour was a reality in South Africa. This participant reflected that she had seen significant changes and one of the first was *"the miracle that white people on the edge of liberalism realised that they could acknowledge liberalism without losing their lives or their jobs"*. At the time of the elections she was working at Khumbula High School in Kabokweni (White River area) and was one of a minority of whites. She commented that at the time *"the wonder of transformation was evident – people celebrating diversity - because in this predominantly black community, people now treated one another differently and there was a sense of celebration of the rainbow nation"*. However, on returning to Johannesburg in the late 90's, she found that democracy was working, but often only in certain sectors and in these sectors there was *"huge transformation and where it is working it is wonderful to observe"*. Other sectors were totally resistant and *"far behind in comparison"* to the predominantly black community she had just left.

> *I had never faced racialism to the level that was evident to me in the late 90's in many of the upper northern suburbs where people were buying in the private school sector where they could dictate*

> *school demographics - and I was shattered that so deep into a liberal environment that it was happening. Even today I find that people drawn from these suburbs are far more active with tongue but very inactive in action. Do they really honour democracy? Do they really honour the rainbow nation? I think a lot of them speak about it but don't engage and honour expectations that our society has placed on us – to be truly integrated – and it worries me.*

However, she acknowledges that transformation is difficult for a democracy in a country so new with so much *"historical pain and rage"* and she says with pride and hope *"the wonder of this generation, is that for so long we were part of a pariah state but now can be proud to be South African. I celebrate my cultural identity as a South African in a country that is acknowledged as being transformational at a level that no other country in the world has got right – and that is the wonder of being South African"*.

SECTION 4.3 Socialising Factors affecting ECD Practice

With relation to democracy, developing democratic characters and living and practicing democratic ideals, many of the participants acknowledge that the socialising influences of the past colours their perceptions, actions and understanding. When asked whether their attitudes and perceptions had changed since the advent of democracy, half of the white participants said no, whereas the majority of blacks said yes. As one of the white participants commented, "*democracy is young, we have a long way to go with learning how to treat everyone properly, but it will happen eventually",* and "t*here is no general standard about how people treat each other and their relationships and behaviour with people. It depends on how the person was brought up – it is up to the individual*".

Language, education and community were identified as the main socialising factors influencing ECD practice, however these in turn were influenced by the respective

age of the participant. The table below differentiates the participants into two main age groups: 29 years and under; 30 years and over.

Table 4.2 Age Group of Participants (n=38)

	Age Group			
	29 years and under		30 years and over	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Black Participants	6	16	8	21
White Participants	17	45	7	18

4.3.1 Significance of Age in Participants

Age Group 29 years and under

The 'young' white participants on the whole seemed to feel generally 'untouched' by the past. The bulk of their schooling took place during the apartheid era or newly into it, and they have only a vague idea of the realities of what happened in the past. As one participant stated *"We were oblivious to a lot of what was going on"*. Participants like her were too old to have encountered the new curriculum at school, and too young to have experienced apartheid with real comprehension. They are cautiously positive about South Africa's future and the new democracy. The young black participants, particularly those who were raised in an urban environment, are more aware of any injustices of the past but again, often state that they were too young to have had first hand experience of apartheid as adults. They can however, recall events recounted by their elders and are very aware of the changed circumstances democracy has brought about. They too are cautiously positive about the future of democracy in South Africa. They generally don't find communicating with each other a problem as *"most people speak English in the world today and so do we so, like, it's OK"* but the whites did wish that they spoke a "black language" fluently.

Nearly all young participants, black and white, state that *"at home and socially"* they have friends from varying race groups. *"I love it that we can mix socially and enjoy each others cultures – music and such"*. One young participant likes to go to Newtown with her friends of all races and another mentioned that she had to *"get over being influenced by other family members and how they felt about different races."* Another said some of their parents *"find it very difficult that their grown children are going out with black friends and having black boyfriends"*. I asked what they did about this and the one participant shrugged and said *"Ag, they must just like get over it!"*. However, apart from school functions, none of the participants mixed socially with each other. This is discussed further in sections 4.4.3.1/2/3 – Education, Cultural Differences and Economic Considerations.

Age Group 30 years and over

The older black participants are very aware of all the changes democracy has brought about and in particular, where change ought to have happened but hasn't. They delight in the genuine changes and have a far deeper, grassroots appreciation of basic rights as opposed to idealistic rights. They are deeply appreciative of the fact that their own children don't have to "suffer poor education" the way they did. The following incident (1988) illustrates this sentiment:

> *When I was in high school I remember these white primary school children 9 or 10 years of age. They came to meet us and see the difference. I was 20 years old in Std 9. In the apartheid my mother could not get me into school at the right age. They kept sending her away and saying I was too small because I was little but I was the right age. They (the white children) see what was on the board and they say "ooo you are still doing this we did this long ago" and they were primary children and we were high school already. I felt terrible. We didn't feel good – we expected to teach them something. They said things about the school that were not nice. They were not being horrible, they were shocked and you could see they were feeling sorry for us. I was very*

> *embarrassed. I think it showed them to appreciate what they had. They looked at the school buildings and they were surprised because they were so little compared to what they had. I have never forgot and it was 20 years ago. I never wanted my children to feel that shame so I made sure they go to white schools.*

All the older participants were more perceptive when it came to liberal democratic 'window dressing' with regard to transformation and the implementation of legitimate change. However, possibly because of cultural differences and past socialising influences, there are many gaps in basic understanding of what both groups perceive as liberal democratic behaviour. This is illustrated in more detail in section 4.4.1 Democratic Practices in the Workplace. Generally almost all the participants felt *"disappointment about many of the realities of democracy in South Africa, such as crime, and an unnecessary drop in standards with regard to services and corruption"* and many stated that if they could emigrate, they would and furthermore, they would encourage their children to do so too. Dubai was a favoured destination amongst many of the black participants, whereas the whites favoured Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom.

The older white participants recognised that they grew up with little or no integration and are very aware that they didn't think about the difference in circumstances between the differing racial groups when younger. *"As a child we never discussed personal circumstances with each other". "I remember they had to have passes and that they lived in small rooms while we lived in big houses. I accepted it at the time. It was just what was done. We played with the domestics' black children in our house but didn't think about what would happen to them – we just assumed they were like us. We were never made to think. We didn't realise. We never took it deeper".* These participants are now far more aware of the realities of what went on in the past and are perceptive about the realities of the situation. *"There is real unity now as we see people as real beings. Before we didn't think about it. We are able to care more about people now as we have got to know them and about their lives. We have legitimate contact as equals".* Another participant said *"I still feel guilty about what happened and embarrassed – when I think of things like the literature…".* A

reflection made was that *"It is really difficult for a country that is so new . The Truth and Reconciliation Commission did a lot but for others we have to go several generations before we can truly say we have got to a point where we have got a true democracy and people are really valued for what and who they are. Right now there is too much that is masked and put behind closed doors, but it is still there"*. Another participant supports this by observing that *"transition was maybe made too easy for the whites and we have never been made to face the true realities of the past"*. These older participants are generally disillusioned about democracy and predominantly cautious about the future.

The older participants, black and white, often stated that they *"are friendly with different races but, on the whole, don't have friends of different races"*.
Comments made by one of the black participants:

> *We find it hard to talk freely in front of the whites and to whites – why? We don't know how they will react. We just don't feel free to talk – we don't have trust. I am scared to have a white friend. Is she going to treat me differently or the same? We are friendly but not friends. I feel people would look at me "funny" if I had a white friend and go shopping with a white friend - and say hey, what is she doing with the whites. I think both the whites and the blacks would look at me funny. If I had a white friend I think I would be suspicious about why she wants to be my friend. I would not go to a white persons house and feel comfortable. With blacks it is quick. At the parties the whites talk to me but I am suspicious – are they really accepting me? I was told by a white friend from the church that the bible say we have to love our sister and to hug each other. I would hug – but my sister? NO. It takes time. It takes time.*

When asked to think of her best friend and imagine if that friend suddenly turned white but was still the same person 'inside' then asked - would you still be her friend? The response was - *"I don't know. I don't know"*. She felt that it was due to incidents in her past, such as the following, that caused her to feel this way:

1. 1960's.

My cousin – the children used to take him and put metal stakes and they would swing him and throw him on the stakes. My gogo's bosses children, whites, and they were quite old, they had their own children. They would take him at night when it was cold and throw him into the pool and he was crying. He was about 14.

2. Late 1970's.

I would say Ellie, before 1994 my experience was different – I would hate any white people. I remember I went into a park, there was a little girl, not so little about my age, 8, and she was walking a dog and she let the dog go and said ***catch her, catch her*** *and I was so angry and I hit the dog and she came up and shouted at me and hit me on the face. My mom was so angry she said – you mustn't do that. I didn't understand. But I was very angry with white people, why must they treat us like this? I have never forgotten it. I knew that this was not right. I couldn't understand why my mother was cross with me. I was very angry.*

3. Late 1980's.

We didn't have anywhere to live, we were staying in the room of a house of a white man and he said he didn't want children there. We didn't have anything and anywhere to go. Then a white lady came from Cape-Town and she took us, and that is where I start to see that you could love white people. I saw that there were good and bad people of all colours. She went to prison 3 times to save the black people. Things changed there. We are family. In 1994 she made us watch Mandela being released. She said it was important. I am glad she made us do this. I will never forget it.

