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2015-02

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Investigating Opportunities for Critical and Integrated Pedagogy and Learning in Visual Arts - A Case Study of Two Gauteng-Based Schools

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February 2015

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Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in History of Art in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

Jane Gaisang Sathekge

Submitted on the 27th of February 2015 in Johannesburg, South Africa

Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank God for the resilience, patience and strength that He has granted me to complete this research report. If it were not for Him, I would not have been able to obtain this degree. All praise goes to Him.

My mother remains my ultimate inspiration. I thank her for her encouragement and continuous support – always pushing me to complete my degree.

Barbara Buntman - whom without knowing me and yet had faith in me - supported me with a bursary to cover my tuition and living expenses. It is because of this extraordinary woman that I have come this far in my studies. I thank you.

I cannot forget to mention my friend, who is more of a sister to me, Thato Tumahole, who also, at a certain difficult time in my life, God used her kindness to assist me. I thank you for your humanity, friendship, and faithfulness.

I thank Prof. Anitra Nettleton who continued to sign my appeals to complete my study. It has been an extended journey and without your desire for me to obtain this degree, I would not have made it.

Sphelele Nxumalo, without those critical inspiration-fuelled discussions about the importance of the arts in education and our surrounding communities, I probably would not have realized the grave importance of this study and its contribution towards the creative hubs we dream of establishing within disadvantaged communities. I trust that this study will serve its role in transforming the status of arts education and bring about positive change within the communities that we aspire to serve.

Last and certainly not least, I acknowledge Prof. David Andrew for his firm hand throughout this difficult journey. This research has been one of the most strenuous academic challenges that I never thought would end so rewardingly. You had a vision when I was despondent. Your continued passion and critical contribution to the improvement of arts education in South Africa kept me motivated and more determined to keep ‘pushing’. I thank you.

To my dearest mother, my inspiration and pillar of strength. And to God Almighty who made a way where there had seemed to be no way.

Abstract

This research project investigates secondary schooling Visual Arts programmes and the extent pedagogical approaches encourage critical and closely integrated learning. The research involves a case study between two secondary schools in Johannesburg - a comparison of two grade ten Visual Arts learning programmes - by investigating the content taught and the pedagogical approaches employed. By evaluating the content of the learning programmes and pedagogical approaches, I investigate whether, or to what extent, the learning programmes challenge hegemonic ideologies and encourage a learning approach that does not perpetuate biased and stereotyped views of culture but learning that critically integrates diversity and difference in the classroom in a manner that is relevant and meaningful to the learner.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Synopsis

My research project is directed at investigating Visual Arts learning programmes in secondary schooling and the extent pedagogical approaches encourage critical and closely integrated learning in the classroom and beyond. Focus is directed at how learning takes place and the extent curriculum policy informs pedagogy and learning. The terms ‘critical’ and ‘integrated’ are complex in themselves and have all been subject to debate. In the context of my research, the term ‘critical’ serves to define a pedagogical and learning approach that encourages inquiry-mindedness, forward-thinking and risk-taking learning behaviour in the classroom - an instructional intervention that is not an end in itself, providing opportunities for learners to further question new and existing information. By ‘critical’, I refer to teaching and learning approaches whereby ‘the right answer’ may continue to be questioned and interrogated - bringing about diverse possibilities and individual pathways to responding to information. I use the term ‘integration’ to suggest the close interrelation of various sets of knowledge from varying sources in a manner that is relevant and meaningful to learning. Here, integration transcends the mere insertion or adding of certain cultural content to educational programmes with the aim of diversifying the curriculum. It is the meaningful interrelationship of diversity and difference which provides a critical and rigorous engagement with content.

The study involves a comparison of two secondary schools in Johannesburg - a comparison of two grade ten Visual Arts programmes by investigating the content taught and the pedagogical approaches employed. By evaluating the content of the learning programmes and pedagogical approaches, I investigate whether, or to what extent, the learning programmes challenge hegemonic ideologies and encourage a learning approach that does not perpetuate biased

and stereotyped views of culture but learning that critically integrates diversity and difference in the classroom in a manner that is relevant and meaningful to the learner.

It is important to note that at the time I conducted my research, the curriculum was informed by *Outcomes-Based Education* (*OBE*) under the *Revised National Curriculum Statement* (*RNCS*) (2007) of the Department of Education. Since then, this policy has been under constant scrutiny and revision and, as a result, the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement* (*CAPS*) is replacing the current Subject and Learning Area Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines for all the subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (*CAPS*, 2011). This document will thus form part of the literature which frames my study and will be discussed in the Literature Review chapter of my document.

The following questions are central to my study:

Key questions integral to my study

A. To what extent is teaching and learning in each Visual Art classroom influenced by the historical and current socio-cultural context in which the school is situated?

i) What is the relationship of Visual Culture Studies to the learners' historical and current socio-cultural context?

ii) Does this relationship encourage critical integration of diversity and difference in the classroom and if so, how?

iii) To what extent do the teachers' pedagogical approaches in each classroom support development of critical and integrated learning?

1.2. Title

Investigating Opportunities for Critical and Integrated Pedagogy and Learning in Visual Arts - A Case Study of Two Gauteng-Based Schools

1.3. Aim

With this investigation I envisage a frame for a Visual Arts learning programme that transcends the mere celebration and embracing of multiplicity, and in doing this, engage ideas of diversity and difference within a critical and closely integrated learning environment. Furthermore, this study urges us to rethink curricula that integrate the progressive nature of culture and identity in society and educational settings; “an instructional intervention” (Gay, 1999, p.202) that is deeply informed by the constantly evolving idea of ‘culture’ brought about by “the age of globalisation, post-colonialism, and multiplicity” (McCarthy et al., p.76) but also ensuring a critical balance in learning new information arising from this diverse curriculum.

1.4. Rationale

The terms ‘critical’ and ‘integrated’ are subject to criticism and may bring about a varied set of definitions. Given this, it is important that I define these terms as a framing for what is to follow. By critical learning programmes I mean learning approaches, which not only respect the diversity of culture, race, class, gender etc. in the classroom, but transcend the superficial and superfluous nature of pluralism; I mean learning environments that engage learners in critical relationships of ‘otherness’. The association of the ‘self’ to the ‘other’ is a conflictual affair that requires a critical relationship. Thus, by critical, integrated learning I refer to instructional interventions that do not merely assimilate pluralistic ideas of culture and difference, but unite these concepts in a manner that would facilitate a platform for learners to not only receive information but to further question and interrogate

knowledge systems. A critical and integrated milieu thus entails a rigorous relationship between learners - what and how they learn - thus affecting the way they receive information even beyond the classroom. It entails a thorough interconnectedness of diverse and different ideas. Integration is not a matter of mere assimilation or incorporation of ideas and neither does it refer to the meagre idea of content addition to the curriculum. It's an affair of conflictual relationships and critical engagements which should involve instructional interventions which facilitate the continuous questioning of how learning takes place across a variety of disciplines. Furthermore, integration should not have as its aim a resolution of conflict, but should set out to manage conflict – even promoting the conflictual situations out of which emerge the crises for change.

Although the South African Visual Arts curriculum embraces the idea of critical and integrated learning, it merely incorporates cultural diversity and fails to challenge dominant ideologies. In this way, hierarchical structures are maintained and conflicts arising from pluralistic ideas are superficially resolved through the idea of acceptance and tolerance of 'otherness'. Critical and integrated Visual Arts learning programmes may encourage metacognitive processes. By being able to think critically and analytically in the Visual Arts classroom (and most essentially, to think critically about one's thinking) learners are freed from conditioned thinking. By contextualising the Visual Arts programme within a critical milieu that challenges hierarchical structures built on foundations of Eurocentrism, the South African learner could be 'emancipated' from stereotyped and biased thinking by broadening cognitive abilities to imagine beyond hegemonic ideologies. The learner will understand the world around him/her expansively. She/he learns to understand and engage the others' expressions, cultures and identities. He/she will learn to critically question dominant ideologies presented to him/her (not only in the classroom but outside the classroom too).

One of the schools that form part of my study is a historically white school located in an affluent part of an upper middle class Johannesburg suburb. The school is built upon foundations of rich, socio-historical contexts and comprises a pupil body of mostly white learners. A school of this nature may strive towards a Visual Arts learning programme which is not merely pluralistic but also challenging to Eurocentric world views in order to provide learners with a learning environment that will allow them to question information and to be citizens who are continuously critical of the learning process. Similarly, the Soweto school, whose foundations are also built upon rich historical backgrounds may invest in a Visual Arts programme which is commensurate with the progressive nature of Soweto's socio-political and historical background by dismantling the hegemonic Eurocentric world views which are so prevalent in the South African Visual Arts curriculum. I believe that such transformations are a stepping stone towards encouraging critical, broadened thinking and what David Perkins (1994) terms "thinking dispositions" (Perkins, 1994, p.4).

1.5. The Importance of my Study

This research has the potential to contribute to the understanding of Visual Arts education by intensifying the critical interconnectedness of the multiplicity of cultures and identities in the classroom and in the broad spectrum of society. Most importantly, this study has the potential to inform South African Visual Arts programmes by encouraging critical and integrated learning that may transform instructional intervention and influence pedagogy and learning approaches in the classroom. My research aims to critically revisit and rethink current Visual Arts learning programmes informed by curriculum in South Africa.

1.6. Contextualisation of the Investigated Schools

I am investigating two different schools (an affluent historically white school in a well-established upper middle class suburb in Johannesburg, and a black less affluent school in Soweto). The suburban school is a well-resourced historically white school that comprises a more Eurocentric spectrum of culture and identity due to its socio-historical background and the environment in which it is located. The Soweto school, on the other hand, is a previously disadvantaged, under resourced, single race educational setting. Thus, it may comprise a variety of South African cultures as the learners come from diverse cultural and multilingual backgrounds. The Soweto school is built upon rich historical backgrounds but in a less advantaged socio-economical context.

I chose these two schools because of their disparate natures. This feature allows for a more critical comparison and investigation - the findings of one school effectively informing the other.

I acknowledge that there are certain limitations to my study as my research is informed by observations and data collection from only two South African schools. I use the two learning programmes as a lens to broadly determine what is taking place in a typical South African Visual Arts classroom. The findings that emerge from this research are thus used to describe teaching and learning approaches as informed by the curriculum.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1. Synopsis

The focus of this study is aimed at investigating Visual Arts learning programmes that do not only embrace multiplicity and celebrate pluralistic ideas but teaching and learning approaches that critically question and interrogate the idea of pluralism as an integral part of learning about art. The following primary sources thus provide the theoretical framework for understanding art education that has the capacity to transform or enhance Visual Arts learning and to consequently inform rigorous and critical integrated teaching and learning approaches in diverse cultural and ethnic classroom environments - what Enid Zimmerman refers to as an "intercultural point of view that combines aspects of multicultural, community-based, and global education perspectives" (Zimmerman, 2004, p.409).

My research is primarily concerned with intensifying awareness and the need for a critical and integrated pedagogy and learning. It is thus necessary to review curriculum approaches that have informed current debates and studies which have and are still taking place around the idea of critical and integrated pedagogy and learning. I have selected literature based on multicultural education and I will be looking closely at how multiculturalism has been employed in curriculum reform in attempting to foster more critical and integrated learning.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The concept of multiculturalism has over the years come under scrutiny and as a result has become subject to rigorous critique. There has been a significant amount of early 21st century writing involving a critique of the "multicultural". Thus, this concept is currently undergoing revision - most significantly in educational settings. Bhiku Parekh (2006) is a critic of multiculturalism and in his book, *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, he adopts a rigorous and critical approach to

redefining and understanding the multicultural concept. His multicultural perspective is premised on the idea of cultural recognition - that a multicultural society is one that yearns for awareness and respect for their culture. I have extracted several significant texts from his book, which speak to my research and I will refer to and critique his perspectives on multiculturalism and how this may contribute to understanding what a critical and rigorous multicultural education constitutes.

Susan Cahan and Zoya Kocur have written extensively on issues surrounding contemporary art and multicultural education. In *Rethinking Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education* (2011) they revise their essay, *Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education* (1996), in which they argue for the need for multicultural art education in schools. Their current essay is a shift from the mere need to integrate multicultural approaches in education to a questioning of the role of multicultural education in contemporary society. It forms an important foundation for my study as it contextualises the role of contemporary art in multicultural education within the 21st century. And although Cahan and Kocur are based in Western institutions, they draw on a post-colonial framework for visual arts education. They focus on the need to bring contemporary art learning into the classroom in order to make learning relevant and meaningful to learners. They emphasise the necessity of pedagogy to link the day to day experiences of learners with the inside of a classroom environment through contemporary art learning. They are concerned with facilitating a critical multiculturalism in a classroom environment that is commensurate with the 21st century learner.

Elizabeth Vallance, Bernard Young, and jan jagodzinski (1999) provide various critical approaches to multicultural frameworks and strategies. These texts lay a significant foundation for my research as my study is concerned with establishing rigorous, critical and closely integrated multicultural Visual Arts education in secondary schools. It is important

to adopt a critical approach to the multicultural concept as the term is one susceptible to various conflicts and critiques and so the aforementioned authors provide me with new thinking approaches to multicultural education.

Zimmerman also provides a unique perspective of multicultural education. She adopts a critical approach to reformed art curricula and suggests an educational philosophy of teaching and learning which she describes as 'intercultural' as opposed to 'multicultural'.

Jagdish Gundara and Christopher Fyfe's (1999) argument departs from the idea that art education, in Europe, remains submissive to the hegemonic canon, and as a result, is subject to cultural imprisonment which recognizes only its own art forms. In the case where it recognizes those outside its 'net', it interprets them according to its own preset values. They suggest that adopting an intercultural curriculum - a curriculum which is multifaceted and multifocal, may consequently "open the prison" (Gundara and Fyfe, 1999, pp.87-101). They speak of an intercultural approach which "redefines the canon of art history and presents the traditions of the world within their own standards, not those of the Eurocentric tradition" (Ibid.).

In his book, *Culture, Education and Development in South Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, Ali A. Abdi (2002) portrays the South African educational system as problematic as it was governed and informed by the apartheid policy of Bantu education. He deals with the historical inequities and inequalities in education by proposing the formulation and implementation of a "critical multicultural education" (Abdi, 2002, p.143). He first defines 'critical' as a term "in alliance with the general characteristics of viewing social relationships, economic dispensations, and political orders from a critical perspective that inherently questions the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the situation and analytically creates ways to improve it" (Ibid.). The kind of critical multiculturalism that Abdi advocates is one that,

> […] is geared toward the critical equalization of different cultures that have to co-exist and learn from one another without necessarily diminishing the legitimacy of the specialized particularities of one given culture in an unidentified domain of generalized or specialized representations of ideas, knowledges, or technical expertise. (ibid., p.144)

He argues for the replacing of the prevalent absolute cultures by "a system that accords equal value to all South African cultures for their own specific and historically situated significance" (Ibid.). Most significantly, Abdi highlights that the conceptual implications of critical multiculturalism, which should presuppose transformative multicultural education, involve notions of voice and representation, identity and empowerment of all learners. The idea of a critical multicultural curriculum that is informed by the socio-cultural and historical background, within which learning is situated, and also providing learners with opportunities of individual pathways of discovering and creating meaning is an integral part of my research and thus, Abdi makes a relevant contribution to my study.

In their book, *Close to the Sources: Essays on Contemporary African Culture, Politics and Academy*, Abebe Zegeye and Maurice Vambe (2009), in discussing issues that pertain to contemporary African educational curricula, begin by rethinking and identifying best practices in "Africanising" curricula in Africa's education. Africanisation in itself can be a term entangled in a complex ambiguity and meaning and it is for this reason that Zegeye and Vambe point out the "imprecision" of what is meant by this term. For them it is necessary to critique the term in order to move forward. Their essay, *Perspectives on Africanising Educational Curricula in Africa* (Zegeye and Vambe, 2009, pp.125-137), discusses the current debates on Africanisation and suggests favourable "epistemic" milieu in which the Africanisation process can take place. It further proposes some standards by which the process of Africanising educational curricula can be deemed productive,

meaningful and practical within an African context. They ask crucial questions as to why Africanisation is such a heated topic of discussion in 21st Century Africa and the diaspora; what the terms are for the debate that is being carried out, and what all these questions have to do with curriculum development in 'Africa's' education. Here, by referring to an education that is essentially African, problematic and stereotypical, connotations of racial or cultural prejudice arise as Africa is treated as a unique collective of peoples separate from the rest of the world.

In her introduction to *Curriculum as Cultural practice* Yatta Kanu (2006), discusses curriculum reform from the contentious perspective of the 'postcolonial'. She interrogates the prejudice of Western Eurocentrism that has been at the core of all education systems for centuries. She states that this domination of the West has been exposed and has led to various perspectives that challenge and deconstruct this hegemonic epistemology in curriculum such as feminism, postmodernism, phenomenology etc. Her concern is that although Western cultural knowledge is being challenged, largely by postcolonial theory, the inferences of these challenges have not been fully engaged with. She contextualises her discussion of the postcolonial within curriculum and pedagogy and uses this as leverage for "understanding and rethinking curriculum as cultural practice in postcolonial educational contexts" (Kanu, 2006, p.4). Kanu's postcolonial contextualisation of education forms a critical lens through which I can begin to frame and understand my study within contemporary trends in curriculum reform. I will also look closely at some of the contributors to Kanu's book, George J. Sefa Dei and Stanley Doyle Wood, who also explore curriculum within a postcolonial context. They work through the lens of 'curriculum as cultural practice' and adopt a radical analysis of education and curriculum - looking more closely at exclusionary practices and social inequity that have been sustained by racial power relations. They assume radical interrogation and challenge dominant school knowledge systems and

their claims to “cultural supremacy, legitimacy and normalcy” (Dei and Wood, 2006, p.152), using “indigenous knowledges and spirituality as a source of embodied resistance and transformative counter-hegemonic knowledge” (Ibid.). Through this analysis, they seek to amputate the “epistemic violence” (Ibid.) of dominant Western cultural knowledge against marginalized ‘minority’ peoples.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, at the time that I initiated the research, the current curriculum was outcomes-based as described in the *RNCS* (2007). The curriculum has since been revised and is currently being replaced by the *CAPS* (2012) document. A brief overview of the Learning Outcomes as stated in the *RNCS* and the topics laid out in the *CAPS* document will follow. I will compare the two policies and assess the changes and also assess whether or not there is a significant difference in curriculum and how this impacts learning. I will also investigate whether pedagogical strategies and the content of the learning programmes are congruent with the guidelines set out in the policy documents which ostensibly aim to achieve integrated multicultural learning.

2.3. Literature Review

2.3.1. An Overview of the Concept of Multiculturalism

2.3.2. A Discussion of Susan Cahan and Zoya Kocur’s essay: “Rethinking Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education”

2.3.3. Alternative Approaches to Multicultural Frameworks and Strategies: Elizabeth Vallance, Bernard Young, Rachel Mason and jan jagodzinski

2.3.4. Enid Zimmerman’s Intercultural Approach to Education

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2.3.6. The need for a critical South African Multicultural Curriculum

2.3.6.1. Ali A. Abdi's Suggestions for a Critical Multicultural Education

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2.3.8. Curriculum and Policy

2.3.8.1. Visual Arts Learning Outcomes in the *RNCS*

2.3.8.2. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

A. What is Visual Arts?

B. Specific Aims of Visual Arts

C. Overview of Topics

D. Teaching Guidelines

2.3.1. An Overview of the Concept of Multiculturalism

The concept of multiculturalism is one which concerns societies since it addresses culture and the ways in which human beings relate and interact with one another. Bhiku Parekh (2006), in *Rethinking Multiculturalism*, states that multiculturalism is facilitated by exposure to different societies and cultures.When different cultural traditions

influence each other, a multicultural dimension is formed and from this also emerges “multiculturally constituted musical, literary and other traditions” (Parekh, 2006, p.226). This new cultural dimension imaginatively “transforms the elements borrowed from different traditions into something wholly different” (Ibid.). The idea of ‘borrowing’ lends itself to rigorous critique and this aspect of multiculturalism will be looked at closely and interrogated against some of the fundamental features of interculturalism. Parekh speaks of two ideas involved in the processes of multiculturalisation - “the multiculturalisation of the existing traditions and the emergence of multiculturally constituted new ones” (Ibid). He describes the two as closely related and reinforcing each other and further explains that “when a tradition is multiculturalised, it sees the new multicultural tradition as continuous with and carrying further its own internal multiculturalisation” (Ibid.). This sporadic nature of multiculturalism structures an atomic – continuous - behavior of culture where one particular concept conceives a series of ideas and continues to multiply into new and complex notions of culture. This pluralistic process conceives and pushes forth continuous cultural dispositions where new information is continuously assimilated and forms new thinking systems without the crucial balance through which a meaningful integration of knowledge may take place. Parekh explains that a multicultural society is one within which cultures are constantly encountering one another in both formal and informal settings and in private and public spaces. He states the following regarding the process of multiculturalisation,

> Guided by curiosity, incomprehension or admiration, they interrogate each other, challenge each other’s assumptions, consciously or unconsciously borrow from each other, widen their horizons and undergo small and large changes. Even when their interaction is limited, the very awareness of other traditions alerts each to its own contingency and specificity, and subtly alters the manner in which its members define and relate to it. (Ibid.)

Parekh speaks of “awareness of other traditions” (Ibid.) as a feature of the multiculturalisation of societies. Parekh emphasises this random nature of the multiculturally constituted culture by referring to its growth as “unplanned” and by arguing that the contents of such a culture are “broadly but not universally agreed, and remain subject to dispute” (ibid., p.221). He further describes it as a culture which is “relatively open-ended, multi-stranded, pulls in different directions, and is constantly in the making”. (Ibid.)

2.3.2. A Discussion of Susan Cahan and Zoya Kocur’s Essay: “Rethinking Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education”

Cahan and Kocur write that “since the 1980’s, the body of literature on multicultural education in the United States has grown” (Cahan and Kocur, 2011, p.4.) and varies from perspectives such as the “heroes and holidays” approach and “celebrations of diversity” to radical critiques of institutionalized racism, sexism, and classism within the education system” (Ibid.). Their main concern is that within this broad scope of literature, very little has been written on Visual Arts and, even more significantly, how the study of art can play certain substantive roles within critical approaches to multicultural education. While most multicultural approaches to art education promote the study of art from diverse cultures, “they overlook the historical and political dimensions of cultural democracy” (Ibid). With their latest book, *Rethinking Contemporary Art and Multicultural Education* (2011) they highlight “the role of art within a critically based approach to multicultural education” (ibid., p.4). Contemporary art is employed as a tool and a “focal point for an antiracist, antisexist, democratically based curriculum, providing both a theoretical foundation and practical resources for implementation” (Ibid.).

Cahan and Kocur begin their approach to establishing the role of art within a critically based framework for multicultural education by first defining the term “multicultural” and consequently proceed to

explaining what multicultural education entails and the role within this framework.

They begin with the premise that the word “multicultural” is a broad term carrying within it an extensive range of meanings and implications. They point out that the term holds within itself ambiguous connotations and that,

> It can mean a cultural pluralism in which the various ethnic groups collaborate and dialog with one another without having to sacrifice their particular identities and this is extremely desirable. But it can also mean a kind of Esperantic Disney World, a *tutti-frutti* cocktail of cultures, languages and art forms in “which everything becomes everything else”. This is a dangerous notion that strongly resembles the bankrupt concept of the melting pot with its familiar connotations of integration, homogenization and pasteurization. It is why so many Latino and black organizations are so distrustful of the term. (Ibid.)

