

---

## *Chapter Two :*

### **LITERATURE REVIEW: KEY CONCEPTS**

“...researchers need clear unambiguous definitions of concepts to develop sound explanations”.  
(Neuman, 2000, p. 158)

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The theoretical framework of this research is situated in the field of teaching and cultural diversity. In order to place the research questions and findings in the context of international and local research and debate on cultural diversity in education, I present a critical review of the literature in two chapters. This chapter discusses concepts central to the investigation. The next chapter looks specifically at multicultural and anti-racist education and related issues. I begin this chapter with the conceptual nature of the framework – an in-depth discussion of culture – which is a salient feature of this study. I then proceed to a brief analysis of other concepts, such as race, racism, ethnicity and related concepts.

#### **2.2 Culture**

The word “culture” has a variety of connotations in general use and is a complex and dynamic term. A common definition of the concept of culture is that it comprises an individual’s understanding of the characteristics of his or her society or sub-group within that society, as well as the values, beliefs and ideas relating to acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Garcia, 1994).

A number of definitions of culture attempt to encompass the totality of human achievement, dispositions and capabilities. Garcia (1994) claims that the majority of anthropologists consider culture to be a phenomenon that is learned and transmitted from one generation to another. Culture is thus not inborn but is learned by an individual born into a particular culture. Parents and siblings teach culture to a child and so the process of socialisation begins. Culture, according to Garcia (1994), is not an abstraction, nor is it an enigma.

---

Anthropologists make two crucial distinctions between ideal and real culture and the distinction between implicit and explicit culture (Hernandez, 1989). “Ideal culture” refers to what individuals believe and how they should behave, while “real culture” refers to how individuals actually behave in specific situations. Group cultural traits become stereotyped in certain cases. However, real culture need not necessarily become stereotypical. Anthropologists make these distinctions with reference to behaviour, but culture is more than just behaviour (Hernandez, 1989; Garcia, 1994; Troyna, 1994).

Reference is made by Hernandez (1989) to the importance of understanding that some elements of culture operate at a conscious level of awareness whereas others do not. **“Implicit culture”**, the kind that operates on a conscious level, is not easily observable or recognisable as it includes elements such as those values, attitudes, fears, assumptions and religious beliefs that are taken for granted. Ideal culture and implicit culture bear a close resemblance as both can be difficult to observe and are more personal, whereas real culture and explicit culture could be categorised together since both are visible. Explicit culture is seen in and describable through dress, speech, tools and concrete behaviour (Hernandez, 1989; Gillborn, 1990; Troyna, 1994).

Another dimension to most definitions of culture is the notion that culture is something that a group shares in common, and that in order for behaviours and ideas to be considered cultural they must be shared. Garcia (1994) claims that this notion of culture is useful only for anthropological comparisons of societies and sub-groups within societies because the basic assumptions are that of uniformity in the cultural attributes of the individual members.

---

Anthropological studies tend to focus upon some kind of group. Anthropologists do not always acknowledge individual differences in behaviour by members of all societies. Thus, anthropologist, Ralph Linton, defines culture as:

The sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses and patterns of habitual behaviour which the members of a society have acquired through instruction or imitation and which they share to a greater or lesser degree.

(In Garcia, 1994, p. 53)

Despite the fact that not every individual in the group may share learned behavioural habits, culture is defined by the commonality of attributes.

Garcia (1994) argues that while some emphasis on shared traits is basic to any conceptual understanding of the role of culture in education, this emphasis leaves very little room for the recognition of the individuality of each student within the framework of the concept of culture. Instead, he suggests that using the culture concept as a basis for theories of education might be appropriate if the object is to educate and perhaps re-educate. Banks (1997) concurs with this notion that culture is shared and he refers to culture as the ideation, symbols, behaviour, values and beliefs that are shared by human groups and that may be defined as a survival programme of specific groups (Bullivant, 1979; Geertz, 1973).

Thompson (1990) distinguishes four conceptions of culture: classical, descriptive, symbolic and structural. The “classical conception of culture” which dates back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, referred to “intellectual or spiritual development (p. 123). Subsequently, the emergence of anthropology in the late nineteenth century gave rise to the two anthropological conceptions of culture, which Thompson (1990) categorises as “descriptive” and “symbolic” (p. 129). According to the descriptive conception, culture consists of:

...the array of beliefs, customs, ideas and values, as well as the material artefacts, objects and instruments, which are acquired by individuals as members of the group or society.