In spite of voicing a sense of unfamiliarity about mixing socially with other races, - *"Integration when first started felt a bit strange but was accepted. However, I feel*

more comfortable with white friends" - the participants, black and white, stated that they enjoyed conversing and interacting with each other. *"Democracy has meant that there is more diversity with religion and cultures and that is a challenge and exciting and enriching". "We enjoy the fact that we are now exposed to all nationalities and cultures" and that it is "enriching to have got away from that narrow-minded way of thinking".*

4.3.2 Language

The issue of language is far greater with the older participants. There is a real sense of regret amongst the older white participants that they don't speak a black language and that they should learn one as they feel that it not only retards their ability to promote democratic practices such as transformation and diversity but also those of the entire nation. *"But at our age it is not so easy, especially when everyone can speak English, it removes the immediate sense of urgency".* The white participants on a social level often feel excluded when their black colleagues speak to each other in their *"own language"* and the black participants feel that they should have the right to speak their first language when they wish. When asked if either group had discussed these issues the answer was *"no – we don't feel comfortable enough with each other to discuss it".* On another level, many of the black practitioners felt aggrieved that they were not given formal teaching posts and did not understand why. When I asked management about this, the reason given, apart from inadequate levels of tertiary education, was poor English language skills.

4.3.3 School Education

Most of the participants (58%) attended state schooling, while 27% went to private schools. 15% went to a mixture of both. Many of the white participants who went to private schools mentioned that it had influenced them in a positive way when faced with issues of democracy regarding change, transformation and diversity. *"It taught us that we had to treat everyone liberally"* and felt the early exposure to integration with other race groups, even though minimal, assisted them later on when dealing with issues in the new democracy. I was told that private schooling provided *"some knowledge that what happened in the past was wrong".* The participants who went to private schools also discussed issues around change and that *"it takes time".*

White participants who went to state schools generally mentioned that they had had little exposure to different race groups and were not confronted with issues concerning apartheid which made it harder to deal with diversity issues. One participant when questioned more closely said *"We were oblivious of what happened. We didn't think about the fact that separation was enforced. We never learned about what really happened. We still don't really know".*

4.3.4 Community

Both black and white participants agree that peoples' attitudes towards them had not changed much since democracy. Although parents from the schools concerned were not interviewed in this study, the principals of the schools, all of whom are white, said that the parents fell into four categories:

1. The genuinely democratic parents who treat everyone as equals with a real depth of understanding of the concept of democracy and the value of each individual.
2. The parents who wish to appear liberal and democratic and treat all the staff equally, but more than likely treat their own domestic staff with discrimination. This can be observed by the way their children treat the black practitioners at school and also how these children treat the domestic staff and nannies who come to the school at 'bringing and fetching time'.
3. A growing group of parents who are totally oblivious to all issues and treat all staff, white and black, with a casual disrespect because they are *"too busy following their careers and making money to think about it"*.
4. The genuinely racist parents who make no bones about the fact that they disapprove of integration to their children and the educators. On the whole this category of parents are white but there have been black parents doing the same.

The black practitioners on the whole felt that the majority of parents treated them democratically and as equals and were very aware of the few that didn't. *"Most are*

happy and there is no colour but some always when they come they give the children only to the white. I don't know why they do this, maybe they don't trust us".
The white practitioners, apart from the principals, perceived little overt undemocratic behaviour with regard to the parents. Certain parents, in spite of counselling, struggle to cope with the changes democracy has brought about and never fully comply with the schools policy on democratic behaviour. *"In these cases we just continue to show both the parents and the children that we do not agree with this behaviour and hope that our attitudes will influence the children rather than the parents attitude".*

There seems to be little interaction between parents of different races when there is a perceived difference in educational and job status. At functions these parents are friendly with each other and greet each other but seldom converse or socialise with any depth. When the parents are perceived to be of "*equal status*," there seems to be genuine interaction and no sense of "*holding back"*. Parents, who are domestic workers or nannies, are wonderful parents when it comes to volunteering for school activities but often get relegated into doing the more menial tasks and excluded from the decision-making by the more affluent parents who are in charge of the function or event. This seems to be done more through thoughtlessness than racism. In these cases the excluded parents have to be *"tactfully brought back in after discussion with the affluent parents about inclusion".*

With regard to the socialising influence of the parents on their children, there was a very positive response from the participants. Apart from a few exceptions, most felt that the parents were starting to embrace democracy and democratic practices. According to the participants, the pre-school parents really like it that their children have friends of all races and treat everyone equally. The participants themselves who are parents, without prompting, talked about the fact that they are delighted that their young children have friends of all races and that there is *"genuine interaction"* and truly appreciate that the white children, unless influenced by their parents, do not discriminate on the basis of colour.

- *"My daughter invite everyone to her party, she has lots of friends. All colours. She sees colours but just as a fact. She calls black children chocolate and white children yellow".*

- *"I am grateful that my children are mixing and about all the positive changes".*

In the few exceptions where racist behaviour was displayed by the children, it could be traced back to the parents. Several participants noted that *"The children see no difference unless it comes from the parents". "We try to talk to the parents but it is difficult to stop what they do at home. They are fortunately in the vast minority but they are there". "We have noticed that some the children will be ruder to the assistants because they don't see the authority in them and I heard a child saying to one of them, "I am not your friend because you are black". They get this from the parents. We have had a parent who has told us that he will never let his children associate with blacks".*

When undemocratic behaviour happens, the parents are called in and told *"in no uncertain terms"* that it is not acceptable. The principals and practitioners counsel the parents on appropriate modelling whether the parents believe in it or not. On the whole these parents comply. The proof of this is that pre-school children are incapable of prolonged subterfuge and their subsequent behaviour and attitudes give an accurate indication of what was being modelled to them at home, both positive and negative.

Glover (in Dau, 2001, p.2) states that growing research evidence shows that young children "*do notice* and *do care about the difference"* but only learn bias from interaction with their families and communities. According to the ECD practitioners, their learners are, as a participant says, *"the hope for our future" as they "see no problems in life – everybody is equal, even if they are rich or if they are poor or if they are black or if they are white".* Every practitioner, without exception, agrees that their learners, unless influenced by their parents or families, are ruled by the immediacy of what they personally want out of life and not by issues such as race,

status, language or colour. This is supported by Glover (in Dau, 2001, p.5) who states that children learn to be biased, and much of this learning occurs during their early socialisation and enculturation. Depending on how they are socialised by their immediate community - primarily parents and school - the manner in which they behave towards each other is affected. As previously mentioned, there is little or no subterfuge with small children. *"With children this age, generally, unless there is a deeper problem, what you see is what you get – positive and negative"*. Other practitioners agree with this and say that they feel that the role of educators is to either counteract or support the actions of the children by modeling appropriate democratic behaviour at all times. This aspect will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

SECTION 4.4 Issues Relating to Implementing of Change

This section discusses and analyses the various issues raised by the participants with regard to implementing democratic practices in the workplace, particularly concerning diversity, both with the learners and practitioners in the ECD context.

4.4.1 Democratic Practices in the Workplace

Concerning Learners.

When asked whether they, as ECD practitioners, have changed the way they work with children since the advent of democracy, the majority of both black and white participants said "*no*". The reason given was that they felt they had always behaved in a democratic manner concerning their learners and therefore the advent of democracy did not change this. Their democratic practice in a time of legislated separation could perhaps be linked to the tendency to generally accept young children (pre-school age) of all races even during apartheid. As one participant pointed out, their domestic workers small children grew up with her and her siblings until school going age at 6 years of age. She said that they played with them all the time and their parents took them all on outings and they were all given presents etc. They didn't see any discrimination in their parents' behaviour towards small children. *"They were cute – we used to play dressing up games – now I come to think of it, we always led*

the games and decided what to do. But the adults in our life were always kind to them, and in our eyes, showed acceptance".

