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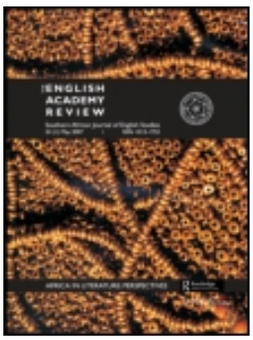
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Reconciliation pedagogy, identity and community funds of knowledge: borderwork in South African classrooms

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This article is based on a South African research project in which teachers and educational researchers pool their resources to explore ways of teaching reconciliation in desegregated English and Art classrooms, ten years after independence. One of the significant findings of this research was that positioning students as agentive researchers of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission served as a catalyst for their engagement with their histories. There is evidence that for some of the students their investigations of their varied communities' funds of knowledge had effects on their own identity locations in relation to those of their classmates. Bringing their different knowledges into the classroom created spaces for borderwork (G. Anzaldúa, 1999. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The new mestiza*) and the remapping of their identities in relation to one another.

Keywords: borderwork; diversity; English teaching; funds of knowledge; identity; reconciliation pedagogies

Introduction

For Anzaldúa,

> The Borderlands are present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy. (Anzaldúa 1999, Preface)

Classrooms in South Africa are ideal spaces in which to do borderwork. According to Ndebele, it is here that

> you have the interface of our individual histories which are seldom acknowledged in the learning environment. [The classroom] is the heart of transformation because living in South Africa today is about sharing identities and cultural experiences. (Ndebele 2005)[1]

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In this article, the importance of helping students to access the knowledge and experiences of their own families and communities, and of using these resources in the classroom is explored. In particular, the writers wanted students to re-imagine their current identities as a result of their own explorations of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The approach is informed by the work of Luis Moll and his associates on 'community funds of knowledge' (Moll, Amanti, Neffe and González 1992; González, Moll and Amanti 2001). In critical multicultural approaches to education, there is recognition that students from different communities bring different knowledge, cultural and intellectual resources, 'ways with words' (Heath 1983), skills and social networks to school, and moreover, that these 'knowledges' are not equally valued. The research of Moll and his associates recognizes that it is hard for teachers to draw on the life worlds of their students if they have no knowledge of them. In their research project, teachers undertook household interviews to understand their students' life worlds. Moll's group claims that 'by capitalizing on household and other community resources, we can organize classroom instruction that far exceeds in quality the rote-like instruction that these children [from working class Mexican communities in Tucson, Arizona] commonly encounter in schools' (1992, 132).

Moll and his fellow researchers understand funds of knowledge as 'historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being' (1992, 133). For them, the *teachers* become a bridge between community and curriculum in order to develop 'ethnographically informed' (1992, 132) classroom practices.

In their research project on cross-generational teacher development, Comber and Kamler (2005), influenced by Moll et al., used visits by teachers to their students' homes as a means of transforming classroom practices. They were able to show how to include and build on their students' funds of knowledge. They named these changes 'turn-around pedagogies' (2005).

In both of these projects, teachers are the catalyst for change and act as the 'bridge' between community and classroom knowledge. In the present project, by making the *students* the bridge, and by incorporating Anzaldúa's (1999) conception of borderwork, the work of Moll and his fellow researchers is re-articulated in significantly different ways.

The South African research project

This research has its origins in an invitation to participate in an international project on Reconciliation Pedagogies.[2] This raised the question as to what such a pedagogy might look like in South Africa where reconciliation is both over and has not yet begun.[3] What does it mean to work with South African high school students on reconciliation, seven years after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) completed its work? The TRC hearings were a particularly important time in post-1994 South African history, because of the public nature of the hearings and the role played by the media, particularly

radio and television, in bringing the TRC into the homes of ordinary South Africans. In a sense, all South Africans were asked to bear witness to the 'gross violations of human rights' (TRC Report 5,1,1) that maintained the system of apartheid. With the aim of exploring the pedagogic possibilities of reconciliation, a South African Research Circle made up of classroom teachers and educational researchers was established.[4] In the initial discussions, time was spent grappling with the notion of 'reconciliation' and how it could be drawn it into the classroom space in ways that would engage students' identities.

The TRC report asks one to think of the Truth and Reconciliation process as the foundation on which one can build the future. 'Reconciliation does not wipe away the memories of the past . . . It understands the vital importance of learning from and redressing past violations for the sake of our shared present and our children's future' (TRC Report 9,149,434).