(Thompson, 1990, p. 129)

---

On the symbolic conception, developed by Geertz (1973), the proper study of culture requires an interpretation of the symbolic meaning of artifacts and practices. While Thompson (1990) accepts the symbolic conception as a point of departure for the study of culture, he identifies two shortcomings in Geertz's theory. Firstly the theory pays insufficient attention to issues of power and social conflict. Secondly the theory ignores the structured social contexts of cultural production, transmission and reception. Thompson's structural conception is intended to overcome these weaknesses. On this conception, according to Thompson (1990), culture is understood as a set of "symbolic forms in structured context" and cultural analysis "may be construed as the study of meaningful constitutions and social contextualization of symbolic forms" (p 123).

While culture may be used as a powerful analytical tool in the social sciences, it may also be used to reinforce existing power structures (see for example, Kanpol and McAllen, 1995). Thompson's (1990) structural conception of culture aims to retain its analytical force but with full attention to the structures of power and how these enter into cultural production. For Thompson social institutions and fields of interaction are structured "by relatively stable asymmetries and differentials in terms of distribution of access to resources of various kinds, power, opportunities and life chances" (Thompson, 1990, p. 159).

This analysis according to Thompson (1990) provides a backdrop against which the nature of the exercise of power may be considered. He develops an analytical framework for considering the exercise of power at different levels in the production, transmission and reception of symbolic forms that constitute culture. At the level of institutions, power may be seen as the capacity enabling and empowering certain individuals to make decisions, pursue goals or achieve success. These individuals are empowered to such an extent that if they had not been given the capacity by the institution they would not have been able to accomplish their aims. However, these individuals who have been empowered in this manner may encounter conflict in relationships. "When relationships of conflict occur, and power is unevenly distributed, then the relationship may be described as one of domination" (Thompson, 1990, p. 151).

South Africa with its asymmetrical history of relationships of power has excluded and disempowered groups of individuals. An empowered minority dominated a significant disempowered majority in South Africa for over forty-five years. Many black (generic) South Africans perceive culture as a political tool used to oppress and marginalise the disadvantaged (Moore, 1994). In the previous dispensation an individuals' culture played an important role. The culture of the rulers of South Africa was imposed upon

---

the disempowered individuals, whereas the cultures of those subjugated individuals were negated. Pupils from these historically disempowered groups are now part of the student population at historically white former Model C schools, where their cultures are perceived to impact significantly on their academic performance and behaviour.

The notion of cultural deprivation still exists in historically white former Model C schools and the cultures of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are ignored, and their languages and heritages count for little. It is necessary to realise that irrespective of race, religion or social status each individual is a culturally whole person and it is necessary to know how to understand the cultural background of the pupils in order that this knowledge be used productively in the teaching and learning processes (Garcia, 1994). Of paramount importance to this study was the observation of classrooms in order to detect the role of culture and how it affected teacher-pupil interaction.

**“Cultural relativism”** was developed by anthropologists as a conceptual approach to understanding other cultures without judging them from an ethnocentric, normative perspective. A recommendation is that to teach in a multicultural society such as South Africa, one should assume the position that all cultures are to be examined relatively. Instead of viewing the value of another culture from the perspective of his or her own culture, a teacher in a diverse cultural society should develop the ability to see how other cultural groups perceive their social reality. This is not an easy task as many of us are steeped in ethnocentrism. Cultural relativism may be used by some to justify racial discrimination or gender-role stereotyping in their classes. Another recommendation is that cultural relativism be used by teachers as a conceptual tool to understand other cultures or groups rather than as a rationalisation to place limits on their students’ life options and opportunities (Garcia, 1991).

Any work focusing on culture and teaching faces innumerable expectations that inevitably cannot be met, as well as controversies that cannot be solved. Beginning with the simple assumption that culture involves a set of meanings and meaning systems created and attached to their everyday lives by people, and that teaching requires the facilitation and articulation of meaning systems of students, an enormous task lies ahead for teachers. One of the questions arising from the above mentioned assumption is the question of whose culture will be facilitated by the teachers in these racially integrated schools in South Africa.