The term “multicultural” (in the context which we use it in educational settings) is one which is intended to deconstruct structures which have secured the hegemony of the canon in its place. It is an attempt to break down “the linear succession of dominant art styles that make up the historical canon” (ibid., p.5). Cahan and Kocur highlight that “it is precisely this hierarchical and linear notion of art history that has prevented work of artists of colour from being considered part of the official story” (Ibid.). They emphasise that the term “Multicultural” is not a style that came and went (just as Pop art defined the 60s) “but a condition of social existence” (Ibid.).

According to Cahan and Kocur, multicultural education surfaced as a result of the social activism of the 1960s and 1970s and was inspired by such activism such as struggles against oppression by racial movements, feminism, and the movement for gay and lesbian rights. In tertiary institutions it emerged as demands for ethnic and women’s studies and in secondary education it called for total curriculum reform

with the approach of student-centred pedagogy, community involvement in policy making and governance, and the equal distribution of resources in order to place the range of cultural, ethnic and economic groups at par level. It is evident that multicultural education has always been rooted in the idea of equality and has been the vehicle through which education is mobilized. “Its purpose is to change the power structure in the wider society in order to foster social and political empowerment for all learners” (Ibid.). Cahan and Kocur report that in the last three decades educators have set out to develop curricula which are more pluralistic and that while most attempts have moved beyond the “heroes and holidays” approach (where teachers celebrate diversity and difference by incorporating information about specific icons and certain cultural artefacts of various groups into the mainstream curriculum) , there is still a need for education models which are “geared towards transforming the very conditions that create social and economic inequalities” (Ibid.).

On the role of art in multicultural education, Cahan and Kocur point out that pedagogy in art has not changed distinctively within the movement for multicultural education. Their concern is that the curriculum models adopted in arts education lack the potential to transform social and political conditions. They make reference to two of the most commonly used textbooks in art, namely H.W. Janson’s *History of Art* and Helen Gardner’s *Art through the Ages*, (which were first published over five decades ago) and state that although they have been revised and updated several times, the content still tends to distort, obscure and merely add on the history of black African art, the art of the African Diaspora and the art of various other cultures and groups. Contemporary art has also been deprived of a concrete place in art history. This is evident in the way contemporary artists have been contextualized - revealing the difficulty art historians have had in incorporating a diverse range of living artists into the canon.

Some of the approaches to curriculum reform which have been used reveal the narrow scope and pitfalls of multicultural curricula. The additive approach entails the addition of those previously neglected movements or styles to the conventional list of European art movements. Content is added without challenging the hierarchical Eurocentric structure of curricula. “The glorification of token “masters” such as Georgia O’Keeffe, Romare Bearden, and Frida Kahlo merely reinforces the prevailing art narrative of the “gifted individual” who has been able to succeed beyond his or her community in achievement” (ibid., p.6). Therefore, it would seem inevitable that art created outside of these limiting criteria lacks value.

The cross-cultural approach is one which focuses on creating links between certain cultural groups. However, the educational content includes a limited selection of historical events and it always stresses the incorporation of ‘third world’ influences into European art. This approach merely focuses on creating links between third world art and European art styles. Artistic developments are rarely linked with historical and political events “such as colonialism, global imperialism, or the slave trade, which in many cases set the context for cross-cultural interaction” (Ibid.). Another pitfall in this approach is that cross-cultural connections between indigenous and diasporic groups are ignored. This portrays the implicit perception that the notion of “cultural diversity” is conceived as referring to ““marginalised minorities” in relation to a white European centre” (Ibid.).

Other strategies, such as ethnically based approaches, place considerable emphasis on a specific culture and adopt criteria that the particular society uses in creating and appreciating its art. Here, the study of art is not integrated into the broader social, cultural, political, and historical context thus approaching art in ways that make it seem alien. Questions relating to power are thus kept at arm’s length within the society.

Cahan and Kocur point us to the complex nature of approaches to multicultural education that consider “not only the art object and its function but also the culturally specific processes by which it was made and the socio-political dynamics shaping its reception” (ibid., p.7). These consider the cultural and social values and beliefs of both teachers and learners (even cultural biases that may be involved). Brian Bullivant (Bullivant 1993, cited in Cahan and Kocur 2011, p.7) makes us aware that “culture is not a set of artifacts or tangible objects but the very way that the members of a particular group interpret, use and perceive them” (Ibid.). Here the term “use” does not only refer to the cultural society but also includes the way teachers and learners engage with the objects during the educational process. Thus, this approach yields self-reflexive learning outcomes - producing learners who are critically conscious of their role as “cultural interpreters and of the real ethical and social responsibilities” (Cahan and Kocur, 2011, p.7.) which come with that role.

In cases where the study of art (art theory e.g. Visual Culture Studies) connects with the making of art, the focus is on medium and form. The example which Cahan and Kocur relate involves a scenario where learners study African masks and are then required to make masks of their own. This situation presents learning content void of critical engagement with objects, enhancement of cultural understanding, and also reduces cultural artifacts to “empty forms void of historical or social significance” (Ibid.).

Cahan and Kocur make us aware that what is missing from multicultural education is “an approach that connects everyday experience, social critique, and creative expression” (Ibid.). They argue that it is only when “the focus is shifted to issues and ideas that learners truly care about and that are relevant within a larger life-world context, that art becomes a vital means of reflecting on the nature of society and social existence” (Ibid.). This idea brings us to the

suggestion of contemporary art learning in the classroom. What is needed is an approach that,

> […] stresses the vital connections between learners' lives inside and outside of school within a framework of social and historical analysis. This approach not only encourages learners to speak from their own perspectives, but also encourages them to critique their environments and confront social issues in ways that are synthesized with the study of art. (ibid., p.9)

They also write of a social reconstructionist approach to art education and they describe a curriculum that would produce a socially-conscious and active learner who is aware of the current socio-political and cultural environment; a learner who is caring and takes cognizance of the way others think and accommodates information as new meaning is formed.

2.3.3. Alternative Approaches to Multicultural Frameworks and Strategies: Elizabeth Vallance, Bernard Young, Rachel Mason and jan jagodzinski.

According to Rachel Mason (1999), the multicultural art education reforms which emerged in North America and Western Europe are informed by Western liberal ideas of equity and diversity. Here, she points out that multicultural concepts, regardless how reformed they are, are still predominantly a Eurocentric canon which continues to marginalise vast majorities.

One of the approaches, suggested by Merelman (Merelman 1995, cited in Mason 1999, p.8), which may be adopted by multiculturalists who want to reconstruct society or facilitate increased participation of minority cultural groups, is the infusion of particularist models of curriculum. The infusion model is understood as a model which aims towards cultural syncretism and projects minority group perspectives across the curriculum as a whole. This model is broad and pluralistic

and fails to engage individuals critically thus running the risk of "distinctive cultural perspectives being lost within a universalistic framework" (Ibid.). The particularist model confines learners to specific courses, enforcing focused and prescribed learning programmes.

Vallance (1999) explores art museums and explains how they, excluding those dedicated to the art of a single culture, are "small multicultural worlds" (Vallance, 1999, p.33). Art museums house a collection of a variety of arts forms from diverse cultural settings collected over a span of time and can engage viewers in in-depth explorations of "art" from places and times which are different and distant from the viewer's everyday life. Vallance views the art museum as a safe and quiet place (I will later critique this perception and argue that this notion of safety and quietness is a Western construct designed to exclude certain 'noisy' interpretations of meaning coming from the 'outside') to explore immense cultural differences and thus provide resources for educators who may incorporate these into their learning programmes. If art museums present their collections in a manner which visibly portrays conceptions of multiculturalism, viewers (learners) can quickly learn that there is a world of diverse cultures different from theirs.

Vallance also suggests that museums can contribute invaluably to multicultural art education through "multiculturally orientated programming" (ibid., p.34) which may create links between historical and contemporary art through the study of their history and the development of culture.

Bernard Young (1999) argues for a curriculum which includes, in the canon, "a distinctive African-American brand of art and art education theory and practice that has developed over a hundred years" (Young 1999, cited in Mason 1999, p.9). He argues for an art curriculum which provides a balance between teaching and learning contemporary and

historical knowledge informed by both the canon and other cultural traditions of the minority groups.

According to Mason, where multicultural reform is linked to problems of bilingualism and multilingualism, interculturalism posits a preferred cultural framework which Fernando Hernandez (Hernandez 1999, cited in Mason 1999, p.9) distinguishes from American multiculturalism. The latter is based on the recognition of and respect for diversity and difference. It is a broad concept which facilitates and favours the juxtaposition of cultures without allowing for critical engagement among groups (what Hernandez describes as the “melting pot”- where a diversity of cultural knowledge systems intermix in a particular contextualised framework and everything becomes everything else and there are no particular characteristics to distinguish one culture from another).

Interculturalism moves beyond the “melting pot” notion and transcends the idea of the mere recognition and respect of differences to a much deeper concept of “learning from each other”. The aim of the intercultural approach is to open communication channels among groups with the objective of learning from one another through cultural exchange. This idea thus moves beyond the pluralist aspect of multiculturalism.

jan jagodzinski (1999) adopts a more radical approach to multicultural reform, speaking of “civilised racism” when describing the liberal ideas intrinsic to the Canadian multicultural rhetoric. He argues that all the proposed approaches to multicultural reform such as the fusion, particularist and intercultural models serve as tools through which Western hegemony is maintained. He views these ideas as merely embracing difference but failing to integrate it into everyday learning. He suggests an approach which would cater to the need for universality and thus proposes a “critical and polycentral multiculturalism” (jagodzinski 1999, cited in Mason 1999, p.10) - a

multicultural concept which is more universal in scope and one through which questions of power relations are continually forwarded. The kind of art education which emerges from this idea is one composed of three parts. Firstly it does not rule out the established canon but includes it on the grounds that it is nonsensical to eradicate "exceptional human artistic achievement" (Ibid.). However, this methodology must be subject to rigorous critique. Secondly it facilitates the inclusion of a selection of arts significant for as many cultures as is beneficial to pedagogy. This notion is based on the grounds that "historical collective memory is essential to a group's psychic survival" (Ibid.). The third part of this concept of art education includes popular culture, provided it is responsive to both the art historical canon and salient texts of dominant minority cultures. jagodzinski justifies popular culture as "the key to understanding institutional and personal racism and de-centring art education as fine art" (Ibid.). This approach is one which would prove essential to art education in South African secondary schools as the most part of the curriculum is largely informed by "fine art". The art curriculum in South African schools governed by the Gauteng Department of Education is distinctly Eurocentric in that the content derives mostly from the 'classical tradition' of high art.

2.3.4. Enid Zimmerman's Intercultural Approach to Education

One of the most important aspects of Zimmerman's teaching philosophy is her intercultural viewpoint on education which is understood as a 'critical' approach to multiculturalism - allowing for a sharing of knowledge across cultures. As opposed to the melting pot notion of multiculturalism where information is arbitrarily tossed into a processing machine to be blended into an unidentifiable consistency of cultural sphere, interculturalism attempts to facilitate a site of interrelationships of difference. As mentioned earlier in this document, Zimmerman argues for an education that "combines aspects of multicultural, community-based, and global education perspectives"

(Zimmerman, 2004, p.409). The intercultural approach to education and learning seeks to inform instructional intervention in a way which reinforces relationships of self to the other through the interrelation and exchanging of knowledge. Her pedagogical approach is one aimed at addressing learners from diverse cultural backgrounds in order to achieve a learning environment which allows for the inter-exchange of knowledge. She believes in constructing a kind of education which interconnects “a web of understanding” (Ibid.) that perpetuates the idea that “a community of knowledge can be created, both inside and outside the classroom and beyond our familiar settings” (Ibid.).

2.3.5. Adopting an Intercultural curriculum as a Mechanism to Redefine the Canon of Art History

Jagdish Gundara and Christopher Fyfe’s (1999) concern departs from the premise that art education in Europe remains in submission to the hegemonic canon and, as a result, is subject to a cultural imprisonment which recognises only its own art forms. In the case where it recognises those outside its net, it interprets them according to its own preset values. They suggest an intercultural approach which has the capacity to redefine the canon of art history and to present the “traditions of the world within their own standards, not those of the Eurocentric tradition” (Gundara and Fyfe, 1999, p.87). Gundara and Fyfe argue for a cross-cultural learning and common core values and recommend an intercultural curriculum that is rigorously selective in content considered plausible for learning. The critical questions that should be asked here are: whose voice proclaims the legitimacy of knowledge selection? Where, when and how does the content selection process take place? Who negotiates the terms in which cultural knowledge should be shared and disseminated amongst varying cultural groups? These multi-dimensional approaches to culture (such as the intercultural and cross-cultural) of merely incorporating cultural knowledge of diverse groups into the canon,

creates the epistemic crisis of representation and voice. Who gets to speak for the marginalised minorities and when?

A primary concern regarding Eurocentrism is that those that study Western artistic forms are taught that the classical tradition, i.e. the heritage of Greece and Rome, is the foundation on which western civilisation is built. However, more unsettling is the ignoring (by the Western academic tradition) of those Egyptians and Phoenicians, for example, who had a central contribution in the formation of Greek culture (Bernal 1987, 1991, cited in Gundara and Fyfe 1999, p.89). It is now the responsibility of teachers to confront and undo this very long tradition of stereotyping non-Europeans as uncivilised. Merely recognising the non-European's contribution to Western culture still secures the Eurocentrism as the assumed gold standard of values. Eurocentrism is not a simple case of prejudices and errors that incite xenophobia and other unjust inequalities but a serious threat to universal knowledge systems. Gundara and Fyfe powerfully state that "Europeanisation of the globe carries within it a de-universalisation of knowledge in that knowledge from other sources becomes marginalised and may disappear" (Gundara and Fyfe, 1999, p90).

A most important task for teachers, in order for them to teach the art histories of the world, is to dismantle the established canon of Western knowledge, but most significantly, they need also to be careful of not establishing another "rival civilisation" (Ibid.) to replace the European one as this would be "substituting one hegemonic model for another" (Ibid.). Phil Cohen refers to this concept as "the civilisation game" (Ibid.) where artworks are judged as expressions of certain racial/ethnic identity and evaluated by whether or not they conform to the set standards of the canonical values. Gundara and Fyfe argue that art history should not be contextualised in any one civilisation as it is multi-faceted and multi-focal in nature.

However, according to Saharat Maharaj (Maharaj 1986, cited in Gundara and Fyfe 1999, p.90) by reclaiming a multi-dimensional approach to culture and incorporating the art and heritage of marginalised societies into the existing canon structure, we adopt the crisis of a "multicultural aesthetic". This aesthetic is problematic in that different art systems have different ways of seeing and understanding. Thus, the pictorial language of one system cannot be comprehended without creating conflict and distortion. There is the danger of misinterpretation of language and discrediting of certain artistic forms and styles that are of non-European descent.

2.3.6. The Need for a Critical South African Multicultural Curriculum

2.3.6.1. Ali A. Abdi's Suggestions for a Critical Multicultural Education

Ali A. Abdi (2002), in *Culture, Education and Development in South Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, proposes the formulation of "critical multicultural education" (Abdi, 2002, p.143) in order to deal with educational inequities and inequalities. He explains the term 'critical' as way of interacting with diverse social, economic and political backgrounds from a critical perspective that allows for questioning "the strengths as well as the weakness of the situation and analytically creates ways to improve it" (Ibid.). Abdi advocates a multiculturalism that is "radically geared toward the critical equalisation of different cultures that have to coexist and learn from one another without diminishing the legitimacy of the specialised particularities of one given culture in an identified domain of generalised or specialised representations of ideas, knowledges, or technical expertise" (ibid., p.145). He argues for an educational system that challenges the idea of absolute cultural values and accords equal value to all South African

cultures. Furthermore, Abdi emphasises that a critical multiculturalism should presuppose “transformative multicultural education, involve notion of voice and representation, identity and empowerment of all learners” (Ibid.).

The concept of multiculturalism has within itself a spectrum of practices and Abdi mentions certain types that fall between conservative, critical or resistance multiculturalism and identifies liberal multiculturalism which ‘welcomes’ the idea of change in “social and economic relationships but always in the context of the primary and dominant European culture” (Ibid.). He also makes mention of the more radical left-liberal multiculturalism and states that it is inadequate in that it still assumes the dominant Western cultural position from which the counter-hegemonic program and discourse may be launched. Abdi argues that this kind of multiculturalism is still less than the “critical multiculturalism that is transformative and requires a complete disavowal from accommodating the dominant social order” (Ibid.). His is a critical multiculturalism that has a resistant and post-structural approach to meaning, emphasising the role that language and representation play in constructing meaning and identity. Abdi relies on a post-structuralist insight that is located within a post-modern disciplinary that suggests that “signs and significations are essentially unstable and shifting and can only be temporarily fixed, depending on how they are articulated within particular discursive and historical struggles” (ibid., p.146).

A critical multicultural education for post-apartheid South Africa is relevant in that it serves as a set of cultural, social and economic transformations that shift certain fixed hegemonic structures of knowledge that had historically nullified all non-European discourse and narratives. A complete transformation of the Eurocentric systems of knowledge is necessary, without

which, “the types of post-apartheid systems of learning, whether they be labelled as multicultural or otherwise, may not be conducive to producing a reliable base for culturally sensitive and responsive development education” (Ibid.). Abdi adds that without this transformative channel “all the social ills we have visited are capable of making themselves permanent” (Ibid.).
Abdi, furthermore, points out,

> What critical multiculturalism and its transformative forms of education are dealing with in their on-site analysis and operation is a cartography of knowledge that centralises and augments Europe while literally belittling; Eurocentrism therefore, bifurcates the world into the West and the *Rest* and organises everyday language into binaristic hierarchies implicitly flattering Europe: our nations; their tribes; our religions; their superstitions; our culture; their folklore; our defence; their terrorism. (Ibid.)

He adds that all of these Eurocentric modes of representation have been used and practised in European dominated South Africa. His concern is that unless progressive educational policies are designed and implemented, the cultural hegemony of Eurocentrism may continue unchallenged for generations to come. Abdi’s overall view is that post-apartheid education should not only be pluralistic in its objectives but most importantly, socio-historically responsive in its applications (thus defining the term ‘critical’).

In explaining what multiculturalism means, Abdi first points to the increase of globalisation and how that may account for the fait accompli state of multiculturalism in many parts of the world. Given the rise of globalisation and its impact on culture, it is perhaps fundamental to understand what is meant by the term ‘culture’ as this would determine what multiculturalism means. If

by culture we refer to all systems that operationalise all human life then multiculturalism would assume a similar definition. However, if by culture we refer to those compartmentalised and static sets of traditional cultural beliefs and ritualistic modes, then multiculturalism would take on a similar posture. For Abdi, culture takes on the former definition where culture is "both conceptually and operationally adopted as being dynamic, historical, power-based, and overwhelmingly influential on people's social, political, and economic lives" (ibid., p.148). Thus, in the South African context, multiculturalism will be geared toward equity in power relationships by equalising educational provisions.

Historically, South Africa had an extreme case of multiculturalism by virtue of having many cultures in one country yet divided by policies of separate living and development - educationally, politically, socially and economically. While past political problems that affected South Africa may have been 'resolved', Abdi argues that the educational and economic problems remain. Abdi advocates a new concept and programme of multicultural education. He writes,

> The new multiculturalism in the new South Africa, therefore, would aptly conform to what Goldberg identifies as commitments to cultural diversity that emerge out of conflictual histories of resistance, accommodation, integration, and transformation. (ibid., pp.148-149)

He goes on to adopt the concept of multiculturalism as presented by Stam and Shohat,

> Multiculturalism means seeing the world history and contemporary social life from the perspective of the radical equality of peoples in status, intelligence and rights.

> Multiculturalism decolonises representation not only in terms of cultural artefacts - literary canons, museum exhibits, film series, but also of power relations between communities…. We therefore prod multiculturalism in the direction of radical critique of power relations. (ibid., p.149)

According to Abdi's account of Stam and Shohat's analysis of what they see as "true multiculturalism, they are led to consider "the more decentralising concept of polycentric multiculturalism" (Ibid.). The contextual framework of polycentric multiculturalism is "thick" (Ibid.) due to its timely responsiveness to change in socio-cultural dynamics brought about by the perpetual changes in globalisation.

Abdi argues that a critical multicultural education in South Africa should not have as its aim to challenge, "headlong", European knowledge systems but to facilitate the multiple approaches to teaching and learning strategies, mechanisms, objectives and results. He writes,

> It is not simply to accommodate and tolerate difference in people's histories, cultures, expectations, and evaluations, but to combine them contextually and situationally and, in the process, render them all valid and potentially crucial for the development of all South Africans. Specifically in Africa, where the overwhelming majority of South Africans historico-culturally hail from, the need for modified systems of learning may be more important than ever. (Ibid.)

He goes on to cite Hopkins who points out that the greatest challenge to Africa's cultures is to develop African versions of educational philosophies that teach thinking skills, problem-solving, and creative independence; not to inherit Western modes of thinking, but simply to deal effectively with the possibility of constant societal change in the future. He says that

“educational systems that merely attempt to transmit culture, whether African or Western, will not accomplish this as the cultural reservoir is deep and the challenge, great” (ibid., p.150). When development is attained by simply adding content to curriculum, then it can no longer be seen as development and there is the risk of culture being transmitted for the risk of transmitting and when this happens, culture becomes static and is reduced to mere symbolism. Moreover, when curriculum is development orientated, it should not conform to any predetermined and preconceived canonical structures of knowledge and knowing. Instead, the development process should be facilitated and informed by “problem-solving, period-specific, and futuristically-oriented with the sustained focus of defining ways and designing models to deal with contemporary, educational and developmental situations as they emerge in and around localities and time-zones within one country, and within one continent, and around the globe” (ibid., p.151).

What Abdi advocates is an open-ended curriculum that allows the entry of multiple suggestions and ideas from other cultures. A South African cultural milieu should also be careful of the danger of assuming equal co-prominence with other cultures, and specifically in relation to the dominant European culture. A critical multicultural education must, most importantly, find that critical cognitive balance within the atomic and sporadic context of a multiculturalism driven by pluralism. This approach rids multicultural education of the melting pot idea where everything becomes everything else. Therefore, a critical multicultural curriculum should facilitate the dialogue of cultures - “while each is rooted in its own historical civilisations and current value systems and still responsive to societal changes brought about by globalisation” (Ibid.).