While from the outside, because of the work of the TRC, South Africa may appear to have done the work of reconciliation, teachers as ordinary citizens were not convinced that they, or their students, had done any reconciliation work or knew how to do it. There was also a sense that in South Africa, apartheid history compels one to place issues of race and identity at the heart of reconciliation in the minutiae of daily life. Yet, from experience, the teachers knew that students resisted talking about apartheid, the struggle, poverty, and continuing structural inequalities. The teachers' experience of high school students accords with that of McKinney's with undergraduate students. According to her, 'The extent to which critique as a process is predominantly backward rather than forward looking, taking students into a past that they are frequently desperate to escape [from] and leaving them feeling stranded in the past, is problematic in post-apartheid South Africa' (2004, 71).

High school students often express this resistance as 'boredom'. The teachers believed that apartheid history does not appeal to teenagers, that the 'born free' generation of black youth do not want to go on hearing about the struggle, they want to live in the present and enjoy their freedom. In addition, white youth often feel blamed for the 'sins of the fathers' and are equally resistant. For McKinney,

> We . . . need to take seriously the difficulties of young South Africans of living with the legacy of an oppressive past that was not of their making . . . We cannot ignore students' feelings of entrapment, accusation and despair and in doing so we need to find ways of tapping the optimism about being South African that many of these young people express. (2004, 71–72)

In the aftermath of apartheid, students' identities are profoundly bound up with questions of race, and classroom discussions about the past are often tense. The authors of this article recognized that getting high school students to engage with South Africa's history would be a challenge. Dolby's (2001) research on South African youth found that Nelson Mandela's call for a 'new patriotism' does not resonate with the youth (p. 13) and that 'the nation state is not a primary point of identification and belonging' (p.

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12). For these reasons, the concern was to find ways of dealing with the TRC that would intersect with students' current realities and that would not be so threatening to their identity investments that they would 'refuse' to participate. It was hoped that what their communities could teach them about the TRC would hook them and that the diverse funds of knowledge from their different communities might enable them to see one another in a new light in relation to their separate histories.

The school-based teachers who participated talked about what they perceived to be their students' resistance to dealing with apartheid and struggle history. They believed that this meant that in their schools many of the thornier issues relating to race, history, culture and difference are swept under the carpet. The result is that it is not in the formal curriculum but in the 'kid's curriculum' that issues seem to erupt. The teachers compared stories of racial conflict about issues, such as different school rules for black hair and white hair; and what counts as 'formal wear' and suitable music for the matriculation/school-leaving dance in their different schools. What is key is that all these conflicts became heated, because of students' investments in their different youth identities, and the politics of hair, clothing and music. With a history of conflict in South Africa based on race and ethnicity, it seemed important to work in racially heterogeneous, desegregated classrooms. This limited the research to schools which have continued to attract a racial mix of students: these schools tend to be less mixed in terms of class, catering largely to the middle-class families who can afford the school fees. The research was located with three teachers, Ingrid Barnsley, Charles Marriott and Monique Rudman, in three different secondary schools in Johannesburg (See Table 1).

As English teachers/educators and researchers, the focus was on English classrooms. Art was included, because of the new emphasis on the relationship between the visual and the verbal in multimodal approaches to the teaching of English (New London Group 1996, Kress et al. 2004). Critical approaches to language teaching have implications for other subjects in the curriculum, and the History researchers who are part of the project are exploring the implications for the teaching of History. A more extended account of this work has been recorded by Ferreira et al. (in press). For the purposes of this article, the focus is on the second phase of this project,[5] which deals with students as researchers of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

While in the early phase of classroom work on this project some of the students were able to link their own feelings, situations, or identities with the need for remorse and forgiveness, their work remained largely centred on the self and based on personal introspection. There was little that was located in the socio-political life of South Africa more than a decade after independence. Given that reconciliation is also a national project of building the future in relation to history and memory, it was important for students to understand the social and historical situatedness of their identities in relation to those of others. Desegregated schools were selected and the focus is on students' community-based funds of knowledge in order to create spaces for differences to rub up against one another. These in-between spaces, where individuals confront their differences, enable

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Table 1: Information provided by the teachers on their professional experience, their students and their schools