---

### 2.3 Ethnicity

Ethnicity is closely aligned to culture. Ethnicity, according to Gillborn (1995), emphasises a sense of difference which could occur through the interaction of particular (ethnic) groups with what he terms non-members. The real differences he claims are nothing more (or less) than identity markers for members belonging to those groups. He further claims that ethnicity concerns the sense and expression of ethnic difference. Foster (1990) states that ethnicity refers to a group's sharing a similar culture and cultural identity.

Ethnicity is a dynamic and complex concept which refers to how member of a group perceive themselves and how others perceive them (Hernandez, 1989). Ethnicity is defined on the basis of national origin, religion and/or race (Gordon, 1964 in Hernandez, 1989). Hernandez's reference to Gordon's definition of ethnic group highlights the importance of race:

Some individuals may have two or more ethnic identities, as the extent to which an individual identifies with a group varies considerably (Hernandez, 1989). In cases where ethnic identification is strong, group values of "peoplehood" are maintained and manifested in individuals. In Banks's (1994) opinion most definitions of ethnicity focus upon the culture and race of immigrants and immigrant descendant groups. Hernandez (1989) refers to Isajiw's (1974, in Hernandez, 1989) study which found that culture was the second most frequently mentioned attribute of ethnicity, and race and physical characteristics was the fourth. Other frequently occurring attributes included common national or geographic origin, religion, language, and sense of "peoplehood", common values, separate institutions and minority or subordinate status.

When I use the term 'ethnic' I shall mean by it any group which is defined or set off by race, religion, or national origin, or some combination of these categories. However, all these categories have a common social psychological referent in that all of them serve to create, through historical circumstances, a sense of 'peoplehood'.

(Gordon, 1964, pp. 27-28 in Hernandez, 1989)

In his later publications, Banks (1997) asserts that ethnicity as a category of analysis reveals the central traditions, perspectives, values and choices that shape people's lives as well as their position in society. He believes that ethnicity, together with cultural and historical heritage, shapes one's perception of race and racism, sex and sexism, class and classism. Banks views ethnicity from the perspective of power and states that the elements of power or the lack of power have much to do with the benefits or deficits of race and

---

ethnicity. In this regard he points out that values which are sustaining in an ethnic group may become deficits when interacting with the majority or dominant group in society. Alternatively, when an individual becomes secure in his or her ethnic identity, deficits of powerlessness and the moves to various levels of success (access to limited power) is possible to be negotiated through variations on those strengths. Kinship networks are believed to be of primary importance to people of colour for cultural reasons and survival (Banks and Mc Gee Banks 1997).

Banks and Mc Gee Banks's (1997) view of ethnicity from a perspective of power was evident during the apartheid era, where power was in the hands of a minority that used difference to justify segregation and oppression. Schools were segregated along ethnic lines. A discussion of ethnicity in this study is imperative so that the role that ethnicity plays in teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction in culturally diverse classrooms can be examined.

## **2.4 Race**

There is a close correlation between race, culture and ethnicity. Gillborn (1995) asserts that race is a highly political matter, a key educational issue and perhaps one of the most controversial aspects of the current educational debate. Troyna (1993) rejects the view that race is a primitive objective category that is resistant to change. Race, he insists, is a socially constructed ideological category, which has to be understood historically. Banks and McGee Banks (1997) concur with Troyna (1993) and point out that the criteria for the determination of the characteristics of race may differ from one culture to another.

Despite extensive research, scientists have been unable to provide biological evidence particular to any one group of people in the world (Institute of Race Relations, 1982). The only divisive biological factor according to the Institute of Race Relations is skin colour, and this should not be seen as a social differentiation.

The concept of race in apartheid South Africa implied the classification of people into categories based on physical features. The term "race" in South Africa implied the classification of people into racial groups and was sometimes conflated or confused with culture. This was evident during the apartheid era, where racial classification dictated which school a child attended, and is significant for this study in its investigation of teaching and learning in historically white former Model C schools. Race remains a

---

contentious issue in South Africa and has given rise to a number of widely publicized, racially motivated clashes in schools.

