

**PERCEPTIONS OF DEMOCRACY EDUCATION  
AMONG PRESET AND INSET STUDENTS AND  
TEACHER EDUCATORS AT A COLLEGE OF  
EDUCATION**

**by**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Masters of Education (Coursework and Research Report) in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

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24<sup>th</sup> Day of April 2006

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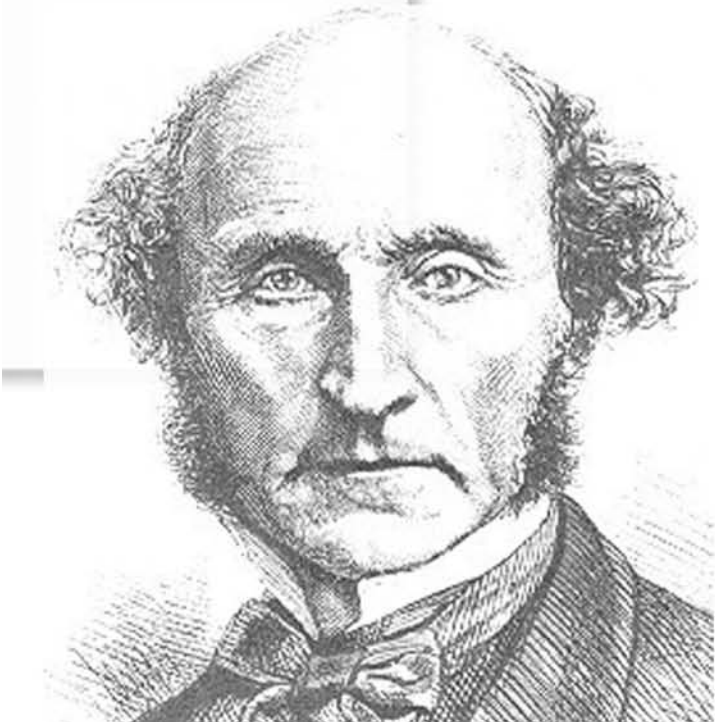
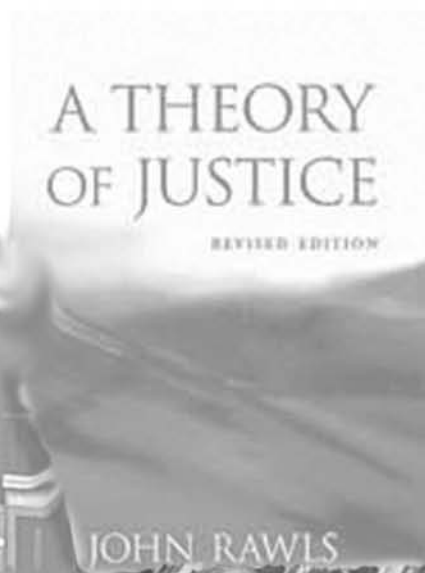
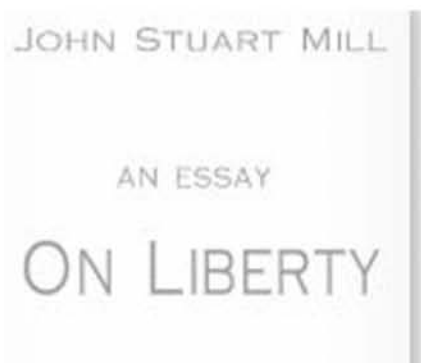
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## **ABSTRACT**

This research report focuses on educators' current attitudes, skills and knowledge in relation to democracy in South African education today. The research report also considers what needs to be done to make democracy a reality that informs education as opposed to simply adhering to policy and legislation that speaks of fine ideals but may well have limited impact on the lives of the majority of South Africa's citizens. I contend that one of the main barriers between democratic theory and practice is ambiguity and the resulting uncertainty and insecurity. I believe that many South Africans, many world citizens in fact, struggle to articulate what democracy actually means. If this grey area is to be addressed and ambiguity defused then educators need to be clear about what it is they are trying to educate learners for. This can only be realised when educators have internalised 'lived democracy' and, as a result, feel both an ownership and commitment to democracy as a lived practice.

## **KEY WORDS:**

Democracy, Transformation, Constitution, Education for democracy, Democratic education, Liberalism, Deliberative democracy, Lived practice, Citizen participation, Attitudes and perceptions, Qualitative research.

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## INTRODUCTION

This report argues that South Africa's new democracy will never become lived practice unless educators internalise democracy-in-action. The research conducted establishes whether South African educators are still working with mainly theoretical notions and inconsistent and individual ideas on how education for democracy and democratic techniques should inform their professional practice. It evaluates the current situation and the challenges that emanate from this. The research focuses on educators' current attitudes, skills and knowledge in relation to democracy in South African education today. The research report also considers what needs to be done to make democracy a reality that informs education as opposed to simply legislature that speaks of fine ideals but may well have limited impact on the lives of the majority of South Africa's citizens.

I contend that one of the main barriers between democratic theory and practice is ambiguity: many South Africans, many world citizens in fact, struggle to articulate what democracy actually means. If this grey area is to be addressed and ambiguity defused then educators must be clear about what it is they are trying to educate learners for. This can only be realised when educators have internalised 'lived democracy' and, as a result, feel both an ownership and commitment to democracy as a lived practice.

Over the past few years a number of organisations and Government institutions in South Africa have been involved in advancing a culture of human rights and democracy in schools. These organisations and Government institutions have worked with educators<sup>1</sup> on the enhancement of their understanding of both education for democracy and democratic practice. Education for democracy refers to the theory behind democracy while democratic practice is this theory-in-action. But have these efforts led to internalisation and ownership of knowledge, attitudes and skills? What about the many educators who have not been exposed to this intervention or have failed to internalise its significance? These are the questions this qualitative study will explore drawing on a variety of theories on democracy and democratic participation.

I contend that before understanding can be enhanced the educators' current knowledge, attitudes and skills in relation to education for democracy and democratic education needs to be established. In other words, before you can enhance understanding you must establish the foundation on which this enhancement will be built. For it is this foundation that will determine the success or failure of the

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<sup>1</sup> 'Educator' means any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons at an educational institution. Later for research purposes to ensure clarity about the groups interviewed I mention teachers. In this context I am specifically referring to someone teaching learners in a school.

implementation of democratic practice in education as envisaged by the National Revised Curriculum Statement and the South African Constitution (Act 108, 1996). If educators have not internalised democratic practice and taken ownership of the vision of implementation then democratic practice will remain an ideal on the statute books and not lived policy. It is therefore imperative that one captures, as indicated above, educators current understanding. This research uses a qualitative approach, based essentially on focus groups, and is an attempt to establish the present state of South Africa's educators understanding in their interpretation and internalisation of lived democracy.

My personal interest in this area arose from working with preservice teachers, who were studying in their third year, and inservice teachers who were participating in the Democracy course offered by the Street Law programme at Wits School of Education. The general feeling expressed by the inservice educators was one of anger and frustration. There was, they felt, an immense gap between what they were experiencing within their institutions and what they were meant to mediate to their learners. Many inservice teachers wrote of the undemocratic practice they themselves experienced on a day to day basis. It concerned me that these experiences might lead the inservice teachers to perceive democracy or the introduction of democracy into schools as working against them and in fact adding to their stress and workload and this could negatively impact on the way democracy was approached in the classroom, the school and ultimately in the country. As Osler and Starkey [1996; 87] say; 'Teachers' perceptions of their own and their pupils' identities impact on the way they handle human rights and citizenship education.' If this is the case then surely democratic change should be introduced in such a way that democratic principles are used and seen to be 'a part of life' at any level.

Chapter One presents the background to the envisaged transformation. It will consider the historical context, the policies and educational changes as set out in the South African Schools Act, Curriculum 2005 and its successor the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), [2001].

Chapter Two considers the theoretical perspectives that inform this research, concentrating on democratic theory and establishing the basic foundation on which, I argue, our democracy rests, as defined in terms of our new Constitution.

Chapter Three focuses on finding a working definition for democratic citizenship in South Africa and explores the important role that education plays in developing the skills of learners into becoming responsible citizens.

Chapter Four sets out the methodology that I used to gather data on the attitudes, perceptions and knowledge that educators have about transformation and towards the notion of democracy and democracy-in-action.

Chapter Five provides an analysis and discussion of the data gathered.

Chapter Six concludes the report and points to the way forward with recommendations.

## CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

### 1.1 Historical Background

For some years, prior to the release of Nelson Mandela, resistance to apartheid spawned debates and ideas about the suggested future of education. The far-reaching changes that took place in the early 1990s brought such debates out into the open. Numerous policy documents were drawn up and discussed and new Acts<sup>2</sup> passed in an effort to start the process of educational change. As De Clercq, [1997; 144] commented ‘In the 1990s policy work and analysis gained a new lease of life in South Africa’.

One of the main priorities for change in education was its transformation from a system of apartheid and educational inequality to a system that was more representative of the new Government and its vision. An important aspect of this vision was the democratisation, through education, of the South African youth and in turn the nation. This quest for democratisation is captured in the preamble to the National Education Policy Act No 27 of 1996 which begins, ‘Whereas it is necessary to adopt legislation to facilitate the democratic transformation of the national system of education into one which serves the needs and interests of all the people of South Africa and upholds their fundamental rights...’.

Greenstein [1997;141] observes that this is very idealistic, without much feasible hope of implementation if no clear structural outlines are put in place to ensure the vision’s future. He acknowledges that curriculum policies can play a role in promoting values that are fundamental to a democratic society but he warns that ‘South Africa should look for creative ways of meshing the specificity of the South African condition with the quest for universally acknowledged educational achievements.’ Educational development has undergone significant transformation since these changes were first set down on paper but there is now a pressing need to ground many of these policies in a South African reality [Greenstein, 1997; 1].

Creation of policy and law alone do not do enough to bring about a fundamental shift in our educational practices. De Clercq [1997; 143] also acknowledges that policy proposals are ‘partly flawed’ because often they do not take into account ‘the context and dynamics on the ground and therefore struggle to influence reform at lower levels of policy making’. She agrees with Greenstein [1997] in saying that South African policy work should root itself more firmly in local realities and suggests that there should be ‘dialogue and debate among social actors involved at all levels of policy making.’ [De Clercq, 1997; 166].

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<sup>2</sup> South African Qualifications Authority Act 58 of 1995 and the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

No matter what the criticisms are of the approach that has been taken in educational reform, there is a need to change from a past educational system which was filled with inequality and authoritarianism to a system where our constitutional values and basic human rights are understood and respected. As I have outlined above, past inequalities cannot be sufficiently addressed through policy alone, particularly policy that was hastily introduced in order to deal with the demands of a new Government with high expectations. Democracy may be the overriding goal hoped for by the Government, but it will not happen overnight because change takes time and needs to be seen more as ‘a process than an event’ [Fullan, 1991; 130]. Change takes place at a number of levels, from the bottom up as well as from the top down. Innovation may have started at Government level through legislation but the important participants of the process of educational change are the learners and the educators. As Gutmann [1987; 49] says ‘a discussion of democratic education must not lose sight of the educators’. By not acknowledging the part educators play in the process of change we will be overlooking the fundamental role players; this in turn will affect the efficacy and ‘deep’ acceptance of the desired changes. An Act passed by parliament will not automatically lead to a whole new approach in education if the reforms are not initiated at the appropriate levels and in the appropriate way.

If Government is serious about breaking the cycle of authoritarianism in schools, in order to become more congruent with a democratic society<sup>3</sup>, it needs to consider the importance of reforming teacher education - bearing in mind that many of the educators participating in educating for democracy are themselves products of an authoritarian system. As a result, change among educators will not be a simple process whereby the educator or the even the school changes the types of materials used in the classroom; it goes beyond changing the curriculum and content. It includes an appraisal of who the educator is, what his/her values and attitudes are and how they influence the personal interactions that take place around them. The key role of the educator in the realisation of ‘lived democracy’ cannot be understated. For a culture of democracy and human rights to be established in the South African classroom educators have to become both targets and agents of change. As targets, it is imperative to know the mindset that currently predominates. Hence this research.