2.3.6.2. Postcolonial approaches to Africanising Educational curricula in Africa

Zegeye and Vambe (2009) refer to Africanisation as both a derivative and reverse discourse - derivative as it can only be named through a process of negation - a process that also characterises it against that which Africanisation rejects. It's a reverse discourse because it's a response in opposition to the objectives of colonialism to "Europeanise or civilise" (Zegeye and Vambe, 2009, p.126) Africans. However, Africanisation may also be founded in a similarly fractured discourse as that of colonialism - the objectives of the argument being the "recuperation of a distinct and yet unified identity for Africans" (Ibid.). This position assumes a contradictory and ambiguous context similar to those ideals of apartheid. The latter discriminated against Africans in the provision of what was seen as 'quality' education and instead administered the 'impoverished' and 'inadequate' bantu education as more fitting for Africans, and yet, the African terms of response to this option of Africanisation offered by apartheid were somewhat contradictory. They saw Bantu education as inferior and favoured the "superiority of European inspired traditions of education that apartheid had defined as only for itself" (Ibid.). The following questions are raised by Zegeye and Vambe,

> Did the African liberation movements in South Africa in particular and Africa in general have coherent and alternative systems of education that they wanted to elaborate after gaining political rule? Did black people resent their inferior education while simultaneously envying the education made available only to white people in South Africa and the rest of Africa? Did any of the African nationalist liberation movements see it as necessary and possible to question the very capitalist basis that survived on, needed and justified a discriminatory education system in Africa? (ibid., pp. 126-127)

Zegeye and Vambe explain that these questions are not merely rhetorical but are also valid, as, most African countries were not willing to discard the colonial models of European education systems that they have adopted. South Africa on the other hand experimented with international models of education derived from America and Australia and adapted them for a South African context in the form of Outcomes Based Education (OBE). Although the current educational system in South Africa has gone through some changes since the implementation of OBE, in my study, I make reference to it as it was the current curriculum when I initiated my research. OBE was the post-apartheid response to the educational policies of discrimination and inequality - hence perceived as an ideal curriculum model. However, it was merely a modified experimentation of curriculum ideas - an ideology that served as an instant formula to remedy the political mayhem that had precipitated the inequitable policies of apartheid. Thus, accepting OBE as transformative and/or transitional posed the risk of what Zegeye and Vambe terms “semantic tiptoeing” (ibid., p.127) and remains “a subservient educational project” (Ibid.) and thus, an impoverished model.

Other models have tried to Africanise the curriculum through an epistemology based on Afrokology which is rooted in Asante’s theories of Afrocentrism. The Afrocentric model suggests that an Africanised curriculum should be entirely informed by Africa cultural resources and its diasporan experiences. The use of oral forms and myths are at the centre of an Africanised curriculum according to the Afrokology ideology and it’s these indigenous knowledge systems that should be re-examined and re-appropriated to form the core of the African learning experience. Zegeye and Mvambe argue that to concede that Africanisation is an ideology of which certain values (such as

the mere use of oral forms) are central to African education is to falsify or to misrepresent the Africanisation debate. They emphasise that apartheid, in South Africa, was based on "segmenting reality, ascribing tribal rituals, myths and songs to African knowledge, and in this way encouraging the perception that takes obscurantist African practices as that which should be at the core of Africanising curricula in black communities" (ibid., p.128). Furthermore, Zegeye and Vambe argue,

> Afro-centrism creates and enforces genealogies of knowledge as that which constitutes knowledge in the African world. In the process, it is less liberating, for its models of othering reinforce the perception that Africanisation equates to ghettoization; it is acceptance of a lower epistemology. (Ibid.)

Afrocentrism is thus seen as a conservation model that elaborates on an "incestuous" (Ibid.) agenda as it rejects the "historical cross-currents" (Ibid.) that have moulded it from other non-African cultures resulting in a static and undifferentiated curriculum called Africanism that lacks the ability to speak to the diverse richness of African cultural contexts. This Africanisation programme does not value individual pathways of creativity as it views the African cultural experience as a collective- where an entire continent is perceived as a monocultural state.

The neo-liberal perspective is based on the belief that Africanisation of curricula can benefit from insight drawn from globalisation. However, there is a distinguishing of certain Neo-liberals who promote Africanisation and maintain that Africanisation can only come from "Africa's past glory" (ibid., p.130) but also believe that Africanisation can be informed by adapting values from other non-African cultures. Makgoba (ibid., p.132) who also views Africanisation as a way of defining, interpreting, promoting and transmitting the African socio-

cultural milieu, does not completely reject the possibility of an integrated Africanised curriculum. Instead, he sees it as a way of facilitating a dynamic, evolving and adaptable disposition and also highlights its significance in the longevity and sustenance of an African people.

Zegeye and Vambe understand this approach, and refer to the traditional Neo-liberals such as Makgoba, as “organic intellectuals” (Ibid.) - who want to sustain and employ the best values integral to Afrikology as well as appropriate African diasporan and white cultures of the West to inform African curriculum content.

2.3.7. Turning Curriculum History on its Head: Radical Approaches to Curriculum within Postcolonial Educational contexts

2.3.7.1. Rethinking and Centring Culture at the Core of Curriculum Practice

Yatta Kanu (2006) begins to imagine curriculum practices beyond the hierarchy of Eurocentric cultural discourse through radical analysis of the epistemic systems that have dominated the formation and receiving of curricular knowledge. She places the discussion of curriculum and pedagogy within a postcolonial educational context and from this position she rethinks “curriculum as cultural practice” (Kanu, 2006, p.4). She places culture at the core of curriculum analysis and reform and underlines practice as a valuable context for this undertaking. Kanu emphasises that culture needs to be the primary source for radical inquiry as it moulds our “ways of seeing” (ibid., p.5). She views schools as catalysts for normalising the behaviours, values and practices of those individuals that are seen as different from what is considered as normal and also as tools designed to inculcate certain dispositions as a tactic of constructing a mono-perspective of culture and national identity.

She contends that schools adopt covert racism in facilitating the inscription of dominant culture as official knowledge for all learners and that "these politics of official knowledge" (Ibid.) function through compromises that favour dominant groups. She highlights that these compromises occur at different levels namely: politics and ideology, state policies, school knowledge content, classroom pedagogy and learning, and also at the level of "how we understand all this" (Ibid.). It is because of this complex relationship of cultural knowledge and power that any engagement with curriculum reform must focus on culture.

Kanu adopts cultural inquiry as a means of destabilizing cultural hegemonic normalcy in curriculum. She states that proponents of practice theory and situated learning argue that all learning is situated in culture and that cultural assumptions underlie all practices. Kanu thus highlights that "practice is the most appropriate unit of analysis for understanding education, curriculum, and pedagogy" (ibid., p.6). The concept of curriculum as cultural practice is an analytical lens through which she examines the history of curriculum and curricular practices and for rethinking future curricular alternatives.

In proposing alternatives for curriculum, Kanu emphasises that 'imagination' plays an important role - citing Maxine Greene who describes imagination as,

> […] the cognitive capacity that allows us to break with the taken-for-granted and transcend familiar definitions and distinctions. […] a mode of thinking that refuses compliance, that looks down roads not yet taken to arrive at a more fulfilling social order, to more vibrant ways of being in the world (Greene 1995, cited in Kanu 2006, p.6)

Imagination thus provides a framework for understanding how curriculum has been negotiated by a colonial imagination and the impact that mediation has had. Imagination also sheds light on the possibilities for alternative perspectives towards curriculum reform. Kanu stresses that "imagination is the most important place to begin the reorganising of the social order" (Kanu, 2006, p.7).

The postcolonial term, in Kanu's book, is recognised as a complex and heterogeneous enterprise and a diverse set of experiences related to both the colony and the independent state. This diverse use of the concept has resulted in looseness in meaning and also the exact centre of debate with regards to its precise parameters. Kanu writes that the postcolonial has been interpreted and explored as,

> […] the scene of intense discursive and conceptual activity characterized by a profusion of thought and writing about the cultural and political identities of colonised subjects (Gandhi 1989, cited in Kanu 2006, p.7).

The postcolonial also contextualises the study and analysis of the hierarchies that assign race, ethnicity and cultural production and relations. Furthermore, the postcolonial is seen as a position against colonialism - "the oppression and subjugation of others" (ibid., p.8). Here, imagination is used to transcend Eurocentrism and the dominance of Western cultural knowledge. Kanu uses the postcolonial concept as a site where curriculum norms are questioned as a means to arrive at more equitable and just social relations.

2.3.7.2. Re-articulating and Repositioning Difference

George J. Sefa Dei and Stanley Doyle-Wood (2006) continue to work through the lens of curriculum as cultural practice - positioning difference in the form of indigenous knowledges and spirituality as forms of resistance and countering hegemonic knowledge. They seek to detach the firm grip of Western epistemic monopoly from marginalised communities. Although their approach is informed by postcolonial theory, they argue for an anticolonial agency and curriculum that articulates itself in "open talk across cultural locations" (Dei and Wood, 2006, p.151). They address the nature and complex issues around the notion of difference- looking at how it can be imagined and reimagined. They also point out that these challenges cannot be isolated from the postcolonial system in which minority schooling is set.

In reimagining or re-articulating difference, Dei and Doyle-Wood pose critical questions regarding the context from which discussions can take place. They ask,

> What are the spaces, political positions, textual locations, discourses, and moments from which particular voices should speak? When and how do they speak? Whose voice is assigned legitimacy or illegitimacy? (ibid., p.155)

They continue to ask questions around the effects of colonial power and how this domineering discourse is disseminated through difference and cultural practice; whether difference is perceived as a shortfall or insufficiency and if so, what the possibilities are for spiritual transformation within this oppressive colonial context of racialised power relations. Most importantly, they question the form indigenous and spiritual knowledge takes in resisting colonial and neo-colonial dominance.

According to Chandra Talpade Mohanty, as cited by Dei and Doyle-Wood (ibid., p.157), classrooms are not only sites of instruction, but are also political and cultural spaces where knowledge is contested, transmitted and received within a varying spectrum of power relations. Thus, the struggle of the students is always about being heard, acknowledged and recognised as human and also about maintaining a sense of agency within normalising systems of power. The proclamation, by dominant Western knowledge systems, of cultural and racial legitimacy takes on a prerogative role in the discourses of normalisation. These hegemonic messages are embedded within the hidden culture of the school and transmitted through a 'deep curriculum'- a space where the cultural and the organisational structure of the school intersect. These discourses of power in schooling systems are thus institutionally approved and supported and are streamed down from the top in a one-way channel where it is impossible for the minoritised to negotiate the terms in which they receive knowledge. That sense of cultural agency is deprived and the marginalised groups are silenced and their right to 'voice' is infringed. The deep curriculum determines who should speak, when to speak, what should and should not be spoken and which language should be used when speaking.

In rethinking difference, Dei and Doyle-Wood first understand it as a site of personal identity, a site of asymmetrical power relations of many forms of social difference. They centre difference in the anticolonial and thus resisting and challenging the 'normal'. By rethinking difference within these terms, they begin to acknowledge the significance of individual agency and of the collective. It's a strategic way of constructing and positioning the self in radial social action. When understood in these forms, difference is no longer a site of oppression and

exclusion but of resistance and empowerment. Those on the periphery take on a powerful role of determining their own terms of receiving, understanding, critiquing and transmitting knowledge. It is also the instructional role of educators to take critical discourse seriously in order to understand what it means to "transform knowledge from the mundane to a more spiritual engagement and/or connection with the discursive practices so that we can move away from a preoccupation with limitation to possibilities of pedagogy" (ibid., p.164).

2.3.7.3. Creating a Place for Anticolonial Agency and Indigenous Knowledge in the Curriculum

Dei and Doyle-Wood stress the importance of everyone's responsibility to be aware of and act on the operating systems of power that control knowledge. They write,

> We must all develop an anticolonial awareness of how colonial relations are sustained and reproduced in schooling practices. To have a decolonised space requires a decolonised mind: Colonialism is situated in the psyche and we cannot create decolonised schools without decolonising the minds that run them. (ibid., p.165)

Furthermore, they argue for a site of anticolonial agency and conceptualise agency as a site of liberation, resistance an empowerment. To understand anticolonial agency is to critically understand one's political self. It is an outlet of resisting, renouncing and countering the epistemic hegemony of the West. The call for anticolonial agency is not a call for removing one centre and replacing it with another. It is essentially a call for diverse, multiple, continuous and dynamic ways of knowing within a collaborative space.

2.3.7.4. Decolonising and Spiritualising Knowledge

To decolonise knowledge is to attain spiritual liberty (spiritual liberty here is understood as the critical knowledge and assertion of self and the achieving of cultural agency). It is an emotional and intellectual understanding of one's place and role in society, and most importantly, one's engagement with learning. It is not necessarily an ascription to religion. Spiritual knowledge can form a crucial component of curriculum by enhancing and reinforcing the learners' understanding of who they are, what their culture is, where they come from and how they can relate their identities to the other. Spirituality is understood as the critical relationship of the self to the other by sharing personal experiences and cultural knowledge with one another. Dei shows that spiritual knowledge has a powerful and significant role in African education. Spiritual attainment in African education should not be misunderstood as attempting to 'Africanise' the curriculum in the sense that Zegeye and Vambe (earlier in this research) discuss, but it must be conceptualised as a means to develop the learner's sense of identity in society in order to have an assertive approach to education and learning. Before one can be a citizen of the world and become globalised, one must first attain and embody that enriching knowledge of who they are and what that means for self in relation to the other. Spirituality reinforces relationships of otherness and promotes critical engagements with a diverse body of cultural knowledge. Most significantly, spirituality is contrary to the Western concept that learning is solely Eurocentric, universal and common to all - it is the de-normalising of Western hegemonic curricula knowledge.

2.3.7.5. Returning to Tradition as an Anti-colonial Approach to Reimagining Curriculum

Yatta Kanu (2006) appropriates the Akan concept of Sankofa, which means to return to the past in order to move forward. It teaches a return to roots and encourages us to gather all the best aspects of what the past teaches in order to be adequately equipped to reach our full potential as we move forward.

Kanu argues for a return to tradition - and by tradition she refers to valuable traditional African education that can frame our conceptualisation of curriculum in contemporary postcolonial Africa. Her call to return to tradition is a re-appropriation of tradition in order to gain access into what has been considered alien and other. She brings forward the past, not just as a nostalgic return to 'home' but as a means to disturb and challenge the complacent normalcy of current Eurocentric curricula that are dominating in the education sphere. It is the "creatively disruptive" (Kanu, 2006, p.204) qualities of Sankofa that Kanu argues for. A return to tradition can be disruptive in that it questions the norms that shape curriculum development in Africa. Kanu's primary objective is to revisit the past as a means to critique the present.

2.3.8. Curriculum and Policy

2.3.8.1. Visual Arts Learning Outcomes in the *RNCS*

The *RNCS* policy which initially informed my research has been under revision resulting in the new *CAPS* documents. According to the *RNCS* a learning outcome describes what learners should know and be able to do at the end of a particular grade (*CAPS* 2003, p.12). The policy states that outcomes encourage the design of learner-centred, problem-solving activities and instruction that supports learners in extending, modifying or

adapting what they know (Ibid.). According to this statement, the outcomes are geared towards encouraging cognitive and metacognitive skills. I will employ these outcomes and compare them to the topics (which are replacing the learning outcomes in the new *CAPS*) as a lens with which to assess the extent to which a critical Visual Arts curriculum is encouraged.

***RNCS* Learning Outcome 1 (LO1): Conceptualizing**

LO1 stipulates that, at the end of the learning process, the learner should be able to "explore, develop and realize ideas in response to both externally set and self-generated projects, drawing on own experience and own knowledge of visual culture in the past and present." (Ibid.) Here the learner is expected to have the ability to creatively conceptualise ideas drawn from personal experience and also apply his/her own knowledge of visual culture.

Learning Outcome 2: Making

"The learner is able to explore and manipulate materials, techniques, processes and technologies in the making of imaginative and innovative objects of personal expression." (Ibid.)

Learning outcome 3: Management and Presentation

"The learner is able to effectively manage own working process and own personal and professional development within the Visual Arts field." (Ibid.)

Learning Outcome 4: Visual Culture Studies

"The learner is able to demonstrate knowledge, skills, attitudes and values acquired through the study of the diverse roles and functions of the Visual Arts in contemporary life and in different times and cultures." (Ibid.)

The above learning outcomes will be assessed in depth and detail. I set out to critically assess the extent to which they, together with the employed pedagogical approaches, contribute to the learning experience envisaged.

2.3.8.2. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (*CAPS*)

What is Visual Arts?

A. The *CAPS* document states that Visual Arts "is about self-expression and offers learners a way to engage meaningfully with, and respond to, their world" (*CAPS* 2012, p.10). It also describes the discipline as one which "provides opportunities to stimulate and develop learners' intellect, engaging their creative imagination through visual and tactile experiences and the innovative use of materials and technology in realising their ideas". Furthermore, Visual Arts also "encourages learners to develop an individual visual language and literacy, which is informed and shaped by the study of visual culture, past and present" (Ibid.).

B. Specific Aims

Visual Arts learners are required to:

- "Explore, develop and realise creative ideas in response to both externally and self-generated projects, drawing on own experience and own knowledge of visual culture in the past and present;
- Explore and manipulate materials, techniques, processes and technology in the making of imaginative and innovative artworks of personal expression;
- Explore materials, processes and techniques in an efficient, economical, safe and responsible way;

- Manage own working process;
- Observe, assess and analyse art forms, processes and products;
- Communicate effectively using visual, oral and written language skills;
- Critically appraise own work and that of others;
- Develop entrepreneurial skills and professional practice within art to explore a variety of career options;
- Be exposed to the diversity of Visual Arts traditions in international and Southern African contexts and use it as a resource;
- Appreciate the critical role Visual Arts plays in the enrichment of the visual environment of school and community;
- Understand the links between Visual Arts and the creative industries, such as design and advertising; and
- Understand the social and historical role of Visual Arts in transforming societies." (Ibid.)

C. Overview of Topics

The 'topics' stated in the *CAPS* document are those themes which inform and guide teaching and learning through learning programmes. All teaching and learning must adhere to these topics which are in fact the guidelines which are replacing the 'learning outcomes' in the *RNCS*. In the *CAPS* document these themes are referred to as 'Broad Topics' as opposed to the current 'Learning Outcomes'. They are as follows:

1. "**Conceptualising through the development and realisation of creative ideas**" (Ibid.)

   At grade 10 level, the learner is expected to respond to a given task by generating ideas through

exploration of different approaches. As part of this developmental process, the learner is also required to engage with own experiences of the world by exploring signs and symbols drawn from visual culture. In realising the concept, the learner must explore and resolve the visual and conceptual challenges such as compositional problems and choice of subject matter. The relationship between the work process and the development of the concept is also an important part of this topic.

2. **“Making of creative artworks, management of process and presentation, following safe practice” (Ibid.)**

   The art-making process entails the exploration and experimentation of materials, techniques and equipment and these must be supported by basic technical skill and knowledge of a range of materials, processes and the techniques. Artworks must also be relevant to the brief given. The learner must manage own working process by keeping visual journals of work created throughout the year. The presentation of work and safe use of equipment are also important aspects of the art-making process.

3. **“Visual Culture Studies: emphasis on visual literacy” (Ibid.)**

   Basic writing and research skills are required in the study of art within historical and cultural contexts. Learners must, at all times, use the appropriate visual art terminology and must also be able to explain the historical context and chronology of distinctive art styles. Visual analysis and critical thinking are crucial

skills required in engaging with own work and the works of others.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This study is a qualitative research project in the form of two case studies focused primarily on data collection and its analysis. It involves a comparative understanding and analysis of art education in two different schools. My focus is directed towards the two grade ten Visual Culture Studies and Art Making programmes of the two schools. In doing this I specifically focus on the possibility of the relationship between Visual Culture Studies learning and Art Making by comparing each school's Visual Arts programme. It is thus also, within certain limitations, an empirical research project (in the form of interviews and classroom observations) involving a comparison of two case studies.

I specifically chose the grade ten class as it marks the beginning phases of art learning in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. The grade 10 level is a significant phase for preparing learners for achieving crucial thinking dispositions as it is the initial phase of FET. This is also the phase where subject choice takes place. The grade 10 class is therefore a significant starting point for capturing both pedagogical and learning patterns.

My project seeks to understand what is happening within the Visual Arts learning programmes and also, how it is happening. Bassey writes that evaluators are "trying to describe, interpret or explain what is happening, but in doing so they are setting out to make value judgments about the worthwhileness of the case" (Bassey 1999, p.40). He suggests that "The expected endpoint is that someone will use their findings to decide whether or not to try to induce change" (ibid., p.41). However, as stated by William M.K. Trochim (2006) on the *Web Centre for Social Research Methods*, there are different forms of evaluation research such as descriptive studies, implementation analyses and formative evaluations. Trochim thus emphasises that evaluation

research should not only entail assessment of merit or worth of an object (in my case, the two schools) but should further prioritise the processing of information and recommendations as an aid to decision-making. His emphasis on evaluation as the systematic acquisition of information to provide useful feedback about an object is the kind of approach I have employed in my study. The evaluative approach to my research is less about assessing the merit of pedagogy and learning but is essentially focused on acquiring information from the comparative study of the two learning environments and processing the findings to form a set of recommendations that may aid pedagogy and learning in the South African visual arts classroom.

My first task includes the (1) comparison of the content of learning programmes and classroom activities carried out by learners in each school; (2) analysis of that content and, ultimately, (3) evaluation of the extent to which it encourages critical and integrated learning. In comparing the learning programmes I am making observations in relation to the following questions:

I. **What is being taught?**

II. **Who is being taught?** (Who is the learner?)
Here I argue that it is important to consider the cultural differences in the classroom. I ask how what is being taught contributes to encouraging learners to engage with and relate the self to others. I will ask whether what is being learnt contributes to managing the conflictual relationship of self to others.

III. **How is it being taught?**
Do pedagogical strategies feature in encouraging learners to engage with self-identity and the identity and culture of others?

IV. **Who benefits? And how?**

Here I investigate whether the learning outcomes are set towards preparing learners for merely achieving success in exam situations or whether the learner also, in passing exams, acquires critical multicultural thinking dispositions?

The idea of a close 'relationship' between schools' Visual Culture Studies and Art Making informs a significant part of my interview questions. Thus the interview questions are largely focused on the possible relationship between schools' Visual Culture Studies and Art Making programmes and how this relationship features in encouraging critical integrated multicultural education. I evaluate the content of the two components of Visual Arts learning. Affixed to content analysis is critical observation of pedagogical approaches. I observe and investigate how the teacher's input contributes to the understanding of art education in encouraging critical integrated multicultural learning.

3.2. The Data Collected

The following data is collected from the classrooms:

- **Classroom observations and note taking**
- **Copies of learning material**
- **Audio taped interviews**
- **Evidence of studio-based material**

3.2.1. Classroom Observations at Each of the Schools

My classroom observations involve an interactive engagement with both the Art Making and Visual Culture Studies lessons whereby I take on a critically attentive approach to listening, asking questions, and note taking. I engage with the learners, particularly in the Art Making lessons. Subsequent to observing a particular Art Making lesson, I ask certain learners questions relating to the lesson using a questionnaire approach. Art Making observations thus involve (simultaneously with taking down notes) listening intently to lessons, observing teaching

approaches and learning behaviour, interviewing learners on both lesson-specific topics and key questions. These interview questions are however unstructured and do not form part of the key interview questions of the study. Due to the informal and practical nature of the Art Making lessons, note taking takes up the most part of observations, i.e. I take notes down as opposed to recording the lessons.

The Visual Culture Studies lessons are more formal and organized and thus both facilitate and necessitate the audio recording of lessons. There is a teacher-learner gradient whereby the teacher has more authority over the lesson. This facilitates unclouded, thus more audible, audio recordings. Allied to audio recordings of lessons are observations of pedagogic approaches and learner interaction with the teacher.