	Ingrid Barnsley	**Charles Marriott**	**Monique Rudman**
Teaching subject & years of experience	English 18 years	English 15 years	Art 10 years
Research participants[6]	Grade 11 49 students	Grade 11 23 students	Grade 10 10 students
Type of school	Model C Co-educational secondary school	Independent, co-educational, Catholic, primary and secondary school	Model C co-educational secondary school
Year of desegregation	1990	1979	1990
Race scape[7] in 2005	1 200 students White 40% African, Indian, Coloured } 60%	1 000 students White 31% African 38% Indian 18% Coloured 13%	1 100 students White 79% African, Indian, Coloured } 21%
Class scape	Suburban school: students drawn from a range of areas from high income areas to mid-to-lower income areas.	Suburban school: students mainly drawn from middle income areas.	Suburban school: situated in an affluent neighbourhood. Students drawn from a range of areas from high to middle income areas.

what Anzaldúa calls 'borderwork' (1999). In her research, Dolby (2001) found that as students 'collide and connect they remap identities within these spaces' (p. 79). This use of diversity as a productive resource lies at the centre of our project.

Reconciliation pedagogy and community funds of knowledge

Within the international Reconciliation Pedagogies project, South Africa is constructed as 'a post settler society' that is addressing the 'effects of colonisation' and the TRC is given as an example of a 'national reconciliation' project that has enabled South Africa to confront its past (Hattam 2005). It was decided that students needed to engage with the TRC process in order to judge its effects for themselves. Despite many criticisms of the TRC (Mamdani 1998; Derrida 2001; Nethersole 2002; Posel and Simpson 2002), as well as the writers' own reservations, it was agreed that this engagement was necessary in order to move the students to a socially and historically grounded approach to reconciliation. The research group collaborated in designing a unit of work on the TRC

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to be used in the three classrooms. It was late in the school year so this unit of work had to be short and focused. Four pedagogical moves were chosen:

1. *Introducing students to the TRC*
   We designed a one-page handout to provide the same basic information on the TRC to students across all three sites so that they did not go into their communities as uninformed researchers. The handout had a multimodal, non-linear visual design that invited interaction and avoided privileging any particular point of view on the work of the TRC.
2. *Positioning students as researchers*
   Students were then required to extend their understanding by accessing their communities' experiences of the TRC process. The students were briefed on the ethics of interviews, and were given the questions which appear in Table 2 to use in their semi-structured interviews. In finding adults to interview, students had to draw on their different social networks to gather 'lived narratives' that would enable them to gauge the impact of the TRC on people they know.

Table 2: Interview questions

1.	What do you think the TRC was about? (What do you think it was for? What do you think it was trying to achieve?)
2.	How did you find out about the TRC? (How did you get to know about it? How did you become aware that it was in progress?)
3.1	What can you tell me about what it was like? What stands out for you from that time? What images or stories do you remember? What stories stayed with you?
3.2	Why does this stand out? Why do you remember those particular images or stories? Why do you think you reacted/responded in the way that you did?
4.	Do you think the TRC was a good thing or not? Do you think it achieved anything?

   Having completed their interviews, the students shared their varied experiences in class.
3. *Written and visual representations of the TRC in the form of postcards*
   Students were asked to design a postcard that encapsulated in word and image what stood out for them from the TRC project.
4. *Reflection*
   Students were asked to produce a final, written reflection in answer to the question: What has this project on the TRC meant to you?

The importance of students' identity locations and their access to different communities were deliberately built into the design of the research project. Because the TRC hearings were broadcast on public television and radio, the TRC process was a national event to which all communities had access. However, there were different levels of engagement and investment by different communities. Because the second and

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fourth pedagogical moves are central to our understanding of the relationship between reconciliation pedagogy, identity and borderwork, the rest of the paper focuses on the students' sharing of their narratives and their reflections on the overall TRC project.

Sharing their communities' narratives: borderwork

The session in which Barnsley's students reported back on their interviews was extraordinarily powerful. It gives important insight as to the potential of reconciliation pedagogies to transform social relations. There is evidence that some shifts in identity were produced by different 'knowledges' rubbing up against each other in the classroom space.

The students brought the stories they heard back to the classroom and it was clear that many of them had been deeply affected by what they had learnt. In a research circle meeting, Barnsley spoke from the notes she had made during class. In the following extracts taken from a transcript of a research circle meeting, Barnsley's voice is interwoven with those of her students as what was said in her class pours out of her.