Educating for democracy can and should look at content such as human rights documents and the history of democracy but it is more than this. It also involves the values behind these democratic principles and requires educators to understand these values, and believe in them, in order to teach them<sup>4</sup>. Education

<sup>3</sup>National Legislation such as South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

<sup>4</sup>It is not only confined to one course’s learning area but about cross curricula application of Democracy and human rights. Democracy to maths teachers can be quite intimidating without guidance and support.

in values is not a simple matter. Democratic education is a whole new way of thinking, preparing for a way of life. Are educators equipped for this? If values are overlooked when preparing educators for democratic education, or in preparing materials, then teaching democracy and human rights could be dry and meaningless to learners.

These idealistic plans call for radical transformation at all educational levels as universities and colleges are also an important part of the change process. But in this transformation the concerns of the educators should not be ignored as educators are faced with a number of new challenges (ranging from changing curricula, a changing environment; in and out of school, to additional demands on their time and resources often with little to no ongoing support). To not take cognisance of the demands of these additional challenges could undermine any effort to 'democratise' educators. It may be necessary for some educators to change their own attitudes in order to be able to teach democracy. Without support and appropriate scaffolding, educators could emerge from attempts to change their attitudes with feelings of isolation and alienation. They may feel ill-equipped to handle the task allocated to them by educational policy. According to current policy, educators have a threefold responsibility to their learners with regards to democratisation. On one level they have to convey the content of human rights and democracy. On the second level they have to convey the ideals and values of democracy to their learners applying these ideals through methodologies used in their pedagogical practice. This, in turn, relates to the third level where educators have to change their own values and beliefs in order to convey and apply the ideal of democratic education in an appropriate and committed manner.

## **1.2 Change in Education**

In referring closely to Fullan's [1991] analysis of change I believe that the complexities and problems he speaks of in the North American context hold some interesting comparisons to our own situation in South Africa particularly with respect to the part that educators are expected to play. In the focus group discussions mentioned later in this report similar comments and concerns were raised by the various participants.

Change can occur in a number of ways and is aimed at a number of levels. The change in South Africa, as I have indicated, is far reaching social reform. Educators are under more pressure, therefore, than they would be if asked to make changes in, say, a style of teaching or assessment. All-encompassing change requires understanding if we are to achieve our vision of democracy and civic education. It is important to remember that how people perceive the change will influence the meaning they give to that

change and therefore the level at which they adapt to change. Change is always difficult at a personal and a political level. It involves 'loss, anxiety and struggle' [Fullan, 1991; 31] and it is often difficult to understand or find clear meaning in change. That is because we are moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar. So whether change has been imposed on us, or whether it has been voluntarily taken on, the meaning of change will rarely be clear at the start. Innovators should acknowledge this and accept that without the appropriate training, teachers will find it difficult to change.

In addition it is possible that change may appear to have occurred when in reality it has not taken place. Where the change is not mastered there may be a superficial taking on of change. Fullan [1991; 35] refers to this as non-change and there are two forms. One he refers to as false clarity and the other painful clarity. False clarity refers to innovations that are not clearly understood. If they are implemented they become twisted into familiar concepts and frameworks. As Fullan [1991; 35] puts it: 'false clarity is when people think they have changed but they have merely assimilated the superficial trappings of the new practice'. Painful clarity means that people find the abstract goals too confusing and this results in levels of frustration, anxiety and abandonment of effort. The innovations are unclear and are attempted in unsupportive conditions where there is lack of awareness about the meaning of change.

When change is implemented the complexity of defining and accomplishing actual change will surface. If there is no clarity about a new policy then this lack of clarity will affect the manner in which it will be understood by people who are expected to implement it. According to Fullan [1991; 37] there are three dimensions that arise when any new policy is to be implemented and these will in turn impact on teachers: 1) the possible use of new or revised materials; 2) the possible use of new teaching practices; 3) the possible alteration of beliefs. For change to be effective all three of these dimensions should occur in practice and importantly if educational change is to happen it will require that teachers understand themselves in order to be understood by others.

Educators may respond negatively to democratic change if it is seen to come from the top down and is implemented in an autocratic manner. Change should be about recognising that there is a process of change and it is not only about achieving objectives [Fullan, 1991]. The problem is that if leaders implement democracy in an undemocratic way or in a half hearted manner democracy may be viewed as superficial itself. The more sceptical educators are towards the ideal of democracy the less sincere they will be in implementing it and this will in turn influence the learners' exposure to and their perception of

democracy. Because change is about moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar real change requires an understanding, clarity about what it means in reality.

Given the vital role placed on education in contributing towards democratic transformation in South Africa I investigate whether educators are prepared for such a responsibility, even with the appropriate policies in place. For it is my concern that change will affect teachers personally in their subjective realities. In the Review Report on Curriculum 2005 it was pointed out that ‘Curriculum 2005 was not implemented onto a blank slate’ (2000; 2). I believe that many teachers are concerned about how change affects them personally, about their subjective reality<sup>5</sup> and that ultimately the transformation of subjective realities is the essence for change. Without this subjective change or a degree of subjective change educators will resist change. The basic premise of this report is that educators’ attitudes will ultimately affect whether democracy becomes an intrinsic part of South African education.

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<sup>5</sup>Where they come from, their influences - their personal histories.

## CHAPTER TWO: DEMOCRACY, A CONTESTED NOTION

### 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I consider the concept of democracy, the various theories that have evolved and how these interpretations of democracy are relevant to this research report. There is not one single model that resonates with the vision of democracy as set down in South Africa's Constitution. I believe this vision draws on both African and traditional Western philosophy to promote a democracy that embraces 'unity in diversity'. It is, in other words, a democracy where individualism, a traditional Western value, and the community co-exist in an atmosphere of mutual respect. How this vision is ultimately translated into practice depends on whether we, in South Africa, are able to take ownership of our Constitution. To do this we need to use education appropriately in order to provide a necessary pathway between theory and practice.

South Africa recently celebrated its tenth year as a fledgling democracy and with a new Constitution and a third election successfully completed searching questions continue to be asked. Questions such as 'Are we a democracy still in transition or have we moved towards consolidation of our democracy?' [Giliomee et al., 1994; 199]. How can we be considered democratic when there are so many unresolved problems from the past, like the crime we face on a daily basis, the resultant insecurity, inadequate policing and instances that point to a lack of a culture of tolerance and responsible citizen participation? All in all our newly acquired constitutional liberalism may introduce the notion of democratic government into South Africa but this does not necessarily make a democracy. As Schlemmer [1994; 149] points out '[new] democracies are hybrid systems in which the democratic institutions are blended with legacies from their anti-democratic past'. A completely new entity or democratic system that reflects no links with the past is, as Giliomee [1994; 193] contends, an impossibility.

So much of South Africa's move towards successful change hinges on the framework of democracy adopted and recognised by the people of South Africa. Many South Africans, notes O'Malley [1999], currently interpret democracy as the opposite to apartheid. After the suppression that came with apartheid, democracy became the answer to South Africa's prayer for freedom [O'Malley, 1999; 123]. In this interpretation, democracy is not seen as part of a process of change towards better governance, but rather as the solution to the wrongs of the past and the opposite to white minority rule. People expected an instant cure to the realities of apartheid and anticipated that the change would be tangible. But democracy is a process and democratic change rests just as much on the willing participation of the citizens in a country as on the new Government. I join Kohak [1997; 2] in his advancement of Dewey's

[1970; 13] belief that democracy should be seen as a way of life and that ‘democracy must be first carefully nurtured in every one of us and in our society at large and only then can be expected to work as a political system’.

The nurturing of democracy in a societal context must, I argue, take cognisance of the particular dynamics of that society. What, for instance, does a society prioritise as its greatest need? Without attention to the particular fears, needs, values and attitudes that form an inherent part of each and every society, the nurturing process of which Dewey [1939] speaks could battle to work as a political system. This is linked, I contend, to the fact that democracy is a multi-faceted, multi-meaning concept. One society’s understanding and realisation of democracy at work may not rigidly translate into the ideal model for another society. In other words, democracy is a system subject to a number of different interpretations dependent upon the society within which it is placed. It is both contextually bound and open to broad interpretation.

In South Africa the constitutional negotiators came from all facets of South African life and from many diverse political viewpoints. How they came to adopt a new Constitution is a miracle of compromise and agreement. The Constitution itself is a hybrid created by the interaction of many factors through ‘local participation, context and history with international influences and conditionalities all influencing a particular South African constitutional culture’ [Klug, 2001; 152]. It is this constitutional culture and the Constitution’s hybrid or heterogeneous nature that will provide South Africa’s democracy with a unique character. This character will be shaped by our understanding of how the parts inform the whole. From the hybrid therefore will come a unique flavour, matured over time and clearly marked South Africa.

Bearing in mind the various influences mentioned above and the number of theoretical approaches available in relation to the notion of democracy, it is necessary, for the purposes of this research report, to identify a particular understanding of democracy that resonates with our Constitutional vision. To do this I refer to a number of writings on the subject. The writings I chose reflect a range of political philosophies from modern liberalism [Mill, 1910] to welfare liberalism [Rawls, 1971] and communitarianism [Sandel, 1996; and MacIntyre, 1996].

## **2.2 Liberalism versus Communitarianism**

Mill [1910] defines modern liberal democratic thought as, ‘Political life enhanced by individual liberty, accountable government and efficient government administration’. Another liberal perspective is that of Held [1987; 85] who defines democracy narrowly as a system advocating democratic self government

that requires minimal state involvement and should allow the greatest possible extent of private enterprise and individual liberty. I have also drawn on proponents of welfare liberalism like Rawls [in van Blerk, 1996; 129] who believe that the welfare state is the basis of social justice. Communitarians challenge liberal theory because they believe that the individual should not be regarded as separate from the community and should embrace the ‘common good’.

The theories I have discussed so far, liberalism and communitarianism, draw on two common sources or tensions that inform democracy: the individual versus the community. Gastil [1990; 11] considers a similar division when attempting to simplify democracy. To do this, Gastil [1990] looked at the early beginnings of democracy and identified two traditions. He believes that these two traditions should be remembered when discussing the current democratic revolution that is taking place because ‘we are referring to changes that represent the legacy of both these traditions, the tribal democratic<sup>6</sup> and the liberal democratic’. Similarly Mansbridge [1990] says that early democratic influences or sources originated from both the proponents for self-interest and for public good.

The influence of these two sources or traditions can be found throughout the debate on democracy and democratic thought. Mansbridge [1990] observes that initially democracy meant deliberative democracy which emphasised the commonality between people. It was the ‘political thought that emerged from the Second World War (that) reversed this emphasis on deliberation and the common good, demanding recognition of power (for the individual) and conflict’ [Mansbridge, 1990; 3]. This led to an emphasis on self-interest. There are numerous reasons given for the strong shift towards self interest but Mansbridge [1990; 3] attributes it to ‘the rediscovery of human evil in Nazi Germany, and the cold war concern for avoiding nuclear destruction’. It could be argued that the atrocities of the Second World War led to a more cynical view of human nature and of the morality of leaders. This then resulted in a renewed interest in perspectives that focused on self-interest and the ordinary citizen; perspectives that afforded power to individuals. The renewed focus on self-interest could also be seen as part of an attempt to counter authoritarian leadership which does not take sufficient cognisance of the will of the people. As a result of this pendulous swing in political philosophy, proponents of self-interest and individualism took precedence in the post war period. In their deliberations on adversary democracy<sup>7</sup>, these thinkers stated that it was the self above all else that was important in a democracy. They argued that Government

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<sup>6</sup> Tribal democracy comes from the universal desire of people to manage their own affairs or to have a say (Gastril above).

<sup>7</sup> ‘Founded on both conflict and self-interest.’ [Mansbridge, 1990; 3].

should not be concerned with the private or personal morality of an individual. Government should confine itself to the political or the public domain<sup>8</sup>.

In today's post-modern society democratic perceptions are once again being influenced. Over time there has been a gradual acknowledgement of the existence of non self-motivated actions such as those that occur within small towns and from Government as well. There is also a growing awareness that in a global society plurality cannot be ignored and it is important to encourage participation at a public level. All this leads to a rethinking of the models of democracy that previously encouraged self-interest above community [Gutmann, 1996; 120; Mansbridge, 1990; 14; Barber, 1984; xviii].