The suburban school has two different teachers for grade 10 Visual Arts. There is a teacher for Art Making and one for Visual Culture Studies. The interview questions are directed at the Visual Culture Studies teacher as he is the head of the art department and is more involved in teaching. Thus, the teacher interview part of this study transpires in the Visual Culture Studies classroom. Data from this classroom includes audio recordings of interviews with the Visual Culture Studies teacher, photographs of slides used during lessons, learners' and teachers' notes, and, most significantly, the learning programme. Key interview questions with learners take place in the Art Making classroom where learners have more time to attend to my questions.

3.3. Data Analysis

According to Mary Stokrocki (1997), author of *Qualitative Forms of Research Methods*, a study that entails comparative qualitative sites is referred to as cross-site analysis. She writes that cross-site analysis is a process of interrelating findings from several contexts to generate

themes, which may be used to develop new theory. My research is a comparative qualitative study involving two (qualitative) sites. I have thus adopted a cross-site data analysis. I am interrelating findings or explanations gathered from the two schools to form suppositions. I am also adopting horizontal analysis of data. Horizontal analysis entails comparison of findings to the literature review. Findings may be tentative, exploratory and incomplete and I am thus comparing them to the literature review in order to formulate new theory, which may be discussed in the concluding chapter.

3.4. Ethical Issues Arising from the Research Study

Some ethical concerns to be considered in the project relate to my interaction with the teachers during interviews. I had to take cognisance of my relationship with the teachers and be wary of adopting an assessor role where I pointed out “shortfalls” in pedagogic styles in the classroom. My approach had to then engage the teachers in a way that allowed them the opportunity to present information in a safe environment where they did not feel that their pedagogic roles were under scrutiny. My interview questions were structured in a manner that allowed for dialogue between me and the teachers.

It is also important to note that at the time I carried out my study, I had intended to work in a more collaborative manner with the teachers as a means for them to engage me in the various pedagogic strategies that encourage critical and integrated learning. However, this proved to be a challenge as I struggled to obtain data that would speak to the different teaching and learning approaches and my attempt to collect this information from classroom observations and interviews, appeared as an invasive investigation of pedagogy. I had to then structure questions in an environment that felt safe and for the teacher to respond. Interview questions were thus structured in a way that required me to deeply analyse the responses to draw certain conclusions and recommendations. The teacher at the Soweto school

was more receptive and engaging, seeming more eager to address pedagogical challenges (pointing out to lack of resources, socio-economic status of most learners, the language issue as some of the issues that affect learning- further impacting on academic performance. This has impacted on the processing of collected data from the two schools as some of the research material seemed more descriptive or detailed than the other. This gap in receiving information projected the danger of adopting a biased approach in forming judgment.

Chapter 4: Discussion of Data from Each of the Schools

4.1. Classroom Observations at the Suburban School

4.1.1. Visual Culture Studies at the Suburban School

The Visual Culture Studies programme at the suburban school is divided into two sections: the history of European art and that of Ancient Africa. These two sections are taught separately and from my observations I noted that there was a cultural divide between the art histories of the West and that of Africa and that this boundary is perpetuated by the teaching strategies and approaches employed in the classroom. This cultural difference stems from the manner in which the two sections of art are approached and handled by the teacher in the classroom; the emphasis made on the difference which exists between the arts of Africa and Europe (and here I noted that the idea of 'difference' was not one which was 'celebrated' but a term insinuating negative connotations suggesting inferiority and subjugation); and as a result, the contrasting attitudes with which the learners approached the African art section and that of Europe. There was an evident show of interest and at certain points, lack of interest in the two different lessons taught. Learners demonstrated their enthusiasm in the European art lessons by interacting and engaging with their peers through provocative statements and arguments. Furthermore, the lessons on European art were delivered to the learners in a detailed and elaborate manner - elaborate, because the learners' notes were accompanied by a colourful collection of slides and detailed analyses of images which consequently aided the learner's comprehension of the history of European art by adding vibrancy to the lessons. The African art section on the other hand, had no visual aids accompanying the lesson. The learners, in the African art section, also did not display the

eagerness to learn. They appeared disengaged. This may partly be attributed to the fact that this lesson was not as visually stimulating as the European art lessons. For example, in the art of the Renaissance section, learners were introduced to Masaccio, Giotto and consequently, the art of Leonardo Da Vinci. The Renaissance art section was used to teach and demonstrate the principles of art (especially perspective), e.g. Leonardo Da Vinci's *Last Supper* was used extensively to demonstrate the application of the principles of linear perspective, proportion, balance and the focal point. Colour slides which portrayed examples of images from the Renaissance art period were used throughout the lesson. Added to the image of *The Last Supper*, the following slides were also shown to the learners:

- *The Massacre of the Innocents*, Rubens, (1611) - The teacher discussed how Herod had ordered the killing of all first born males in Egypt as an initiative to kill Christ. Here, reference to the Holy Bible was made. Most of the learners did not show familiarity with the Bible and the teacher made a comment that the reason the learners were not familiar with Bible scriptures was because they do not attend church. He took this as sign that his learners were not spiritually inclined. He had seemed displeased at this idea and stated that the boys were more interested in modern culture and media instead of church matters.
- *The Flight into Egypt*, Giotto, (1304-06) - An explanation of how Giotto had figured out the appearance of space followed. The teacher explained that the painting was a fresco and also explained, in detail, the nature of a fresco. He also pointed out subject matter and elaborated on how the painting

illustrated the event when Joseph, Mary and Jesus were told to escape to Egypt.

- *The Lamentation*, Giotto, (1305-06) - This image was used to explain and demonstrate how Giotto had highlighted the focal point. A technical and detailed explanation of the focal point was given.

He went on to discuss Masaccio and his work in detail. He discussed how the artist had used a certain type of paint (tempera) to paint on wooden panels and also expounded on each colour, use of various tones, and the chemical process involved in mixing colours. He referred to each process by using the correct terminology. He also pointed out the symbolic imagery of Masaccio's work. He also emphasised that learners should not make the error of terming Renaissance art primitive just because it was made "2000 years ago"[1]; that the art should not be judged by "today's progress of mass media, technology and modernity" and also stated that learners should note that the artists of the Renaissance period were highly advanced and that the Renaissance age was not a "stupid or primitive age". He took the learners through each artist's progress and achievement and showed how each artist had mastered the skill of the predecessors and also demonstrated how Masaccio had mastered the principle of perspective better than Giotto. He elaborated on the focal and vanishing points and also mentioned that "Masaccio was the greatest artist that ever lived". He showed how everything about Masaccio's figures was "perfect" and also described Masaccio as the master of perspective and how he was the first artist to "get it right".

[1] These, in fact, were the teachers exact words used in the classroom to refer to the time frame in which Renaissance art was made.

In another classroom observation, one of the learners made a comment that Greek and Roman architecture serve as 'the best examples of perfect art"; that ancient African art cannot be accepted as works of high calibre due to the apparent "absence of skill and thought". This learner described African artworks as "objects" which were made to serve certain "utilitarian" purposes such as ceremonial functions. I then asked him why he would offer such an explanation and his response was that he understands European art as art made for appreciation - as works which can be displayed on a wall and people could "admire it as beautiful works of art". He also said that European artists had to plan and work hard in order to produce "great works" and that these artists paid attention to detail - that being the reason for the "perfect" results obtained. He also commented that "the obvious presence of skill showed that the artist had to think very hard about what he was doing - he did not just make a clay pot or a mask just because he had to". In relation to European art, the learner stated that the African masks displayed "more of a grotesque shape" and that it was clearly evident that elements and principles of design, especially line and proportion, were not carefully considered. This learner also reported that he relates better to the art of Europe as it is closer to his 'culture'.

However, another factor which may have had a far more weighty impact on the way information was received and assimilated by the learners was the attitude with which the teacher delivered the two different art sections to the learners. The teacher had demonstrated confidence and a depth of knowledge and understanding of the art history of Europe. He approached this lesson with enthusiasm and vigour, encouraging the learners to participate and engage in those themes endemic to Classical and Renaissance Europe (topics around Christianity would be interrogated with in-depth

analyses) and certain debates would arise which I found to be stimulating the learning process in the art classroom.

The European art history lessons span a wide range of topics such as Gothic art, medieval art, Renaissance art and the Baroque through to the Rococo era. Ancient architecture is also covered and the main themes include topics such as Early Christian Byzantine, Romanesque and some African structures such as the Pyramids and the Zimbabwe Ruins. Emphasis is placed on art appreciation and comprehension of the visual literacy intrinsic to Visual Arts.

In Visual Culture Studies, art is taught in chronological order and emphasis is placed on European art masters. Visual Culture Studies thus entails the study of various histories of art, with great focus on Eurocentric ideas around art such as the seemingly ubiquitous principles of design which lay the basic rules for making art.

The African art lesson was delivered in an ad hoc manner as opposed to the supposed apparent rigour with which European art was elaborated. The teacher introduced the learners to African masks and focused only on the masks of Nigeria. The lesson was text-based and no visual aids were used to further enhance the lesson. The lesson unfolded in a rapid and recited fashion where the teacher read from his notes and learners were expected to follow sentence by sentence. The images which were featured in the notes were at times blurred and difficult to read so no interpretation of the visual language took place in this particular lesson. The entire African art section was covered in the forty-five minute period.

As an observer, I understood the lesson as a basic overview of Nigerian masks. These tribal masks of a West African country had represented a massive continent as a whole. Learners were

briefly told how certain masks had evolved over the centuries with no specific or detailed reference made to those particular historical periods. The teacher briefly discussed the purpose, meaning and background of these masks. The most significant feature of this lesson was the idea that African art was used to serve utilitarian purposes - that African art was always made for ritual functions and never for the appreciation of aesthetic qualities. Another notable fact which emerged from the lesson (through the teacher) was that these masks served the purpose of hiding one's identity, especially when one was involved in unconventional or unsightly practices. Also, the notion that ancient African art possessed grotesque features as opposed to the more refined stylistic aspects of Greek and Roman art, dominated the lesson. These stereotyped deductions will be addressed in more depth in the data analysis chapter.

4.1.2. Art Making at the Suburban School

In the Art Making classroom, the learners at the suburban school were required to create masks based on the African masks section which had preceded the lesson. The teacher took the learners through fundamental skills of working with clay and processes of firing and moulding. Following the basic overview of working with clay, the learners were required to proceed with creating the masks. The teacher was available at all times to give ideas on how to decorate the masks; to answer questions; and to give advice on the creative process itself. Learners were encouraged to explore a variety of themes as no particular theme was prescribed. Most of the learners had opted to explore themes around self-identity. Thus, most of the masks displayed creative expressions of the self. Although there was no significant relationship between what the learners were taught in Visual Culture Studies and what they were learning in

Art Making, there did exist some form of a link between the two learning areas - the very vague and superficial lesson on African masks which had been carried out in the theory classroom, had been ‘rolled over’ into Art Making in the form of this mask-making activity.

4.2. Pedagogical Approaches to Visual Arts Based on Interview with the Suburban School Teacher

The suburban school teacher has designed the learning programme in a structure that allows for comparisons between European and African art. Learners are introduced first to Greek sculpture and pottery in relation to African sculpture and pottery. Following the theoretical component, learners would then be required to create their own ceramic sculptures. The Design learners would create utilitarian objects and the Visual Arts learners would create faces.

The architecture of Greece and Rome also forms a crucial part of the curriculum and other European themes such as early Christian Byzantine, Romanesque Gothic or Renaissance. The teacher links these themes to the practical component by instructing learners to replicate the artistic styles. Although he attempts to make links between practical activities and visual culture studies, he also finds this process challenging, forced and artificial.

Learners also struggle to see the connection between Visual Culture Studies and Art Making. As an attempt to remedy the situation, the teacher would provide learners with copies of Impressionist paintings and require them to copy and replicate the artistic styles and techniques. Through this activity, the teacher believed that he would get learners enthused and inspired, and most importantly, that the learning outcomes would be more comprehensible.

Another pedagogical challenge is the attempt to make connections between classroom learning and the socio-cultural context in which learning is situated. The teacher expressed his concerns that he finds it almost impossible to connect the classroom with the learners' social and cultural backgrounds- making references to resistance art of the Apartheid era and arguing that learners are despondent towards such historical content. In response to the learning behaviour, the teacher would then introduce themes such as gender issues and artists such as Penny Siopis and Cindy Sherman. The chronological structure of teaching art history is more preferred than attempting to create relationships between contemporary art and classical and ancient styles.

4.3. The Relationship between Visual Culture Studies and Art Making at the Suburban School

During my observation at the suburban school, I observed that at times the teacher tries to relate what the learners are taught in Visual Culture Studies to their activities in Art Making. For example, when learners were given the mask project to do, prior to that they had looked at African masks in their Visual Culture Studies lesson. It was similarly so with the portraiture activity - they had looked at Greek and Roman portraiture in their Visual Culture Studies lessons. The teacher relates theory to practice only when it is easy to do so. Otherwise, according to the teacher, it becomes an artificial process to force a connection between the two subjects. He argues that trying to relate Visual Culture Studies to the Practical Assessments Tasks does not necessitate a natural process of teaching and learning. The learners at the suburban school do not have a positive approach to Visual Culture Studies. They do not take the theory as seriously as they approach the practical. They find the theory boring at times and find the Art Making more enjoyable. They tend to reject the theory. They sleep most of the time during Visual Culture Studies slide presentations.

It is easier for learners at the suburban school to find inspiration in those artists taught in their theory lessons. Most of the time, learners have the privilege of accessing visual aids such as slides. The Visual Culture Studies lessons in this school are more visual and have more content. Most of the lessons go hand in hand with slide presentations. Each slide is discussed in detail. Learners have a specific timetable that separates Visual Culture Studies from Art Making. The Visual Culture Studies class is where learners go on a specific day for their theory lessons and slide presentations whereas the timetable at the Soweto school does not separate the art slot into two entities. The onus is on the teacher to decide when theory should be taught and when the practice should take place. At the suburban school each entity has a different teacher but I observed a degree of communication between the two teachers. The Art Making teacher attends the Visual Culture Studies lessons with her learners. She becomes a learner and takes part in that lesson. This is where she gets her ideas and themes for Art Making. The themes are set by both teachers, i.e., the Visual Culture Studies teacher and the Art Making teacher. There is therefore a sense of communication when themes and activities are drawn for Art Making. I observed that when learners see a direct connection between the theory and the practice, they tackle their practical activities with ease.

4.4. The Visual Arts Programme Structure: Looking at the Historical, Current Socio-Economic and Socio-Cultural Context in which the Suburban School is situated

The teacher at the suburban school reports that he finds it extremely difficult to relate the grade 10 learning programme to real life situations as the learners themselves lack the enthusiasm to make links between learning in the classroom and learning beyond the classroom. He explained that most of the Visual Culture Studies themes, especially in the senior grades, related to apartheid South Africa and that many of

the learners “couldn’t care less”[2] about such issues. He says that the learners do not want to be reminded of their history and that they find it boring. He further stated that, in actual fact, the learners do not know anything about their history and background. During my interviews with these learners (especially when I asked them questions regarding culture and self-identity) there was a feeling of disengagement and vagueness in their responses. One of the learners, in response to one of the questions, stated that he has no culture and some of his comments around identity were stereotypical. The teacher thus argues that it is inappropriate to “force the learners to deal with issues from the past”.

In contrast to the Soweto school, most of the learners at the suburban school are from privileged backgrounds. The financial backgrounds of the learners facilitate a comfortable environment conducive to learning as they can afford to purchase the costly visual materials and equipment. “As opposed to teaching in a township school”, the teacher says, “It is much easier to teach art in a privileged school set in an advantaged economic background”.

Although the school is situated within a milieu of multi-cultural dimensions, the learning programme at this school is not necessarily structured to suit the diverse socio-cultural backgrounds of the learners and this is evident in the teaching of Visual Culture Studies where the medium of instruction is English and yet some learners cannot articulate the language fluently, i.e. those learners whose mother tongue is not English. Even in an affluent school such as the suburban school, issues around language can become a learning barrier. The content of this learning programme does, however, engage learners with a variety of international cultural expressions. Some examples of the learning material may feature content such as Hindu temples and the Taj Mahal in architecture. Artists such as John Muafengejo may

[2] These are the direct words of the teacher at the Suburban school.

feature in covering certain parts of South African art, together with prominent South African artists such as Penny Siopis and William Kentridge who address issues around the apartheid past of South Africa.

In terms of whether this engagement with diverse cultural expressions undertaken in Visual Culture Studies is reflected in learners' Art Making, I observed that the learners are more inclined towards their social backgrounds for motivation as opposed to being informed by their Visual Culture Studies. The socio-economic and socio-cultural structures from which they emerge is, to a large extent, communicated in their practical tasks. For instance, most of the black learners at the school come from the surrounding affluent suburbs of Johannesburg and this element features in their work through a communication of popular culture such as hip-hop and pop rock. Even those learners who come from townships like Soweto, which have a rich historical background, use subject matter that is influenced and informed by a more globalised culture. I also observed that the teacher plays a crucial role in reinforcing knowledge that is more inclined towards westernisation in terms of art history and culture. The contemporary setting in which learning takes place becomes the dominant theme informing the learners' practical work. Thus, in the suburban classroom, there is inclination towards teaching and learning influenced by the contemporary socio-cultural context in which the school is situated. There is a contrasting pedagogic parallel across the two schools where the suburban school teacher encourages his learners to borrow ideas from their immediate surroundings whereas the Soweto school teacher disapproves of the learners' inclination towards their socio-cultural backgrounds.

4.5. Classroom Observations at the Soweto School

4.5.1. Visual Culture Studies at the Soweto school

The Visual Culture Studies programme at the Soweto school is also composed of a foundation phase where learners are exposed to different art periods. According to the teacher, learners are taught general history of African art from the Zimbabwe ruins to Egyptian art. However, when I asked the teacher for evidence of learning material for the African art section, he was unable to produce the learning programme document. The grade 10 phase is thus a foundation phase where learners are initiated into the process of art learning. It is only when they reach grade 11 that concepts become more challenging.

The Visual Culture Studies programme is structured in such a way that African art is the first art genre taught. Learning thus begins with African art then builds up to European art periods. It is only in grade 12 that the focus turns to South African art. In grade 10, the focus is largely on Eurocentric content. The following classroom observation emerges from field notes taken in a Visual Culture Studies lesson. This lesson focused on Greek and Roman architecture.

- **Greek and Roman Architecture**

  The teacher discussed the history of Greek and Roman architecture by referring to notes extracted from the grade 10 *Visual Culture Studies Guidelines Study Aids* book. Because there were no further visual aids, the teacher showed some examples of Greek and Roman architecture by making chalkboard drawings portraying the columns which had formed part of the Parthenon and the Pantheon structures i.e. the Doric, the Corinthian and

> the Ionic orders. He discussed and explained the features of these columns with in-depth knowledge. He talked about the appearance and stylistic features of each column in detail. A brief discussion of the Pantheon from page 29 of the *Visual Culture Studies Guidelines Study Aids* book followed. I observed that the teacher would first ask some questions before he explained anything. This was a way of allowing the learners the opportunity to create their own meaning as opposed to being fed with information. He allowed the learners to analyse the Pantheon by prompting them through questions.

Another noteworthy observation that I made was that, throughout the lesson, the teacher encouraged learners to communicate in the English language (with which the learners struggled). He furthermore discouraged any expression in vernacular.

During discussions around the Pantheon and how this structure had represented the Roman universe, a learner asked the teacher to define the term ‘universe’. A brief discussion about the universe thus followed. This then led to a discussion on spirituality. Explanations of Greek gods and beliefs were consequently carried out. The teacher expounded on meaning by making reference to the spirit world of African ancestry. He placed Greek mythology in an African context in order to make meaning accessible to the learners.

At the Soweto school, the Visual Arts programme is divided into two sections - Visual Culture Studies being a separate entity from Art Making. There is no link between these two components. For instance, in the Visual Culture Studies lesson, learners had been introduced to Greek and Roman architecture

and in Art Making they were required to make a using any subject matter of choice. The teacher did not attempt to create a connection between theory and art making. The integration of Visual Culture Studies and Art Making is critical and significant because it is at this nexus where the two disciplines intersect, that the most intense and critical learning should occur. When learners can make links between theory and practice, learning becomes relevant and has the potential to be informed by the everyday real-life experiences of the learner. According to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (*CAPS*),

> "The subject Visual Arts is about self-expression and offers learners a way to engage meaningfully with, and respond to, their world. It provides opportunities to stimulate and develop learners' intellect, engaging their creative imagination through visual and tactile experiences and the innovative use of materials and technology in realising their ideas. It also encourages learners to develop an individual visual language and literacy, which is informed and shaped by the study of visual culture, past and present." (*CAPS*, 2012, p.6).

The former *RNCS* document also strongly suggests that "the practical should be linked to the Visual Culture Studies during the process of conceptualisation" (Ibid.).

The activities given to learners in Visual Culture Studies also include visits to art exhibitions where learners are required to write essays based on the particular exhibition. They may be asked to interview an artist and write something about that artist. For example, learners visited an exhibition at the Standard Bank Gallery which showcased a body of work by female South African contemporary artist, Marlene Dumas. It is also in this area where I identified a gap between theory and practice. Prior to visiting this exhibition, learners were not given

a foundation upon which they could begin to engage with contemporary South African art. By merely exposing learners to South African art and artists, the learning programme encourages superficial and fragmented content. There is thus also an evident lack of integration between what the learners are taught in the classroom and what they are exposed to in their immediate environment outside the classroom.

4.5.2. Pedagogical Approaches to Visual Arts Based on Interview with the Soweto School Teacher

The Soweto school teacher identifies a learner-centred approach as one of the most important strategies for his classroom. As mentioned earlier, one of the activities with learners involved a trip to an art gallery where learners got the opportunity to meet Marlene Dumas and interact with her. Learners were also required to report back on their experience. The feedback showed that learners were inspired to meet and interact with a contemporary artist. This was one of the highlights of the learning programme. Learners were enthused at meeting a living artist and found the experience enriching and different from the day to day classroom environment where they only interact with the teacher and textbook content.

On pedagogical limitations, the teacher pointed out the lack of resources and the economic factor affecting most of the learners - saying that the lack of Visual Arts resources impacted the academic performance of the learners. Although pedagogy and learning seem to be influenced by socio-economic limitations, I maintain that more innovative approaches to learning programmes could transform the seemingly monotonous ambience in the classroom. The classroom, as per observation and learner responses to some of the interview questions, is often an unimaginative shell. For instance, instead

of thinking of creative alternatives to creating art, the teacher at the Soweto school attributed the lack of learner enthusiasm to socio-economic challenges - explaining why pencil drawing activities were a solution to addressing lack of resources[3].

Other pedagogic challenges related to the creating of connections between Visual Cultural Studies and Art Making. Similar to the suburban teacher, the Soweto teacher finds the process, of creating these links, superficial and forced. He points out to an indirect connection where learners may identify certain 'role models' from art history books and attempt to draw influence from stylistic features of those artists.