A further reason for perceived unchanged democratic behaviour towards learners by practitioners could be that many of the emotional and social skills (lifeskills) emphasised in ECD practitioner training, (even in the apartheid era) are mirrored in many the values listed in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (DoE, 2001a, pp.12-15). Values such as Equality, Non-Sexism, Ubuntu and Accountability. One of the principals who trained at the Johannesburg College of Education in the early 1980's said that she remembers clearly the Pre-Primary Head of Department, Jenifer Hallett, explaining how women were discriminated against in the teaching profession by losing all grants the minute they got married, by being passed over for promotion in favour of male teachers etc. *"I remember Miss Hallett warning us not to pass on the same sort prejudices to our learners – to be constantly aware – to make them all feel equal. She said even things like saying - please can I have some big strong boys to help me - was insidiously inferring to the learners that boys were strong and girls were weak".*

However the practitioners recognised, as one participant put it, *"We all come with baggage, none of us are free from it but we have to control it. We are here for the children – we are not here about an ego trip – we are here to make sure that they grow up as much as they can. That they are seduced by learning and buoyant about learning, that they want to go out and do the best they can without being* ***too*** *perfect or* ***too*** *anything but just being* ***too*** *enthusiastic".* This participant is one of the older educators and is spoken about by those who know her - colleagues, fellow educational practitioners, parents and learners – with admiration, love and respect. Yet she could easily have been lost to the teaching community as her critical incident shows. The following was told to illustrate how important it is for educational practitioners to model the positive and not the negative. That is, to model liberal democratic behaviour with all its values in order to promote the maximum learning experiences to benefit the learners:

> *This was when I was training to teach and the lecturer assessing one of my lessons (and I know when you are learning that some of your*

> *lessons flop), said to me "never mind Miss X one day you will get married and you will never have to teach again." I want to tell you that my life has been driven by teaching and I have supported my family through teaching since 1966. That one thing that he said – when I think about it now – I thought I must give it up now – but I had taken out a loan and I had to pay it back so I had to carry on – otherwise I might well have given up. I think discouragement either spurs you on or discourages you and I don't care whether you are 5, 15 or 50 that sort of thing is very sad. I think of people like Gary Player and his school reports. A teacher can make or break. You have to really think what you say – you cannot judge.*

This participant concludes by saying *"We often don't realise it but as educators we have enormous influence and have to be very careful about what we say. One of the big changes that the new system has brought about is that teachers are not allowed to say discouraging things these days either to the parents or the children and I am very glad about it. You can be honest without being discouraging".*

Without exception, all the practitioners said that the primary method they used for promoting democratic behaviour in their learners was by displaying it themselves in their words and actions and this had not changed since the advent of democracy – it was something that they had always done. When asked if the inclusion of children of different races and cultures had changed their behaviour in this particular regard, all the practitioners answered "*No*". They made the following comments:

- *Children observe our behaviour so even if they are not listening respectfully to the other children they still see us doing it. We also make sure that we listen respectfully to our colleagues and the parents and are always polite to everyone.*

- *When there is a conflict situation we always listen to both sides of the story to make sure that everything is fair and we make sure the children are part of this process.*

- *We treat belongings with respect and encourage the children to do the same. We make them responsible for looking after the toys and school equipment and if it gets lost or broken we discuss the situation and what should be done to prevent it happening again.*

- *We model the appropriate behaviour and are very disapproving about disrespectful behaviour to each other and to the adults.*
- *The children treat each other equally as long as the adults around them do so.*

Apart from modelling the appropriate behaviour, the practitioners use tools such as books, games and role play. A game such as 'musical chairs' was given as an example as it teaches the children to co-operate in a group – to play fairly and to lose with good grace and to ultimately honour the winner. *"We give appropriate and realistic praise and affirmation. We show the children how great we think they are when they share and are kind to the other children". "Games teach the children to work as a team, give each other equal chances, share equipment, help each other, etc. The aim is to teach the children that playing the game is important not winning and even though winning is fun, it is also nice to let your friends have a chance to be a winner sometimes but to nonetheless respect everyone's achievements and efforts".*

Several participants mentioned that over the last few years many parents were not instilling the right values in their children. The reasons given were mainly those that both parents worked so were lenient with the children when they saw them. Some parents also mistakenly saw anti-social behaviour as "*character*". The participants found that they were now having to take on the primary role model for promoting democratic behaviour rather than that of the supporting role.

Concerning Practitioners

The table below reflects the perceptions of practitioners concerning issues of change and transformation in the workplace with regard to democratic practices.

Table 4.3 Perceptions of Change in the Workplace

	No Change (%)		**Change (%)**	
	≤ 30 years	> 30 years	≤ 30 years	> 30 years
Blacks	8	22	3	5
Whites	27	5	8	22

Interestingly it was the younger whites and older black practitioners who gave a negative response regarding change and transformation in the workplace but for different reasons. The whites felt that this was because they had not experienced apartheid as adults and could therefore make little comparison. However, most of the black practitioners, though positive about democracy and democratic practice, felt that there were certain areas within the various workplaces, where these participants would like to see some changes. Their concerns are highlighted in section 4.4.3.4. Implications for the Learners.

Regarding general democratic behaviour and practices, all the participants felt that as *"decent human beings"* it was important to treat each other with respect and equality. However, unlike the black participants, all the white practitioners felt that this was happening to the full in the workplace and made comments such as *"Everyone is treated equally and democratically"* and *"It is fair. There is no division in our working environment. We are on an equal basis and we treat each other equally. We show respect and share."* Reasons for this discrepancy in perception of democratic behaviour is discussed in the following sections.

4.4.2 Transformation and Diversity

Since the advent of democracy, the schools have made a visible effort to implement democratic practices regarding transformation and diversity and have increased the number of black practitioners in their schools. A principal said that when she became head of her school in the apartheid era, nearly all the practitioners were white. Now 30 to 50% are from other racial groups. The white educators emphasised how all their schools promoted furthering the educational status of all the practitioners and supported them both financially and educationally whilst they did this. In many cases, all the practitioners, when possible, are invited to attend workshops, conferences, educational talks, etc. at which, amongst ECD issues, adult education issues such as management, leadership, change are addressed. Practitioners also attend conferences to improve inter-staff social and cultural understanding. None of these practices were in place under the previous regime and the white participants saw

these measures as a huge step towards promoting diversity and improving opportunities for all. The black participants felt that some of these measures are worthwhile but at the same time some are window dressing and are only a little useful. Again, this discrepancy in perceptions can be traced back to socialising influences, see section 2.5 Socialisation and Culture, as well as to a lack of genuine dialogue to promote understanding of basic issues on both sides. Measures to address this are discussed in Chapter 5.

A stumbling block with increasing the ratio of black teachers and putting them in formal teaching positions is the level of English skills as well as the quality of the qualifications gained in the apartheid era. Many of the white educators voiced the opinion that it would be *"much better if there were more qualified black teachers"* in their schools. However, at an educational/business level, the principals discussed the issue that there is a divide at a work level because of qualifications and *"it causes a natural separation at times because of job descriptions. It is unfortunate. Often the black teacher has the correct teaching qualifications but the English language skills and the quality of the qualifications are considered just not good enough which is an issue for parents, and therefore a business issue because we need parents to send their children to the school to keep it running. We rely on them for income. It is not the colour of the teacher's skin that worries parents – it is the English level and standard of the level of qualifications".*

As far as the learner base is concerned, all the schools have attempted to increase their ratio of children of different races by various means such as promoting the schools as multi-cultural and by offering scholarships. One school in particular has been decidedly successful in this area and 38% of its learners are children of colour. The principal attributes this to *"front of house promotion, that the school welcomes all races and word of mouth from parents once they are in the school and feel welcome and made a genuine part of the school so then promote it to other parents".* The white parents are also "*kept in the loop*" and provided with information about different cultures and what is happening in the school regarding diversity and transformation issues. A stumbling block with regard to developing more diversity amongst the learners is that of finance and demographics. The other schools have a diversity rate of approximately 15% to 20%. None of the schools get any outside

assistance and everything has to be financed by the parents. For many of the previously disadvantaged South Africans, this makes sending their children to these schools financially impossible.

When asked if the inclusion of children of different races and cultures had changed their behaviour in any way the educators responded that they have had to become a lot more aware of different cultural and religious practices. *"Through our actions we try to show to the children acceptance and to show that it is good to all be different. It makes life interesting but also that we must all respect and tolerate each other"*. The observation was made by one practitioner that it is the small things that often count a lot to the parents and children and said that she now, when saying grace before the meal, uses the word Lord instead of Jesus because it is more universal. *"We also talk about different religious festivals as they occur through the year"*. Some practitioners ask parents to come in to explain aspects of their culture. *"We do lots of travel themes to teach children about different countries and people to teach them about tolerance"*. One of the schools has started a Zulu language class for the children which one of the practitioners in the school runs and the other schools try and teach the children things such as greetings etc, in different languages.

Many of the practitioners observed that because children of this age group don't notice differences unless you point them out to them, you have to be careful not to make an issue of these differences – that there is a fine line between celebrating diversity and making a child stand out as different. *"Children see each person as an individual and not as member of a group and by emphasising that an individual is a member of a particular group you are making him 'different' and children don't want to be different, they just want to be who they are and get on and play with their friends". "It is more a case of respecting differences as they occur rather than pointing them out – children at this age generally don't notice or care".* Many practitioners voiced that they were sure they could be doing more in this area but they were often not sure exactly what. *"We are learning as we go along". "We could be doing more – we should be doing more".*

4.4.3 Discrepancies and Contradictions

Many of the findings in the above sections 4.4.1. and 4.4.2 are in stark contradiction with each other and these contradictions, it will be argued, can often be traced back to the socialising influences of the past under the apartheid regime.