Like ethnicity race may be seen as a category of social analysis since it reveals the central prejudices, perceptions, and stereotypes that shape people's lives, as well as their positions in society (Banks and McGee Banks, 1997). An awareness of race among people is underpinned by the concept of ethnicity and cultural diversity together with historical heritage. Power plays an important role and the elements of power or the lack of power are closely related to race. The dominant society is in a position of power as was the case during the apartheid era where the black (generic) races were powerless.

#### 2.4.1 Racism

Whereas Brandt (1986) sees "racialism" as overt acts of racial aggression stemming from racial hatred and a belief in racial superiority, he argues that racism refers to a complex network of factors. These factors try to justify and guarantee the exclusion of racially defined oppressed groups from access to the finest resources in society, as was the case in South Africa. Brandt (1986) points out that power is at the base of racism and identifies the powerlessness of the oppressed groups.

To add to Brandt's (1986) argument on racism, Garcia (1993) claims that racism has served an economic function for white groups who have benefited from the exploitation of and the discrimination against racial minority groups. The scenario differs in South Africa, however, where the disadvantaged majority were discriminated against and exploited by the powerful white minority. Kuper (1974, in Brandt, 1986) refers to South Africa, to demonstrate the fact that the privileges of whites derived from their political power prior to the 1994 elections and was used to oppress blacks. In Todd's (1991) discussions of the form and effects of racism three levels of analysis are identified:

**Individual** – which is concerned with actions and attitudes involving the negative evaluation of people on the basis of some assumed biological characteristics such as skin colour;

**Institutional** – which is concerned with routine procedures and practices and the ways in which they can exclude or disadvantage people;

**Structural** – which is concerned with the broader, historically embedded patterns of social inequality in society with reference to, for example, work housing or education.

(Todd, 1991, p. 81)

These levels do not work in isolation but are interconnected.

---

#### 2.4.2 Institutional and Popular Racism

Gillborn (1990) distinguishes between two types of racism, **“popular racism”** and **“institutional racism”**. The former he claims is racism in its crudest form, born out of the belief that races are not equal or similar; this bears a close resemblance to Todd’s (1991) **“individual racism”**. There is a shared opinion among researchers that the term “popular racism” subsumes both belief and practice and stems from the notion that racial or ethnic groups are inherently, morally, culturally or intellectually inferior to those in power (Gillborn, 1995; Kanpol & Mc Laren, 1994; Troyna, 1993; Foster, 1990).

**“Institutional racism”** refers to the manipulations to exclude black people from chances in a society (Todd, 1991). Both “popular racism” and “institutional racism” have underpinned the apartheid education system, providing an unequal education for the various race groups. The current racial conflicts within open schools may be traced back to these two forms of racism.

New expressions of racism may go unrecognised as racism as they are masked by discourses of “nationhood, patriotism and nationalism” (Gilroy, 1987). The new racism distances itself from the ideas of “biological inferiority and superiority” by engaging in a discourse of nationhood that is distinguished by a claimed community of cultural unity. This form of racism excludes minority cultures. Since black pupils in historically white schools in South Africa are the minority culture, teachers unsuspectingly use this form of racism.

“Institutional racism” is more abstruse than “popular racism”. It happens when procedures and practices perhaps date from a time when most of the population was white and Anglo-Saxon, so the population operates in such a way as to exclude minorities. In the UK if a school provides all its information about uniform grants in English only, the effect is to keep that information from parents literate in other languages. If a school in a predominantly white area recruits new staff from the existing teachers in the white area, their associates, and students from local colleges, black people will not even hear of vacancies or even get a chance to apply for them. Neither of these are acts that intend disadvantaging a particular group. They are simply the continuation of routine practices originally devised under different circumstances. Nevertheless, the ultimate effect of these practices is to disadvantage a particular group (Cole, 1990, p. 32). The practice of excluding people from diverse racial backgrounds is evident in most of the historically white former Model C schools where the staff is predominantly white and not representative of the school population.

---

As prejudice is often associated with racism, it is pertinent to examine the conditions that give rise to and reinforce prejudice.