4.5.3. Art Making at the Soweto School

At the Soweto school the content of the Art Making programme is made up of foundation studies where learners are introduced to basic skills of drawing and painting. These basic skills entail qualities such as line, tone and texture. In one of my classroom observations, learners were given a still life assignment[4] to do. The teacher had set up some objects on a desk and he had required the learners to observe and draw the still life composition. There were no specific instructions or guidelines given in order to direct the lesson and, also, the learners were not made aware of the learning outcomes expected and, according to the teacher, had very little knowledge of art principles. These learners were thus not guided by those rules rooted in European art styles and regarded as the fundamental building blocks of art. Because the teacher had certain expectations of learning outcomes, the final products submitted by his learners were considered somewhat unsatisfactory. According to the teacher, the learners had struggled with

[3] See Appendix A
[4] See Appendix B

exploring formal qualities in their drawings and their drawing skills and techniques were rudimentary and needed to be improved.

Although the content of the Art Making programme at the Soweto school entails foundation studies in drawing and painting, learners are not aware of expected learning outcomes. Both the *RNCS* and *CAPS* set specific outcomes and topics that must be achieved at the end of learning. It is expected for all lessons to be planned in a way which will incorporate these objectives. Because the envisaged outcomes are not made clear in the classroom, learners struggle with making a connection between what the teacher discusses in theory and what they are required to do in practice.

In another Art Making lesson learners were required to paint. As they were not given a specific theme for this activity, they were given painting material and instructed to paint on a subject of their choice. According to one of the learners, prior to the lesson, the learners had not been given any painting lessons. They were just instructed to paint anything that interested them. The learners had found this task particularly daunting and difficult to do. They found it easier to work around a given theme and a set of guidelines. On completion of the painting activity, learners were asked to present a critique of their works. They were required to stand in front of the classroom and perfrom a short analysis of their work. They were not allowed to speak in their mother tongues. They were required to present in the English language with which they struggled. Besides the language factor, learners did not know how to comment on their works. Most of them appeared nervous and speechless in front of the classroom. The teacher would, at certain points of the lesson, ask the learners to comment on their peer's work.

However, they struggled to express themselves in English and they also struggled to articulate what their art works were about.

4.5.4. The Relationship between Visual Culture Studies and Art Making at the Soweto School

Visual Culture Studies in the classroom is understood to have the potential to subsequently prepare learners for Art Making. On the relationship between Visual Culture Studies and Art Making the teacher pointed out a direct and indirect connection. I asked whether Visual Culture Studies played any role in preparing learners for Art Making and he stated that while Visual Culture Studies may not directly link with Art Making, learners may find inspiration in the artists they learn about in theory lessons. The teacher also reported that he reinforces this connection between Visual Culture Studies and Art Making in the classroom by perhaps having an art critique session where learners may be asked to comment on their work. He also pointed out that the learners always refer to certain artists studied in Visual Culture Studies as their “role models” and as a point of inspiration and stated that this approach to learning is a “peaceful way” of resolving the disparities which exist within the relationship between Visual Culture Studies and Art Making. He argued that as a teacher, one does not need to force this relationship. Thus the teacher does not create a direct link between the information obtained in Visual Culture Studies and Art Making given in studio practice.

With reference to the above statements, it is evident that there is tension in trying to form a closer relationship between theory and practice in the classroom at the Soweto school. There seems to be an artificial and forced effort made to connect Visual Culture Studies to Art Making. The teacher states that it is through critique sessions that the connection between Visual

Culture Studies and Art Making may be encouraged. I observed the contrary. Firstly, the learners do not comprehend the significance of speaking about and explaining their work. They find the visual image inaccessible and complex. Furthermore, when required to critique their own work, they observe the instruction as a testing of their language skills. They feel intimidated and uncomfortable when having to articulate meaning in the English language. They are often at a loss for words when having to speak formally to their peers. Secondly, the art department does not possess enough visual aids that may stimulate learners creatively. The visual material is not effective in inspiring learners to have “role models” in art. Most of the time, learners read pictures from black and white photocopied notes. The only time learners may claim to have been inspired by a certain artist is when they have visited an art exhibition. The problem with this activity is that when learners return to the Visual Culture Studies classroom, they cannot make the connection between what they saw at the exhibition and what they are taught in class.

At times learners may struggle with practical tasks and perform better in theory and with some learners, the opposite applied. The learners whose performance was satisfactory in theoretical studies were found to possess proficient language skills in English and could also comprehend higher thinking order skills such as visual analysis and interpretation. Those learners whose performance was weaker in Art Making often had difficulty with conceptualising ideas and thinking creatively in order to create artworks which displayed aesthetic qualities. The language barrier in the Soweto school’s classroom inhibited proficiency in the academic performance of some learners, and yet, these same learners would display creative and artistic potential when given practical tasks. Visual Culture Studies involves critical discussions about art and presentations, all of

which require the English medium of instruction as all art terminology and visual jargon are presented to learners, through text books, in the English language. The school has a diverse body of cultural differences with the majority of the learners speaking isiZulu, Xitsonga and Setswana and the teachers are also multilingual. When these learners are spoken to, they want to respond in their mother tongues. The English medium poses a challenge and at times a threat to learning as the learners feel inferior, victimised and intimidated when they cannot express themselves in the language. The teacher thus expresses that it is obvious that the school's Visual Arts programme should be designed in a way which accommodates the socio-cultural background of the learners.

It is evident that there is tension between how learners are motivated in the Visual Culture Studies classroom and how they are inspired in Art Making. The grade 10 Visual Culture Studies programme is Eurocentric as a large percentage of the content focuses on the art of the Renaissance and classical themes in art such as the architecture of Greece and Rome. The art of Europe thus dominates the learning programme which is situated in a classroom of learners who speak a diversity of African languages and are of ethnic African cultures. In Art Making, the influence is socio-culturally informed - the learners turn to their social and cultural backgrounds for ideas. They turn to their township and traditional cultural backgrounds. On this idea of 'tension', the teacher commented that as learners progress into higher grades, the more independent they become - meaning that they become independent and creative thinkers as they develop into seniors. He commented further that in grade 10 the learners still turn to their backgrounds for inspiration. The teacher's expression when he commented on the latter, connoted disapproval and a negative response. This became more evident when he said that even the children's

"level of thinking equalled their age". He stated that when learners are given a project to do at home, they would never make art which reflects the Eurocentric Visual Culture Studies studied in class - instead, they would still "do things in the conventional manner by referring back to their cultural stuff - cultural utilitarian topics". He pointed out that it is only when they reach grade 12 that the learners may realise that they need to be creative and express themselves in a manner which is their own. He also argued that as a teacher, one cannot just "at a drop of a hat" take the learners out of that thinking mode.

At the time when I conducted my research, there was one learning outcome for Visual Culture Studies and three for Practical Assessment Tasks. In the new *CAPS* document, not much has changed as the revised 'topics' are similar to the former learning outcomes in the *RNCS*. The combination of these topics indicates a potential for a close relationship between the two areas of study. The topics that are envisaged from the possible closer relationship between Visual Culture Studies and Art Making, according to the Soweto school teacher, are expected to prepare learners who are creative. I ask how this can be attained when there is no connection between the two components, when learners struggle to perform proficiently due to issues such as lack of resources, language barriers, and stultifying pedagogy.

4.6. The Visual Arts Programme Structure: Looking at the Historical, Current Socio-Economic and Socio-Cultural Context in which the Soweto School is situated

Current socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds where learning is situated have to be considered in any educational setting because particular environments will inform and affect the way teaching and learning takes place in the classroom. The various histories of a place; the myriad stories which helped build a

community; the sufferings, struggle, and successes of a certain people - all these factors have an inevitable impact on current affairs and the capacity to inform pedagogy and learning and makes learning relevant. I asked the teacher whether the Visual Arts programme is structured to suit the historical as well as the current socio-economic and socio-cultural context in which the school is situated and he answered that he always encourages learners to be themselves and to "consider their backgrounds" when they set out to make art. He pointed out that their learners are previously disadvantaged and that the majority of the parents are unemployed therefore, as a teacher, one cannot expect these learners to buy expensive material so he motivates learners to use readily available resources. He also commented on the common thread which seems to run throughout the learners' work - learners always attempting to express their everyday experiences, thus resulting in a clichéd "township art" style. The teacher also argues that while the Visual Arts programme may not be structured in a manner which may address the historical context in which the school is situated, these township experiences of the learners' everyday lives always seem to leak into their subject matter. He went on to say that although he makes efforts to bridge the gap which exists between the educational policy documents and actual practice, he finds the NCS always "dictating terms" to him. He argues that the educational policy document is rigid and highly prescriptive and that at times it is difficult to create a relationship between South African art and European art as it is curriculum requirement. He addresses this requirement of the *RNCS* as one which is 'pretentious' and forced - saying that it imposes certain unrealistic ideas around South African art leading learners to believe that South African art is on the same level as that of Europe.

On the issue of whether the learning programme is structured to suit the socio-cultural context in which the school is situated, I found that the learning content is not designed to cater for the variety of cultural differences in the classroom, but that this proliferation of diversity consequently dictates how pedagogical intervention should take place.

On this particular issue, the teacher also reported that the learners always portray cultural artefacts in their artworks when given tasks centred on the theme of culture - learners always refer to “who they are”. It is important to note that while the Soweto school is composed of multilingual black learners and teachers, the medium of instruction remains English, which learners find challenging. Because the Soweto school classroom is made up of a multiplicity of cultures and languages, one would imagine a learning programme which is structured to address any cultural divide that may exist. However, this is not the case - teaching and learning continues to take place in English and I found that this caused more problems in the classroom by creating barriers to learning whereby learners would tease and mock one another when difficulty arose in not being able to speak English fluently. Furthermore, the themes which are being taught at grade 10 and more significantly in grade 11 level are centred on European art movements of the 19th and 20th centuries. I inquired whether this content was necessary in a 21st century South African township school and the teacher felt that it was relevant to study these art movements of Europe in that they have the potential to motivate and inspire the learners’ stylistic approaches and choice of subject matter in their art. He says that learners find their ‘role models’ within these European art themes.

Chapter 5: Findings and Data Analysis

5.1. Synopsis

This chapter presents the findings emerging from the two different contexts within which my study is based, i.e. the two learning programmes of the Soweto school and the suburban school. I will be adopting a cross-site data analysis where I will interrelate findings or explanations gathered from the two schools to generate themes and form suppositions. These themes may consequently be used to develop new theory. My research is thus a comparative qualitative study involving two (qualitative) sites. I will also adopt a horizontal analysis of data. Horizontal analysis entails comparison of findings to the literature review. Findings may be tentative, exploratory and incomplete and I will thus be aligning them with the literature review in order to formulate new theory, which will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

5.2. Common Themes in both the Soweto School and the Suburban School

From my discussion of findings in the previous chapter, I have identified six common themes which run through the findings which I gathered from the two schools. The themes will be further explained and analysed with cross references to the literature review. In both contexts I found the following common themes:

5.2.1. A domination of a Eurocentric curriculum informed by European art movements in the learning programmes of both schools

5.2.2. The lack of correlation between the study of art and the making of art

5.2.3. Socioeconomic backgrounds of learners impacting on learning

5.2.4. A language issue in both schools presenting itself as a learning barrier

5.2.5. Superficial links between South African art and European art movements

5.2.6. Teacher bias arising from tension between desires of learners and teacher's formal curriculum

5.2.1. A Domination of a Eurocentric Curriculum Informed by European Art Movements in the Learning Programmes of both Schools

Historically, the Visual Arts curriculum in South African schools has always had a Eurocentric leaning and, following my classroom observations, it is evident that not much has changed even with the socio-political transition the country has undergone.

The Visual Culture Studies programme at the suburban school revealed a cultural disparity between European art history and that of Africa and this barrier was perpetuated by the biased instructional methods employed by the teacher. The manner in which he delivered the two lessons echoed qualities of prejudice pedagogy where there is an evidence of preferential content selection. The two sections of art were handled differently and learners' attention was directed towards the 'difference' which exists between the art of Africa and Europe. This idea of 'difference' was not critically engaged with but suggested a sense of inferiority and subjugation to established hegemonic ideologies. And, as a result, the learners approached the two sections of art with contrasting attitudes. There was an evident disengagement of interest in the African art section contrary to the more enthusiastic approach towards the European art section. The learners were taught to understand that art, more specifically the European classical tradition, allows a platform of critical analysis and interpretation of the visual language. The notion that Western

art is more ‘contemplative’ as opposed to the functional and ceremonial purposes synonymous with African art is eminent in the suburban school’s classroom. This idea is reflected in the rigour and detail in which the teacher approached the subject. The learners were made to understand that the West is the cradle of art; that all principles of art are fundamentally contextualised within Eurocentric art modes. Principles of art are taught in tandem with the art of the Renaissance and learners have been taught to analyse images by constantly referring to the formal language. They are taught that the complex theories involved in analysing and interpreting the visual language, are in actual fact the ultimate and the ‘gold standard’ which govern all art. Principles of art such as perspective, proportion, balance and compositional relationships carry with them a complexity of visual jargon which can only be comprehended within an intellectual framework and this framework is facilitated by the dominant ideology of Eurocentric art. Later in the document (see 5.2.4.) I address how the language barrier impacts negatively on the learners’ performance due to the literacy expectations stated in both the *RNCS* document and *CAPS*.

The African art section, on the contrary, was taught in a manner which treated the continent’s history as a history of a common people - treating West Africa as a collective people of Africa. This was evident in the lack of critical information such as socio-historical and cultural facts that informed the making process of the West African masks of Nigeria. Focus was directed toward the primitive qualities and functional ritualistic purposes of the objects. There was no information given regarding the socio-political and/or socio-economical contexts which in many occasions influence the reception of the artefacts. There was also no reference made to those individuals which created the art. The masks originating from Nigeria were viewed through a generalised and stereotypical lens and an entire continent of

Africa was reduced to a single society. Furthermore, because of the superficial imparting of information, learners developed the perception that African art is grotesque (because of its 'unfamiliar' form in relation to its European counterpart whose art is often communicated within intellectual and aesthetic frameworks) and always primitive and lacked the academic content which would allow the learners to engage critically with the art objects. Thus, this section did not enjoy the detailed analysis and interpretation with which its European art lesson was delivered. This notion contrasts the intellectualism which emerges from the dominant ideologies around Eurocentric art. This perception also reflects the nature of the pedagogical approach employed in the teaching and learning of visual culture - that certain knowledge is preferred more than the other. There is an allusion to preferential inclusion and exclusion of knowledge and educational outcomes which also suggests what Fyfe and Gundara refer to as a "Politics of Recognition" (Gundara and Fyfe, 1999, p.87) where the curriculum embodies "various indices of diversity but continues to be governed by hegemonic state apparatuses" (Ibid.). This stultifying learning environment calls for Cahan and Kocur's multicultural reform that does not consider only the art object and its function, but also takes cognisance of the socio-historical and cultural contexts shaping its reception. The cultural beliefs and values play an important role in receiving these objects. Bullivant, earlier in my literature review, also points out that culture is not just a set of traditional artefacts but the very way that a particular society uses and perceives them. Bullivant says the term "use" does not only refer to the cultural group but also includes the way teachers and learners engage with the objects during the educational process. The lack of critical information when addressing African art in the classroom, results from an additive approach, where content is arbitrarily added to the curriculum without challenging set dominant ideologies.

This stereotyped approach to teaching and learning distorts and obscures the history of black African art and places it on the margin of esteemed canonical values and almost excludes it from what Cahan and Kocur address as the “linear succession of dominant art styles that make up the historical canon” (Cahan and Kocur, 2011, p.5). In the light of this statement, it is somewhat disturbing that *Topic 3* in the grade 10 *CAPS* requires the learner to “explain the social and historical context and the chronology of distinctive art styles” (*CAPS*, 2012, p.14) whereas African art is not included in this canonical framework. Thus, only the distorted and obscured parts of African art are considered as part of the official story. Also, this approach further deepens the notion that Western art is far superior and more valued than African art and affirms the socio-cultural divide between Western and African societies. This idea lends itself to Cahan and Kocur’s concern that the curriculum models adopted in arts education lack the potential to transform social and political conditions.

It is evident that the learning programme at the suburban school is dominated by classical art concepts and European art movements and focus is directed at the social, political, and economic conditions which affect the communities and consequently the making of art. However, the African art section is minimal and limited to Nigerian masks. Content is skimmed through with very little attention paid to the salient features of the art objects. There is a lack of critical integration of knowledge resulting in curriculum gaps and a disjuncture in learning. The teacher does not reinforce a learning programme that enhances learning and develops relationships of otherness between certain knowledge systems and amongst learners.

As discussed in my literature review section, a learning outcome describes what learners should know and be able to do at the end of learning. It is stated in the *RNCS*, that “outcomes encourage

the design of learner-centred, problem solving activities and instruction that supports learners in extending, modifying or adapting what they know" (*CAPS* 2012, p.10). The fourth learning outcome (*LO4*) in the *RNCS*, which focuses on Visual Culture Studies, explains that the learner will be able to demonstrate knowledge, skills, attitudes and values acquired through the study of the diverse roles and functions of the Visual Arts in contemporary life and in different times and cultures. In comparison to this curriculum document, the new *CAPS* policy requires learners to acquire basic writing and research skills in the study of art within historical and cultural contexts. Appropriate visual art terminology must be used at all times when analyzing visual images. The learner must also be able to explain the historical context and chronology of distinctive art styles. It is clear that higher order thinking is a crucial skill that was required in the *RNCS* and remains a crucial element in the *CAPS*. Both these statements from the old and the new curriculum documents envisage a learner that is able to think critically about his or her own work and the work of others. The two policies are synonymous as they both emphasise the metacognitive skills in Visual Culture Studies.

What I found in the suburban classroom was that the learners developed negative attitudes towards African art studies and this behavior was one reinforced by the biased and stereotypical perception of the teacher. Another leak - a gap in pedagogy through which certain knowledge falls through- exists in the latter part of the learning outcome. To merely study roles and functions of the Visual Arts in contemporary and historical times and cultures does not equip the student with critical, integrated and learner-centred knowledge structures which have the capacity to develop caring, risk taking, inquiring, balanced, knowledgeable and understanding individuals. Furthermore, I also find the new topics in *CAPS*, specifically the topic outlining that learners must

be able to explain the historical and chronological context of distinctive art styles, dictatorial and prescriptive. They do not allow the learner to explore, engage with and question his or her immediate environment. There are discrepancies within the 'appraised'[5] concept of multiculturalism which inform both the *RNCS* and the *CAPS*. Parekh's notion of "awareness" as being a feature of the multiculturalisation of societies is problematic because there is the danger of presenting the concept of multiculturalism as a mere pluralistic notion lacking the capacity to engage learners in critical relationships of otherness. There is also the risk of inserting content into the curriculum as a means to repair the leaks. The suburban teacher was merely exposing learners to diversity and difference - making them aware of other cultures that exist outside of their own world. This approach is one which refers to Parekh's statement that "multiculturalism is facilitated by exposure to different societies and cultures" (Parekh, 2006, p.226). If multiculturalism is understood in these mere terms, then this approach to education and learning poses risks of curriculum failure. Cultures and societies will continue to encounter each other, forming completely new traditions that would continue with the multiculturalisation process. Content will continue to be arbitrarily added to curriculum but with the risk of meaning being lost due to the haphazard, sporadic nature of the multiculturalisation process. This atomic feature of the process of multiculturalisation is one that requires rigorous monitoring because it poses the danger of knowledge acquiring an ephemeral and superficial quality where knowledge systems are not closely integrated. Inevitably, there arises a disjuncture in learning where more and more ideas are formulated through exposure to other cultures and there results an urgent need to assimilate the proliferation of new knowledge without the critical

[5] The *RNCS* is informed by certain concepts of multiculturalism such as cultural equity and this idea, in many marginal societies recovering from post-colonial experiences, is one received with appraisal as it seems to set everyone at par levels and thus facilitating a democratic society.

balance required to manage this constantly shifting learning target. Thus learning becomes trivialised within this obscure multicultural context.

The content of the Visual Art learning programme at the Soweto school is also informed by ideologies of the classical tradition and 20th century art movements. The African art section is, to a large extent, generalized and the content is skimmed through and no particular features receive a more specific focus. This section of art is treated as 'basic' knowledge as opposed to the complexity with which the European classical art period is taught. The Greek and Roman art sections seemed highly sophisticated and this was attributed to the mathematical and rational concepts applied when analyzing and interpreting the pictorial grammar. Both the African and the classical Greek and Roman art were classified as ancient, however, the African art of the Zimbabwe ruins and ancient Egyptian art were understood as primitive, while the classical art was addressed as advanced, sophisticated and as having intellectual content. The Soweto art teacher's enthusiastic handling of the European art section portrayed an informed and knowledgeable approach to the content while the African art section seemed to be approached in a more perfunctory manner in order to fulfill curriculum requirements.

What I found problematic was the attempt to apply the same rules and principles used in evaluating Western art in understanding African art forms. The teacher had encouraged learners to refer to the elements and principles of art when analyzing and interpreting some of the African art sections. Also, the teacher had been dissatisfied with the drawing skills of his learners and had expressed his concern that learners had not met the learning objectives as they had failed to apply the formal elements and principles of art "required" to create art of acceptable standards. From my observation it appeared that the learners were not

equipped with the basic tools, required by the teacher, to interpret and analyse visual language. I perceive this as a pedagogical failure which attempts to reclaim marginalised art into mainstream art and yet still maintaining the same principles and ideas utilised in comprehending Western art forms. African art was simply added to the Eurocentric curriculum as an attempt to avoid conflict and to encourage mere tolerance of 'others'. I concur with Gundara and Fyfe (Gundara and Fyfe, 1999, p.91) in that African art cannot be decoded within the framework of European aesthetics just as European art cannot be decoded from an African aesthetic perspective. The African content addition to curriculum is simply what Parekh refers to as "awareness of other traditions" (Parekh, 2006, p.220) when he discusses the process of the multiculturalisation of societies. This idea of awareness is preeminent in both schools and is highly problematic in that previously marginalised cultures are being added to the existing Eurocentric curriculum and this poses the danger of perceiving the multiculturalisation of curriculum as simply a pluralistic notion lacking the tools to critically integrate varying knowledge systems and engage societies in relationships of otherness.

5.2.2. The Lack of Correlation between the Study of Art and the Making of Art

In both schools, the teaching of Visual Culture Studies is a separate entity from the Art Making (studio art practice). There exist forced and superficial links between the theoretical and the practical content. In the Suburban classroom the masks that were being made were informed by the African masks lesson from the Visual Culture Studies class. This is a superficial attempt to connect learning about art and making art because there was not enough information and knowledge imparted to the learners when they were learning about the masks. The information given to them was vague and lacked the content depth necessary to

develop learners' critical capacities and knowledge base. The suburban school learners had only learnt about the primary function of the objects. There was no further expounding on the socio-cultural and political dynamics shaping its reception. Learners had approached the African masks as a set of artefacts and how the members of that particular group perceived, interpreted and used them was not considered. Thus, the learners perceived the mask making activity as shallow and lacking the essential educational content which would not only inform the learners' mask making task but also develop their artistic, creative and critical thinking skills.

The way various cultural societies "use" and engage with the art objects should critically inform the way teachers and learners should relate to the objects they are learning about during the educational process. Cahan and Kocur state that the term "use" (Cahan and Kocur, 2011, p.7.) does not only refer to the cultural society but also includes the way teachers and learners engage with the objects during the educational process and that this approach has the capacity to yield self-reflexive learning outcomes which would produce learners who are critically conscious of their role as "cultural interpreters and of the real ethical and social responsibilities" (Ibid.) which come with that role.