4.4.3.1 Education

As can be seen from the above sections, all of the black participants perceive that they are not treated equally in many respects. They do recognises that in most cases their qualifications are not as extensive due to apartheid policies. To illustrate, in 1953 the newly elected National Party allocated only R13 million a year to 'Bantu Education'. This meant that for every R1 spent on a black child, between R4 to R8 was spent on a white child over the same period of time. However the black participants felt that their qualifications should be given more recognition and that everyone should be given equal status, not necessarily financially, but definitely in every other way. They were also very aware that the learners seemed to be aware of the perceived difference in status and at times treated them with less respect. This has been noted by the white principals who commented: *"We have noticed that some the children will be ruder to the assistants because they don't see the authority in them"*. The whites generally felt that advanced qualifications should be given extra recognition and felt that the blacks now have the opportunities to obtain these qualifications. The white participants however, rarely seemed to perceive the difficulties facing the black participants in doing this. Difficulties such as having families to raise and support - often single handed - transport costs, study costs, learning in a second language and often coping with concepts that are difficult to understand, not having had the schooling benefits that the white educators received as children and adults. Measures to address this will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.4.3.2 Cultural Differences

The black participants voiced many positive aspects about the realities of democracy such as those mentioned in section 4.2.1 'Equality'. However, on the whole, they discussed them more in the light of general society than in their working life as can be seen from the points they raised in section 4.4.1 '*Concerning Practitioners'*. Many still felt sidelined at social events both by their fellow white practitioners and by the white parents. As Groenewald (1996, p.19) explains: "In South Africa exaggerated

ethnocentrism of whites towards blacks and other people of colour is a product of centuries of stereotypes and prejudices. This sharp edge to ethnocentrism makes the complicated blend of beliefs and attitudes a very difficult problem to handle in intercultural relations". The whites also often felt sidelined because of not understanding a 'black' language. Both groups voiced that although the situation was much improved, they still did not feel totally comfortable and trusting with each other. They felt that this was due to their upbringing and cultural differences in their customs and lack of familiarity with each others customs - supporting what Steve Biko wrote in his book, *I Write what I like* (Printed in 1996, p. 27) in that he had lived all his conscious life in the framework of institutionalised separate development; that his friendships, love, education, thinking and every other facet of his life had been carved and shaped within the context of separate development.

4.4.3.3 Economic and Logistical Considerations

As previously stated, most of the participants were raised in the apartheid era and either suffered or benefited economically. "According to a United Nations Development Programme report released in May 2004, nearly 22 million South Africans (58.5% of the population) fell below the poverty line" (in Spreen & Vally, 2006, p.354). Although none of the participants in this study would fall into this category, there is still a considerable gap in the economic realities between many of the participants, which can be traced back to the realities of apartheid. Due to diminished opportunities resulting in lower qualifications, many black participants get lower salaries and can therefore not afford to live in more affluent areas and often have to live further away than the whites from their place of work. Transport costs add an extra financial and time burden. Due to the advantages of apartheid, whites were generally already established in the more affluent areas pre-1994 and had the choice to live close to where they worked, plus most had the economic means to learn to drive and own a car. Many black participants were never afforded the opportunity to learn to drive and still can't afford cars so have to rely on public transport, again adding to the financial burden. How this impacts on the social relationships between the races is often purely economic and practical. For example, black participants can often not afford to socialise with the whites, nor do they find it easy to socialise in the areas that the whites socialise because of logistical difficulties

of getting home afterwards. As a result, despite the legal freedom to do so, little social interaction happens between the races within the school community.

4.4.3.4 Implications for the Learners

ECD practitioners are all tasked with promoting a liberal democracy and celebrating diversity. The findings show that within the school setting, many of the practitioners have implemented many practical measures such as ensuring that the doll's corner is representative of all races. However, there are more subtle issues and practices of which the black participants are aware and which they feel affect the learners. The white participants, on the other hand, do not seem aware of these practices or of their possible effects.

Practices, such as the following, described by the black participants:

- *We sit separately at functions. We don't have to but we just don't feel comfortable and we don't feel invited.*

- *We are not treated equally. Some whites feel uncomfortable hugging us. We are allowed to use the same facilities but when we do we know they look at us funny and we feel uncomfortable.*

- *We have meetings together but all the decisions are made by the whites we never have a say. We are too scared to have a say. Often decisions are made and we are just told about them at the last minute and not asked how we feel.*

- *We are never invited to meetings with the whites – we are just told what to do afterwards and have no say. We do not feel like a team. Why do you think this is so – do the whites realise that they are doing this – "Of course they do?" I don't know why they do this – maybe they don't trust black people.*

- *When new whites comes into the school they are still put in charge by management when they come into the school. Even when we are superior in knowledge. Even when we have to teach the new whites what to do.*

- *When black people come to the school gate the caretaker always has to go and check them out before letting them into the school and be with them when in the school. I know crime and security is a problem but even so, we should still send him out for all the parents, white and black so they don't notice a difference, and our children don't notice a difference.*

The black participants feel that the children notice these things and that they affect the children's perceptions of the different races. They also feel that as role models, the issues above, (mentioned in section 4.4.2) give a poor example of democratic behaviour which the children may well notice and emulate.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter discusses recommendations in relation to the relevant literature and research findings with special reference to democratic practices in the ECD workplace. The study's conclusion includes reflections on the strength and weaknesses of the research design and offers suggestions for further research. New questions raised by the data and analysis that had not been foreseen earlier in the study are discussed and pertinent findings highlighted. Personal reflections conclude this section.

5.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been compiled from suggestions proposed by experts in the field, myself as researcher and the practitioners in this study who were enthusiastic about providing support and assistance and generous about sharing their expertise and ideas - a genuine instance of *ubuntu* at work.

5.1.1 Strategic Planning

Schools are responsible to a diverse set of stakeholders and have responsibilities to all of them. The parents, the learners, the community, the board of governors, to name but a few. Striking an acceptable balance between its responsibilities to these groups and keeping the business on a firm financial footing is one of management's most important roles. The principals of the schools, all *adhocratic organisations, discussed the challenges concerning these issues and suggested the following strategies (Table 5.1) to assist in this area.

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*Adhocratic – responding to urgent problems rather than planning to avoid them.

5.1.2 Strategies to Improve Democratic Practice

Table 5.1 Strategies suggested by ECD School Principals for improving democratic practices in the workplace

COMMUNICATION	❖ Whenever possible communicate all decisions with staff and other stakeholders ❖ Involve the staff in pro-actively marketing the school and pre-primary education using the media, articles, posters, photographs, internet, videos, open days, exhibits, talks, etc.
TRAINING	❖ Provide as many opportunities as possible to send practitioners to conferences and training courses in order to keep abreast of current educational developments. ❖ Send practitioners on Educational courses to improve ECD skills. ❖ Hold regular workshops which concentrate on world trends and developments in education. Put in place a framework to apply to the Sector Education Training Authority (SETA) for funding for staff development and training.
POWER SHARING	❖ Delegate and power share with junior staff members whenever possible. ❖ Actively train staff members to become leaders in planning techniques and problem solving. ❖ Develop strategy teams. As the staff is small in number, individual members can be given specific areas to head and they draw from other staff members to assist them where necessary.
LEADERSHIP	❖ Have clear goals and use them as the benchmark at all times.

5.1.2.1 Concerning the Practitioners

Developing strategies and interventions for resolving conflict and introducing change are necessary in every organisation. One of the major tools suggested by participants was that of improving communication. A dialogic approach, as Gravett, (2001, p.36) advises, "*assists in breaking through to new insights, implies co-operative and reciprocal inquiry that forms a continuous and developmental sequence, fosters engagement and is marked by an attitude or reciprocity among participants even when disagreeing or encountering misunderstandings".* This study suggests that the dialogic approach (discussed in the literature review) would be a particularly useful tool in fostering and promoting critical reflection in the practitioners. This is particularly relevant in an educational setting where educators are tasked with implementing liberal democratic principles in a diverse school population.

From discussions with the leaders of the schools, I found that they were making a genuine effort to be as transparent and as ethical as possible and on speaking to their staff, I agreed with this assessment. As discussed in section 4.4.1 *Concerning Practitioners,* there are many aspects for the leaders still to consider when implementing liberal democratic principles in their schools, many of them almost implicit. However the leaders of these schools were very open and transparent with me and welcomed the opportunity to learn from this study. At no time were any areas or any staff members barred from taking part in interviews or discussions and every measure was taken to accommodate me. I was given free range in all areas at all times. The staff were open, welcoming, confident, relaxed and honest when speaking to me and this too was an indication of the overall positive, open and welcoming climate that predominates in the schools. However, where *certain* staff members felt there was a problem, they were not always so confident about approaching management. I perceived that the socialising influences of the past on these participants was still affecting their perceptions and affecting their ability to *fully* trust in authority or speak openly in front of other racial groups. These participants felt confident about speaking to me about their problems on an individual basis or when with a friend, but not in a group setting and some of the participants did not feel comfortable about approaching management with their issues. And from both sides, in some cases, there were reservations about talking openly in front of other racial groups so as not to cause offence.

Therefore, although the measures mentioned in Table 5.1 *Strategies suggested by ECD School Principals for improving democratic practices in the workplace* are valid, this study seems to show that a more ground roots approach may need to be implemented in order to promote more critical reflection amongst the practitioners to promote legitimate knowledge and understanding of democracy and democratic practices. One way, as suggested by Thomson (1993, pp.45-46) would be that educators, using mediums such as surveys, speakers, discussions and workshops with external facilitators, "look inward and outward at their own feelings about prejudice, discrimination, and related issues" so they can genuinely reflect liberal democratic behaviour to the learners.