> I just said today, how did you find the interviews? And these were some of their responses: many people knew what the TRC was but didn't really care . . . some felt that the TRC was an example for the world to follow . . . some didn't think the TRC was of any use. It just made people sad, it didn't help, it achieved nothing – there's still no similarity in black and white vision . . . some say it didn't bring closure, just more attention.
>
> 'My mom's cousin was chopped up. The day he went out, he didn't tell his parents. Everything was always a secret. [His mother] was offered money by the TRC but she would not take it. She said it wouldn't bring back the dead'.
>
> Then one girl said that her, I think it was her uncle – a white girl – was an anti-apartheid activist and he went to all the hearings that were in Cape Town and what touched him was that during all the hearings there were always boxes of tissues it was like something that stuck in his head.
>
> One boy's father was an anti-[apartheid] activist in the townships at the time and they went to one of the hearings, there was an apartheid policeman who specialised in torture and when it came to the trials he wanted to come forward and give his confession and no other policeman would sit next to him, so the man he tortured, who never broke, who never submitted to all his torturing techniques, eventually went and sat next to him. (Transcript of research circle meeting, October 2005)

For many of these students, it was their own family members who had been involved in the TRC. Suddenly the relationship between South Africa's history and their own identities was glaring. One of them reported that what he learnt was so disturbing, [because] 'it happened to us, our family – I can't believe it was my family and they didn't tell me, this is my history, it happened to us, my family. They did things that if people could confess, it would help' (Transcript of research circle meeting, October 2005).

Barnsley reports that, 'When they were giving some examples of apartheid atrocities,

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they were the quietest class I've ever had . . . Everyone was listening, even the total skater boy hooligans . . . everyone was listening, listening, listening. So, if nothing else happens that was phenomenal' (Transcript of research circle meeting, October 2005).

But this is not the only 'turn-around' (Comber and Kamler 2005). Two other important transformations happened. Suddenly it was the black students who had more interesting stories to tell. Whose 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al. 1992, González et al 2005) are valued by the curriculum task shifts, and white students who are used to having their knowledge privileged by the curriculum feel displaced. According to Barnsley,

> The white privileged ones were so "pissed off", they didn't have juicy stories. They were so frustrated – I wish my mom had told me something interesting. She just doesn't know much about it, and she says, "Oh it's in the past, let it be", and "that's not right, how could she?" . . . And then there's this thug who did learn like life-changing stuff and was really saying deep things . . . I think that some of those more privileged children, sort of white suburban group, were really disappointed in their parents. They were upset that this thing, that they were hearing was so momentous, had been ignored. (Transcript of research circle meeting, October 2005)

All students were given direct access to funds of knowledge beyond their own social networks when one of Barnsley's students invited her interviewee, Steven Kwapeng, a former freedom fighter detained on Robben Island, to speak at the school. In this way, students were exposed to the experience and knowledge of a person deeply invested in the TRC which he nevertheless described as a 'toothless dog'.

In addition, the teacher is able to see the class 'thug' in a new light. Her previous knowledge of her students, based on 'their performance within rather limited classroom contexts' (Moll et al. 1992, 134), becomes more 'multi-stranded' and effects a change in her attitude. She says:

> Thus I learned a great deal about my learners and how they can tangibly contribute to the wealth of classroom experience. I learned that I had undervalued what they had to offer. They taught me a lot – not just about the past, and by sharing the results of their interviews, but also about how classroom dynamics can shift, depending on the nature of shared experience. (Barnsley, Teacher's journal, November 2005)

The effects were not as dramatic in either Rudman's or Marriott's classes. Despite the students' initial hesitation in Rudman's class, she reported that 'the more they found out about the TRC, the more curious they became' (Research Circle transcript, 17 October 2005). With only nine students, Rudman's class was too small to generate a critical mass of interviews and, in addition, her students did not have access to the same range of community 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al. 1992, González et al. 2005) as Barnsley's class. Nevertheless, there was one student, 'who had interviewed her cousin and she didn't realize her cousin was part of the struggle . . . so here she was seeing this person every single day, and interacting with her and she was completely unaware of her cousin's own background in it' (Transcript of research circle meeting, October 2005).