### **2.3 Communitarianism and Diversity**

The chapter thus far has indicated how world events impact on interpretations of democracy and South Africa, it could be argued, is yet another instance of this. If we look at the influences that finally led South Africa onto a path of democratisation and away from apartheid, we note that the movement was not - explicitly at least - about self-interest but was 'the people's struggle' against oppression, namely apartheid. It reflected, in other words, a communitarian perspective. Running alongside the armed struggle was the mass mobilisation of civil society as trade unions, church groups and other communities gathered together to enforce change. All these different forces of change resulted in the birth of a Constitution that carried within it an awareness of the importance of both the community and the individual's contribution to South African society. The South African Constitution therefore aptly reflects the thinking and concerns of the time of its birth. As Judge Sachs [in Welsh, 1994; 85] has said 'Constitutions are a society's autobiography'. Undoubtedly South Africa faces a challenging future coming out of a past marred by racism and division and if we are not vigilant in observing the specific requirements of a 'new democracy' we could fall back into established, authoritarian habits in both our leadership and our institutions<sup>9</sup> [Weffort, 1994; 29].

Vigilance is essential, especially if you take cognisance of Diamond's [1994] argument that although we have seen the South African environment and society going through a massive shift, both in the public, political and the private domain in the last ten years, the question remains: how sincere are we about democracy? [Diamond, 1994]. If we are sincere we cannot ignore the diversity that makes up South

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<sup>8</sup> Which carries its own traditional legacy criticised in feminist theory with respect to the notion that the private is feminine and the public domain, political and masculine.

<sup>9</sup> Weffort [1994; 41] says that consolidation of new democracies are much more fraught with difficulties and failure than during the process of transition. 'It's easier to bring down a dictatorial government than create a democratic government.'

Africa's people, based on their traditions, their language, culture, and religion. But there is also a reality that cannot be ignored and that is South Africa is a society emerging from a time of sustained conflict that was induced by 'perceived differences.' The future therefore lies in trying to reconcile the past, riddled with division and distrust, with the hope for a democratic change and a 'common South African citizenship.'

This hope for commonality whilst at the same time protecting the individuality of citizens is reflected in the South African Constitution where there is an express wish to go beyond the mere protection of individual rights and to look towards creating a culture of democracy. The Constitution speaks about fostering citizens who reflect the democratic values of South Africa and have an awareness of human rights. There is a commitment in the Constitution to a 'society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights...' but underlying this notion is the idea of 'promoting a recognition of the potential of each person.' [Preamble to South African Constitution, 1996].

The question, however, remains; how are the aims expressed in the Constitution capable of being realised when there are two potentially divergent paths or tensions, the same tensions that have been influencing democratic thought throughout its history? How can we balance the need to have a common citizenry with the need to safeguard individual rights? A conceptual difficulty lies in creating that balance so that citizens do not drift towards narrow individualism, nor towards a form of nationalism that may erode an individual's fundamental rights. Undeniably it is important, in South Africa, to respect the richness of our diversity without losing the togetherness of being a nation of people working towards democratic consolidation.

Possibly the answer lies in looking more closely at the notion of democracy itself and adapting it to South Africa and the needs of its people and not 'replacing' one western form of government with another. As Dibodu [1995; 24] points out, despite the interruption by 'the individualistic, acquisitive action of white rule' the strength of 'communitarianism in African traditions survived'. He argues that we cannot and must not ignore the power of these communitarian traditions. If we do our democracy may be short-lived: it must therefore be a democracy that encompasses and encourages participation of the community and the individual in that community. As Dibodu [1995; 24] asserts:

The individualistic and acquisitive mode of white society might be less functionally viable in poverty stricken communities...and norms favouring human kindness, generosity, neighbourliness,

brotherliness, sociability and fellowship, co-operation, mutual aid and avoidance of strain arising from competition and individualism, would contribute more effectively to group survival.

If one embraces Dibodu's [1995] notion then a particular challenge emerges. We know that if citizens are deprived of their power, no matter how democratic the vote, there is a threat that paternalism will return (if it ever went away) and in turn civic responsibility will fade.<sup>10</sup> To centralise too much power can often expose a democracy to abuses by the executive and there is no certainty that even with our Constitution protecting fundamental rights that power will not be abused. As Zakaria [1998; 10] says in his article titled *The rise of the illiberal democracy*, 'Finally, and perhaps more important, power accumulated to do good can be subsequently used to do ill.' If the objective is to develop a culture of democracy so that our new Constitution becomes a living document for the people then cognisance must be taken of Zakaria's [1998] claim. There must, for instance, be a sense of ownership by the people. This in turn depends not only on the framework of our democracy but also the sincerity of our political leaders and the determination of South Africans including, of course, educators. All these factors are key to the actualisation of our Constitutional vision.

The challenges facing South Africa are, of course, not dissimilar in some ways to challenges that have been embraced by other nations throughout history. South Africa, for instance, is not alone in needing to determine how to adapt to a democratic culture, and even though the dominant form of government in the west has been a liberal democracy, in recent history these western institutions have been shaken by the challenge for greater citizen participation. In their attempt to address the issues that face modern democracies, theorists such as Rawls [1992], Mansbridge [1990], Benhabib [1996] and Young [1996] have written extensively on the subject of plurality and democratic participation. It is these writings that have helped me in this study to move towards a particular interpretation of a South African democratic culture on which I shall now focus.

## **2.4 Political Liberalism**

### **2.4.1 Rawls Theory of Liberalism**

I have chosen, initially, to examine Rawls' [1993] theory of political liberalism in some detail as it is a major statement of liberal theory in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. In terms of this research, Rawls' [1993] belief that liberalism can speak, not only about rights and their protections, but also about diversity, is

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<sup>10</sup> I agree with Weffort's [1994] argument that South Africa is a hybrid of past and present experiences. The past where paternalism was a major feature is an ever-constant influence on our present interpretation of democracy. Our tendency in the past, therefore, to lean towards paternalism remains a present option.

paramount. His contention is that no one member in a society should be 'more equal' than another. How, one then needs to ask, does this contention link with the notion of liberalism? Before answering this question the theory of political liberalism needs some definition.

According to Scruton [1996; 313] it is almost impossible to reduce liberalism, in the context of political science, to a theoretical position. Fundamentally, it can be said that liberalism is a belief that the individual has natural rights existing independent of Government. Two of these rights are freedom and independence and the acknowledgement that these rights cannot be tampered with by third parties. In a liberal society citizens are free to pursue their private rights within the boundaries drawn by the legislature. Their private rights, which are a form of freedom, can only be limited when an individual strays into or across the boundaries of another individual. Because of this belief that Government is there to protect and ensure that the administration of the state takes place a liberal government adopts a neutral attitude when faced with the private life of an individual. According to liberal theory, Governments are given the power of sanction by being elected and citizens participate in a liberal democracy by voting. Liberal political theory stresses such principles as equality, individual freedom and human rights. But the rights that individuals have are negative rights, rights such as freedom of movement and the right to free speech<sup>11</sup>.

Having said this, it is worth noting that liberalism like democracy has become the subject of a number of different interpretations. Avineri and de-Shalit [1996; 11] attribute this to the 'concept of neutrality', an integral part of liberal theory. Neutrality, they say, can be defined as non-intervention or 'sometimes neutrality is thought to require neutrality in the consequences of policies; sometimes it refers to the manner in which policies are justified'. Therefore some proponents of individualism argue that liberalism is a theory of minimum government whilst others argue it is a theory of basic human rights. Others, furthermore, especially Dworkin [1977] and Rawls [in van Blerk, 1996; 210] define liberalism as an egalitarian philosophy. It is in Rawls' [1993] work that one is able to find the three basic principles that I am seeking to actualise in South Africa's 'lived democracy', namely; liberal rights, equality and plurality. In terms of plurality, Gutmann [1996; 121] says that Rawl's work has altered the premises and principles of contemporary liberal theory by taking into consideration the concept of plurality in a modern democracy.

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<sup>11</sup> Negative rights prevent the Government from interfering in the life of an individual. Positive rights place a duty on Government to deliver to its citizens, e.g. socio economic rights.

In relation to liberal rights and equality, Rawls [1971], in his first book **A Theory of Justice**, ‘attempted to reconcile a liberal ideal of a political obligation with a redistributive conception of social justice’ [Scruton, 1996; 466]. Later work developed in response to criticism that he had ignored the issue of plurality, Rawls [1992; 186] set out his understanding of justice for a constitutional democracy. He stressed that ‘in a constitutional democracy the public conception of justice should be, as far as possible, independent of controversial philosophical and religious doctrines’. This is an acknowledgement by Rawls of the importance of diversity in a modern democracy.

Any consideration of democracy should, I argue, also note Rawls’ views on political power which is an important concept in liberal rights. In fact, according to Mouffe [1996], Rawls’ later theory of political liberalism could be described as a distinctive approach to the problem of political power. The broader question of power and the constructive handling of power-related issues links with his view of political liberalism as ‘defining a core morality that specifies the terms under which people with different conceptions of the good can live together in political association’ [Mouffe, 1996].

This core morality could, I contend, be seen as a central feature of a pluralist approach. It is a feature that would also play a pivotal role in the actualisation of a democracy where co-operation and negotiation are vital. Rawls [1993] contends that co-operation can exist in his understanding of a pluralistic society as long as that society is well-ordered and the people are rational and reasonable<sup>12</sup>. His envisaged society anticipates that justice should prevail as long as the domain of the political is very narrowly construed. He advocates that fundamental principles, or laws, would be fixed, grounded from the start, and not open for debate. In this way, disagreement, that would inevitably arise in a diverse climate, on issues that concern people’s comprehensive religious, philosophical or moral views can, should and would be avoided at the political level. It is then left to citizens to settle between themselves how an individual’s political values may relate to, for example, their moral or cultural values. It is not a matter for the state.

For Rawls [1993], where reason is being sought amongst different conceptions of the good, it is important to limit the discussion and to argue for public reason. The idea is to create a domain where there can be a form of agreement amongst different people, who are reasonable. Because of the constraints placed on the discussion some tension does exist because, even though there is moral weight in his theory, he avoids the total truth. This is not seen as a problem for him because he seeks agreement at a political level. What is important for Rawls’ theory to succeed is that it must appeal to a large and diverse number of people and that it is sensitive to the differences in others. For the purposes of this research one would

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<sup>12</sup>This does not necessarily mean that it will be appropriate in South Africa.

also need to consider the qualities of personhood that would be required in a Rawlsian society and how educators could mediate the acquisition of these qualities by learners.

Rawls [1993] believes that where certain basics, such as rights, are agreed upon by all citizens and are publicly accepted as a non-debatable norm, these rights should not open to public reason<sup>13</sup>. If people are brought up in a society where these rights are valued then a sense of democracy and rights becomes deeply instilled in the people, over time.

What one has to ask is whether Rawls' [1993] societal understanding is applicable to South Africa where homogeneity is not the norm and unity is in an embryonic stage. In South Africa, we not only have a plurality of values and opinions but there are also great inequalities in wealth and education. How appropriate is his theory for South Africa? Admittedly, he accommodates difference in his theory and considers needs beyond a small elite group of people in a society, but he does not really embrace a notion of how we deal with differences in non-western societies. In a western society people would probably apply his principles of justice because the society is well ordered. But South Africa is not the west. She is like, yet unlike, the west and here we face a unique, home-based set of uncertainties. South Africa, I argue, presents a realisation of Rawls' vision of society with a definite challenge. In South Africa we face a combination of differences; some have been artificially imposed on us through past legislation, some have arisen – and continue to arise - through culture and tradition and differences, of course, also arise through the vast disparity that emanates from South Africa's many instances of poverty and wealth.

So the question remains. How can we achieve agreement on certain basics where there is suspicion and distrust inherited from the past? The past division broke down communication between the races and open discourse was never allowed. In South Africa, today, few citizens are aware of their rights and if they are aware they lack the appropriate knowledge or direction of how to enforce them<sup>14</sup> [Diamond, 1994; 50]. Herein lie the challenges for education.

#### ***2.4.2 Criticisms of Rawls' Theory***

A further critique of current liberal theory is captured through a number of writers. Barber [1984; 4], for instance, argues that liberal democracy is a thin democracy,<sup>15</sup> thin because of the liberal aspiration

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<sup>13</sup> Public reason is a form of collective reasoning - deliberation in the public domain- where the content is limited.

<sup>14</sup> Diamond [1994] believes that 'a culture of bargaining and compromise will only emerge gradually in South Africa and only in the context of genuine empowerment of the long disenfranchised non-white communities.'