Thomson suggests asking questions such as:-

- How do you identify yourself ethnically?
- What emphasis was put on ethnicity in your family of origin?
- What emphasis do you put on it as an adult?
- What prejudices did you learn growing up?
- What prejudices are prevalent among your family, work community, neighbourhood, or friends?
- Are you working on being more thoughtful about your attitudes towards a particular group?
- How do you respond to stereotypical or prejudicial remarks and actions?
- Are their groups of children with whom you find it easy or difficult to work?
- Are there types of parents with whom you find it easy or difficult to work?

I would further agree with Thomson's suggestion that it would be helpful to have a core group of practitioners willing to provide support, develop resources, and offer opportunities for adult learning to assist the anti-bias process, as her assertion rings true in the South African context, that "many of us did not benefit in our own schooling from any focus on other cultures or civilizations" (1993, p.46).

Klein & Chen (2001, p.197) advise that "professional development is a lifelong process that energises our passion for our work and commitment to the field" and that high-quality and meaningful personal development takes time, planning, and

commitment". The participants in this study, at all levels, would benefit from improving their qualifications and I agree with Klein & Chen's (2001, p.197) suggestions to assist in this endeavour:-

> Find a colleague whom you trust and respect and also who is working on his or her own professional development. Team up for the process. Identify changes each of you would like to make in your own situations; and share observations, resources, and ideas for creating culturally responsive early childhood programs. Focus on making one change at a time, try out new ideas, evaluate what you tried, and share your experiments with your colleague.

Klein & Chen's (2001, p.198) ideas, I suggest, could be concrete steps on the road to deepening democratisation by providing the opportunity for practitioners to step back and reflect on their experience.

The table below presents suggestions made by jointly participants and myself to assist leaders in 'in house' matters.

Table 5.2 Improving Workplace Practice regarding Communication & Leadership

COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF
○ Communicate all decisions to staff even though the information may seem irrelevant to those parties. It is better to have illumination to avoid misunderstanding and potential conflict. ○ Discuss present policies, routines and norms with all staff, both individually and in groups to assess the 'climate'. Things change and what might have been 'OK' before may not necessarily be felt to be 'OK' anymore. ○ Talk to the staff about language issues, level of staff qualifications and parent expectations. Explain that the school is reliant on the parents for income. It may seem obvious to management, but this is not necessarily so for everyone else on the various rungs of the ladder. ○ Talk to the staff about yourself, your problems, the pressures you encounter (like keeping the school full and parents happy so everyone has a job) and ask them for help. Implement formal measures and procedures to gain this help and give responsibility and status to the staff. ○ Have open discussions about job expectations which should lead on to colleague expectations and parent expectations. Discuss the issue that 'correction and requests for different ways of doing things is not racism'. ○ Give a bit more affirmation at times. One of the participants mentioned that because of being constantly told what to do under the previous regime, she felt she now needed regular reassurance and confirmation that she was "doing the right thing". She emphasised that she "knows the head thinks she is doing a good job" but still feels "nervous sometimes because of the past".

LEADERS TO LEADERS
o Perceptions change so re-promote yourself as an approachable leader so staff feel comfortable about communicating their problems to you. Gain or re-gain their trust. o Act ethically and admit your mistakes. o 'Re-look' at every staff member and discuss their personal circumstances and expectations of the job. Provide a legitimate, genuine opportunity for dialogue. o Provide ongoing support when they are victims of crime. o Don't ever speak when angry – give yourself time out. o Have empathy but keep a balance. Too much personal involvement can destroy you. o Be realistic about your limitations and ask for help. o Review old habits and routines as they may be holding you back. o Be ready and open to hear what everyone has to say – listen even to the pessimists as they are often more realistic. o Trust and act on your intuition.

5.1.2.2 Concerning the Learners

> How educators react to children's ideas and behaviours will influence the feelings that children develop. Teachers can play an important role in helping to free children from stereotypic definitions of gender by creating an environment what deliberately contrast the prevailing biased messages of our society. Children who are provided with accurate images and props, and who are encouraged to think and talk about differences, will be more prepared to deal with biases. Those who are helped to identify and think critically about what they see in books, on TV, in movies and on signs and posters are more likely to develop healthy identities and understanding of others.
>
> (Dau, 2001, p.23)

Klein & Chen (2001, p.35) suggest the following to assist educators in achieving the goals of multiculturalism in school setting. Many of these practices correlated with what the participants are already doing:-

- Teach children to respect other's cultures and values as well as their own
- Help all children function successfully in a multicultural society
- Develop a positive self-concept in those children most affected by racism, such as children of colour

- Help all children experience their differences as culturally diverse people and their similarities as human beings in positive ways

- Encourage children to experience people of diverse cultures working together as unique parts of a whole community

Helping the practitioners to become more reflective about their own socialisation and practices may well enhance the legitimacy, sensitivity and efficacy of their implementation of democratic issues. I suggest that they should reflect on recognising the issues raised by Klein & Chen (2001, p.200) "that all children are cognitively, linguistically, and emotionally connected to the language and culture of their home" and that "parents and families must rely on caregivers and educators to honor and support their children in the cultural values and norms of the home".

5.1.2.3 Concerning the Parents

I would support the following ideas raised by Thomson:

> When families are involved in schools, everyone benefits: the parents (or other caregiving adults), and we, the teachers. There are opportunities for a rich exchange of ideas, information, points of view, misgivings, feelings and more. It is important to see families as resources. Parents as volunteers, speakers, and field trip helpers are a diversity source for your students. Children learn a lot when they have contact with different parents. They learn to appreciate the similarities and differences among parents, as well as to recognise the skills or interests of a particular parent.
>
> (Thomson, 1993, p.57- 64)

Thomson (1993, pp.58-64), furthermore, provides some useful advice for schools and educators in how to engage families in school events which I feel would be useful in the South African context:

- Making a welcoming phone call to each family the first month of school.

- Provide easy lines of communication between the school and the families.

- Personally invite families to school social and educational events. Get established parents to assist with the process.

- Have a cultural food and games event asking everyone to bring a dish of food and ideas for games. Consider having events at other venues

such as the community hall if you feel families feel at a disadvantage being on school premises.

- Brainstorm with parents.
- Learn key phrases in different languages and invite parents who speak common languages to make parents who don't speak English well to feel comfortable and accepted.
- Hold talks and courses on what is happening in the school – explaining issues such as the 'anti-bias curriculum'.
- Communicate with parents using newsletters, children, newspapers, pictures etc.

Klein & Chen (2001, p.190) emphasise the importance of family involvement in the children's schooling and that positive experiences should be provided and strategies should put in place to empower the parents with "the confidence and skills necessary to advocate for their children". An example of this would be to involve parents in 'career days' during which parents come into the school and talk to the children about their work and demonstrate their prowess.

5.1.3 Community "Ubuntu"

Pre-schooling is often the first platform for the learners to develop and promote advanced social and emotional skills and is therefore a big adjustment for both the learners and their parents. If the children and parents feel comfortable, no matter what cultural group they come from, the school can be considered a success. Developing social and emotional development is paramount to these pre-schools and promoting the spirit of ubuntu comes naturally to most practitioners. Much of this has already been discussed but further suggestions given to assist in this area were "*You have to be positive about what is going on around you. Be realistically optimistic even when bad things are happening then everyone feels better". "Be positive about yourself and what you can do". "Look after each other no matter what. Children today are not encouraged to do this enough, its all about me, me, me. It can only lead to bad things, now and in the future".*

The practitioners voiced concerns relating to this. They noted that children were openly destructive, showing little respect to equipment or people. *"When possessions get lost or broken, there is an automatic assumption that it will be replaced".* There is enormous competition for who has *"the best or the biggest or the fastest car"* etc. Children show little joy in others achievements and good fortune. Practitioners attempt to overcome this by role modelling positive and respectful behaviour to each other, the parents and the learners. Engendering a spirit of positive good will is seen as a vital component to providing a successful learning environment for the children. Apart from supporting colleagues, parents and learners, Pre-Schools need to be seen as a school which serves the community. The following table contains suggestions made by the practitioners.

Table 5.3 Community – Promoting "Ubuntu"

➢ Support local charities and ventures.	➢ Allow the community to use the premises for community functions
➢ Allow the premises to be used for educational events	➢ Participate in local events
➢ Initiate ventures to support ventures pertaining to the community both locally and countrywide	➢ Provide In Service Training for potential educators
➢ Invite other schools to attend educational courses held at the school	➢ Actively celebrate diversity
➢ Provide for scholarships/bursaries with support programmes for both learners and learner's families	➢ Build relationships with local authorities

5.1.4 Crime

Crime was a dominant issue introduced by participants who feel that it impacts deeply on democratic practice, both in their personal and working lives. In response to this. I interviewed Margaret Roper from Alternatives to Violence Projects (AVP) and the following figure 5.1 outlines a strategy for dealing with crime. A detailed explanation is beyond the scope of this research report. However, recommended guidelines for dealing with crime and the Children's Act, as requested by the school principals, have been attached (See Appendix H).