At the Soweto school, there was no relationship between Visual Culture Studies and Art Making. What the learners were taught in the Greek and Roman art lessons had no connection to the practical activity of painting in which they were involved. In the painting lesson, learners were required to paint any subject that interested them. There were no painting lessons prior to the activity and there was no particular theme given to the learners. Thus, at the Soweto school, the two components of art are completely separate from each other with no attempts to create

any correlation. In cases where the study of art connects with the making of art, e.g. the mask-making activity at the suburban school, the focus was on medium and form. Cahan and Kocur (2011) make reference to a scenario where learners study African masks and then were required to make masks of their own. This is an occurrence identical to the situation at the suburban school which presents learning content that fails to enhance learners' cultural knowledge and understanding by reducing art objects to hollow objects lacking historical or social significance. This superficial attitude or approach to learning about art from 'other' cultural societies is evident in learners who rightly question the value of learning about art which has no significance or any socio-cultural relevance to their immediate surroundings. Cahan and Kocur (2011), earlier in the document, argue that "such arbitrary approaches tend to merely incorporate art from every culture under narrow formal or technical concerns, which are themselves drawn from European aesthetic contexts".

Both teachers adopted a cross-cultural approach to teaching the two sections. In this context, by cross-cultural, I simply mean that certain concepts were appropriated from one cultural context and used in another - not in any critical manner but in an attempt to cross-relate cultural content. The Soweto school teacher applied concepts and principles used to deconstruct and analyse classical art forms in interpreting indigenous African art.

5.2.3. Socioeconomic Backgrounds of Learners Impacting on Learning

The learners at the suburban school come from more affluent backgrounds that are able to provide them with adequate educational resources. The school is also funded by the tuition fees which are paid by the learners and this feature also facilitates learning environments that are fully equipped and well-resourced.

Art learning at the suburban school is easily accessed because they have well-equipped facilities such as art studios and classrooms. The Visual Culture Studies classroom is well-resourced with slide projectors and a collection of slides. Learners have access to computers, photocopiers and printers which they may use for research purposes especially when preparing their research books (visual diaries) in which all research material, pictures and preliminary sketches are recorded. The visual diary is a most important component of the Art Making where the learning process is recorded in the form of brainstorming ideas, artist research, artist intention, rationale, pictures, sketches, drawings and any form of exploration of ideas. This process requires the availability of a range of resources such as a variety of art materials. The visual diary is required to be visually attractive and evidence of exploration of media must be shown. The suburban school learners can afford to purchase these art materials as they are more economically privileged. There is a dearth of art educational resources at the Soweto school and learners are faced with the challenge of appreciating art from only a formal perspective. However, the learners are equipped with an array of extraordinary human resources of creativity inspired by the rich personal experiences of everyday life informed by the complex historical background in which the school is situated.

5.2.4. The Language Issue in both Schools Presenting Itself as a Learning Barrier

The Soweto school is a black school composed of a body of learners and teachers who come from diverse cultural backgrounds and also speak a range of black South African languages. English, to most of the learners, is a third or fourth language (with other vernacular languages being spoken in the classroom and at home). Thus, the learners struggle with communicating in the English tongue.

Learners at the Soweto school struggle when it comes to articulating themselves in English as it is neither their mother tongue nor a second language. The Visual Arts curriculum at both schools is composed of complex terminology and concepts that are taught in the English language. Learners are expected to understand these concepts and to be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding thereof through critique sessions, exam and essay writing. Most of this terminology is delivered in complex jargon, making the visual art language inaccessible and exclusive to those learners who have the required language skills. Those learners who have not received the adequate language training suffer academically. Not only are these visual concepts Eurocentric by nature, the language with which they are taught is foreign. And, because the learners have various African languages as their mother tongues, standing in front of a classroom to critique their work in English using the required visual language is an alien and often humiliating task. At the Soweto school, instruction in the English language is thus a fatal learning barrier in an educational setting where the student and teacher body have African first and second languages. Neville Alexander, in his book *Thoughts on the New South Africa* (2013), revisits and reimagines the language question- explaining that language should be understood as process and social practice as opposed to language as structure. He idealises the implementation of a consistently democratic language policy that has the capacity to restore self-esteem and confidence. He writes,

> The self-esteem, self-confidence, potential creativity and spontaneity that come with being able to use the language(s) that has or have shaped one from early childhood (one's mother tongue(s)) is the foundation of all democratic polities and institutions. To be denied the use of these languages is the very meaning of oppression. (Alexander, 2013, p.96)

The language issue at the suburban school presents itself in a different manner. With a school body comprising mostly of English speaking learners and teachers, the academic visual grammar used in the interpretation and analysis of art works is not as challenging as it is at the Soweto school. However, there is also the subtle danger of assuming that all the learners in the classroom are able to comprehend this visual jargon and that the language employed is accessible to all, thus excluding the minority whose mother tongue is not English. There is risk of skimming through certain complex concepts without further expounding on meaning and thus disadvantaging those learners who are not fluent English speakers. The language barrier in the Soweto school's classroom is thus an issue as it inhibited proficient academic performance among some learners, and yet, the same learners displayed creative and artistic potential in the Art Making.

Naz Rassool (2007) states that the choice to teach in a particular language plays an important role in shaping and articulating the ethnic and cultural basis of a political society. The role of language in education underlines the literary canon and sets up a knowledge system that is legitimated as "hegemonic cultural capital" (Rassool, 2007, pp.245-266) thus instilling sets of beliefs, practices and values that are enforced as cultural norms.

The use of English as the language of choice in teaching in black South African schools has the major hegemonic role of defining the imagination and aspirations of learners. The learners are prohibited to speak their indigenous languages in the classroom and so from this early age they are imbued with certain negative attitudes towards their own cultural habitus.

Both the grade 10 *LO4* in the *RNCS* and Topic 3 in the *CAPS* place emphasis on visual literacy and the importance of writing

and research skills. Learners at the Soweto school are faced with language challenges when it comes to literacy. Given the highly Eurocentric visual and oral language used in teaching art, the *CAPS* topic presents a myriad of language problems. The learners come from a background of a variety of African languages, some of which are the mother tongue. As previously stated, for most of these learners, English, being the medium of instruction, is a third or fourth language. The complexity of the visual jargon and principles applied in the visual art classroom poses critical language barriers, often leading to academic failure.

Alexander (1989), in *Language Policy and National Unity in South Africa/Azania*, addresses issues around language in South Africa and how best to tackle these when designing a language policy that would include all languages spoken by the people of South Africa. Although his essay was published more than two decades ago, the issues that he addresses are still relevant in a 21st century classroom - where English is still the dominant language of instruction across subjects. He argues for a language policy that accords equal rights to existence. He further deliberates that no language is superior or inferior to another and that we have to arrive at a post-apartheid solution to employ a language policy that is dynamic and one that would critically address "ongoing socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic changes" (Alexander, 1989, pp.51-52). He further emphasises the need for every person in South Africa to speak his/her home language fluently and other regionally important languages. Based on Alexander's viewpoint, I argue for a classroom environment that encourages multilingualism where learners are able to switch between English and their indigenous languages whenever necessary without feeling inferior or ostracised for their identities.

In his 2013 publication, Alexander emphasises the importance of language planning. He explains that language policies are

government strategies designed to promote the interests of particular socio-cultural groups, arguing that language does not simply develop naturally but that it is formed and structured to cater to the needs of different groups of people. He highlights the fact that English as a standard language, is the preferred mode of instruction and communication of the ruling class. Based on this idea, he argues that language is not a natural development, and that it can be planned in a democratically appropriate structure that would benefit especially the interests of the marginalised language groups.

5.2.5. Superficial Links between South African art and European Art Movements

Although South African art does not form part of the curriculum at grade ten level, teachers at both schools expressed the concern that in grade 11 and 12 the curriculum specifies the cross-relation of links between South African art and European art movements. The problem herein lies in artificial and forced links between the areas. The teachers do not feel comfortable with creating a relationship between art styles which, seemingly, have no relation with one another. At close observation it seemed that these teachers felt a discomfort with swopping old methodologies of teaching for new alternatives and the reason for this reluctance could be attributed to the lack of appropriate teacher training which would prepare teachers for new curriculum content. Due to this lack of training, and inadequate curriculum content, teachers feel that they are forced to create false and meaningless links between local and international art where relationships are non-existent.

This notion of forced superficial links again lends itself to Saharat Maharaj's idea of the "multicultural aesthetic" (Gundara and Fyfe, 1999, pp.90-91) where Gundara and Fyfe address this notion as a

complex problem of acknowledging racial differences and divisions between artistic cultures. They argue for “meaningful intercultural exchange” (ibid., p.91) which entails “discarding the Eurocentricity which defines extra-European artistic traditions on its own terms” (Ibid.).

The idea of formulating links between African and European art styles also appears to be an attempt to establish a sense of “cultural equity”[6] where these two different cultures are presented parallel to each other, but with the latter maintaining dominance. Cahan and Kocur refer us to the “additive approach” (Cahan and Kocur, 2011, p.6) where learning content is carelessly added without challenging curriculum hierarchy. This approach also relates to a cross-cultural approach where focus is on the creation of links between historical South African art and 20th century art movements. Learning content is limited to a selection of certain historical facts and emphasis is placed on creating links between so-called third world art and the more Western art styles, while neglecting links between indigenous art and diasporan influences.

A most notable concern regarding the cross-cultural approach is that the South African art content is always interpreted, analysed and understood within a Eurocentric language of deconstruction (interpretation of meaning). The same standards used to interpret and appreciate the European classical art tradition are applied to South African art forms. South African art thus continues to be evaluated according to European cultural frameworks.

[6] See footnote 5.

5.2.6. Teacher Bias Arising from Tension between Needs of Learners and Formal Curriculum

In my discussion of data, I referred to one classroom incident (at the suburban school) where a student had expressed that Roman and Greek architecture served as the epitome of perfection and that ancient African art could not be regarded as works of high calibre. He justified his statement by describing the latter as objects intended for utilitarian use, whereas European art was made for the purpose of appreciation - as art which could be hung on a wall and admired for its aesthetic qualities. The perception that African art is of inferior quality to that of Europe and that the former cannot be considered as high art due to the ceremonial functions to which it is linked, is reinforced by the teacher's attitude and approach towards certain curriculum content. The teacher at the suburban school prefers certain content over the other and this is seen in his pedagogic handling of the two sections of art learning. Learners are often the reflection of the teacher - they will construct meaning and understanding in relation to the information received from the teacher. At times this information may have been transmitted ambiguously but learners always assimilate new information as part of a learning process. The teacher is thus responsible for the kind of messages that he/she sends during the educational process. In another incident, the teacher had referred to Masaccio as the greatest artist that had ever lived. Again, it is this kind of biased instructional intervention which reinforces certain belief systems in the classroom. The African art lesson at the suburban school was evidently dominated by the notion that ancient African art possesses grotesque features as opposed to the more refined stylistic aspects portrayed in Greek and Roman art. These stereotyped deductions reflect the cultural bias which exists in the suburban classroom and this learning environment does not

stimulate learners' reasoning capacities by allowing them to make certain interpretations and create meaning for themselves.

The teacher at the suburban school encourages his learners to seek ideas in their immediate surroundings. Thus, the learners are motivated to borrow certain concepts from their social and cultural backgrounds. He opposes the idea of turning to the artists prescribed in the curriculum for creative stimulation. Contrary to this, the Soweto teacher discourages his learners turning to their backgrounds for inspiration as he perceives the township subject matter as a clichéd notion and as a concept that is not thought-provoking. He also prefers his learners to look to the European art studied in the classroom. By affording his learners the opportunity to explore ideas within immediate environments, the suburban teacher progresses towards Cahan and Kocur's demand for a multicultural educational approach that "connects everyday experience, social critique, and creative expression" (Cahan and Kocur, 2011, p.7.) because the focus is shifted to issues and ideas that learners truly care about. This teaching approach makes way for learning that is relevant to "the now" as "art becomes a vital means of reflecting on the nature of society and social existence" (Ibid.).

The Soweto school teacher on the other hand may not feel comfortable with contemporary art content, hence his disapproval of learners borrowing ideas from their everyday experiences. It could be that he feels safe within the parameters of traditional and conventional forms of art.

Although the teacher states that he encourages a Visual Arts programme that responds to the historical, current socio-cultural and socio-economic background in which the school is situated, he does not seem to promote the idea of learners' personal

experiences reflecting in their artworks. He views this as a limitation of ideas and lack of creativity.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Synopsis

In my rationale I presented three questions integral to my study probing the relationship of Visual Culture Studies to each school's history, current socio-economic and socio-cultural context and whether that relationship encourages integration of diversity and difference in the classroom. With reference to my findings, through classroom observations, comparison of learning content and interview questions with teachers and learners, it is evident that the study of visual culture in each school is dominated by hegemonic Eurocentric ideology presented in the form of traditional classical art forms while African art lies at the periphery of this European ideal. Some of the learning material that is used, e.g. History of Art Guidelines Study Aids (Clarke 2011, pp.1-121)) that was established more than four decades ago, focuses only on European art history and the teacher merely adds the history of black African art and even then, the content is distorted and obscure.

Contemporary art is not facilitated in the grade 10 Visual Arts programme. The only opportunity that some of the Soweto school learners got to meet a living artist was when they met Marlene Dumas at her exhibition opening. These learners were evidently thrilled to be able to interact with her. But generally speaking, learning is not informed by the everyday experiences of the learner. Instead it is confined within the classroom and framed by a highly Eurocentric curriculum. The classroom becomes an incubator of western ideas where the cultural, social and economic status of the learner is neglected and prescriptive curriculum content precedes the learner's individual and personal experience within current socio-cultural and economic contexts. As Cahan and Kocur point out, pedagogy in art has not changed distinctively within the movement for multicultural

education. Curriculum models adopted in arts education, they argue, lack the potential to transform social and political conditions.

6.2. Conclusion

The concept 'multicultural' is one that has been under scrutiny and has also been contested mainly because of the superficial manner in which it has been applied. In the past, this concept has lacked the critical approach and intervention which may have allowed it the capacity to critically inform and engage instructional intervention in educational settings. Due to its superficial understanding or lack of understanding in both schools, the multicultural concept envisaged in the education policy statements (*RNCS* and *CAPS*) has failed to achieve the "student-centred pedagogy, community involvement, and the equitable distribution of resources", which, according to the policies, should be the outcomes of a critical multicultural education.

Dominant Western cultural knowledge has killed that sense of imagination - where possibilities of a different and more fulfilling social order may be re-envisioned as a means to harness human agency. Imagination plays an important role in proposing and rethinking alternatives for the function of curriculum as cultural practice.

Most of the perspectives that have emerged from multicultural reform only continue to perpetuate the dominant ideals of Western culture. Multicultural perspectives such as the intercultural, cross-cultural, fusion and particularist models maintain a Eurocentric knowledge system and affirm its dominant position in the canon. Although Zimmerman's proposal of an intercultural approach to multicultural reform in education suggests a more critical, rigorous, and multidimensional engagement with learning, I challenge this perspective on the basis that the hegemony of Western knowledge continues to map out the trajectory in which all 'other' cultural discourses should disseminate into mainstream epistemology. The

‘inter’ in intercultural and the ‘cross’ in cross-cultural remain a mere language construct understood within a framework of Western culture. Within these perspectives, the ‘other’ remains objective and spoken for. Curricular decisions are negotiated on behalf of the minority cultural groups. Their voice continues to be silent in curricular negotiations, which are aimed at rethinking their sense of identity and place in society.

Another view that I challenge is Vallance’s suggestion that museums are safe multicultural worlds that offer a safe and quiet space to explore cultural differences and also provide resources for educators. Museums, and classrooms, are often institutionalised knowledge constructs designed to perpetuate, even further, the Eurocentric dominant possession of knowledge. The accessibility of information is controlled by the West and can only be accessed from within particular frameworks contextualised within Western and European cultural knowledge. Museums are a ‘safe’ space because of formalised epistemology that cannot be challenged or interrogated. It’s a safe space because knowledge has been canonised and protected behind glass cabinets. Furthermore, museums are a ‘quiet’ space because of the minority voice that has been silenced - a people whose place in society has been spoken for negotiated on their behalf.

6.3. Recommendations

6.3.1. Summary of Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform

Various approaches to multicultural reform in education have been discussed in my research and I have drawn insight from some of the suggestions brought forward in my study.

Zegeye and Vambe’s critique of the Africanisation of the curriculum is relevant in that it points to some of the shortfalls of multicultural curriculum reform and also presents solutions suited for the South African classroom. Africanisation presents paradoxical challenges

which may result in regressive curricula and a character that sets it against the very Eurocentric values it is attempting to negate. Furthermore this approach resonates with the colonialist tendency to unify an African identity, subsequently reducing the continent to a collective. Although the modernist Neo-liberal methodology to the idea of Africanisation advocates the integration of other diasporan and white cultures and also draws insight from the idea of globalisation, I argue that this approach is problematic for the reason that it departs from the premise of establishing African art and culture within a hegemonic context. Furthermore, it also challenges, headlong, European knowledge systems and puts considerable emphasis on a specific 'culture'.

Abdi advocates cultural equity in education - calling for radical and critical equalisation of different cultures without eradicating the legitimacy of the specialised attributes of one culture but still challenging dominant ideology. He argues for a transformative critical multiculturalism where a complete transformation of Eurocentric systems of knowledge takes place and learners acquire creative independence through an open-ended curriculum that allows for multiple entries of suggestions and one that would also yield socio-historically responsive individuals. There are critical parallels between the latter and Cahan and Kocur's reconstructionist approach, the combination of which I recommend for Visual Arts learning programmes in the South African classroom.

The reconstructionist approach describes an education that prepares learners to become active citizens who are critically aware of societal issues and who fully participate in and engage with society; learners who not only draw information from other societies but also individuals who are contributors of knowledge. A social reconstructionist approach thus requires total curriculum reform, a complete change in the content and design of the curriculum and, most importantly a shift in pedagogical methods. An educational milieu such as this encourages

learners to bring their personal experiences and knowledge into the learning process, thus suppressing the idea of one dominant voice.

Cahan and Kocur further emphasise the need for an educational approach that connects everyday experience, social critique, and creative expression. They make us aware that what is missing from multicultural education is the teaching of contemporary art to the 21st century learner. However, many teachers are not at ease with teaching contemporary art simply because they do not feel comfortable with a subject for which they do not have the formal training and also because they feel safe within the parameters of traditional and conventional forms of art. Therefore, intensive teacher education is necessary in order to equip teachers with the necessary skills needed to feel comfortable with teaching the art form. Another recommendation would be to involve contemporary artists in the classroom and engage them with learners. Bringing artists into the classroom expands the insight of learners and also engages them with a world outside of the classroom. Through studying contemporary art, they are made aware of current socio-cultural and socio-political issues that affect the societies they live in. Learners feel comfortable and familiar with what they are learning and are able to apply their knowledge beyond the classroom in real-life situations.

Contemporary art in education is relevant and necessary because it sets the platform for challenging monolithic and stereotypical perspectives, addresses questions pertaining to power relations and also acknowledges parts of history which are specific and relevant to 'the now'. It also reinforces the learners' consciousness of their place in history and also allows for multiple interpretations of culture, thus "emphasizing the capacity and ability of all human beings, including those who have been culturally degraded, politically oppressed, and economically exploited" (Cahan and Kocur, 2011, p.7).

Teachers' pedagogical approaches in each school also deserve to be questioned as to whether they can support a critical and closely-integrated multicultural learning. Educators find it difficult to integrate African art with European art. The Soweto school teacher reported on the difficulty of linking content and how he finds it easier to teach in a chronological fashion as it is more accessible and familiar. The suburban teacher also commented on how complex it is to relate content to real-life situations as the learners "lack the enthusiasm to make the links". However, I question, how integration can be facilitated in an environment where learners are inundated with white Eurocentricism while African cultural content is dismissed as insignificant to the learners' historical background. Also, if African art is insignificant, how is classical European art relevant to the contemporary learner?

Learners also struggle to understand the relationship between African and Western art as the task of linking content appears superficial and forced. The current curriculum is merely 'fixing the problem' through additive and cross-cultural approaches that continue to place Western art at the forefront of knowledge. The role of the teacher plays an important role as he/she is seen as the transmitter of knowledge and when the information received jeopardises learning, we anticipate cognitive behaviour that is a barrier to critical capacities of learners; learners that do not care about their socio-cultural environment; selfish individuals with stereotypical views of others and individuals who lack the courage to explore and question issues relating to power relations. A classroom environment is a cultural knowledge transmitter that should encourage and allow critical relationships of otherness and induce inquiry-mindedness, forward-thinking learning behaviour.

Learning in an intercultural setting does not only fortify relationships between learners but also conceives reflective individuals who are able to think critically about thinking through learning about 'others'. Zimmerman's most critical outcome of intercultural education is that

learners are encouraged to create their “personal, collaborative, and public voices through knowledge of content and pedagogy, through creating caring communities of leaders and learners, and through creation of shared success and autonomy” (Zimmerman, 2001, p.409). However, concepts such as interculturalism and cross-culturalism reveal the Western and Eurocentric epistemic anxiety to retain dominance and power in the dissemination of knowledge. The proliferation of approaches to multicultural reform highlights the restless attempt of the West to maintain power and control on policy-making.

The Visual Arts policies, both *RNCS* and *CAPS*, are informed by a somewhat obscure definition of multiculturalism where diversity and difference is addressed through the mere awareness and recognition of other cultures. African art content is added to the curriculum without the significant historical and cultural values that have contributed to the art-making process. It is this arbitrary approach to teaching and learning which has become intrinsic to the pedagogy and learning observed at the two schools. It’s a way of learning which becomes dependent on haphazard pedagogy. The curriculum is highly Eurocentric in that it emphasises the value of European art styles and movements and by so doing, marginalises African art content and obscures the knowledge and understanding thereof. I’ve observed both the additive and cross-cultural approaches in multicultural reform within the South African Visual Arts curriculum, where there exists preferential inclusion and exclusion of information and continues to be governed by dominant Eurocentric epistemology.

jan jagodzinski’s critical and polycentral multiculturalism is an integrative approach, integrating into the curriculum everyday learning informed by ideas of diversity and difference. It is a multicultural concept that is more universal and one which brings questions regarding power relations to the fore. This multicultural reform approach does not rule out the canon and all its hegemonic ideas but

includes it on the premise that it is nonsensical to eradicate exceptional artistic achievement. He adds that while maintaining the canon in the curriculum, it must remain subject to rigorous critique. Furthermore this approach includes a selection of arts significant to a varying spectrum of culture. jagodzinski emphasises the inclusion of popular culture in the curriculum provided that it is responsive to both the art historical canon and the art of minority cultures. He justifies popular culture as the key to decentring art education as "fine art".