<sup>15</sup> 'One whose democratic values are prudential and thus provisional, optional and conditional- means to exclusively individualistic and private ends.'

for certainty and simplicity without the dynamics of citizen participation. It is therefore not a theory for ‘transformation’<sup>16</sup>. Rawls [1993] does not offer any other motive for justice other than rational self-interest. Inequalities are to be distributed so as to benefit the least advantaged in a society, because you may end up being the least advantaged; tolerate others because you wish to be tolerated’ [Barber, 1984; 18]. But one needs to ask if this is not a rather narrow view of society? Kelly [1995; 24] argues that a democratic society is one ‘which seeks to provide positive rather than merely negative advantages to all its citizens...’<sup>17</sup> Trakman [1994; 49] also believes that even though the exercise of negative liberties does foster communal growth, it does not encompass the full gamut of political life. Political life also involves the community and there should be recognition of the vital part played by community, ‘Cooperation and solidarity among cultural, ethnic and economic communities is as important to the polity as is competition between individual and state’ [Trakman, 1994; 49]. Notions of an enriched form of existence through citizen participation and community involvement clearly emerge as a central concern of a number of these writers.

Mouffe [1996] has also expressed concerns about Rawls’ conception of a well-ordered society being restricted in terms of debate. Barber [1984; 45] sees Rawls’ original position as artificially creating an ‘antiseptic starting place’ where ‘individual men are decontaminated of their special psychologies and particular interests.’ Does this mean that for Rawls a well ordered society is a society from which politics has been eliminated or at least subdued?

Mouffe [1996; 252] believes this is the case. She argues that Rawls’ rational society is one that looks to her like a dangerous utopia of reconciliation, a democracy where there is no argument, just rational public debate. The other concern is that only reasonable voices could operate successfully in Rawls’ well ordered society. What, one could argue, constitutes a reasonable voice? This demand for reason could exclude some groups from being heard, resulting in deliberation reserved for the educated.

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<sup>16</sup>In South Africa the liberal theory of equality supported discrimination in the past. Although Rawls’ [1993] difference principle disagrees with this and is therefore a more attractive theory, I must agree with Barber [1984] in that is not a theory for transformation. I do not think that during a transition similar to that taking place in South Africa, Rawls’ theory would make space for a collective vision of affirmative action?

<sup>17</sup>According to Trakman in an article ‘Interpreting a Bill of Rights’[1994; 27] ‘a viable bill of rights should be interpreted to include the community rights of those that share a common history, cultural identity and social aspiration.’ He says this is not to protect white minorities but is rather directed at ‘disadvantaged peoples.’ He also goes on to say that in South Africa communal conceptions of liberty are conceived of as second or third generation rights.’

### 2.4.3 *Communitarians*

There is no denying, however, that Rawls' [1993] new liberal political thought revived a number of debates about democracy and diversity, the self versus the common good. One group that has joined this debate are the communitarians. The communitarian challenge is based on the belief that liberalism creates individuals as 'autonomous individuals' governed purely by self-interest and a social contract. Liberalism, they say, ignores the fact that identities are formed by our communities and traditions. If this is the case, then in South Africa our strongly traditional communities could be lost in the demands for self and one's own negative rights. And this would be contrary to the spirit of democracy embraced by South Africa's Constitution where the intrinsic value of traditional communities is inherently acknowledged. The value of these traditional communities and their traditional leaders was, in fact, specifically taken into account when drawing up the Constitution. So much so that the Constitution makes special note of the role of the leadership of these communities in our democracy and their place in its realisation. Additionally, as pointed out by Trakman [1994], the South African bill of rights conceives of the communal conceptions of liberty as second or third generation rights<sup>18</sup>.

Gutmann [1996] makes a convincing argument for a review of both communitarian values and basic liberal values. Although strong communitarians do not, according to Gutmann [1996], provide a convincing argument offering a viable alternative to political liberalism, they do re-ignite a debate that is important both academically and also practically because they reflect the dilemma facing many new democracies<sup>19</sup>, including South Africa. As Gutmann [1996; 133] says, 'Communitarianism has the potential for helping us discover a politics that combines community with a commitment to basic liberal values'.

Already in settled democracies there is a certain degree of relying on communitarian values for our 'moral vision' [Gutmann, 1996]. In fact, according to Barber [1984], Americans have been doing just what Gutmann suggests, living with a liberal Constitution and democratic participation without violating individual rights. Barber [1984] points out that American citizens have been actively participating in neighbourhood associations, church groups and PTA's for years unaware that their participation could be regarded as anything more than getting on with their lives, certainly not regarding themselves as being politically active in any way. Yet, Barber [1984; xi] says '...that same public, bitter about national politics,

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<sup>18</sup>He goes on to say that '(t)o level the playing field amongst diffuse ethnic, cultural and linguistic communities is to affirm their differences constitutionally, positively rather than negatively.

<sup>19</sup>And old democracies but in a different context. Older democracies are starting to realise that it is important to have a culture of civic participation in a democracy.

remains remarkably active locally, though individuals scarcely regard what they are doing as politics at all'. Barber's [1984] theory of strong democracy is not about introducing a new theory on political behaviour; he believes that ordinary Americans need to realise that they are already engaging in political behaviour and should therefore take themselves more seriously.<sup>20</sup> Admittedly, Barber's [1984] argument that Americans have been politically involved without really realising it, does not mean that anything a citizen does outside of the home is political. For example, volunteering to help out in a homeless shelter is not public politics but, according to Mathews [1999; 24] 'organising a neighbourhood watch, or joining in a forum on what to do about a community wide issue...' could be regarded as political or public politics. It is certainly an example of citizen participation.

## **2.5 Democracy in South Africa**

### **2.5.1 General**

Barber's [1984] notion of strong democracy could inform how South African citizens see their place in their democracy; if they value participation and feel their participation is valued, democracy may thrive. As Diamond [1994; 68] says we need to develop a democratic political culture where the practice of democracy becomes internalised and over a period of time habitualised. Reconciliation of all our differences cannot come as an initiative from the top alone. The values inherent in a democracy lie in the social or community organisations where citizens mix and acquire skills that help to serve them well in political participation. Institutions should be encouraged to democratise and Gutmann [1996] suggests that in order to foster communal values new political institutions need to be created that could counter possible moves by older, more entrenched institutions to exert a reactionary influence over moves towards institutional democratisation. Weffort [1994; 32] argues that it is often very difficult for institutions and leaders of the past to become democratised; who teaches them about democracy?<sup>21</sup>

In South Africa the same can be said of our leaders and civil society: both were born in a period of conflict and struggle and are now trying to redefine their roles in a new democracy. Weffort [1994] and Diamond [1994] discuss the problem, particularly with respect to civil society. They say that such groups as trade unions and civic associations are no longer working at transforming oppressive practices into more democratic practices; these are now in place. Therefore in a 'new' democracy the past practices

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<sup>20</sup> Barber [1984] argues that for strong democracy the objective should be to 'reorient liberal democracy toward civic engagement and political community not to raze it.'

<sup>21</sup> 'Most democratic transitions are led by people who were not 'born' democratic...Most leaderships are born of a dictatorship.'

of unions and other social movements also need to change. They need to move from being defensive in nature to becoming more pro-active in their relationship with Government and society.

Here, of course, a question of autonomy may arise. Giliomee [1994; 195] argues that although it is important to retain autonomy from Government, the idea is to support democratic change and to build a society that recognises the rights and responsibilities of all citizens. Weffort [1994; 42] points out that 'Social movements tend to mix demands for rights with calls for socio-economic reforms; workers demand, for example, higher wages, more employment and more freedom of organisation...'. I argue that it is now important for these organisations to move away from the struggle mentality and move towards more democratic notions of conflict and consensus. In this way, they can contribute to the consolidation of a new democracy. They can teach their members democratic practices and provide society with a model of 'lived democracy'.

My belief is concomitant with the contentions of Weffort [1994] who maintains that the social movements to which I have referred need to have a clearer vision of the future. Such groups should be able to move beyond the capacity to make demands to 'being able to articulate a coherent view of an alternative society or state.' At the present moment, he contends, they 'lack a project for a new state or new society.' Similarly, for leaders in a new democracy they must be conscious that even though we have a new Constitution, a bill of rights and various institutions in place it does not yet mean democracy is in place. Weffort [1994] warns that our leaders also need ongoing vigilance to ensure that they do not regress into the easy practice of authoritarianism. Citizen participation needs to be encouraged which necessarily involves knowledge, belief and trust in democracy and the process. To facilitate this, the leaders need to be seen to be democratised themselves. Their actions must therefore mirror 'lived democracy'.

Weffort [1994] also points out that during times of transition similar to that which has taken place in South Africa, there seems to be an inversion of Madison's conception of democracy. 'Madison's first precondition for democracy is a society capable of creating a Government and the second is a society capable of controlling the Government. ... (A)s Madison says, up to now our societies have proved much more able in bringing down a dictatorial Government than in creating a democratic Government' [Weffort, 1994; 41].

This should be a warning for South Africans not only during this time of transition but also for future Governments. Nationally, South Africans need to change past perceptions and attitudes towards leadership and move towards an ideal of constructive citizenship. I believe this move or change cannot

easily be achieved without some form of intervention, part of which should take place through education and training. It is through education that South Africans could gain a sense of empowerment and it is this sense, a sense of political self-esteem, that would enable them to participate politically as active citizens.

Although Diamond [1994] and Weffort [1994] are not in favour of perpetuating the form of civic participation of the past, they are not arguing against having a civil society in South Africa. In fact Diamond [1994] believes that civil society contributes to the strength of a democracy by providing citizens with an opportunity to exercise their 'political muscles'<sup>22</sup>. Both authors are not arguing against the involvement of past social movements, such as the trade unions and civic organisations. They are suggesting is that participation should be encouraged but that it should not be populist driven and exclusionary, '(T)he totalist, exclusivist, violent and intimidating nature' of many popular organisations in the townships, the absence of internal structures of democracy and a culture of intolerance now loom as major obstacles to the construction of a democratic civic culture. If such groups are able to understand the need to democratise themselves then, as Diamond [1994; 50] states, 'Civil society is the one place which will hopefully continue to inculcate [in people] the empowerment necessary for participation but at the same time teach basic skills of political participation'.

One must remember, however, that our democracy is still young and many citizens remain unaware of the role they could play in public politics, apart from voting. (This unawareness, I believe, is even applicable to some of our Government officials). Citizens express a sense of frustration about not knowing how to get involved, who to communicate with in the local Government and where to go with concerns or complaints. This lack of knowledge must be addressed or the problem will remain. The problem becomes especially visible when, for example, many South African citizens express a desire to participate in some way in their communities, be it through neighbourhood watch or community policing but they are either thwarted by Government itself or by lack of encouragement from the community.

There is a concern that Government will undermine legitimate attempts by the community to participate. This situation, it is argued, could stem from both the Government's and the citizens' lack of awareness of what is meant by citizen participation and could lead to dissatisfaction and frustration on the part of our citizens who may lose interest and withdraw or take the law into their own hands. What both leaders and society should be reminded of is that in terms of our new democratic dispensation many of our

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<sup>22</sup>Again not in overthrowing Governments but in learning to live and participate in a democracy.

parliamentary procedures, for example, were designed to foster participatory policy-making. Initially, when the procedures were new the Government made sincere attempts to foster participation and many policies were opened up for discussion and debate. Citizens at the time were not sure of what was expected of them but still many did participate in the early efforts.<sup>23</sup>

This element of debate can be seen as a start that was made by the new South African democracy to introduce deliberation into their policy making process. A cause for concern, however, is that apathy and frustration, on the part of both Government and its citizens, could interfere with ongoing attempts at deliberation. Such attempts could be by-passed by a ‘technocratic, expert, consultant-driven approach that assumes what the people want or need, with little or no consultation or participation by the people who need it’ [O’Malley, 1999; 151]. This would then place us back onto the path towards paternalism. We need participation so that democracy may thrive in South Africa. South African citizens need to realise that exclusion from participation is a form of subtle suppression that is in many ways more effective than overt intimidation and restraint. If this oppression is a part of our institutional makeup citizens often believe it to be normal and remain unaware that they can participate actively and effectively [Dewey, 1939; 14]. I must, however, re-iterate that the responsibility for participation lies with all the stakeholders involved and education must play its role in conveying this message.