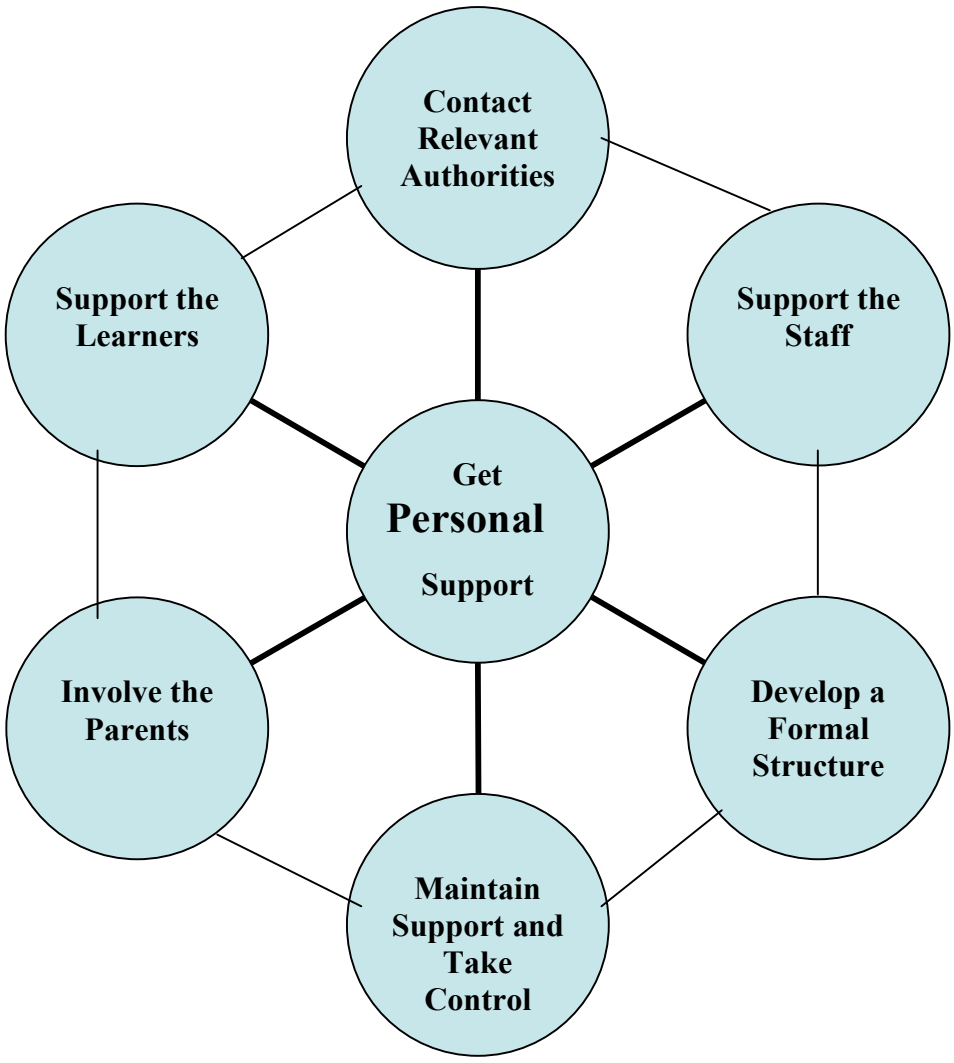


Figure 5.1 Strategies for dealing with Crime (Roper, 2007)

With the number of reservations around crime raised by the participants, an adoption of Roper's strategy could be beneficial.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 Research Design and Methods: Strengths and Weaknesses

The research aims and questions were found to be relevant to this study and they explored and answered questions and issues relating to democracy and adult education as discussed in the literature review. I found the mixed methods and theoretical framework appropriate for this study with a few minor adjustments. Logistical problems due to the practitioners' final term schedules made it difficult in the allotted time frame allowed to have Focussed Group Discussions with participants from every school. The combined levels, theoretical and methodological triangulation of the research methods proved to illuminate the topic and confirm the data. I also found that several of the participants were comfortable with some research methods more than others. For example, some practitioners were not initially comfortable to be interviewed on their own but when with a friend, felt far more relaxed, so I introduced in these cases 'paired interviews'. Educators are often natural orators and enjoyed *telling* rather than *writing* their 'critical incidents'. A further issue was that the initial proposal stated that the participants would be chosen once the questionnaires had been assessed. I had not taken into account that some of the participants were not confident about writing in English and therefore could not express their ideas adequately. Just using the questionnaires as a guide would have therefore eliminated willing, knowledgeable and erudite participants. Therefore, when I went to the schools concerned, instead of my choosing participants, I asked for volunteers and at times requested specific practitioners to participate. As individual entities, the 'paired interviews' and 'critical incidents' often elicited the most in depth data as they allowed for personal reflection and provided impetus for further discussion.

Many of the participants saw this as an opportunity to voice concerns and talk about issues pertaining to them both past and present. At one school I was told by the principal that the caretaker, currently in his second year of studying law, had a great deal to say about democracy and democratic practice and was asking why he was being excluded. As a result I interviewed him and although have not used him formally in this study, his insights have been of great value to me - regarding this study, personally, and as a leader of a school - and I have already implemented several of his suggestions.

5.2.2 Relevance for Educators.

The disparity in educational levels due to apartheid has resulted in all adults needing further education in a multitude of areas. Apart from educational levels needing to be uplifted, factors such as crime, globalisation and diversity to name but a few add to the challenges facing educators today. In order to achieve a successful learning environment, educators have to be multi-skilled in issues such as business management and social counseling. They have to be skilled child educators, adult educators and self educators. It is through education that paradigms shift. Educators in South Africa have huge responsibilities and challenges facing them in their quest to both *be*, and *develop* liberal democratic citizens.

5.2.3 Recommendations for further Research.

This research was an in-depth study on four schools and as such revealed valuable insights into how these school perceive and deal with the relevant issues. However, all these schools came from the same socio-economic group with a predominance of Caucasian English language speakers. In possible future research studies, I would suggest including schools with differing cultural bases, religious followings and racial and language bases, etc. The findings in this study suggest that educators perceive little change in their practice and that there are contrasting perceptions of democratic practice between black and white practitioners. The reasons for this were briefly explored but could provide possibilities for further research. For ethical reasons, I did not observe the participants in the classroom setting and for future studies, gaining permission to do this, would be a valuable avenue for gaining insight into participants and learners practices. It would also be valuable to interact directly with the parents of the learners to gain their views and insights.

5.2.4 Unforeseen Issues and Pertinent Findings

On completing this study, I reflected that in future studies I would include formal questions relating to the conflict that the new democracy was having on family and community dynamics. Black participants who had white friends were often afraid to go out with them in public as their community called them ‘coconuts’ i.e. black on the outside but white on the inside. *“They think I am trying to sell them out”*. Two of the

young white participants also voiced concerns about racial mixing regarding her community. One said that both her family and her community *"didn't really approve of my Black and Indian friends"*. Another of the young white participants said she felt conflict with her culture and what was going on in South Africa. She said *"I love being Afrikaans and love the Afrikaans people and am proud of what they have achieved, but at times I also hate being Afrikaans and hate what they stood for"*.

A further unexpected issue for me was the extent of the fragmentation of cultural groups that the black participants discussed regarding communities and government. *"We are no longer united as blacks – we are now Xhosa, Zulu, Pedi, Sotho and it is destroying us"*. The male caretaker who wished to be part of the study, (a Pedi) and is a second year law student, told me that unless Zulu was spoken in Johannesburg you were called *"stupid so you had to learn it very fast"*. He also said that the different tribes were labelled and there was a lot of inter-cultural and tribal racism – *"They say you Pedi you stupid , you Xhosa or Sotho you clever, if Zulu you stubborn and like to fight. There are even stereotypes of this on TV. This makes many people ashamed of their culture"*.

The extent of the impact that crime was having on the participants, with regard to their personal and working life and how it was negatively swaying their opinions towards democracy in South Africa, was also unforeseen. It was the single factor that universally united all the participants and has persuaded them that democracy is not fulfilling its promise of allowing each citizen to work to his or her full potential. All but one of the participants when questioned about the possibility of emigrating, said that they would if they could, and would want their families too as well, and the primary reason given was that of lack of personal safety, closely followed by lack of opportunity – often as a result of crime levels.

All the participants were happy about the abolishment of apartheid but none were universally positive about democracy working in South Africa. Sadly, the overall impression gained was one of disappointment and disillusionment. However, this situation, is in certain ways, uniting practitioners and the strong spirit of 'ubuntu' in the schools is very evident.

5.3 Personal Reflections.

Being an ECD practitioner myself, who teaches a class of children and who is also principal of a school, provided a considerable advantage as I was able to identify with, and learn from, many of the issues raised in this study. It has been a personal, as well as educational journey, that has caused several paradigm shifts in my thinking and done nothing but raise my admiration for educators for the way they are facing the challenges of educating in a new democracy with a diverse society.

I have deepened the ties with my colleagues and made new friends. I find that I am able to handle diversity issues with more tact and understanding. Just realising that I may be doing completely the wrong thing, and voicing this concern, has opened doors and allowed others to educate me. Cognitively, I found that every step of this research project provided a new educational and mental challenge as research is not part of my normal practice. I have run the gamut of feeling daunted, terrified, challenged, stimulated, exited and humbled. I have become enlightened about the many pitfalls facing researchers and experienced the wonder of gaining new insights. As an educator I have been educated and have gained insight about both my professional and personal life.