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Marriott's students had mixed experiences with their interviews. 'There were quite a few of them that seemed to have hit at least one good interview . . . One guy avoided interviewing people he knew . . . His family knew David Webster's[8] family; he didn't know if that was sensitive or not (Transcript of research circle meeting, October 2005). Overall he felt that students 'needed more time to explore the value of this experience' but that they had nevertheless 'learnt a great deal about the recent past, as well as how they felt about this past and their distance from it' (Teacher's journal, 22 February 2006). Like Barnsley, he learnt more about many of his students and their differential access to community 'knowledges'.[9]

Students' reflections: history and identity

In the students' reflections on the overall project, their response to the experience of interviewing and to the sharing of these experiences in class emerges as key to the success of this pedagogy for engaging with the past. Although the length requirements for the written reflection task varied considerably, most students articulated their attitudes towards the TRC project without difficulty. Table 3 provides a quantitative analysis of the students' positions on the TRC project.

Table 3: Student positions on the TRC project

Students	Positive response to TRC project	Negative response to TRC project	Mixed response	No opinion on TRC project expressed
Rudman's	2	2	–	2
Barnsley's	37	–	–	3
Marriott's	15	1	2	2
TOTALS	54	3	2	7

The students' responses to the TRC project were overwhelmingly positive, the majority describing it as a stimulating learning experience. It was interesting to note that of the sixty-five students who reflected on the TRC project, only two students, in Rudman's class, provided the anticipated 'bored-with-the-past' response, saying that they had found the work 'boring', 'repetitive' and 'uninspiring' – the kind of response that one had initially feared. Overall, the students engaged with the past, some even demonstrating a 'turn-around' (Comber and Kamler 2005) in their attitudes towards their own histories or History as a subject.

> I was very young at the time of the hearings. So doing research and finding out about the TRC, interviewing people made me discover interesting things about the past and why some people feel the way they do towards other races, traditions, etc. (Barnsley's student)

> [The project] made me appreciate South African history more than before . . . I had always [hated] history as a subject, mainly because there was too much information to be learnt and too many dates to be remembered. This project on the TRC was an informal and fun way to

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> learn about the past . . . The project made me realize, history is not only a subject but also determines my future. (Marriott's student)

In Barnsley's class, many of the students spoke of having been deeply moved or otherwise affected by the stories they came across:

> It was heart wrenching to hear real-life stories told by the person involved!
>
> I found it very informative, I learnt something I did not know, I now have more respect for the victims of apartheid.
>
> I feel this project was incredibly insightful! As a young South African, I'm proud to have been informed of such thought-provoking, historical times by someone who was actually involved.

Marriott's students, having been required to respond in more detail, provided more carefully considered opinions on their experience of the project. Their responses demonstrate a considerable degree of reflectivity, both intellectual and emotional, and by and large they are characterized by students' explanations of having shifted, in various ways. Some students commented explicitly on the pedagogy of the interviews:

> After having conducted my interviews, I was amazed to such an extent about how much we can learn from others' personal experiences . . . [C]onducting these interviews was an interesting way to . . . learn about the TRC through others . . . The interview process for me allowed me to learn about the TRC on a personal level and therefore it was exciting. Because of the enthusiasm of my interviewees they were more than willing to share their experiences and opinions with me; therefore it was a pleasurable learning experience.
>
> "TRC? Truth and Reconciliation Commission? I think I've heard of it. Oh well, who cares, it's just another English piece," those were the first words that came to my mind as this project on the TRC was being presented to us. In the beginning I felt as though I was being "forced" to learn about South Africa's history but what I didn't bargain for was that at the end of the assignment, I wasn't bored, but rather intrigued and more interested in our past than ever.

In reporting on their interviews in class, students moved from their initial positions as listeners of narratives in their communities to tellers of stories in the classroom space. In some instances, students uncovered stories about their own relatives that enabled them to understand for the first time how their own identities are inflected by the past. In the borderlands, where different funds of knowledge enter into the same space, the students assigned different values to their respective 'knowledges' and were able to recognize whose stories mattered.

> The people that I interviewed did not really have a big effect on me because they did not have something real to tell me. For example, I heard some of my classmates report backs and they had people who were really involved in the TRC like the one was a freedom fighter. Now if I interviewed a freedom fighter I'm sure I would feel a lot different about it. (Marriott's student)

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It was the students themselves who privileged previously marginalised 'knowledges', even as they recognized that their own 'knowledges' were being decentred. While one would not want to claim that all students re-evaluated their own contributions in this way, there is evidence in the changed classroom dynamics and in students' increased levels of receptiveness to infer that, at least in some cases, students' senses of themselves shifted in relation to one another. This suggests the potential of this pedagogy to develop a 'heightened historical consciousness' (González 2005, 42) that enables students to recognize how history constitutes identity, their own identity and the identity of others.