In South Africa, the 1996 Constitution was a settlement negotiated by the major contenders for power in South Africa at the time. It was a Constitution that incorporated a number of checks and balances that any future Government would find difficult to override. These include a bill of fundamental rights, a largely independent judiciary, an independent media commission, and a number of other institutional structures established to protect and oversee our rights. In addition to the formal institutions and protections contained in the Constitution, there are a number of references to the need to maximize public participation in the development of policy and the legislative process and ensure accountability of Government [Zybrands, 1998; 206]. It could be said, in fact, that the spirit of the new Constitution is supportive of continuous interaction with the public plus an assurance that democracy is not restricted to elected Government structures. It was the intention of the original Constitution framers that our democracy would never again exclude citizens from being heard. Furthermore, a lot of initial attention was given to the ‘restructuring of the policy making process and obvious measures for including participation and consultation were made’ [Booyesen, 1999; 222].

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<sup>23</sup> Discussions and focus groups carried out nationally with respect to the drafting of Equality Legislation and also on Educational policy and the Schools Act.

There has always been a realisation that consolidation of our liberal democracy rests very much on ‘individual entrepreneurship both on a business and a civil society level’ [Venter, 1998; 20]. For example, the Constitution specifically provides that self-governance is important at local and provincial levels of Government. It also states that the provincial Government must be seen to be facilitating public involvement in the legislature and its committees and, with a few exceptions, provincial parliament should hold its business in a public manner [S118 South African Constitution, 1996]. At local Government level, the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making. In fact it clearly states in S152 (1)(e) of the Constitution that one of the ‘purposes’ of local Government is to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local Government’.

### ***2.5.2 Deliberative Democracy***

When thinking about models of democracy that reflect the ideals laid down in our Constitution, ideals such as respect for liberal values, acknowledgement of community, encouragement of participation in the making of policy and the protection of our democracy, I am left with the realisation that neither communitarianism nor political liberalism offer a complete answer. Aspects of each, as Gutmann [1996] says, cannot be overlooked as both offer value to a new democracy. I contend neither is complete in itself for the current South African context. Through political liberal thinking, our (the people of South Africa’s) rights and our identity are protected and in terms of communitarianism our traditions and cultures are acknowledged. But how best can participation and unity be encouraged without taking a strictly communitarian/ unity-based or individualistic approach? This remains the challenge. The latter, individualism, could be seen as promoting diversity but is, I contend, limited in its ability to promote unity in diversity. If democracy is to be a form of self-governance, the model that could facilitate participation and involve the kind of discussion, deliberation and communication amongst citizens that is envisaged in the Constitution is, I believe, deliberative democracy. As Mansbridge [1990; 17] says, ‘the quality of the deliberation is what makes or breaks a democracy.’ And it is in this area, the enhancement of quality in deliberation, that education could play a pivotal role.

The deliberative model’s attractiveness to democratic theory is that it reflects a form of democracy where citizens participate in public discussion on collective problems. It also advocates the type of discussion that citizens have been asking for in older more established democracies.<sup>24</sup> Good deliberation is more

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<sup>24</sup> According to research carried out by the Kettering Foundation people don’t want just any kind of talk. When answering a question asked about what kind of conversations citizens look for when sizing up problems, the response was that they would like a lot more dialogue than debate? [Mathews, 1999; 24]

than just debate, it gives citizens a chance to exert an influence over policy and produces, as a result of this involvement, the intellectual and emotional resources needed when accepting decisions that are not always favourable [Mansbridge, 1990; 17]. The discussion is active and, through deliberation, there emerges ‘a conception of democracy that understands politics as the meeting of people to understand public ends and politics in a rational way’ [Mansbridge, 1990]. The discussion is of a different form and nature to Rawls’ conception of deliberation through public reason. This deliberative model has different forms and structures that open up the debate. As Young [1996; 121] says:

(T)he model of deliberative democracy conceives of democracy as a process that creates a public, citizens coming together to talk about collective problems, goals, ideals and actions. Democratic processes are oriented around discussing this common good rather than competing for the private good of each.

Mansbridge [1990; 17] does warn that many theorists tend to conflate deliberation and the common good and this is incorrect. In this conflation, deliberation is framed in terms of ‘we’ and claims of self-interest are therefore invalid. Mansbridge [1990] disagrees with this understanding as she maintains that self-interest cannot be ruled out of the picture. Without self-interest, she argues, you lose sight of the reason behind why people are participating in the first place. In addition, the ‘we’ could become exclusionary as those who speak with a stronger more powerful voice have a habit of excluding the less powerful<sup>25</sup>. Mansbridge [1990; 18] believes that deliberation (debate) and the political process (which involves policy, legislation and governance) must be there ‘to make participants more aware of their real interests even if such interests result in conflict’.

In a democracy, conflict, in fact, is not something to be avoided. Rather, as Diamond [1994] contends, conflict is a vital part of the democratic process. He points out that without conflict, difference may be ignored. An inherent paradox in the democratic process is that we need both conflict and consensus; to ignore conflict is to ignore the ‘genuine’ tensions that emerge within a democracy; to overlook consensus could send a nation spiralling out of control and often to the point of violence. The answer therefore lies in a delicate balancing of conflict and consensus and to achieve this we need to develop a political culture where the value of bargaining, negotiation and compromise is recognised and encouraged. Deliberation becomes a societal norm, enhanced even in the preschool.

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<sup>25</sup> This is a point made later on in chapter two when looking at Young’s [1996] communicative model for deliberation.

It is deliberation that offers the opportunity to recognise difference and talk about it in an open and public forum where there can be a free and equal discussion. In such a forum, difference and diversity are welcome additions to the deliberative mix. The debate is open in varying degrees and there are few if any limits placed on the agenda. As Benhabib [1996; 75] points out ‘the deliberative model insists upon the openness of the agenda of public debate.’ It is this openness, I argue, South Africa needs as her citizens face the challenges of transformation and transparency.

Benhabib’s [1996] description of a deliberative model and the openness of public debate contrasts with Rawls’ [1992] notion of public reason. Rawls [1992] limits the process, the content and who (public and non-public) can participate. He advocates for a specific type of stability which cannot be created through coercion because it needs to be as a result of peoples’ reasoned acceptance. What is common to both authors is their support for the same fundamental premise that legitimacy can only exist where people come together, freely and equally, and accept certain uses of political power. Both agree that it is crucial for ‘the justice of institutions to be a public process, open to all citizens and subject to their examination’ (Benhabib, 1996; 75). But the two writers differ when it comes to how public the public process is and the degree of scrutiny that should be applied to all practices in a democracy. A deliberative democracy, as advocated by both Benhabib [1996] and Cohen [1996], displays many features that are less restrictive and more open to public scrutiny and participation than the Rawlsian model of deliberative democracy. Benhabib [1996; 76] lists three areas where she believes a deliberative model of democracy is less limiting; firstly it does not restrict the agenda of public conversation, ‘in fact it encourages discourse about the lines separating the public from the private’, secondly it locates the public sphere in civil society and thirdly unlike Rawls’ [1992] model the processes of opinion formation are noncoercive and unrestricted in the public sphere.

Mansbridge [1990] develops the question of the agenda of public conversation further and argues that although deliberation is not about merging the public with the private, ‘it does require seeing relations formed in the private... as reasonable models for, or moving towards, some forms of public spirit.’<sup>26</sup>

In terms of the second area, Weffort [1994] refers to how the deliberative model locates the public sphere in civil society. This is particularly significant in South Africa where the Constitution states that the best place for much of the public participation and access to legislative processes is at a civil society

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<sup>26</sup> Mansbridge [1990; 18] is arguing for the feminist contribution to deliberation where political vocabulary should move beyond merely being based on power to integrating a vocabulary based on care and emotion as well. To being attestative to relationships.

level. In this way we could constructively use already powerful groups from our past; providing, of course, that these groups are able to shift from destructive to constructive modes of interacting with Government and other institutions.

It is in terms of this notion of civil society participating as a constructive public force for democracy in South Africa, that Rawls' [1992] model of political liberalism loses much of its legitimacy. He believes that the public sphere is not located 'in civil society but in the state and its organisations, including first and foremost the legal sphere and its institutions.'<sup>27</sup>

Finally, the deliberative model focuses on 'non-coercive and non-final processes of opinion formation in an unrestricted public sphere.' Benhabib [1996; 76] points out that the deliberative model is open to 'all contestable, rhetorical, affective impassioned elements of public discourse.' The outcome sought is consensus on the common good. With respect to finding consensus on the common good, a number of theorists have voiced some concerns. Young [1996] and Mansbridge [1990] both believe that the notion of common good is not necessarily part of the deliberative process and can become exclusionary in practice.<sup>28</sup>

### **2.5.3 *Communicative Democracy***

Because the deliberative processes discussed above can be exclusionary Young [1996] proposes a communicative version of the deliberative model. In the standard deliberative model there is an assumption that unity is a goal or a starting point and this tends to restrict the deliberation to argument which can lead to exclusions<sup>29</sup>. In addition where unity is sought in a discussion, either in the beginning or as a goal, it directs the discussion, in some way, from the start and limits the diversity of opinions expressed. To Young [1996] diverse opinions, expressed in a discussion, are constructive as diversity can change our perspectives significantly and there is 'something to be learned from the other perspectives'. Diamond [1994] and Honig [1996] add their voices to this contention and Honig takes her argument even further. Honig [1996; 270] advocates the active encouragement of difference saying that instead of

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<sup>27</sup> The legal sphere was one area, during the apartheid years, where apartheid could have been challenged but there were very few challengers to be found. The legal system has been very white, very male and conservative for many years and it is only recently, with pressure from above, that changes have been made. It will take many years for the legal system to regain its legitimacy. There are small notable pockets of change particularly at higher court level but it is at the lower courts where change needs to take place significantly.

<sup>28</sup> See later re comments made by Mansbridge [1990] with respect to certain theorists mistakenly conflating deliberation with common good.

<sup>29</sup> As often there are implicit cultural biases which can lead to exclusion.

one trying to reconcile these issues there should be a coalition that is in ‘perpetual motion of mutuality, engagement, struggle and debt.’ It is the power of these decentred subjects that manages to challenge and energize ‘social democracies’ [Honig, 1996; 270].

Mansbridge [1990] believes that answers to the problem of unity, discussed above, can be found in feminist writings because they can correct the vision of both the unrealistically hard-nose political scientists and the deliberative theorists. Good deliberation lies in the deliberative process incorporating the skills of care, listening and emotion [Mansbridge, 1990; 17]. This claim resonates, for me, with South Africa’s educational vision where skills, values and attitudes are emphasised alongside knowledge. Learners, according to the New Revised Curriculum Statement [2001], must ‘demonstrate the ability to listen actively’ and this ability is multi-faceted with a number of affective components.

A further criticism of the standard deliberative model, voiced by Young [1996], that resonates within a South African reality, is her concern about inequality in the deliberative process. Often, even with diverse representation in a discussion, the cultural differences and social positions of people can affect the play of power. Many people are prevented from speaking in public forums because some forms of speech are valued above others. According to Young [1996] the dominant form of deliberation is a western form of communication that is historically male, elitist and exclusionary. This form of deliberation is thus culturally specific and can operate as another form of power that can exclude and silence. She points out that there are certain forms of speech that are recognised as necessary in a debate or discussion and such speech follows a particular pattern or structure. One can see this where Cohen [1996] speaks about ‘public reasoning’ that is preferred to ‘public discussion’. And where Benhabib [1996] says that the process of ‘articulating good reasons in public’ makes people provide considered and presumably well-constructed reasons. Young [1996; 124] says that such speech can be formal and dispassionate. It is as if there is an opposition between mind and body, reason and emotion. Young [1996] advocates that if a theory of democracy is said to be discussion-based then it must be so.

A discussion-based theory should accommodate broader norms and styles of speaking and take in the plurality of ways that reflects the society itself. Young [1996] argues for a more ‘communicative democracy’ which takes on a more broader conception of communication incorporating elements such as greeting, rhetoric and story telling. Mansbridge [1990] similarly sees certain forms of deliberation as exclusionary. For her this exclusion occurs when deliberation turns into a demonstration of logic as many people are inexperienced in this form of speech. In such instances the deliberation becomes

unrepresentative. This is something that we have to take particular notice of in South Africa<sup>30</sup> just because one group or an individual is unable to reason as well as another it should not mean that one opinion is greater than the other or more relevant to the discussion.

Other criticisms of the standard deliberative model question the foundations of deliberation. What is of particular interest here is a conceptual question put forward by Michaelman [1997] where he queries how a theory can be considered deliberative if involvement of the people occurs only after establishment of the laws and procedures. In South Africa many people have asked a similar question; ‘If we are a democracy now, how come I never had a say in the drawing up of the Constitution?’ Surely, if the people are to deliberate on these issues then they should be involved from the start and all the time?’ Michaelman [1997] argues that deliberative democracy by its very definition is conceptually incoherent because the dedicated pursuit of such a notion could become a conceptual impossibility.