## 2.5 Prejudice

The word “prejudice” can refer to favourable or unfavourable attitudes, feelings, and beliefs that were constructed with a lack of prior knowledge, understanding and reason. Prejudice is underpinned by irrationality, and a lack of evidence to support conflicting perceptions. As a result of socialisation processes individuals generally acquire a range of prejudices.

Prejudice has been identified as one of the major obstacles to true multicultural education. *We* as opposed to *they* is common when individuals from a particular society or group see others from a frame of reference that is ethnocentric or racially biased. The discourse of “them and us” is informed by a view of human nature that contends that human beings prefer homogeneity – that is being with their ‘own kind’ - and consequently are antagonistic to other groups, displaying a sense of territoriality (Troyna, 1993). Ranking and generalisations are characteristic of ethnocentrism, for example, there are generalisations that Latin people are passionate, while Scots are parsimonious and blacks are outstanding athletes, the stronger the feeling for the group (the group affiliation factor) the greater the chance of prejudice towards other groups.

Although prejudices are essentially established as negative, they may also be positive. In the case of South Africa positive prejudice exists in favour of mainstream American culture because of the deluge of American television programmes as well as media coverage from America. Prejudice consists of both intellectual and affective components and once these components are translated into behaviour their effects become visible. Whether positive or negative, it has been found that a prejudicial attitude is firmly established in an individual by the age of seven, a result of learned behaviour and attitudes. When these prejudiced attitudes and behaviour are firmly rooted there is an obvious reluctance on the part of the individual to change. It has been established by a number of researchers that prejudice is most intense among those whose economic and social status is threatened (Van Scotter et al, 1985, pp. 203-211).

Prejudice may lead to individuals and groups avoiding each other, or it may escalate to the level of denial or deprivation. A dominant group may deprive another group of citizenship, or land ownership, or other

---

civil liberties (as was the case in South Africa). In this way, prejudice can escalate into discrimination against racial or ethnic groups and may become institutionalised as segregation; that is, legalised discrimination. Apartheid was the brainchild of prejudiced individuals, and caused considerable problems in society, education and the South African nation. One can distinguish forms of voluntary segregation as well, where people choose to be among people of their 'own kind', sharing a sense of homogeneity. I encountered evidence of this in Birmingham in the UK. Asians live in an area called Moseley and West Indians live in Handsworth. In London there is a large Asian population in Southall. Since the first South African democratic elections all white suburbs have become open and if one considers the area where the research was conducted, certain areas have a large number of Indians while the residents of another area are predominantly African. This is evidence of people choosing homogeneity wanting to live among people who share the same culture, however, this may be interpreted as prejudice by some.

Any discussion of prejudice should be accompanied by a discussion of discrimination. Discrimination can become violent, and ultimately it may lead to extermination and genocide. Examples are observed in the genocide that took place in Nazi Germany during World War 11 and the genocide of American Indians in the USA in the previous century. Gillborn (1995) states that prejudice and discrimination are defined in terms of a reaction to difference, while racism is ignored by Education for Citizenship in the UK, which he finds to be weak and a "liberal façade". In schools discrimination can be dangerous, as was evidenced by an incident at Burnage High in Manchester where a fourteen-year-old white boy stabbed an Asian boy to death (Troyna, 1995).

In order to understand prejudice and discrimination in the classroom it is necessary to examine the conditions that reinforce both prejudice and discrimination. Generally, these are low expectations of minority or marginalised pupils by teachers. Because of a lack of understanding of other cultures and ethnocentricity, teachers have preconceived ideas about cultures other than their own.

### **2.5.1 The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy**

Teachers make predictions or prophecies about the expected behaviour of pupils on the basis of the group to which the pupils belong. For example, teachers who interpret the behaviour of pupils from low-income working class backgrounds as an indication of lack of motivation and interest may see them as unrestrained and difficult to control. Other factors may include pupils' posture, walk, hairstyle, and use of slang and manner of speech as evidence of lack of motivation. In the UK a number of studies were

---

conducted into teachers' expectations of pupils, and evidence proved that pupils tend to perform as well or as poorly as their teachers expect them to. Teachers' predictions about individual pupils or a group of pupils have a direct impact on pupils, whether it is intentionally or unintentionally communicated to them. These predictions influence the behaviour of the pupils (Meighan, 1994).