6.3.2. Recommendations for a Critical, Socio-Historically Responsive and Closely-Integrated Pedagogy and Learning

There is a necessity for a reimagining of pedagogy and learning – an instructional intervention that has the capacity to transform lives through the critical and analytical inclusion of diverse knowledge systems, and one that would be subject to continuous rigorous critique. Based on the responses obtained from educators and learners at the two schools, it is evident that there is a lack of creative inspiration in the classroom as learning is mostly informed by the Western canon of art history – a history removed from the learners' immediate surroundings and, more importantly, their lives. In the Soweto classroom, where learning is influenced by the socio-economic limitations, content becomes mind-numbing and monotonous due to lack of visual arts resources. The classroom becomes an unimaginative space. There is urgency for Visual Arts learning programmes that take learners' everyday experiences into account - content that is inspired by creative imagination and curriculum possibilities that are non-prescriptive, dynamic and constantly evolving.

Hooks (1994) writes that leaners require their educators to see them as whole human beings with complex lives and experiences as opposed to being perceived as "seekers of compartmentalised knowledge" (hooks, 1994, p.14) Learners need to be fully conscious of the information they are receiving; be critically aware of and engaged

in the learning process by being active participants labouring mutually in the field of knowledge. In both classrooms there was evidence of that style of pedagogy where learners are expected to absorb, store and memorise information fed to them without actively engaging with content and with one another's opinions and ideas. This active participation and critical engagement with knowledge is what Hooks terms engaged pedagogy – a style of teaching and learning that allows learners to come out of that passive absorption of information and encourages metacognitive skills. Classrooms need to be active hubs of information where knowledge systems go through constant rigorous critique facilitated by learners themselves.

Based on my findings, there is a common thread that runs in both Visual Arts classrooms where learners are inclined towards their immediate surroundings for creative inspiration. The monotony of the prescriptive curriculum and formal learning programmes moulds the classroom into an unimaginative space where creativity and imagination die. There appears to be a 'hidden curriculum' - contemporary settings with which learners interact, learn from and then draw their creative inspiration. The concept of the hidden curriculum in schools refers to certain cultural and behavioural patterns that learners must adopt in order to conform to certain societal norms which are not part of the formal curriculum. The hidden curriculum refers to that set of unspoken knowledge that is communicated to learners – dictating how they should behave and conduct themselves culturally, socially and academically. However, my use of this concept is something wholly different. I speak of the hidden curriculum of learners wherein learning takes place outside of the classroom and through interaction with one another and the communities they belong to. I speak of a surreptitious style of learning that is 'smuggled' into the classroom by learners and preferred more than the formal and mundane teaching and learning approaches. In my study, the hidden curriculum refers to skills and knowledge that are exchanged among learners and preferred over the normal classroom pedagogy. I believe

it’s from this concealed knowledge system that learning content should be drawn and critical connections made between everyday experience and the formal curriculum As discussed in my introduction, a critical and integrated learning environment should foster rigorous relationships between learners - what and how they learn - thus affecting the way they receive information even beyond the classroom. Curriculum should not necessarily prescribe how teaching and learning should take place. I see it as a framework of content which can be malleable and tailored, through pedagogy and learning, to suit the specific needs of each learner. I see curriculum as a learning content guideline and not a canonical presentation of ideologies and should be approached as a platform on which varied sets of knowledge and sources of information can transpire. A critical and integrated instructional intervention would thus perpetuate pedagogy and learning that draws from the everyday experience of each learner where learning continues to take place even outside of the classroom.

Both classrooms observed in this researhc project can benefit from a Visual Arts learning programme that is informed by this sense of a hidden curriculum where learners are encouraged to search for creative inspiration from their immediate socio-cultural environments. There seems to be an urge to bring the outside into the classroom- however, the formal curriculum does not facilitate the platform for this kind of teaching and learning to take place.

In my literature review I highlighted Abdi’s critical and transformative approach to multiculturalism which suggests notions of voice and representation, identity and empowerment of all learners. Thus, the idea of critical and integrated learning programmes should be informed by curricula that employ current socio-cultural and historical background, within which learning is situated, and also providing learners with opportunities of individual pathways of discovering and creating meaning.

The learning environment needs to become a live space that allows for multiple ideas to permeate in and out of the classroom - where learners map out their own creative pathways influenced by individual practice outside of the formal curriculum. Classrooms need to become creative hubs where learning adopts a holistic artistic approach where learners interact directly with artists and creative facilitators from various fields. bell hooks (1994) states that any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow and are empowered by the process. She speaks of "engaged pedagogy" (hooks, 1994, p.21) where teachers are actively involved in a ritual of self-reflection that promote their own well-being in order to empower their students. The Visual Arts learning programme needs to be informed by the dynamic and ever-changing nature of culture. The teacher needs to understand that history is not a static stagnant notion but that societies continuously interact and engage with new information. There is a necessity for classroom pedagogy to allow contemporary art learning to form an integral part of Visual Arts learning. What is happening on the outside has to flow into the classroom space and allow the 'hidden curriculum' to inform learning.

I also recommend a community-based learning approach that allows for artists from various communities to share their historical, cultural and creative narratives with both teacher and learner. In relation to what Kanu (2006) advocates, I suggest that certain content be drawn from cultural and traditional knowledge received at 'home'.There are certain important cultural values that can be integrated into classroom pedagogy that can shape the learners' ways of seeing and interpreting meaning in their own voice. It is then crucial to bring back those traditions that have always been valuable in the social upbringing of black and other marginal groups. I believe that the use of indigenous languages, traditional proverbs, idioms and other figures of speech in the classroom is crucial to holistic pedagogy and learning rooted in the attaining of cultural agency. Kanu places culture at the core of curriculum analysis and reform and emphasises that culture needs to

be the primary source for radical inquiry as it moulds the way we see and receive information. She also calls for a return to the past as a strategy to allow us to critique the present. This is necessary, especially for a Visual Arts programme for schools similar to the Soweto school - learning programmes that bring forward the past, not just as a nostalgic return to 'home' but as a means to disrupt and challenge the complacent normalcy of current Eurocentric curricula that are dominating and informing learning programmes.

Kanu further argues that schools practise covert racism in facilitating the inscription of dominant culture as official knowledge for all learners and that this notion of the 'official knowledge' functions through compromises that favour dominant groups and this kills imagination. The classroom environment has to allow learners the platform to imagine possible worlds existing outside the classroom realm. Creative imagination needs to meander around and break through dominant epistemologies and allow for an artistically atomic learning environment where one creative idea gives rise to a myriad of creative pathways which learners can individually pursue and adopt as their own outlet of expression. By challenging dominant Eurocentricism in the curriculum, we decolonise knowledge systems and facilitate anticolonial agency for each learner and afford them spiritual knowledge in encouraging them to discover their emotional and intellectual understanding of self.

jagodzinski's suggestion of a critical and polycentral multiculturalism and Cahan and Kocur's emphasis on the role of contemporary art in education are key to providing learning that is relevant to the day to day experience of the learner. They also begin to lay the foundation and framework for the reconstructive overhaul of learning programmes that would promote efficient, rigorous, critical, and closely integrated content. In turn, this would yield self-reflexive outcomes. Self-reflexive learners are those that continuously respond to their everyday experiences of the world around them; learners who are constantly

aware of socio-historical events that shape the way they relate to one another; and learners that reflect on their thinking and also on the way others think. They would be responsible, and responsive, citizens who care about the environment which they share with many other cultural societies. This would be a curriculum where each learner attains cultural agency and is encouraged to explore his or her personal experiences. It would be a curriculum that allows for individual pathways of thinking, but at the same time paying attention to the cultural contributions of others and accommodating them in their own learning process.

Perhaps the most striking realisation emerging from this research is the distance that seemingly exists between the theoretical possibilities present in the literature review section of the report and the case studies themselves. Further research is necessary in order to mine the notion of the 'hidden curriculum' introduced in the concluding section. This research needs to framed by an extended archive that includes more locally grounded arts education research.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions Directed at the Soweto School Teacher

J.G.: The visual art curriculum is composed of two components namely history of art and studio art practice. What is the content of each of these components?

Teacher: Our learners do arts and culture from grade 8 to grade 9. When they get to grade 10, that's when they start with Visual Art. What we do with the practical, we do the foundation where we teach them the language of art, that there are different kinds of art. When they were in grade 8 and 9, they used to see things differently to the way I'm teaching. When they came to class there was no observation. So now what we do, we teach them to start looking…look at the texture, look at the tone. We tell them to go out there to look at the different textures and tones. Before they came to grade 10, they used to draw with lines. But now you make them aware that these objects do not have lines…now we use tones. In history of art we take them step by step…all the way from the times of the Zimbabwe ruins until we get to Egyptian art. When they get to grade11 that's when things get a little bit challenging. We prepare them for grade 12. Slowly but surely.

J.G.: Do you always as a teacher start with African art and then work your way up to Europe? Is that the structure?

Teacher: That's how it has been structured even in tertiary during our times.

But in grade 12 the focus turns to South African art. There are 12 themes give to us for the grade 12s.

J.G.: So are you saying that in grade ten the focus is more on European art?

Teacher: Yes, whereas as you get higher the focus comes back home. That's my own personal view. I see it coming back to South Africa.

J.G.: Making Africa the starting point for grade tens, I get a sense that one is more anxious to rush through the African art and get to 'the art'.

Teacher: There is this saying that African art of that period was made for utilitarian purposes. That's not why we start with African art…because it

is crafty we will start with it and then get to European art which is the real art. That's not how I see it. The reason I think we are starting with African art is because this is home. Charity begins here.

J.G.: What kinds of activities are given to learners in history of art?

Teacher: We sometimes take the kids to exhibitions and when we come back we give them essays to write on the exhibition. We ask them to go out there and interview an artist and come back and write something on that artist. There was a time when we asked learners to look at an artist who chooses a medium that is, if I could use this word, on the periphery. The majority of the artists, whether we like it or not, become creative even in the way they choose the material because the majority of these artists make a living out their work so you need to be different in your choice of media so that you stand out.

J.G.: Is there a time in history of art where learners go to exhibitions and return and are asked to write essays on the exhibitions?

Teacher: Yes. For instance, they went to the Marlene Dumas and some of them were fortunate to talk to her. When we went there we gave them some sort of a guide sheet so that they should know what to look at when they got there.

J.G.: So did they talk to her…How did they find it?

Teacher: Some of them did manage to talk to her. They found it very exciting. They saw a different pattern as compared to what they would have read about. Fortunate enough some of them were there on the opening night.

J.G.: I would imagine that the same kind of thing happens in studio art practice where learners go to exhibitions and come back and are required to produce a work.

Teacher: Yes the same kind of thing happens but at times you find that…we are a township school and with the background of the learners that we have…sometimes you find that our background determines the type of work that we do. You may find yourself wanting to do work in a particular manner or in a manner that you have seen from a particular studio but you can be limited by the material that you have. Sometimes you end up making more pencil work as opposed to working with other

media because we have mainly pencils because we are very limited when coming to gaining that freedom...the freedom to use the media that we want.

J.G.: Are you saying that because of their surroundings and background, you encourage them to sort of look around them and go back to the classroom and use what they have? Are most of these themes based on their social background?

Teacher: Yes, you have got to consider that otherwise you won't be able to manage if you turn a blind eye on the type of people they are. If you ask them to do a collage, half of the class will be running around the school asking glue from their friends.

J.G.: Is there a relationship between history of art and studio art practice and if yes, how do you, as the teacher reinforce it in the classroom?

Teacher: Yes. There are a lot of things that come out of History of Art. Our learners have role models in History of Art. There are artists who do things in a way that they would have dreamt. Things can connect in different ways. There is both direct and indirect connection. In History of Art they can find an artist whose work is so outstanding. It makes a learner to want to work even more. That is really what we are trying to promote- that indirect connection. We don't want learners to become copycats of other people. We want them to see creativity in other people that can inspire them.

J.G.: Does this relationship feature in assisting learners to perform proficiently with regard to the learning outcomes and if so how?

Teacher: (inaudible) we can have a 'crit' session where you ask learners to talk about their work. They will always refer to where they have been in History of Art. The learner will always tell you that the reason I'm doing something like this is because I saw this guy doing 1, 2, and 3. By so doing, you are going somewhere. You are getting somewhere. This is a peaceful way of doing it. You don't have to force it on them but just make them acknowledge it once it comes up. Once you do that I think you'll see a direct connection.

J.G.: Does the history of art learning outcomes prepare the learner, in any way, for studio art practice and if so, how?

Teacher: You find so many learners struggling in practice, especially females. When coming to drawings and stuff like that. Practice becomes a bit challenging. And then when coming to boys, you have those few who have this passion because they feel they are talented and they have the love of it but it's not going to be the whole class that performs well. There are those pupils who look forward to the history of art class much more than practice and there are those with whom it happens vice versa.
J.G.: So there is difficulty, with some learners, to make the connection between history of art and practice. So you find that some perform better in practice and they struggle with the theory.
Teacher: history of art is about discussing and all of that and you find that the majority of the boys take the backseat because they do not want to find themselves talking and our school is not an English medium type of school. We have learners doing African languages. When you talk to them they want to respond in their mother tongue. If you ask them to speak English then that's the last time you'll hear from them.
J.G.: so how do you tackle the language barrier?
Teacher: As much as we encourage them to speak in whatever language they want, we make them aware that at the end of the day they are not going to write in their own mother tongue so they need to start speaking in English.
J.G.: So you are saying that language in the history of art is a barrier and may also affect the performance…
Teacher: They have no choice they have to speak in English. Perhaps where they come from, in grade 9, they were not told about the issue of English. Our learners are not even aware that they need to speak in that particular language.
J.G.: No I understand, I mean the language of history of art is an academic language and if the learners are going to learn history of art, they will have to speak the language. So you say that the female learners struggle in studio art practice. Why females in particular?
Teacher: I'm not too sure. I think our female learners don't give themselves more time when coming to working with the hands especially. I don't think the majority of them draw at home. They only

draw at school. Boys love to compete. There is competition amongst boys when it comes to drawings…they love to show who can draw better than the next. But you don't find that with girls. Girls are much more proud with their theory marks but nor practice. They don't push too hard.

J.G.: What learning outcomes are expected from the possible relationship of history of art and studio art practice?

Teacher: There is only one learning outcome for visual cultural studies and for practice they are about three. The combination at the end of the day… you are trying to prepare fully fledged learners who are creative.

J.G.: Is the visual art programme structured to suit the historical as well as the current socio-economic and socio-cultural context in which the school is situated and if so, how?

Teacher: what we do is try to encourage learners to be themselves; to consider their background in trying to do their work, e.g. our learners are previously disadvantaged. The majority of their parents are unemployed so you cannot expect these types of learners to buy expensive material so we encourage them to use the available material. You give them a theme and you are going to see a common thread throughout their work. They try to reflect their everyday life- the way they do their things in the township. The visual arts programme, even if it may not directly be structured in that manner we try and put it in that way. (Inaudible) We find it at times dictating terms to us. We might not be able to say you cannot do this but you find their background reflects itself in the work that they do.

J.G.: Comment on the socio-cultural context

Teacher: Our school is a multilingual school. We have Zulu, Tsonga, and Tswana etc. And our staff is also multilingual

J.G.: Is the school's art programme designed to accommodate the socio-cultural background of learners?

Teacher: Well I think that one for us is an obvious case. The majority of them are quite aware that art reflects our culture. Another interesting thing is that you might assign a particular learner's surname to a particular culture only to find out that is not the case. When you give that learner some work to do especially one that is open, the learner will

come up with their real culture and you'll wonder whether the learner is not Venda and then he or she'll say "no I'm using my Venda surname but my culture is Zulu.

Teacher: As an educator you look at the challenge and you might use that as s theme. You try to address the issue through the work that you give to your children. It's like you are indirectly trying to raise an issue. They are going to address that issue through their work. When they come to present, that's when such issues are going to come up, through the work that they have done. Sometimes some of them might not even be aware that what they are doing here, at the end of the day, is going to end up addressing the issue that is troubling 'me' in class. So those are the things that we try to address through the work that we do, through the themes that we give to our learners to go and research on. There are so many issues that are challenging to learners or to school in relation to difference of status or difference of background… So at the end of the day learners see themselves as one and not as divided…we do not look at them in considering where they come from or what kind of status they have…we try and promote oneness.

J.G.: It sounds like there is a hidden curriculum. The learners in a way go out and teach themselves. They teach one another and learn from one another not through the established curriculum but through the hidden curriculum, which is the background they interact with when they are out of the classroom.

Teacher: Whether we like it or not, what is quite important is the issue of the education that is learner centred. We don't undermine what learners can do in trying to educate themselves. We try and raise issues indirectly because it does not always have to come from the educator to say this is what I want to do with you. No, give the learners a theme…let them go and research on that theme and let them come to class and discuss it.

J.G.: Can you give me an example of a theme that has been, or could be given to learners.

Teacher: Let say for example, in our school we have so many kids who are Tsonga. There are so many Tsonga learners who do not want to speak Tsonga around their friends because in South Africa Tsonga

people are being looked at as an inferior cultural group. So, let say for example, you come up with some sort of theme that looks at cultural tolerance or cultural intolerance…you know such issues…and then you leave it at that. Sometimes you don't even give them some examples because the problem with them, you give them an example, they are going to give it back you as an answer when you ask a question.

J.G.: Does the history of art programme engage learners with the diverse cultural expressions.

Teacher: History of art covers a wide variety of histories of art…as an educator, yes, there are those parts of history of art that I think they do

J.G.: It seems like there is tension between how learners are inspired in the studio art practice classroom and how they are inspired in the history of art classroom. I get a sense that in the history of art classroom learners are taught the different art periods and the most part of it, at that level, is Eurocentric. That's what they learn and when they get to studio art practice they turn to their background.

Teacher: The higher they go, that's when they start to become independent but in grade 10, the majority of them turn to their 'backgrounds' for inspiration. Even their level of thinking equals their age. For some of them it's still too early to become aware of the fact that "here I'm being taught how to become myself". They still do thing in the conventional manner. The majority of them think, "Okay art is about doing what my culture says. You give them a theme to go and work on their own. The chances are you might not see anything that reflects the Eurocentric history of art that they do. You find that they just go back to their cultural stuff, cultural utilitarian topics. When they get to grade twelve, that's where they realise that they need to be creative; they need to express themselves in a manner that is their own. But at the moment there is still that struggle and you cannot just at a drop of a hat take them out of it. You need to do it slowly but surely.

J.G.: The visual art classroom could embody a multiplicity of culture, race, gender and class -these may consequently create divide amongst learners. Does the visual art programme assist learners in engaging critically with diversity and difference and if so how?

Teacher: As an educator you look at the challenge and you might use that as a theme. You try to address the issue through the work that you give to your children. It's like you are indirectly trying to raise an issue. They are going to address that issue through their work. When they come to present, that's when such issues are going to come up, through the work that they have done. Sometimes some of them might not even be aware that what they are doing here, at the end of the day, is going to end up addressing the issue that is troubling 'me' in class. So those are the things that we try to address through the work that we do, through the themes that we give to our learners to go and research on. There are so many issues that are challenging to learners or to school in relation to difference of status or difference of background… So at the end of the day learners see themselves as one and not as divided…we do not look at them in considering where they come from or what kind of status they have…we try and promote oneness.

J.G.: There is a huge focus on the art periods in the art classroom. Is it necessary to focus on the art periods in this particular context- in the Soweto school?

Teacher: People need to know the history of where you are coming from. We were using the word inspire. Some of these learners, once they some work belonging to a particular movement, they just fall in love…it keeps them going.

Appendix B: Interview with Suburban School Teacher

J.G.: The visual art curriculum is composed of two components namely history of art and studio art practice. What is the content of each of these components?

Teacher: first of all it's no longer history of art it's visual cultural studies. One tends to combine the visual cultural studies with the practical so that you cover all four of the LOs- 1, 2, 3, and 4. LO4 is more of the theory side where LO 1, 2, and 3 are more practical and we try to combine the two into the whole program to these various [inaudible]. We have learner activities. We have facilitator activities. There are resources and assessment strategies which come at the end. For instance, we have crossed the grade ten programme [inaudible] so that they get to understand the content of the visual arts in terms of European and African visual arts…we start with Greek sculpture and pottery and relate that to African sculpture and pottery. We then make our own ceramic sculpture. Because we do visual arts and design the design "guys" would do a utilitarian object and we would do a face which would then be decorated having related it to the practical and then we do the architecture of Greece and Rome. Sometimes we will relate that to a poster so they will then change from ceramic to painting and they will do a painting related to one of the themes we're working on which could be the African renaissance theme or the early Christian Byzantine, Romanesque gothic or renaissance so that we can tie it up with the visual cultural studies of that time and we show slides in terms of the sources that I use and give them notes on the various topics we're covering and obviously the practical projects…they also get notes with rubrics to checklist if they're doing the right thing.

J.G.: What kinds of activities are given to learners in history of art?

Teacher: they have to keep visual diaries. They will do a timeline at home, within the class they look at slides. I will continue to ask them questions and relate it to the visual material that they have seen to

see whether they're awake; whether they're absorbing what they're seeing; whether they can relate it to their own experiences.

J.G.: Is there a relationship between history of art and studio art practice and if yes, how do you, as the teacher reinforce it in the classroom?

Teacher: we try and relate the activities in studio art practice with the activities they do in class. Sometimes one of the problems that we have found is that it's a highly artificial situation that to try to and force what you're doing in VCS into a practical project…it's exactly that…it's a forced thing. It's not a natural thing, sometimes it does work well as I said with the portrait heads of African art, Roman and Greek art and then they do their own portraits, it works fine.

J.G.: Does this relationship feature in assisting learners to perform proficiently with regard to the learning outcomes and if so how?

Teacher: If they do they take it seriously. If they see the connection. In the past there was no connection. They were two separate subjects where they would often reject the history of art as something they didn't want to do. They could see a relationship between Rembrandt's painting technique with what they were doing. They could say "let's try and do that". To try and remedy that we'd often get them to copy a real painting like an impressionist painting so that they could see what the impressionist were doing and what they were doing and actually relate it in the practical sense so that they can copy and understand the difficulties that that artist had and then say: "I understand now what he was trying to do so I could appreciate the VCS better because I'm now doing it.

J.G.: Does the history of art learning outcomes prepare the learner, in any way, for studio art practice and if so, how?

Teacher: definitely. Sometime no, it doesn't relate closely enough. It would be very artificial to combine them but generally if you do it in that way that I suggested, the learning outcomes become much clearer to the learners if you can relate what they've done in VCS to the practical work that they do in class.

J.G.: What learning outcomes are expected from the possible

relationship of history of art and studio art practice?

Teacher: A certain amount of skills development, innovation so that they can expand on what they've seen, and that it also becomes a personal experience which is very important to the outcomes.

J.G.: Is the visual art programme structured to suit the historical as well as the current socio-economic and socio-cultural context in which the school is situated and if so, how?

Teacher: I think in grade ten not quite as much as in the grade 12 programme. I find it very, very difficult to sometimes relate what they're doing to real life situations. They can't actually relate it. For instance a lot of the VCS, especially in the senior grades relates to apartheid and all of that and to be quite honest many of the learners actually couldn't care less about it. They say, "It's happened and now we're through that, we've passed it. They don't want to be reminded about it no matter what colour they are. You ask them about the history in that time, they don't know a lot. Most of them, no matter what colour they are, they want to move on and it becomes a very artificial situation in trying to force them to have to do issues from the past. Something that we're doing with them right now is gender issues and they can relate a bit more to gender issues where we can use artists like Penny Siopis and American Judy Chicago; Cindy Sherman and they can sort of begin to relate a little bit with that kind of thing but generally it's a very artificial situation. Matrics are doing this for the first time and so we're not sure yet how it's working out. I'm finding it very difficult to get my mind around teaching theme as opposed to chronology. We're forced to relate unrelated things from Europe and America to South Africa. What they've given us is extremely artificial. It's so forced that it's almost irrelevant. But in terms with what they're doing in their practical we make it more relevant. At the moment matrics are doing gender issues and we're looking at Penny Siopis and Judy Chicago at the same time and hopefully they're seeing some kind of connection.