It opens up a question about the legitimacy of our new Constitution because if rule by the people means rule by everyone then the law should be subject to the ongoing authorship of the country’s people. Therefore, in a deliberative democracy, there must be system in place that results in legislative outputs that are subject to the approval of those so affected. But who puts those systems in place?

It could be said that in negotiating the new Constitution, South Africa did come as close to Michaelmans’ [1997] ideal of deliberation as it possibly could. It would be farcical to attempt to negotiate or deliberate with all citizens in South Africa but representation was as broad as it could be and as a result of the deliberations a new Constitution was drawn up. Baynes [1997] offers a viable solution to Michaelman’s problem of legitimacy and maybe to our own question of constitutional legitimacy. The answer lies in tradition. Why do we have to constantly attempt to reinvent ourselves when historically we have centuries of governance and knowledge of previous Constitution making traditions which may serve as a guide?

## **2.6 Conclusion**

In South Africa many of these theoretical questions have been answered on paper, and through policy initiatives. The future of democracy depends on South Africans taking ownership of their Constitution through their lived practice. What I believe is that the deliberative model, advocated by both Mansbridge [1990] and Young [1996], is a model that can accommodate the type of participation envisaged by the

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<sup>30</sup> We also have very rural, poor communities; must they be excluded because they have not had the same education or experience as the better more experienced speakers?

framers of our Constitution. South Africans have seen the efficacy of popular dialogue in the publicity leading up to the final Constitution. We should not lose the momentum of that moment. The strength and effectiveness of our democracy lies in encouraging and allowing debate to continue to take place in a constructive and inclusive manner for all South Africans. A catalyst that could help this process to root and grow is education. Education is in an ideal position to ensure that all citizens have:

- open access to information
- confidence and ability to communicate effectively<sup>31</sup>
- opportunity to participate in public within the classroom and/or school
- confidence, power and knowledge to turn a principle into an action.

If democratic theory is to become ‘lived practice’ educators are faced with a vast task. How can they begin to meet it? In the next chapter, I explore how the deliberative framework I have discussed may be used to assist in closing the distance between theory and practice. I consider, in other words, how education and educators can link theory and practice so that democracy becomes a constructive, participatory and deliberative way of life for all South Africans.

Another key theoretical construct that informs the aforementioned vision is Vygotsky’s [1978] notion of internalisation. I have already argued that South Africa’s realisation of democracy rests on her educators internalising ‘lived democracy’ and, as a result, feeling both an ownership and commitment to democracy as a lived practice. It is Vygotsky’s [1978] theory of social constructivism that deals with this notion of internalisation. Internalisation is the process whereby the individual, through participation in interpersonal interaction in which cultural ways of thinking are demonstrated in action, is able to appropriate them so they become transformed from being social phenomena to being part of his or her own intrapersonal mental functioning [Cole, in Forman et al., 1993; 63].

This section has captured some key claims in the debate around deliberation and its purported ability to generate exclusion, struggle, consensus and energy, depending, of course, on the perspective you embrace.

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<sup>31</sup> As Enslin, et al. [2001; 124] point out; ‘Deliberation has a formative role in enabling an individual to reflect critically on her views and to order them coherently. Requiring students to articulate their views in the proto-public sphere of the classroom forces them to consider what would count as good reasons for all involved.’

## **CHAPTER THREE: EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In Chapter Two I mentioned that South Africa's democracy has emerged from a hybrid of interrelated factors all contributing to a particular South African Constitution which, over time, will determine a particular South African democracy. I further argued that the interpretation of democracy that is best suited to meeting the vision of citizen participation, as set out in our Constitution, is that of deliberative democracy. This would be a deliberative democracy as envisaged by Mansbridge [1990] and Young [1996] where difference is accommodated and civil society plays an integral part in participatory governance. All of these factors remain academic if citizens are unable to accept that they too have a significant role to play in the practice of democracy and that they need to move away from being subjects in a country into becoming participants to a democracy. The (conceptual) difficulty is how these various theoretical arguments can become part of a lived practice or as Dewey [1970] sees it, as a way of life. In this chapter I put forward a view that education is the pathway between theory and practice. How this notion can best be applied in the current South African situation is explored in relation to the theory of citizenship.

### **3.2 Citizen Participation**

For democracy to thrive in South Africa citizens need to accept that not only do they possess the freedoms, rights and protections as set down in the Constitution but that they also have reciprocal duties and obligations [Venter, 1998]. According to Diamond [1994] South Africans need to develop a democratic political culture. When citizens develop a culture of democracy they start to understand the importance of participation and as a result acknowledge that institutions have been established for, and are to be utilised by, citizens.

Participation does not come naturally, particularly in a country that has been subjected to an authoritarian, patriarchal form of governance for many years and where many South Africans were denied their citizenship. South Africans may have either been complacent or rebellious during this time but there was an uncomfortable certainty in the established rules and practices. Transformation came unexpectedly for many and when the old rules were no longer applicable people were thrown into uncertainty. O'Malley [1999; 138] refers to this condition as anomie, the need to adjust to changing conditions and the difficulty people have without clear rules to guide them. With the transformation relationships between races changed and at times roles reversed, values were challenged and established attitudes and perceptions were unravelled and needed reassessment. The resulting uncertainty introduced a number of shifts and

dilemmas. Violence of a political nature ended and criminal violence appeared leaving many people with the perception that the past was a safer place. To re-establish this sense of security is going to take some time and work, not only from Government and its institutions but also through citizens working together. It is therefore important that citizens are encouraged to know about and are able to access their rights and responsibilities and that there is reciprocal acceptance by Government of its responsibilities to citizens, the country and the Constitution.

In a democracy ordinary citizens hold a multitude of roles, including the role of parent, breadwinner or teacher, and these are responsibilities that take up a citizen's time [Diamond, 1994]. Citizen participation is seen as yet another role and one for which people often claim they have no time. Government on the other hand has a reciprocal duty to encourage and accommodate citizen participation. The question is; how can Government encourage participation and ensure that citizens believe in the process?

The Constitution has made specific provision for public access to the legislative process. In the Gauteng Provincial Legislature a 'petitions and public participation process' has been institutionalised. The task of the standing committee and its administrators is to oversee the receipt and action of all petitions from the public but to enlist the participation of citizens from disadvantaged communities [Besdzick, 1998; 186]. My concern is where the average citizen goes to find out about participating in these processes. Where does someone in a rural community, or an educator, or the person on the street become more informed or exposed to participation in government? Civil Society can offer some relief to the frustration of the average citizen but the problem remains that if you were previously unaware of your rights or never had access to the necessary information, you remain unaware. Information is not freely available, simply given or easy to follow. In addition how accessible are Government structures when faced with citizens participating and how much weight does a citizen's opinion carry?

Bobbio [1989; 56] advocates that civil society is important in modern democracies because nowadays the indicators of a democratic process 'cannot be provided by the number of people who have the right to vote but the number of contexts outside politics where the right to vote is exercised'. In other words the criteria for judging a country's state of democratisation cannot be based solely on who votes but needs to extend into an evaluation of the spaces that are available for citizens to exercise their right to be heard.

Knowledge of governance or democracy is not innate and it should therefore be the initial responsibility of Government to ensure that there are ongoing programmes set up to inform and educate the public.

In return, over time, citizens will become aware of the resources available and with more information citizens may be prepared to take responsibility and participate more effectively in civil society and therefore democracy. At present Government is sadly lacking in providing access to the sort of information citizens need to make responsible, informed choices. Additionally educational institutions need to approach the question of developing a culture of democracy so that young South Africans learn about the values, attitudes and behaviours that are supportive of democracy. There are obviously other places where democracy can be taught and learnt but it is in schools where a greater number of young citizens can start to participate in and be exposed to a democratic way of life.

### **3.3 Education and Citizenship**

#### **3.3.1 Preamble**

What should be taught and learned in schools with respect to democracy and citizenship depends on our past, the history of South Africa, and the struggles that have taken place over time. Now, as a result of recent struggles and negotiations, we have a constitutional democracy where rights have been extended to include all those groups who were previously excluded. These rights and obligations of citizens are protected in the formal framework of a liberal Constitution. In addition to the formal protections there are the requirements for citizen representation, participation and access as mentioned above. The dynamics of South Africa's past have determined that the new South African dispensation intends to ensure that citizens participate beyond elections and that all voices are heard. What needs to be defined therefore is the form and extent of the participation. As McLaughlin [1992; 237] points out the state's attitude towards citizenship depends on the 'degree of critical understanding and questioning that is seen necessary to citizenship.'

In South Africa the concept of citizenship is politically charged. For the majority of South Africans the struggle was about achieving inclusion and equality. It was about getting a chance to live a normal life. In the formal framework of the South African Constitution citizenship is described in S3 as 'a common South African citizenship.' The following sub-sections then briefly explain that 'the citizens of South Africa are equally entitled to rights' and 'equally subjected to duties.' Generally writers such as McLaughlin [1992] and Carr [1991] argue that, like democracy, citizenship is an essentially contested topic and it is therefore difficult to define.

But if we do not seek a definition of citizenship how can it exist outside of an abstract conception, how can it be more than a word? Marshall [1950] unpacks citizenship by looking back into its past. To him

citizenship is fundamentally ‘a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed’ [Marshall, 1950; 175].

### ***3.3.2 Equality and Citizenship***

Citizenship is a notion of equality; all who are entitled to become citizens see themselves, and are considered, equal. In the South African Constitution citizens, unlike in the previous dispensation, now have the right to full and equal political rights irrespective of race, colour, gender, creed or origin. But where differences exist, be it through class distinctions or other social distinctions, this equality may become superficial or a mere formality. In the Constitution there is a formal<sup>32</sup> recognition of the equal status of all South African citizens but because of our past and the society from which we have developed, the elite citizen may be seen as being ‘more equal than others.’ There is no denying that the right to equality does not mean that everyone must be treated identically but where distinctions are made and, in the case of South Africa, where differences were legally enforced, many people were unable to rise to their full potential. Education systems differed between races. Under apartheid educational resources were limited for the majority of black South Africans, teachers were under-qualified, schools lacked facilities and students were disenchanted. As a result of these inequalities, equality may become an unachievable goal without some form of state assistance or interference to kick-start the transformation. Marshall [1950; 173] speaks of the equality that citizenship provides as being a veil to the inequality existing in society because of class differences and that ‘citizenship... becomes, in certain respects, the architect of legitimate social inequality’. What he suggests is that where there is inequality as a result of difference, the social rights of citizens need to be adequately addressed<sup>33</sup>. At the same time citizens need to remain vigilant and observe their duties just as much as their rights. To him for example, citizens in South Africa would need to carry out certain acts with a lively sense of responsibility towards the welfare of the community. This does not mean that citizens would be expected to give up their individual liberty in so doing. For Marshall [1950] full and effective citizenship would mean that the formal rights of equality and liberty should be extended to include substantive equality, to take into account difference. In some liberal societies where substantive equality is absent citizenship

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<sup>32</sup> ‘Formal equality presupposes that all persons are equal bearers of rights within a social order, the problem is that formal equality ignores actual social or economic disparities between groups and individuals and constructs standards which appear to be neutral, but which in truth embody a set of particular needs and experiences which derive from socially privileged groups. [Albertyn and Kentridge, 1994].

<sup>33</sup> The provision for socio-economic rights in the Constitution is an important step towards enabling substantive equality in South Africa.

can and does become a meaningless exercise. It is through the inclusion of socio-economic rights that citizens who have been previously disadvantaged because of racial or gender exclusion can achieve full citizenship in the future. As Lister [1997; 33] points out, although civil and political rights are obviously important, it is the social rights that ‘buttress’ these rights and contribute to ‘then weakening the effect of inequalities of power in the private sphere.’

The South African Constitution includes socio-economic rights for all citizens and has taken that important step towards an inclusive conception of citizenship. But having these rights on paper is not enough to guarantee their protection. It is the participation of citizens themselves in policy making and in political processes that will ensure the ongoing exercise of those rights. These rights need to be ‘living rights’ and citizens need to become aware of such rights in order to effectively participate in or to comment on issues that concern them.