### **2.5.2 Labelling Theory**

The expectations of teachers and the self-fulfilling prophecy are derived from a larger perceived assumption known as the "labelling theory", which is located in the fields of criminology and sociology relating to deviant behaviour. Applied to education this theory is concerned with the negative definitions given to individual pupils whose behaviour is seen to deviate from expected classroom behaviour. A pupil who breaks a rule may be labelled "deviant". The label defines the pupil, and future actions by the pupil are interpreted in terms of the label, e.g. a troublemaker, a moron, a clown, a problem child. If the label sticks, and research by Cicourel and Kitsuse (in Haralambos, 1989; Meighan, 1994) indicates that it often does, some pupils may be disciplined for behaviour that is overlooked among *good* pupils. In this way a deviant subculture may develop within a school. Group members are often found in lower-level classes where they disrupt lessons, are cheeky to teachers, fail to hand in homework, cheat and play truant. Because this behaviour brings prestige to the "deviant" pupils in the eyes of their peers and creates attention, it reinforces the effect of the labelling process.

The labelling theory is an influential factor and one that is most difficult to control. Teachers and administrators combine to create a school environment where the dominant attitudes of the community are reflected. Often teachers' behaviour and attitudes tell pupils that some pupils are better than others because of their skin colour, religion or ethnic origin. This was evident in all three schools where this study was conducted. The appointment of more teachers of race groups other than white may provide pupils of different race groups/cultures with concrete evidence that there are role models for pupils from these diverse racial and cultural backgrounds.

Closely related to the self-fulfilling prophecy and labelling theory is the grouping of pupils from cultures other than the dominant culture. Some proponents of interaction have identified a relationship between perceived ability and social class with regard to the grouping of pupils of diverse cultures and the courses that they are offered. Researchers have detected a tendency for pupils from higher-status sub-cultures to be placed in the A stream and to be taught higher-grade knowledge. Teachers in the UK during the 1970s

---

and 1980s were known to modify their methods and instructional material depending on the group they were teaching, allowing pupils in the lower-grade courses to be noisy and to do less work, effectively denying low-status pupils access to knowledge deemed necessary for educational success (Haralambos, 1989).

School counsellors in the UK during the period between 1970 and the early 1980s were more likely to perceive pupils from middle- and upper-class origins as natural college and university candidates. The classification of pupils' ability and potential was influenced by, among other things, pupils' appearance, manner and attitude, assessment of parents and reports from teachers. These pupils were described as serious, personable and well rounded, and with leadership potential. This research conducted by Cicourel and Kitsuse (in Haralambos, 1989, p. 210) concluded that school counsellors did not uphold the ideal of equal access to educational opportunities for those of equal ability. A similar situation prevails in many of the former Model C schools where African learners are encouraged to take non-academic or practical subjects. For fear of being accused of being prejudiced, some teachers prefer to ignore the colour of their pupils and opt for a colour-blind approach to teaching.

### **2.5.3 The Colour-blind Approach**

Many teachers opt for the colour-blind approach when teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. Rist (1974, in Banks and Mc Gee Banks 1997) defines the colour-blind perspective as a point of view that perceives racial and ethnic group membership as immaterial to the manner in which individuals are treated. It is believed that if attention is paid to minority group members this could lead either to discrimination against the minority group or favouritism towards the minority group. This colour-blind approach is prevalent in both the USA and the UK and may, in certain instances, encourage discrimination against minority group members. Teachers believe that by adopting a colour-blind approach they are treating pupils equally. However, pupils from minority groups are discriminated against, in some instances, because pupils from the dominant group follow the example of the teacher whom they perceive to be ignoring the minority pupils.

One of the main reasons for teachers adopting the colour-blind approach is to avoid dissention and conflict. The adoption of colour-blind policies is perceived as useful in achieving the goal of avoiding conflict. The rationale behind implementing colour-blind policies in schools is the belief that it could assist towards protecting the institution and management from being accused of discrimination. The

---

colour-blind approach to multicultural classrooms is considered to be a fair approach, which it is not. Banks and Mc Gee Banks (1997) cite an example from research conducted in the USA. Teachers who were questioned about the disparity in the numbers of suspensions of white pupils and black pupils responded that because they subscribed to the colour-blind approach they had not noticed that the number of black pupils suspended far exceeded that of white pupils. Teachers confirmed their commitment to the colour-blind approach and that the colour-blind perspective actually tends to make life easier for the teachers while it increased their freedom of action (Banks and McGee Banks, 1997).