Conclusion

There can be no doubt that the pedagogy used for the TRC project opened the curriculum to different communities' funds of knowledge. Like the work of Moll and his associates (Moll et al. 1992, González et al. 2005), this project challenged what counts as valued knowledge: students usually disempowered by the school curriculum now had greater access to privileged knowledge which they could use to write themselves into the classroom. There are nevertheless important differences in the compilers' iteration of the work of Moll and his associates.

First, we construct *students* rather than teachers as the researchers of community funds of knowledge. By capitalising on community resources, we were able to move away from text-book history to real engagement with people's lived narratives. In this way, it was students who produced the curriculum content.

Secondly, although Moll's project understands funds of knowledge as both historically and culturally developed bodies of knowledge as well as the skills essential for household and individual functioning, much of the work that is translated into curriculum focuses on skills and 'labour history' (Moll et al. 1992, 133). We shift the emphasis to a focus on historically developed bodies of knowledge and experience. We are less interested in how skills are acquired historically than in who people are as a result of their histories. Our work emerges from our interest in the relationship between accumulated funds of knowledge and identity.

Thirdly, while Moll and his associates' research works towards the inclusion of marginalised community funds of knowledge into the school curriculum, we wanted to work in the borderlands by bringing multiple funds of knowledge into contact with one another in the shared classroom space. Both approaches challenge the hegemony of traditional curriculum content and disrupt power/knowledge relations. Our approach works with diversity as a productive resource for transforming the power/knowledge (Foucault 1980) configuration in the curriculum.

That community funds of knowledge are racialized in desegregated South African schools is not surprising. What is significant, is that everyone was moved by what the students with direct access to personal experiences of the TRC had to say. Barnsley describes the listening silence in her class, and Marriott the 'reverent' atmosphere' in his. Moreover, where the pedagogy was effective, the teachers saw their students

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through transformed lenses, the power dynamics in the classroom shifted and students related to each other differently. Perhaps most important is that some students were able to connect with their own family and community histories in new and profound ways.

Meeting in the spaces between their differences gave students and teachers an opportunity to see one another in new ways. Desegregated classrooms enabled the teachers to do important border work. Where teachers were able to re-consider their students' worth in the light of new knowledge about them; where displaced white students became interested in what their black peers could offer from the life experiences of their communities; and where individual students re-connected with their community and family histories, the learning experience proved to be more moving than threatening. While all we can claim thus far is some powerful moments of reconciliation in 'the borderland where the space [people] shrinks . . . with intimacy' (Anzaldúa 1999, Preface), it is a hopeful pedagogic beginning.

Notes

1 Njabulo Ndebele is quoted by M. Merten in 'In 20 years we'll wonder what the fuss what about', *Mail & Guardian*, 26 August to 1 September 2005.

2 The international Reconciliation Pedagogies project, entitled Rethinking Reconciliation and Pedagogy in Unsettling Times, is led by Professor Robert Hattam of the University of South Australia. It aims to research the pedagogical nature of reconciliation processes by bringing two discourses – 'reconciliation' and 'pedagogy' – into conversation. It also includes research sites in Israel, Cyprus, New Zealand and the USA.

3 While the official TRC process has been completed, many South Africans have not yet begun to do the kind of daily work that is necessary to effect healing.

4 The core members of the Research Circle are Ana Ferreira, Hilary Janks, Helen Ludlow and Reville Nussey, all educational researchers from the University of the Witwatersrand; and Ingrid Barnsley, Charles Mariott and Monique Rudman, school-based classroom teachers.

5 The early phase of the project comprised several months of work in which teachers explored the meaning of the word 'sorry' with students, using a range of different approaches and stimulus material. Students produced lively and engaged work that dealt with socio-politically decontextualised individual experiences of apologising and feelings of remorse.

6 (Table 1) We use Soudien's term 'scapes' to enable us both to deal with the dominant factors in a social analysis of South African schooling and to simultaneously call attention to the constructedness of these ways of seeing. He identifies race, class and gender as the most obvious of these scapes (2004, 93).

7 (Table 1) Student numbers fluctuated during the year. These numbers reflect the full complement of students who participated in this research. Because some students were absent at times, the data does not always include work from all the students.

8 David Webster was a political activist who was assassinated by the State in the 1980s.

9 He discovered, for example, that one of his students was the step-grandchild of George Bizos, a pre-eminent human rights lawyer who was part of the defence team in the Rivonia treason trial.

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