### ***3.3.3 Difference and Citizenship***

Another concept that I believe is connected to citizenship and education for citizenship is the notion of difference. This becomes more of a concern when the state calls for a common national identity. In terms of the preamble to the South African Constitution South Africa is for all its people; ‘We the people of South Africa... believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity’ [South African Constitution, 1996]. Undeniably there is a need by Government to turn the past around and to move onto building a South Africa with a common citizenship for all. Unfortunately for South Africa this idea of nation building can at times sound like the nationalist call from the past. The question is ‘so whose nation are we building?’ Weffort [1994] warns that new democracies must be vigilant in their awareness of the past and be wary of slipping back into old practices. He is aware that in other new democracies the past has influenced their future, sometimes in a negative way. The state’s responsibility lies in facilitating the process of nation building but not enforcing it. An awareness of social justice and democracy needs to be encouraged in a democratic country. In schools young citizens should be exposed to democracy and human rights as a way of life. The hope is that they will learn to respect the values and attitudes that follow which in turn will influence future citizens in developing their own togetherness.

Difference is an essential part of the South African identity and it should not be ignored or assimilated into a greater view of nation and unity. Because identity is multi-layered the notion of plurality or difference defies easy definitions of what is a citizen. In a nation the different should actively be encouraged and it is the ‘perpetual motion of mutuality, engagement, struggle and debt that manages to challenge and

energise social democracies' [Honig, 1996]. Having a national identity is not necessarily a unifying concept because it can cancel or subsume cultural difference. As citizens living in a democracy we should feel comfortable about critically evaluating such 'universal mores' or other policy issues where difference is threatened. Constructive criticism should not be discouraged, speaking out against wrong and being wary of attitudes inherited from the past are all important aspects that should be encouraged in our new democracy<sup>34</sup>. Patriotism can produce togetherness but it can also alienate and where power is abused practises such as xenophobia, racism, gender exclusion and cultural hatred could emerge. As Giliomee et al. [1994; 182] say 'We are not sure how relevant this particular element may be'. They suggest that there may be a minimum requirement of acceptance of one citizen's right to exist but there is no need 'to like or love each other' [Giliomee et al., 1994; 183]. The idea is to not force people to be unified and that as stated before, unity may be a result of democracy being seen to work. It is possibly dangerous if difference is presented as an insurmountable obstacle especially in South Africa. Many South Africans are already starting to see themselves as sharing a common country.

### ***3.3.4 Democratic Attitudes***

In South Africa when considering citizenship and education for citizenship we should not lose sight of the past and the exclusions that took place. It is important in the new South Africa that citizens are encouraged to become involved in shaping national goals and policies to ensure that their concerns are heard. Participation is important at two levels, formally, to guarantee the protection of our Constitution and the rights held therein and substantively, to ensure that substantive rights are enforced and representative of the constituencies they are supposed to protect. Almond and Verba [1965] believe in encouraging a civic culture to ensure representation and a democratic citizenry. They believe attitudes that support a democratic civic culture should comprise an acceptance and an awareness of policy choices, political preferences and opinions. These should include an awareness of the social and economic realities that exist, a tolerance of the divergent interests of others, a critical awareness of the political choices individuals may make and a sufficient trust in elections. Citizens should be encouraged to deliberate either as individuals or as part of civil society and this requires a degree of understanding about political processes. Citizens need to be critically aware and well informed about the structures of Government and the manner in which they can participate, for example through civil society. Citizens

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<sup>34</sup> In a recent interview with the Weekly Mail [March 2-8 2001] Mandela stated, '[W]e must always welcome differences of opinion. They will always be there. One of the most effective weapons in dealing with different opinions is tolerance and the ability to take criticism and not to personalise it, even if a prominent individual is specifically identified and becomes a target for criticism.'

also need to understand the type of democracy that is in place and the many facets of this democracy, both formal and informal.

But how does this translate into a practical solution for democratisation of South Africa? How do we encourage citizens to participate in their democracy be it as an individual or through civil society? Where can the values and attitudes necessary for the future of a democracy become lived practice?

### **3.3.5 *Democratic Citizenship***

Wherever there is an attempt to educate for citizenship in a pluralistic democratic society, philosophical problems will arise because ‘such a society seeks to balance its elements of social and cultural diversity with those of cohesion’ [McLaughlin, 1992; 236]. McLaughlin [1992] suggests that the ambiguities around the concept of citizenship can be dealt with by creating a measure, a yardstick, against which one can refer to citizenship in terms of a minimal or a maximal interpretation. Against this yardstick or continuum we should measure the notion of citizenship using the four features he regards as essential for a democratic citizen. The features he identifies as important to citizenship are the identity that is conferred upon the individual, virtues of the citizen that are required, the extent of political involvement and social prerequisites necessary for effective citizenship. The notion of citizenship can then be measured using these four features and giving them a minimal or maximal interpretation. For the purposes of this research the continuum may also be used in relation to ‘education for citizenship.’ To McLaughlin [1992] an example of a minimal interpretation in the context of education for citizenship would be a main concern with the provision of information and the development of virtues of immediate and local focus. Citizenship is seen merely in formal legal juridical terms. On the other side of the continuum lies the maximal interpretation of education for citizenship. This requires a more comprehensive educational programme in which the development of broad critical understanding, with a wide range of dispositions and virtues in light of a general liberal and political education, are seen as crucial. McLaughlin [1992] does warn that this measurement is not a set of distinct conceptions but a continuum of interpretation.

### **3.4 *South African Citizenship Education***

It is my contention that McLaughlin’s [1992] continuum could assist South Africa, to some degree, in defining South African citizenship and that this could, in turn, help in a more effective incorporation of democratic education into our schools. The choice of definition could be based on a minimal or maximal interpretation. To decide on which part of the continuum one would interpret the concept of citizenship and democracy education depends on the vision of democracy held by the particular society.

This intention is reflected in recent policy documents all of which are underpinned by the values and principles contained in the South African Constitution. For example the South African Schools Act clearly indicates that education can contribute to fundamental social reform and can play a role in shaping our democratic civic culture [Preamble of South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996].

A number of educational policy documents reflect this same intention to reform and transform the previous educational system. A more recent document, the Revised National Curriculum Statement [RNCS, 2002] working in conjunction with Curriculum 2005, emphasises the need for a paradigm shift from the traditional aims and objectives of the past to an outcomes based approach. To determine how education for citizenship is interpreted in the South African context I have chosen to refer to the new curriculum structure contained in Curriculum 2005 with reference to the Revised National Curriculum Statement [RNCS, 2002].

Curriculum 2005 [1997] introduced a new curriculum framework for South African learners and educators. The goal of Curriculum 2005 was to provide learners with opportunities to develop their full potential as active, responsible and fulfilled citizens who play a constructive role in a democratic, non-racist and equitable society [C2005; 6]. The later introduction of the RNCS was aimed at streamlining and strengthening Curriculum 2005 and did not introduce another new curriculum; 'Curriculum 2005 was streamlined between January and July 2001 in order to ensure that these goals and vision are easily realised in the classroom' [Draft RNCS, 2001; 4].

In order to determine where South Africa's conception of citizenship and democracy fits into McLaughlin's [1992] continuum it would be necessary, according to him, to study the type of descriptive language used in both curriculum documents. For example, he argues that where a document makes reference to (mere) information, this indicates a minimalist interpretation. But where a document speaks of 'independence of thought on social and moral issues' or 'an active concern for human rights' then there is movement towards a maximalist reading. With this in mind I refer to portions of these learning areas to prove my argument that the concept of citizenship education and democratic participation in curriculum 2005 and RNCS leans more towards a maximal interpretation.

For example the earlier C2005 learning area, Social Sciences, specifically refers to democracy and citizenship. The first specific outcome for Social Sciences states that learners need to: 'demonstrate a critical understanding of how South African society has changed and developed.' The hope was that learners will develop the 'attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding so as to locate

themselves in their own society, history, and country, within a global context'. This helps learners develop a meaningful and critical sense of self worth and identity which gives them the confidence to exercise their full rights and responsibilities as citizens [Curriculum 2005; HSS 4].

In the streamlined version of the RNCS the purpose of the learning area Social Sciences is to: 'develop an awareness of how we influence our future by confronting and challenging economic and social inequality...to build a non racial democratic present and future' [RNCS; 2002]. Of the six learning outcomes named in terms of this learning area one learning outcome states that its purpose is to enable learners to become 'critically responsible citizens within a context where human and environmental rights are fostered' [RNCS; 2002].

In the earlier C2005 learning area, Life Orientation, specific outcomes are founded on a conviction that a human rights culture should form the basis of South African society. In this learning area two of the outcomes sought to instil, in the learners, a respect for the rights of people to hold personal beliefs and values and to also demonstrate value and respect for Human Rights as reflected in Ubuntu. In the later RNCS life orientation's purpose is defined as; 'enabling the learner to demonstrate an understanding of and a commitment to constitutional rights and responsibilities and to show an understanding of diverse cultures and religions [RNCS, 2002]. The RNCS also states in the outcomes for Life Orientation that the learner should know about and should enforce his/her rights and responsibilities as set out in the South African Constitution and that this learner should be 'encouraged to recognise and oppose unfair discrimination' [RNCS, 2002].

These outcomes and the rationale behind them suggest that the intention of the curriculum is, as McLaughlin [1992; 238] says, 'to encourage broad critical reflection, and to encourage understanding informed by political and general education'. In other words a maximal interpretation of citizenship education is proposed. McLaughlin [1992; 240] does warn that there is a concern about applying a maximal conception of education for citizenship. He fears that maximalist interpretations, given the range of controversial questions which they engender, are in danger of presupposing a substantive set of public virtues which may exceed the principled consensus.

Writing from the context of the United Kingdom his solution to this problem is to suggest that there should be greater consultation at national level, where all parties concerned should become involved. In South Africa the formulation of Outcomes Based Education and C2005 purported to be an attempt at approaching education from a more consultative level. Many argue that this is not the case. According

to Baxen and Soudien [1999; 136] from the start of the educational reform initiatives ‘the powerful hand of the formal bureaucracy was apparent in the construction of reform and its content’. This is cause for some concern because, as is pointed out earlier in this chapter, fundamental to our social and educational transformation is the need to move from a past marred with authoritarianism to a future where our processes are transparent and participatory.

The subsequent research design was informed by the author’s recognition that participation and transparency are important components of the democratic process. In the following chapters I examine the attitudes and the perceptions of educators with respect to democratic change and the change in educational policy. It is in these chapters that educators are given an opportunity to have a voice, small as it may be.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Research Design**

As stated in the introduction my personal interest in the attitudes and perceptions of a group of educators, at a specific time in South Africa, came about as a result of interactions I had with educators whilst conducting a course in Democracy at Johannesburg College of Education. This interaction led to my realisation that educators came to lectures with certain pre-held attitudes about democratic transformation in South Africa. These attitudes often influenced the way in which the educators understood the input they received, or were prepared to receive, in lectures. I was interested, as a researcher, in exploring these attitudes and perceptions further as I hoped to gain a clearer understanding of the educators' personal experiences within their particular contexts<sup>35</sup>. The research design was therefore based on exploring the nature of these experiences.

Firstly my study aims at capturing the educators' perceptions and attitudes towards transformation in South Africa. Secondly the study explores how these perceptions influenced the understanding and/or acceptance of democracy and democratic practice.

Because the focus of the research remained on the educators' words, their personal narratives and experiences and the meaning within these narratives I chose to use a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research seeks to 'examine people's words and actions in narrative or descriptive ways more closely representing the situation as experienced by the participants [De Vos et al., 1998; 40].

### **4.2 Methodology- Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is significantly different from quantitative research. It is emergent and interpretative in nature whereas quantitative research is based on observations that are converted into discrete units by using statistical analysis, a more positivist position. Although quantitative research has, for years, held the position of being the dominant scientific method it is not the only method of research<sup>36</sup>. The choice of the method used therefore depends on the researchers' paradigm<sup>37</sup> and the questions being asked. In this study I am interested in exploring the educators' words and qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, is a method geared towards the gathering of words. In qualitative research words are the data. Maykut and Morehouse [2002; 18] sum this up when they say, 'Words are the way that most people

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<sup>35</sup> Within the School of Education and schools.

<sup>36</sup> Maxwell [1996], Maykut and Morehouse [2002] argue that there is more than just one scientific method.