#### **2.5.4 The Use of Culturally Biased Materials**

Textbooks and other materials may be selected that include no information or only warped information about minority groups and their contributions (or lack of them) to mainstream culture. Very often, the dominant groups in society are given the power to define what counts as knowledge for inclusion in the curriculum, and in textbooks. If classroom knowledge is based largely on the knowledge of dominant groups, it is argued that schooling will automatically discriminate against pupils from marginalised groups (Haralambos, 1989).

During the late 1970s and early 1980s the curriculum in the UK failed to acknowledge the contributions of the minorities. A severely damaging message communicated by the curriculum was that the minority groups were invisible. Their history was either omitted from the curriculum or included in a superficial and stereotypical manner. In South Africa the obverse was the case, as the contributions of the majority were totally negated. History dealt specifically with White contributions but totally ignored African contributions to the history of South Africa. However, since the paradigm shift from a content-based to an outcomes-based curriculum, there has been a marked move towards including culturally relevant material in the lower grades up to Grade 7.

#### **2.5.5 Linguistic Insecurity**

Teachers should be sensitive to the special problems that pupils from marginalised groups face as a result of a monolingual school environment, where one language is the medium of instruction. Teachers, who do not recognise the particular linguistic problems of speakers of other languages, may conclude that such pupils are academically deficient. The negative impact of low teacher expectations of academic performance of pupils on the relationship of such teachers with their pupils might contribute towards pupils being inarticulate. Because of some pupils' inadequate command of the medium of instruction and

---

the teacher's low expectations some pupils refuse to speak or are reluctant to speak in class. Once again, cultural traits may reinforce this reluctance to speak (Du Toit, 1999).

### **2.5.6 Deficit Theory**

The notion that prevailed in the USA and the UK during the 1960s and 1970s was that black pupils entered school with deficits, as a consequence of their family background and low socio-economic circumstances. This has been referred to as the "deficit theory". The researchers and writers who advocated this theory were all white. Studies in the USA and UK investigated the achievement and aspirations of black and white pupils based on parental occupation, skin colour, and children's age. The conclusions arrived at in these studies were that black pupils had a negative self-image. During that period, there was a plethora of literature accounting for the low academic and career ambitions of black pupils as a result of their underprivileged social and personal backgrounds. This deficit theory situates the problem of failure at school squarely in the cognitive ability and background of the pupil. Pupils' deficits that were identified by researchers were: a language other than English as a first language, learning disabilities, lack of basic reading skills, poor socio-economic background, substance abuse, neglectful parents, unemployment, uncontrolled crime in the community, poor educational background of family (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001; Whitehouse & Colvin, 2001).

## **2.6 Integration**

Integration presupposes equality of opportunity for all groups and sub-cultures in the mainstream society. It also implies, providing the opportunity, for all citizens. However, the policy of integration was applied so aggressively in the USA that it was met with negative responses in some circles and labelled reverse discrimination. In others it was received favourably as affirmative action. Integration has not been applied as aggressively in South Africa, where classrooms have become progressively more multicultural. It is not clear whether we can apply an adapted form of multicultural education and, if multicultural education is introduced, it will need to create educational opportunities that will remedy the effects of decades of prejudice, discrimination and segregation of identifiable groups without violating individual rights, creating equal educational opportunities and reducing prejudice.