J.G.: Are you given themes?

Teacher: the themes are in fact…there are four themes. So you have ten themes and you've got to cover six of them during the course of the year- things like emerging voice of black artists in the 1960s; search for an African identity in South African artists in the 1950s; gender issues in South African art and then they connect them to instances from international and a lot of these are very forced and very repetitive and that causes quite a few problems in terms of teaching. It would be far more sensible to teach them chronologically and just include all those things but it's an experiment…it's making my teaching more interesting but it's challenging. I'm talking a lot about the matrics here.

J.G.: And what about the socio-economic context in which the school is situated- does it affect how you teach?

Teacher: We have a very diverse socio-economic background. Most of our learners are from reasonably privileged backgrounds and there is a variety of difference sectors of the population. Their financial background is very similar. They can relate more easily to what you are doing because they have a fairly privileged background. If one were to be teaching in one of the township schools- the disadvantaged schools, I would certainly battle because they do not have access to the facilities; the computers…Even just paper- the quality of paper, pencils and that kind of thing. It can be a major problem. That's why very few of them actually do art. Our matric art at the end of the year…there is a very small proportion of learners from the previously disadvantaged and still disadvantaged schools who do it because they literally cannot afford it. They cannot afford the visual material for the history of art and they can't afford the actual material to create the art. No one can work with bits and pieces of newspaper and make jewellery from junk and sculpture from junk. But, certainly with our learners…they're very advantaged and they are able to relate to what they see in the visual and be able to recreate it because they can afford acrylic paint and oil paint and sculpture material- material to make chairs and tables…

Appendix C: Interview Schedule for the students at two Gauteng-Based schools

1. What have you learnt in history of art so far?
2. Did you do that at the same time you did Egyptian art?
3. Do you think it is important to learn the different histories of art and if so why?
4. What do you understand by culture and identity?
5. Is there a difference between culture and identity?
6. What do you understand about yourself identity and culture?
7. Is art learning relevant to your identity and/or culture?
8. Can you identify the diversity of culture and identity in your art classroom? If so, please give examples of the different cultural identities in your classroom?
9. Does what you learn in history of art assist in you in your practical work and if so, how?
10. Are you given the opportunity in the classroom to express your cultural identity in your practical work?

Appendix D: Interview Questions for Learners at both Schools

Interview with the Soweto School learners

J.G.: What have you learnt in history of art so far?

L: We learnt about the history of the Egyptian people and we also learnt about other sculptures like the stone hedge and the Venus of Willendorf…we did both of them.

J.G.: Did you do that at the same time you did Egyptian art?

L: These were all in the same chapter. Everything was combined.

J.G.: Do you think it is important to learn the different histories of art and if so why?

L1: It is important because in art we do different things so if it means we have to do different histories of art, we have to.
L2: In art there are many different types of things…It is important to me because I get to learn the many differences between different arts.
L3: It is important because I want to know the roots…the roots of art.
L4: For me it is important because for to do art now, I have to know when it started.
L5: I have to know what art is all about

J.G.: What do you understand by culture and identity?

L1: Culture comes from the ancestors. We all have different ancestors so there are different ways of how to communicate with the ancestors. Cultures differ because of different ancestors.

L6: Culture is something that comes from the elders. I cannot claim that I know what culture is. I don't know. I get told by the elders what culture is…but I think it's from the ancestors.

J.G.: Is there a difference between culture and identity?

L1: There is a difference because in that culture you have to identify yourself by the clothes you wear. In India they wear the saris so that's how they identify themselves through the clothes you wear.
L2: It has to do with who you are as an individual;
L3: The language you speak…
L4: And who you are as an African...
L6: in many cultures people do different things. The Basotho wear blankets. It gives identity to their culture

J.G.: What do you understand about your self-identity and culture?

L1: I'm proud of who I am. I am a Tswana…an African woman so I respect this African culture so it's part of who I am and what I believe in.
L2: Well from my side I have two cultures. My mother is Tswana and my dad is Zulu. So I believe in both of them
L3: I'm Tswana and I'm proud of who I am. I can never be able to change to another culture. Actually I don't want to. I'm proud of what I am.
L5: I'm proud of who I am and what I believe in. I believe in the Tswana culture. My dad is a Ndebele but I'm not too close to him because my mother raised me till now so I can't say I believe in my father's culture. I believe in my mother's because she's the one who carried me.
L6: I believe in my culture and I believe in the ancestors. My father is a Lenyatsa. Those people who carry spears…they kill. They are like the Khoi Khois almost. (Learner does a greeting in the language).
L4: I am a Motswana and as I am a Motswana I am intending to know more about my culture so that I can be more proud.

J.G.: Is art learning relevant to your identity and/or culture?

L1: I think it is important because learning history of art is part of our traditions
L3: for instance the Ndebele people paint their houses in many colours and their traditional clothes are beautiful
L1: And art is important when it comes to part of sculptures. They use those clay pots…in art it's a sculpture. It's a 3 dimensional artwork so it is important to culture.
L5: yes art is important because it helps us to express our feelings through. Some people would make rough drawing and when you ask them what it means they would say that when they drew that they were angry. It illustrates your feelings.
L6: I have never liked art. Since Sub A I have never liked art. I only started liking it when I got to grade 10. That's when I realised that art is important. Art tells you everything…like culture and the drawing you make
L4: I think that in many ways art talks to you. It talks to you in many ways.

J.G.: Can you identify the diversity of culture and identity in your art classroom? If so, please give examples of the different cultural identities in your classroom?

L1: Our class is made up of mostly Tswanas. Some took their father's side and some took the mother tongue. Most of us took our mother tongue. It's a mixed class.
L6: I took my mother tongue.
L3: I also took my mother tongue.
L5: in our class there aren't many cultural things. The artists who draw, they paint illustrations of mountains, trees you see. There are no cultural things. They are few. In our class that is.
L1: Mostly they do natural things like trees. They are not based exactly on culture.

T: So you are answering the next question actually.

J.G.: Does what you learn in history of art assist in you in your practical work and if so, how?

L3: For me it does because when we talk about the history of art, we talk about how we draw- the way you should position what you draw. And then when we come to practical drawings you remember what the conversation in class and then you apply it in your drawings.
L5: The history of art helps us. If you believe that you can't paint and you see other people who can paint you ask yourself, "How can I not?" It helps you to increase your confidence.
L3: To add to that…The Khoisans used to engrave on the stones. So when we do the practical we remember the Khoisans…we can learn something from the Khoisans.

J.G.: Are you given the opportunity in the classroom to express your cultural identity in your practical work?

L1: So far we haven't got that opportunity as because we are doing still life. It helps us with the skills of drawing because some of us cannot draw.

J.G.: Does learning art encourage you in any way to understand your culture and the others' cultures around you and if so how?

L1: It does help because in art obviously you have to talk right? And when you talk you don't only talk about the culture that we are doing- we expand. We go into other cultures like India; like Zulus…So we get to understand their cultures when we talk in class.
L6: Many people take others' religions for granted. Yes it helps because I never used to like the Shangaan ones, the Tsongas. I thought hey, they are not South Africans. How can they live in South Africa? But when we are taught, I understand that they are people. They can do what we can

do. They can do more than us. Art help us to understand other cultures. If it wasn't for art people would think other people are inferior.

J.G.: Is this something you teach yourself or is this something that's in your art programme?

L1: It is something that we learn from each other because we all have different opinions in different things. So when someone gives an opinion you learn what you didn't know about what that person knows so it's something that comes from us when we talk.
L3: I also think it's the input of the teacher because the teacher is the one who comes up with the topic and then we start contributing.
L5: As you can see, in our class there are many different people who talk different languages. There are Tsongas, Zulus and Tswanas. If it wasn't for art we wouldn't respect one another because art helps us a lot. Yes art is good, very, very good. It helps us with art and culture. In my class there are Tswanas and Zulus. There are some Tswanas who don't like their culture. They like the Zulu culture. They don't respect their culture. They want the Zulu culture but they are Tswanas.
L1: Yes but when they get to know their culture better they go back they came from. I think culture and art interact. In art you talk about culture. You get to know where you come from- your roots. It also connects with art because in art you can draw the traditional instruments. That's how they interact.

Second Soweto School Group

J.G.: What have you learnt in history of art so far?

L: I've learnt about sculptures and how to create sculptures; how to create still life; how to draw and how to use tone using pencils. I also learnt how to use oil pastels

L2: I've learnt the difference between the artists of the renaissance and the artists of the mannerism and I've also learnt how they use paint and texture and how their paintings are different from those we do.
L3: I've learnt a lot about the artists from history of art. I've learnt a lot about all the things they use in their paintings and drawings like subject matter; how they arranged their drawings and paintings and how they sculpt.
L4: I've learnt about where art comes from and the media of art.
L5: I've learnt about how people use different expressions to pass messages across people. E.g. the renaissance artists and the Greek artists use different methods and materials to tell or pass their message across people like praising their gods and sculptures.
L6: I've learnt about how art has moved from one generation to another and different works that are being done by different artists in ancient times even today

J.G.: Do you think it is important to learn the different histories of art and if so why?

L1: I think it is important because maybe we could- even with today's art- look and learn how they used old fashion art and maybe it could be the same as today's art.
L2: It's good to learn what other people do so that we could compare with what we do in class. It helps us to know where art originated.

J.G.: What do you understand by culture and identity?

L1: I think culture is identity. It's a way of identifying a person. For instance in South Africa we have different cultures which mean different identities because people do things differently. E.g. religion
L2: culture is one way of identifying a person's origin and accepting her identity.
L3: Doing art has helped to know my identity- where I come from. Most of the ancient Tswanas, we fall under Khoi Khoi people. Most Khoi Khoi

people did art- rock art and they dance (that's a form of art) so it helped me to love art more because I know that my people were doing art. Not only Tswana people but also Sotho, Zulu, Ndebele- they paint. It helps me understand that art did not exist in Greece or Europe only. We also did art but as a form of expressing ourselves.
L4: Sometimes you are not aware that you are expressing your identity or where you come from. Even the Ndebele people, they paint their houses…
L5: especially those people from ancient times, they did not know that they were doing art.

J.G.: So you are saying that form of art was a form of expressing culture…

L1: Yes I think it's important because learning art teaches you things that other people don't know. It helps you think in a different way from other people. For you, if you are an artist, it is easy to analyse things that other people cannot analyse.
L2: And you learn things that are different. You have different thoughts that other people do not have.
L3: For instance someone can paint a picture, a picture of nothing really, just mixing colours. A person who does not know art will ask him/herself. He or she is going to see it as a mess but as an artist you can even write an essay about that picture.

J.G.: So you are saying, in other words, that learning art helps you to think better…

L3: Yes even though some people think art is useless, as they say, but as an artist you won't think that.
L5: You get to learn more things and you learn new things that other people don't realise that they are important.
L3: You could see something as useless but we'd see it as something significant.

L1: And most people can see a messy work of art buy you as an artist you can analyse.
L3: Like there by the fence…when people pass they think it's underwear but we actually did a person out of nothing but we see it as something beautiful.

J.G.: even the chairs this side…

L3: Yes even the chairs…it's actually a tree they actually think we had spare chairs of which we didn't know what to with them but we made something out of nothing because those chairs weren't doing anything.

J.G.: Is art learning relevant to your identity and/or culture?

L2: We come from different cultures because I'm Zulu and she's Tswana. Those are the things that differentiate us, e.g. culture, language, background.
L3: Last year we did a project based on identity. Some people did things that were related to their culture. In some cases you wouldn't know someone's culture but by looking at their project you would pick up that they are Ndebele. So culture does exist in our classroom.

J.G.: Does what you learn in history of art assist in you in your practical work and if so, how?

L1: It helps me. We've learnt how to paint so far. At home they wanted someone to paint a small portion on the wall and I was there and I do art so I took the paint.

J.G.: So are you talking about learning art and taking it out of the classroom? I want to know about how history of art helps you with your practical work.

L4: It has helped us to use tone in our drawings. We learnt from history of art how those artists used tone and colour. Those artists were quite better than the artists in South Africa.

J.G.: Who are "they" when you say "they" were better than South Africans?

L4: Italians…People from Greece because art I think started in Greece and Egypt.

J.G.: Do you agree (to everyone)

Learners: Yes we agree.
L2: Art has helped us a lot because when we refer to history of art, you take some mistakes that some of the artists did and you correct from there.

J.G.: Are you given the opportunity in the classroom to express your cultural identity in your practical work?

L1: Yes. They have given us opportunities. Sir gave us blank paper and said we must draw anything that we want to draw and then we started to draw whatever feelings we had.
L3: We learn about our classmates' culture so that helps us and begins to help us express our own culture through practical and verbal activities.

J.G.: Does learning art encourage you in any way to understand your culture and the others' cultures around you and if so how?

L3: That is what I was saying that through reading about history of art you get to learn about other people's cultures- where they come from; how they expressed their feelings; and how they praise their gods.

J.G.: So does that help you to understand your culture and the cultures of others in the classroom?

Learners: Yes

J.G.: So you move away from the culture that you are focusing on in the classroom to your own cultures?

Learners: We compare what Jacobus Pontormo and them did in those times were doing sculptures (because I mean they were famous isn't it?) But us, we were doing rock art and painting our huts. So we compare what those ancient outsider people did with what we did. That helps us, as the Ndebele and Khoi Khois, understand that we were doing rock art, painting huts and dancing as a form of art without knowing it.

J.G.: Can you compare what you did in the European art section with what you did in the African art section?

L: We didn't do African art at all.

J.G.: So how do you feel about that?

L3: The curriculum is more European because most of the time we talk about countries from Europe. We never talk about artists from Africa. But there was a time when Sir took us to Pretoria to see some South African art so that we could compare but the curriculum it's 60% European.
L3: It will balance soon as we have seen some Marlene Dumas exhibition.

J.G.: Do you think it is important to visit exhibitions and see contemporary works?
L1: Going to exhibitions exposes us to different artists doing different art.
L2: You get to explore a lot

L4: You get to learn about the artists that exist right now…not those who existed a long time ago.
L5: It's important to learn about South African artists in order to know more about what our art is rather than artists from other countries and in order to know what art means to South Africans.
L3: And again you get to learn about legends of today. You don't learn about legends of the past only. You can see that there are people who do art today,
J.G.: a short conclusion- Yes and that also teaches you that African art is not only primitive or ritualistic. A lot of the times when you study African art you only see the "primitive" side of it so I think it's important to look at contemporary African art so that we can learn that African art moves forward, that it is not static.

Interview with the Suburban School Learners

J.G.: What have you learnt in history of art so far?

L1: Well it's pretty interesting to learn what happened back in the days. Some odd stuff…some really odd stuff
L2: I learnt that all this history of Roman art and Greek art…Their art is kind of extinct. From the Greek, it moved down to the Roman which is quite similar…that's what I learnt
L3: I've learnt that history of art can help you do thing in better ways without things breaking quicker.
L4: I learnt about the Greek buildings, Romanesque buildings…pretty much from prehistoric art up to modern art.
L5: We learnt Greek art and Roman art.

J.G.: Do you think it is important to learn the different histories of art and if so why?

L1: I think you can see the different cultures that people had and why they did particular art
L2: I think yes because you learn different cultures and what colours they used and you can use it in your own work so you move away from the paper and board canvas, whatever they call it.
L3: You can use their art to make your own art. So you make new art.
L4: You use their technique to improve your own. You learn their belief systems. The Greeks had their sculptures of gods.

J.G.: What do you understand by culture and identity?

L1: Culture is how people act and what gives them motivation to do what they do.
L2: The way of life…how different people live their life; how they go by everyday… what they do and what they enjoy.

L3: hobbies, talent, the food they eat, and the clothes they wear
L4: Culture and Identity…? I think culture is an everyday thing. Eventually it becomes normal- it's the way you live. I think identity is partly formed by your culture so they are both…they are close…they are related. I am Xhosa. By Xhosa you would know that I have a good language; I am good looking; I am a politician; I am outspoken so that's what they assume. The Basotho will say something else.
L5: Culture is what makes you unique from other people and your identity is formed by what you took from your culture.
J.G.: And what culture are you?
L5: I am Sudanese Bagare. Bagares are Masaris.

J.G.: What do you understand about your self-identity and culture?

L1: Well nowadays people all of us don't really have a specific culture. We normally just do what we do and whatever we enjoy we just carry on doing. So we don't have a specific set culture. We just do what we enjoy.
J.G.: Is that how you feel about your self-identity?

L1: Yes, I don't really have a particular culture. I just do what I enjoy.
L4: I feel that there is a culture now but the culture that is there is like a movement that is moving throughout the whole of this country…like if you see one guy with a Karrimor bag then everybody is going to have that Karrimor bag. If this guy likes partying then other people will like partying. I try to move away from that because I acknowledge myself as an individual and therefore I choose to stand out.
L2: I think that everyone is influenced by the mass media like music and television and different products. Like the Karrimor bag…someone sees someone with that they think "wow I need to get one of those". And everyone sort of moves around one person.

J.G.: So you are inspired by contemporary culture, mass media, globalism…

L2: Not really but most people in general
J.G.: And you?
L2: I like to think about what I want to do and if everyone else does not like it then I don't mind.
L5: I'm just forced to be different from everyone else.

J.G.: why is that so?

L5: Because South Africans like to look the same as each other. As far as I can see it, they come around here and they see an American accent, different features…they look at my hair and say "you are not black" but then South African people don't really know what black is. Black is more skin colour than (inaudible).
L4: No, No, No. I don't think that if is your skin colour is dark it makes you black. I think being black is knowing where you come from and having your identity. If you are Xhosa then you will know where you come from and you will know your roots and even if you speak your English like I speak my English- this perfect, this British English…it does not mean that I am a coconut. I don't think "black" is the colour of your skin. I think "black" is knowing where you come from" and that's what helps you to know where you are going.
L5: That's exactly what I'm talking about. He says Black is Xhosa right? So that means to know where you come from you have to come from South Africa. That's why no one thinks I'm black. People are just ignorant of everything.

J.G.: Is art learning relevant to your identity and/or culture?
L1: Yes. It's like a way to express yourself and how you feel and how you think about things.
L5: Not really. No. You draw and stuff but that won't change who you are

L6: I think you can create your own culture with art because you can make your own sort of art or whatever, from that you can develop a way of life.
L3: Basically its' a way to express yourself- through music. Yes, pretty much.
Learners: yes! There is Sudanese, Xhosa, Ghanaian and "Japanese"

J.G.: Does what you learn in history of art assist in you in your practical work and if so, how?

L1: You just copy what they do. If you think you have something interesting, you take something here and you take something there and then no one will see it's the same thing.

J.G.: Like a cut and paste situation?

L1: …And make your own unique…
L3: You just see what they did right and then you do it and if they did something wrong then you'd know what not to do.

J.G.: Are you given the opportunity in the classroom to express your cultural identity in your practical work?

L2: Yes. For the mask project, we weren't given a specific topic. We could do whatever we liked.
J.G.: So what came out of that?
L2: People just did what they felt they could do and what they thought would look good.

J.G.: Does learning art encourage you in any way to understand your culture and the others' cultures around you and if so how?

L1: I think by just looking at Jason* for instance, the way he enjoys his art is very different to the way I enjoy art. His type of art is the complete opposite to what I enjoy.
J.G.: Is it relevant to his culture?
L1: I don't think so. I think he just does what he enjoys and I do what I enjoy. I don't think my culture plays any part in my art.
L2: Well sometimes it could be difficult like me for instance I like learning about different cultures. But when you talk to someone about their culture and try to learn about it, they think you are ignorant. Sometimes it could be difficult to learn about other cultures.
J.G.: Ok but does learning art encourage you to start understanding one another?
Learners: Yes, No.

J.G.: No? Why not?

L5: I see no relevance between Xhosa people and Greek art.
J.G.: but haven't you studied any African art?
L5: Oh yes. That helps yes.
J.G.: Elaborate on that. Was there any relevance between Xhosa Lwazi* and the African masks?
L3: No, it helps you more with Zimbabwe but nothing more to help you learn about Lwazi*. We learn about other people but not about him.

J.G.: But does it sort of begin to help you understanding critically the others' cultures?

L6: I think just by looking at someone's art you can sort of find something out about them. Say if someone makes this crazy mask, you could probably assume that he is a very violent person or rather extraordinary.

J.G.: Okay, last term you started with African mask and then you moved into Greek and Roman art so I want you to talk about those

two lessons by maybe comparing them. Just talk about the African art lesson in conjunction with the Roman and Greek art.

L2: I preferred the Greek and Roman art because the African art was more primitive and they use it for ritual purposes instead of using for the enjoyment of the art.
L1: I don't think there is such a big difference like everyone actually thinks. I think by the few pictures that I have seen I do see some similarities between the masks…some war masks. There are not much different to some Greek masks…the ones I've seen before.

J.G.: Which lesson did you prefer?

L1: I have to say European because every day you experience European history…movies so it's always going to be more interest in European because there is more publicity on it.
L2: It's quite easy to fall asleep in a history of art lesson.
L4: We probably covered African art in a lesson and the rest of the time we were doing European art and seeing naked people and it's just hard to stay awake during those times. L4: But I think that it's kind of similar. Although African art moved…it had movement and European art is just meant to stick on the wall and you just watch it and you're quiet and all of that.
L1: African art has a use and Greek art is meant to stay there and last for a long time. With European art, your grandchildren will say my grandfather did this and it's really nice. African art…the wood is going to rot. It's non-volatile than European art.

J.G.: Can you talk about how you felt about using only one lesson to cover African art and the rest for European art?

L4: it bothered me

J.G.: Why?

L4: Because we're African. As white as we are, as black as we are, we're still African. So we should've focused on that first and then moved on to Europe.
L3: Yes but most of us come from Europe. I'm Portuguese. Both my parents are Portuguese. With European, I'm always at home. It's in my face all the time.
L4: I argue differently. We need more African art.

J.G.: okay, it's quite interesting because African art I not just primitive. It's not static. It actually moves. What you guys have been looking at is sort of what is termed "primitive" art. There are contemporary African artists who make contemporary African art and that has nothing to do with primitivism. If you guys had visited a show like the Jo'burg Art Fair, you would have seen a whole range of contemporary African art and you would have been exposed to a whole lot of contemporary artists that have moved away from primitive notions and what is termed "township" art that most black artists were making in the past during the apartheid era. They were restricted to township art. But African art is not just primitive, it moves and that's what my project is about- to start encouraging a multicultural art curriculum- to start encouraging a curriculum that critically starts to be a very dynamic curriculum.

L6: I think the reason we spend more time on European art is because you have to look at it longer because it's static and you have to sort of try to appreciate it whereas with African art…it's moving and back then it wasn't always in your face like that. You didn't get a chance to properly see it and appreciate it properly.

J.G.: So European art is meant for appreciation
L6: Yes, more for appreciation, dwelling on, and understanding.