In Conclusion

This research document attempts to highlight how the advent of democracy has affected ECD practitioners both personally and with regard to their practice in the South African context. Issues such as, leadership, change management, transformation and socialisation have been discussed to emphasise the importance of adult education in the promotion of legitimate democratic transformation in South Africa. It is hoped that the research will illuminate and therefore provide material to assist in ultimately improving educational democratic practice in all spheres.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

DEMOCRACY: A REALITY CHECK FOR ECD PRACTIONERS/EDUCATORS

1. How many years have you been involved in Early Childhood Development (ECD) Education?

……..

2. What is your role in the school? (mark with X)

Teacher Assistant	Educator	Teaching Principal	Principal

3. Where did you go to school (Province)? …….

4. Was it State or Private education or a Mixture of both? (underline)

5. Where did you train to work in the ECD field? (mark with X)

Place of work	College	University	Other

If other, please describe

……..……

6. How would you define democracy?

……

..……..

..……..

7. How do you understand democracy and democratic practice within your workplace context?

…….

…….

…….

8. Do you think that democratic practice is important in ECD practice?

Either way - yes or no - please explain or justify your response.

…….

…….

9. Are democratic practices demonstrated in your workplace? If so, in what ways?

…….

…….

…….

10. What democratic practices (if any) would you make in your workplace? Please explain fully.

…….

…….

…….

…….

11. On a personal level, what has democracy meant to you, as an individual and as an ECD practitioner?

…….

…….

…….

12. Please comment on any further aspects of this topic that you feel are relevant to this study.

…….

…….

…….

APPENDIX B: FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION /INTERVIEW GUIDE

DEMOCRACY: A REALITY CHECK FOR ECD PRACTIONERS/EDUCATORS
LENGTH: Approximately 90 minutes.
VENUE: Bluebird Pre-Primary Staff and Training Center (The Nest). Hume Rd Dunkeld
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 2 or 3 from each of the four participating schools.
TIME AND DATE: To be decided.

Researchers information only. The following questions are included here simply as a reminder and guide to the interviewer.

Main Research Question

Has the advent of democracy had any meaningful impact on ECD practitioners and if so, in what ways?

Sub-questions.

1. What are ECD practitioners' understanding and perceptions of the term democracy?
2. What are ECD practitioners' understanding and perceptions of democratic issues such as diversity and transformation?
3. Have ECD practitioners' practices changed since the advent of democracy? If so, in what ways?
4. What do ECD practitioners perceive to be the factors that influence the implementation of change?

GUIDELINES TO LEAD DISCUSSION AND INTERVIEWS

The following questions will be adapted and modified depending on the participants response in order to allow for participants freedom and flexibility of expression. Adopting this approach will allow the interviewer to probe and unpack issues and concepts that may emerge as a result of the interviews or discussions. In this way it is hoped that richer data may be discovered. Furthermore this semi-formal format should allow the participants to participate in a natural way i.e. a way that is not prescriptive and controlling and allows for possible emerging themes/topics/concepts/comments and therefore further investigation.

1. What do you understand by the terms democracy, diversity, transformation etc.
2. Have you noticed changes in your life since the advent of democracy in South Africa? If so in what ways? (Possible prompt words – attitude, behaviour, opinions, positions, etc.)
3. Has democracy changed the way you perceive the people around you? If so, please describe.
4. Has democracy changed the way you perceive global events? If so, in what ways?
5. Do you think that the ways you were brought up (socialised) by your community affects the way you view democracy? Please give examples if possible.

6. Do you think the way you were educated affects the way you view yourself as an individual? If so, in what way?
7. Has democracy changed the way you teach?
8. Please explain and give examples.
9. What do you view as:
    A) obstacles that may hinder or prevent you from implementing democratic practice in your workplace?
    B) factors that would promote or help you implement democratic practices in your workplace?

APPENDIX C: CRITICAL INCIDENT GUIDE

& INFORMATION SHEET
DEMOCRACY: A REALITY CHECK FOR ECD PRACTIONERS/EDUCATORS

(The following information was transcribed directly, with minor variations, from the B Ed Hons '*Issues in ETD practice*' Coursework Book. Jane Castle 2003:41)

Critical incidents create opportunities for people to become interpreters of their own experience.

Practitioners involved in adult education have a special interest in the lives of individuals, because understanding and respect for people are essential in helping them to fulfil their multiple roles. Roles which require sensitivity to learners' fears and hopes, their beliefs, their ways of making sense of their experience, their practical knowledge, and their ways of solving problems.

Critical incident technique identifies the significance – especially the emotional significance – of actions and events (which may be intentional or not) on people as they carry out tasks related to education, training and work. People are asked to report positive and negative outcomes of certain actions, and to identify those acts and events (the 'critical incidents') which seem to have triggered these outcomes.

Critical incidents may be written by respondents, or they may be told to the researcher who transcribes them, before isolating, categorising and interpreting the incidents, searching for commonalities in individuals' stories, and for recognition of problematic incidents.

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

3rd September 2007
My name is Eleanor Huggett and I am at present doing my Masters degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. My research topic is DEMOCRACY, A REALITY CHECK FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) PRACTITIONERS. In line with the Department of Education (DoE) 2001 Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, all practitioners are now tasked with promoting the values of a liberal democracy. The study will focus on the ECD practitioners' perceptions and attitudes towards change regarding democracy and diversity issues in their working environment. Understanding the factors that promote democratic principles, such as cultural interaction, diversity, etc. will in turn, help ECD practitioners in creating and promoting legitimate democratic practice in the workplace.

I would really appreciate your participation as you, as ECD practitioners, have valuable insights and experiences in this area and these would greatly assist me with this research. This will entail filling in a questionnaire after which a few individuals will be asked to participate in focused group discussions, be individually interviewed and asked to write a critical incident. (An example of a critical incident is that of an experience in your past that has caused you to change the way you view a situation – has caused a paradigm shift in your thinking.) These activities will not take place during school hours. I will ensure that I let you know the dates and times I will be at your school.

Thank You

Eleanor Huggett, principal researcher 0849544655

APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANTS CONSENT FORM

Hi, my name is Eleanor Huggett and I am studying for my Masters degree at Wits University and have chosen as my research topic – Democracy: A reality check for ECD practitioners.
I would really appreciate your participation as you, as ECD practitioners, have valuable insights and experiences in this area and these would greatly assist me with this research. This will entail filling in a questionnaire after which a few individuals will be asked to participate in focused group discussions, be individually interviewed and asked to write a critical incident. (An example of a critical incident is that of an experience in your past that has caused you to change the way you view a situation – has caused a paradigm shift in your thinking.) These activities will not take place during school hours. I will ensure that I let you know the dates and times I will be at your school.

Please feel free to ask any questions regarding the study either before participating or during the time you are participating. I will be happy to share the findings of my study once the research is completed. Absolute confidentiality and anonymity is assured should you decide to participate - and once started, you have the right to withdraw from this study should you feel the need to do so without consequences of any kind. There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. Please sign the consent form with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the research procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you for your records.

I, (Full name) _____
understand the nature and conditions of the research study, and give my consent to participate in this study.
Signature: _____

Signed at …… (place) on ……(date)

Eleanor Huggett, principal researcher 0849544655

APPENDIX F: VENUE CONSENT FORM

3rd September 2007
My name is Eleanor Huggett and I am at present doing my Masters degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. My research topic is Democracy, A Reality Check For Early Childhood Development (ECD) Practitioners.

In line with the Department of Education (DoE) 2001 Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, all practitioners are now tasked with promoting the values of a liberal democracy. Since many practitioners were educated and socialised under the apartheid regime, the study will focus on the ECD practitioners' perceptions and attitudes towards change regarding democracy and diversity issues in their working environment. Understanding the factors that promote democratic principles such as cultural interaction, diversity, etc. will, in turn, help both the participants of this study and other ECD practitioners in creating and promoting legitimate democratic practice in the workplace.

I would very much appreciate it if I could use your school as a vehicle to complete my research. This will entail requesting your educators and teacher assistants to volunteer in filling in a questionnaire after which a few individuals will be asked to participate in focused group discussions, be individually interviewed and asked to write a critical incident. These activities will not take place during school hours. I will ensure that I let you know the dates and times I will be at your school.

The confidentiality of the school as well as the participants in the study will be respected and ensured throughout the research process and will not be associated with any of the research findings as the identity of the school will only be known to myself.

Please sign this consent form with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the research procedures. A copy of this consent form will be given to you for your records.

I, (Full Name) _____ understand the nature and conditions of the study, and give my consent for the research to be carried out at
(Name of school) _____ where I am principal.

Thank you
Eleanor Huggett., principal researcher 0849544655

APPENDIX G: PERMISSION LETTERS FROM SCHOOLS

From:
Bluebird Pre-Primary
Greenpark Nursery School
Parkmore Nursery School
Stepping Stones Pre-Primary

APPENDIX H: ROPER GUIDELINES RE. CRIME & CHILDREN'S ACT

Get Support

The first thing is if somebody has been either first hand a victim of violent crime or any sort of criminal act it is really important that they get the help and support that they need because apart from personal reasons you have to deal with your own emotions and life in order to be able to teach effectively or to interact effectively with other people without passing the trauma on and also by not remaining in the sphere of the victim. There should also be a formal process in place in the school setting so victims have an established procedure in place which they can use so they don't have to break new ground and a safety net is provided. Apart from this you can contact the DoE or there are various NGO's who provide support. They all have teams of counsellors who can come into the school and give support.