It seems logical that a good starting point for multicultural education would be the elimination of all forms of prejudice in the classroom. Research has thus far produced very limited strategies on how to

---

proceed to intentionally reduce prejudice. However, Van Scotter, et al. (1985, p. 212) state that “factual information about another group is not sufficient to change attitudes”. Facts do not speak for themselves; rather they are interpreted through the experiences and biases of the listener. Class prejudice can be stronger than racial or religious prejudice. Van Scotter et al (1985) explain that an individual who has a high degree of self-acceptance (positive self-concept and self-esteem) will be likely to have a low degree of prejudice. Students who work in international learning teams develop positive attitudes and cross-ethnic friendships. The cognitive, affective and behavioural components of prejudice are not necessarily related (a person may profess one attitude but act out a different one). Media (newspapers, magazines, television programmes) may have a positive effect on students’ attitudes. Social contacts may reduce prejudice under certain circumstances. Research also indicates that contact among races or groups alone will not improve inter-racial relationships since it may have either positive or negative outcomes.

## **2.7 Change**

Change may occur as a consequence of imposition though reform or it may be an individual’s voluntary decision to change because of certain circumstances with which he or she is not satisfied. In the present situation in South African schools, change has taken place specifically with regard to integrated classrooms. Teachers, whether they favour change or not, have no alternative but to contend with it. There is a difference between voluntary and imposed change and in this regard Marris (1975, p.164) points out that if any real change occurs there is always a sense of loss, accompanied by anxiety, and struggle. He adds, “Any innovation cannot be assimilated unless its meaning is shared. Teachers need to share and be part of the change, the “innovation”. However, there are a number of teachers who do not subscribe to this innovation of change in their classrooms because change is something new and disrupts the familiar. In this regard, I quote at length from Marris for if I attempt to paraphrase this rich extract the revelations contained in it may be lost.

No one can resolve the crisis of reintegration on behalf of another. Every attempt to pre-empt conflict, argument, and protest by rational planning, can only be abortive: however reasonable the proposed changes, the process of implementing them must still allow the impulse of rejection to play itself out. When those who have power to manipulate changes act as if they have only to explain, and when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice they express a profound contempt for the meaning and lives other than their own. For the reformers have already assimilated these changes to their purposes, and worked out a reformulation which makes sense to them,

---

perhaps through months or years of analysis and debate. If they deny others the chance to do the same, they treat them as puppets dangling by the threads of their own conceptions.

(Marris, 1975, p. 166)

Both Marris (1975) and Schön (1971) refer to “dynamic conservatism” (Marris, 1975, p. 51) which is a social, and not an individual phenomenon. Since teachers are members of schools, and schools are social systems consequently both teachers and the school have shared meaning. In essence both Marris (1975) and Schön (1971) concur that actual change, irrespective of whether it is wanted or not, symbolises a grave individual and shared understanding characterised by uncertainty and ambivalence. If the change is accomplished the consequence could be a sense of expertise, achievement and professional development. On the other hand, if the change is not embraced it could lead to anxiety, loss, uncertainty and failure.

In his discussion of educational change, Fullan (1991) discusses two forms of non-change: namely, “false clarity without change and painful un-clarity without change”. Other studies of attempted change indicate that many teachers do not experience the comfort of false clarity. Fullan (1991) refers to Gross and Associates, Huberman and Miles (1984) who found that abstract goals and an injunction for teachers to put them into operation caused confusion, frustration, anxiety and cession of the effort.

False clarity occurs when people think that they have changed but have only assimilated the superficial trappings of the new practice. Painful un-clarity is experienced when unclear innovations are attempted under conditions that do not support the developments of the subjective meanings of change.

(Fullan, 1991, p. 35)

Louks and Hall (1979, in Fullan, 1991) clarify the assumptions that the initiators of change are unaware of teachers’ “stages of concern”. In the beginning stages the concern is more with how change will affect them on a personal level in their classrooms and the additional classroom work than with the actual goals and advantages of the programme. In Fullan’s (1991; 2000) opinion, change does not take into consideration the teachers’ “subjective reality”.

## 2.8 Summary

This chapter dealt specifically with the clarification of a number of concepts central to this study with brief characterisations of each of these concepts in an attempt to illuminate their use in this study. Some of the above mentioned concepts play a role consistently throughout the study and have a significant

---

bearing on the findings. Although all the above examples are taken from both the US and the UK they are applicable in the South African context. Many teachers are not aware that their actions and behaviour may be identified in terms of the above mentioned concepts. In order not to appear to be judgemental of any individual, the discussion of these concepts makes it easier to identify certain actions and explains the behaviour of particular teachers.