Relevant Authorities

It is important to report the crime in terms of the criminal justice system. A lot of people don't do this as they don't have faith in the system but unless you do this you have no recourse to any formal justice and never feel that you have any chance of formal reparation. It is also a good idea to establish a good relationship with the local police station with it's victim empowerment centre. As manager it is also important that you join the Community Police Forum to maintain an ongoing relationship to provide a forum for changes and assistance. We have to take the initiative.

Supporting the Learners

To help learners it is important to have a process through life skills programmes where learners feel comfortable about talking about their situation and where avenues are easily open to them to do this. In the pre-school setting this would be through discussion in a relevant manner with the children and also promoting open communication with the parents so you as the educator is aware of exactly what trauma happened in the child's life, whether it is first or second hand. Some of the schools have networks of social workers and psychologists to whom they are able to refer children, parents and staff members when necessary. Dealing with victims of crime is a skill and unless we do something formal about it the burden falls on the educators.

Supporting the Staff

Prevention is better than cure so try to avoid situations that put staff at risk. Apart from this, management should provide support to staff members, who are victims, in every way they can. Sometimes when the victim does not want to talk about it, just offering to give the person some time off or providing names and numbers of outside help and offering to phone for help is enough to give the victim a sense of support. Management needs to have a policy in place, have opened a door so all victims, even the most self sufficient ones, feel it is easy and acceptable to get help. The more explicit it is, the more likely that people will feel comfortable about using it and the far easier it is to manage for all concerned. Schools are usually not good in this areas when it comes to teachers. If it is a formal process, with processes in place that ensure that it will be implemented fairly, then the victims feel confident about accessing it. There is this expectation that you are a teacher and you have to be capable and you have to be strong and be a role model of not showing emotion and getting on and doing the job. But actually if you consider schools as a microcosm of our broader society what we are trying to instil is a realm of democracy and social relations. Therefore we actually have to start addressing these issues and supporting the practitioners.

Developing a Formal Structure

Schools can provide the vehicle for reaching youth and encouraging the exploration of cultural diversity, democratic citizenship and the richness of our South African experience. Achieving this type of school in South Africa today is not easy as schools reflect a microcosm of our broader society: one that is negatively affected by HIV and AIDS, high levels of crime and violence, and high levels of poverty.

Roper continues, in excerpts from her article SCHOOL SAFETY – TURNING THE TIDE! that schools with the most success with dealing with crime in all spheres are the ones who have formal processes in place.

- ⇨ BE PREPARED: Be prepared by having policies and strategies in place.
- ⇨ BE AWARE: Be aware of what is happening at the school, where learners feel more vulnerable, where and when most incidents happen and what the early signs are for learners in trouble.

- ⇨ TAKE ACTION: Taking the necessary action which may include reporting a possible threat, reporting an incident, managing the incident, dealing with the trauma of the incident, taking disciplinary measures, improving security, reviewing the safety and security plan, or getting support from community members.
- ⇨ TAKE CARE: Take care of every member of the staff and learners by involving them in the process of building a caring school, by reporting back to them on action taken, by supporting those in need to get the care or help they need and by encouraging positive behaviour and activities on the school property.

Involving the Learners and Parents

It is also important that the learners and parents have a big say in what policies are put in place and how these are implemented, and this can be done at any level, from pre-school to high school. In the pre-school setting you have a wonderful opportunity because you have far more interaction with the parents than at other levels and you can therefore with them, set the norms and standards for dealing with safety and crime issues and also find out what they do in their homes and incorporate this so there is far more consistency for the children.

As far as educating the parents in dealing with these issues it is important for the educators to engage with the parents in providing guidelines appropriate for the age level of the children. Parents often yell at the children in a dangerous situation but often don't explain why and have any discussion around the topic; something that educators do naturally. Educators are always negotiating boundaries and behaviour in a democratic way; setting the norms. In a pre-school you are actually building the norms, the standards and the values enormously, by educators actually engaging in areas which are second nature for educators. Educators teach children these social behaviours which develop skills so later on they themselves can become increasingly proactive in developing norms, values, boundaries and strategies for themselves. So the children can manage safety themselves. It is important to remember that rules mustn't only focus on *What I can't do* but also on *What I can do*. Peer education becomes the norm and it is also effective at pre-school level. Make the parents aware of safety issues and policies that are in place to gain support and build confidence and

make sure that they are implemented. This then prevents problems. It is better to prevent than cure.

Maintaining Support and Taking Control

Maintain support over long periods. It supports the democratic process.

We are seeing that providing post traumatic counseling over the long term, starting from pre-school level, is vital because we are now having teenagers perpetrating crimes and when interviewed finding that they were victims and witnesses of sometimes horrific abuses as small children and never given assistance or counselling at the time, or at any stage. Kids today are calling out for the death penalty and severe measures to deal with crime. They are wanting training in policing measures. But it is actually not what they want, it is what they feel they need because they are feeling so vulnerable because of crime. We as educators need to give alternatives to coping and solving problems and resolving conflicts that don't involve punishment and that do involve the democratic process. In this country we don't have a culture of doing this and the more management in schools and educators can show how conflicts can be resolved by using words, using a restorative process, the more our democracy is going to be strengthened and the more ultimately it is going to encourage people to speak up and defend democracy. At the moment unless it is highlighted by the media or a politician everyone else is quiet about our lack of good governance. It is actually up to the general public to take far more of an active role and we have got to start it at a young age to get children to feel that they are empowered to give their opinions. That puts a huge emphasis on caregivers and educators to creating that environment where children can be children but can learn to take responsibility appropriate for their age group. Adults have to take back the responsibility for putting this democracy in action and putting democratic discipline into place to provide a safe and learning environment for our children. The benefits we would reap in 5 to 10 years if we could do this would be huge. If we don't, all we are going have is what we have now; continued crime and barbed wire. We have to shift our thinking. And it's not about a piece of paper or a policy or a manual. It is about individual people *and* their skills *and* their visions *and* competencies to engage with people to really put democratic processes into place. We need to equip people to put these democratic processes into place in schools. Crime happens in a context – in an environment. We need to change that context and that environment. We need to provide a balance. We

need to provide the safety net for our learners so they don't remain victims and later become perpetrators of criminal acts.

Children's Act

Roper provides these suggestions for the participants in the study who are concerned about teenagers and the Abuse of Children's Act:

The Children's Act in no way in reality, if you look at it, should it be disempowering any one. Many of the Acts were not explained properly and we should not be in this situation at all. For example the limitation is that people spoke about what children's rights are but they didn't talk about responsibility and the practice. Parents have forgotten, and are often not allowed to be parents, and I think that that's a sadness and because of that we can relate it to the comment earlier about expecting too much and so much from children. We are giving them too much responsibility at a young age and expecting nothing from parents. The challenge now is how to change the situation – but there is a way. If you say to children that there is a constitution in South Africa that sets out who we are and how we go about things, how we behave and what are everyone's roles and responsibilities. In our family we are going to develop our own constitution and our roles in it. Compare what you are going to do with the values and norms and rights outlined in the Constitution and ask the children to suggest ways how that could happen in the family. Tell the children that you as an adult, in the Constitution, also have rights. In this way you set your own boundaries and your own rules but make everyone part of the process. Things have gone wrong because of lack of communication. People aren't being open. People are hiding behind the Constitution because they don't want to deal with the situation. If you do deal with it you would have far greater cohesion in your family. You have got a problem and to solve it, everyone, including you as the adult, has a say in how to deal with it. Talk about the consequences. Hiding behind the Children's Act and legislation and pointing fingers is not actually doing anything about building a family and ultimately building a nation.

This is easier said than done but it is easier the younger the children are, so implement these measures with younger children so they can become responsible democratic citizens. With older children, Grade 10, you move into a whole different realm of

teenage risk-taking behaviour. Try and get them to participate in clubs, sport or youth groups or something like that. Go to your church and ask for help in setting up schemes. Sport is a wonderful tool to promote teamwork. Get together with the other parents and find out if there is someone who can coach the children. In things like sport you are setting the norms – they are essential – you are setting the boundaries – everyone has to work together as a team. It's saying to them "Ok if you want the freedom it comes with responsibility. If you want to live in a SA where you want to walk the streets without fearing for your life, that comes with responsibilities. Responsibilities is about everything – about reporting, it's about not selling drugs etc". Parents have got to create the opportunity or when the opportunity arises you have to have the courage to open the conversation. It starts with yourself. Try and find someone to support you, a pastor, a male in your family. Not take over and be dictatorial but just to support you. Have the courage to talk to your children. Tell them that when they go out selling drugs and drinking it disempowers you because it is destroying what you believe and what you are trying to build and what you are working hard for. Point out that they are taking the right to behave as they wish without dealing with the responsibilities and at the same time abusing your rights.

Get together as parents and share your problems and ideas try to find solutions for your particular problems. It is vital that this happens for democracy to work. It starts in the home and with the family.

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