<sup>37</sup> An understanding of the researchers nature of reality and the relationship therefore s/he had with reality.

come to understand their situations. We create our world with words. We explain ourselves with words'. In Chapter Five I look for the patterns within these words and analyse them in such a way as to represent the context from which they come.

The qualitative approach I have chosen for gathering most of my data is called focus group research. This is a form of group interview where 'dynamic group interactions are emphasised, amongst other things' [Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; 104]. By using this method I explore a deeper, more contextual level of understanding and move away from sweeping generalisations<sup>38</sup>. I believe that by using group interviews participants are encouraged to share in and explore new ideas in a stimulating environment. As stated in Maykut and Morehouse [1994; 105], 'Group interviews are especially useful for investigating what people think and for uncovering why people think as they do'. This method enhances the importance of human experience and human situations, as the emphasis is on the human as the instrument of research. This means that it is necessary for the researcher to 'gain an understanding of the persons or the situation, and to *ensure* (my italics) that it is meaningful for all those involved in the inquiry' [Maykut, 1994; 19].

Data for qualitative research is gathered in a number of ways, specifically in ways where words or stories can be assimilated. Some of the most useful forms of data gathering are found in a variety of interview techniques. These range from group interviews, in the form of focus groups as mentioned above and described in detail below, or one-on-one interviews, as well as other methods such as observation, fieldwork and, in my case, observation in the form of journals. The journal observations act as an 'add-on' to the focus group discussions and are only used in the section discussing democratic change and lived practice.

Although the majority of the data is gathered through focus group interviews (Appendix A.1) I have not excluded the use of other formal instruments, like questionnaires (Appendix A.2). In doing so I take heed of the warning delivered by Maykut and Morehouse [2002; 46] who note that when a researcher uses other instrumentation it is important the instrumentation remains 'grounded in the data and inductively drawn from the data s/he has already collected'.

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<sup>38</sup> Often statistical data, gathered through surveys or questionnaires, can depict the views of a wider number of respondents but the questions are specific and not exploratory in nature. By selecting a qualitative research method researchers can read the 'why' behind the responses that people give.

### 4.3 Research Method

The reason I am attracted to the use of focus groups is because it is a methodology that reflects the dynamics of the participants I am interviewing. The focus groups held at Johannesburg College of Education were small group interviews consisting of approximately six to ten participants. Ordinarily these groups comprise participants who are specifically recruited in terms of demographic, social and/or political criteria. Unfortunately, with respect to the groups held at the school, it was not always possible to achieve the balance intended as participation was dependent on those who were interested and took the time to attend.

Demographic information for Focus Group interviews:

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Educators: Female</b>	<b>Preservice: Female</b>	<b>Preservice: Male</b>	<b>Inservice: Male and female</b>
<b>Age:</b>	25 – 40 years	20 – 25 years	20 – 25 years	25 – 50 years
<b>Race<sup>39</sup>:</b>	Mixed races	Mixed races	Mixed races	Black
<b>Placement:</b>	College of Education: work	College: study	College: study	Vosloorus, Tembisa Katlehong, Soweto <sup>40</sup>
<b>Experience:</b>	Average; 13 years	3 <sup>rd</sup> year of study	3 <sup>rd</sup> year of study	Average; 28 years

**Figure 4.1: Focus Groups conducted at a college of education**

Interviews were conducted by a male moderator, from the Street Law office, and myself. During an interview the moderator facilitates the discussion using a discussion guide, which is a form of a focus group road map (see Appendix A.1). Moderators are expected to keep the conversation flowing and to encourage spontaneous and open interaction between participants. A typical focus group interview can last about two hours and during that time participants share their feelings, perceptions and orientations on a range of topics [Booyesen, 1999; 7]. To ensure the moderator’s full attention throughout the interview process all interviews are tape recorded and then transcribed.

The discussion guide is an integral part of the data gathering process and even though the interviews appear relaxed and spontaneous the moderator must not stray too far from the discussion guide. A

<sup>39</sup> The importance of specifying race is for demographic purposes and to understand the perceptions of the different communities involved at the school of education

<sup>40</sup> Not all areas of work were specified

focus group interview is not a hit and miss interview but an in-depth interview where questions can be interchanged or even omitted depending on group dynamics and responses being elicited.

The guide used in this study consisted of four components: an introduction, a warm-up section, a main body and then a closure section. The guide was developed so that interviews could progress from a light introductory talk into a deeper discussion on the participants' thoughts and feelings during the latter portion of the interview. The focus of the questions in the discussion guide were to assess the:

- Attitudes and feelings towards the process of transformation in South Africa.
- Attitudes and feelings towards transformation in education.
- Awareness and understanding of democracy and the South African Constitution.
- Opinions of the relationship between citizen rights and obligations

When analysing qualitative data either an inductive, open-ended approach or a deductive, structured approach can be applied. The inductive approach is of specific importance in my research. In my analysis the verbal responses of the groups were reviewed and recurrent patterns, similarities and differences sought. These clusters of responses, feelings and emotions expressed are important in the first phase of the focus group analysis. It is here that I look at the study through the eyes of the respondents. In the second phase of analysis I disengage and look for trends or deviations from the trends. From this, the various points of view are brought together, analysed and reported.

Following the focus group discussions and in order to obtain a wider sample of responses questionnaires<sup>41</sup> (Appendix A.2) were distributed amongst preservice and inservice educators<sup>42</sup> registered for a Street Law course at the College of Education. Pre- and post-tests were distributed amongst the preservice and inservice educators. Preservice educators returned both tests but at the completion of the inservice course most educators failed to answer all the post-test questions. Post-evaluation of the inservice course was therefore based on reflective journals filled in by inservice educators. The following diagram sets out the distribution and collection of data based on questionnaires and journals:

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<sup>41</sup> The questionnaire aimed at evaluating, in a positivistic manner, the number of respondents who agreed or disagreed about issues on democratic and educational change. Most questions asked were direct unlike the open-ended questions used in the focus group guide

<sup>42</sup> See chart below

Demographics of questionnaires and journal write ups:

<b>Participants:</b>	<b>Preservice: Pre-test</b>	<b>Preservice: Post-test</b>	<b>Inservice: Pre-test</b>	<b>Inservice: (Journals) Post-reflection</b>
<b>No.of responses:</b>	11	25	39	14
<b>Age:</b>	20 –21 years	20 – 21 years	27 – 60 years	27 – 40 years
<b>Experience:</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> year study	3 <sup>rd</sup> year study	Average; 19 years	Average;14 years

**Figure 4.2: Additional research instruments used: questionnaires and journals**

Note: Weaknesses in the research are due to the fact that only one form of research methodology was initially selected. At a later stage pre- and post-questionnaires were also developed in order to address some of the concerns about gathering broader and more generalised information. Certain limitations that need to be noted are:

- As a lecturer from another department distribution and collection of the pre- and post-test questionnaires was at times difficult and this influenced the number of responses received.
- the pre- and post-test questionnaires had a few broad questions - some of these were too open ended to use in the final analysis.
- the correlation between the pre- and post-test<sup>43</sup> questions was weak in places and a comparative analysis was not possible.

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<sup>43</sup> In the post-test several questions had been changed and the two tests therefore differed.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.1 Analysis of Educators<sup>44</sup> Attitudes and Perceptions

Three instruments were specifically chosen to provide both qualitative and quantitative insights into the attitudes and knowledge held by educators on democracy and democratic change in South Africa. The main body of the analysis, however, is made up of focus group responses. The three instruments consist of: 1] transcripts taken from focus-group interviews, 2] responses to questionnaires distributed amongst inservice and preservice groups and 3] extracts from journal entries<sup>45</sup> made by inservice teachers working in schools in the Gauteng region.

The first instrument introduces a qualitative approach through focus group interviews, the intention is to explore, in depth, the participants' attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of democracy and change. The second instrument, in the form of a questionnaire, aims at assessing the attitudes to change in South Africa and their understanding of democracy and the Constitution. The third instrument, journal entries written by inservice teachers, intends to establish the individual teacher's perceptions of lived practice.

Based on the research data gathered from all three instruments a variety of themes and patterns emerged. A brief discussion of the focus group findings is set out under each theme. Examples of responses are quoted in the text below and the numbers in brackets, after each response, refer to:

[1] inservice educators, [2] female preservice educators, [3] male preservice educators and [4] female educators based at the School of Education.

Responses to the questionnaires are also discussed under each theme and, where possible, results are depicted in graphs A to C.

Main themes:

1. Response to change post 1994 – page 50
2. Educational change – page 54
3. Teachers as agents of change – page 58
4. Support and knowledge of democracy – page 63
5. Enhancement of democratic practice – page 69

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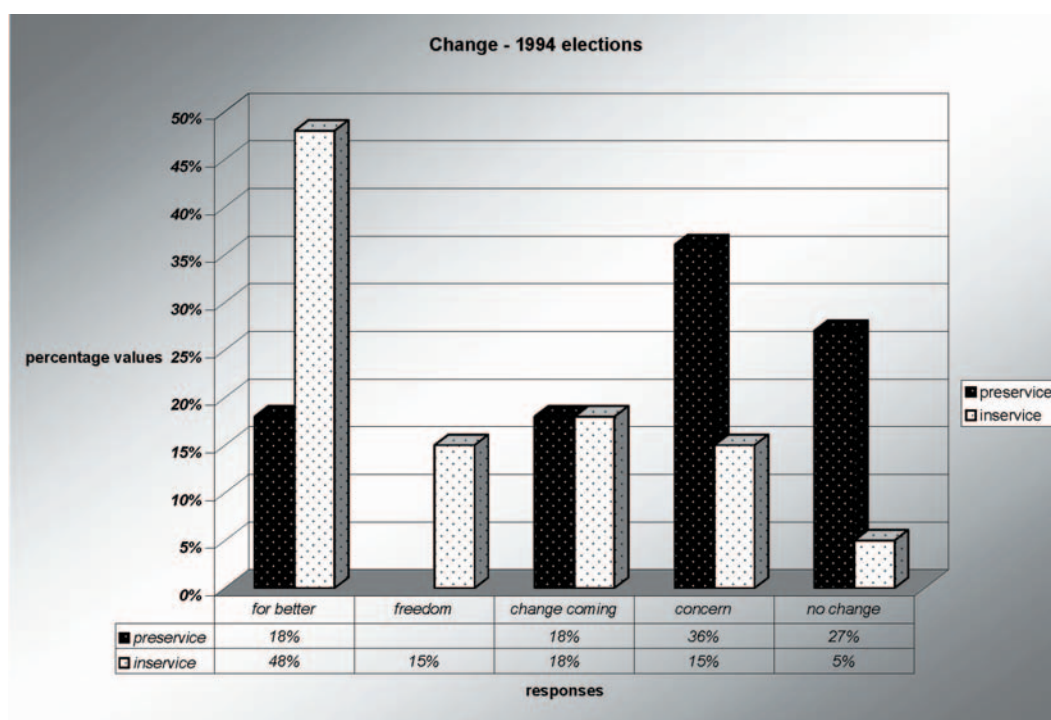
<sup>44</sup>Including teachers studying at a college of education, both preservice and inservice.

<sup>45</sup>Inservice teachers were asked to observe their schools for a week and record any democratic or undemocratic behaviour that may have taken place.

### 5.1.1 Theme 1: Response to Change Post 1994 (Graph A<sup>46</sup>)

Responses to questionnaires reveal the following:

With respect to change inservice respondents indicated that at the time of the 1994 elections 48% believed change could only be for the better. The preservice respondents were more concerned about the possibility of violence (36%) or they had no interest at all in what was happening (27%). In response to the question; ‘Is South Africa moving in the right direction?’ both the inservice and preservice respondents answered ‘yes’ (74% inservice and 86% preservice). See graph A below:



**Graph A: Response to change post 1994**

After analysing the responses given in the focus groups the following patterns emerged:

- Mixed views
- Positive but uncertain
- Positive and realistic
- Negative features
- Change as a personal choice

<sup>46</sup> The graphs A - C represent findings made from the questionnaires filled in by both preservice and inservice respondents.

### *Mixed Views*

The focus group respondents explained that they had mixed feelings about change in South Africa. They spoke about fear, frustration and despondency mixed with a sense of hope and excitement. Changes that were seen as positive were the building of houses, mixing of races and the opening up of opportunities for all. But the down side mentioned by the majority was the presence of crime and the fact that South Africans, white and black, are building their walls higher and developing a laager mentality:

*'I feel that our society's become a lot more fragmented than before - and obviously I'm speaking from my perspective, you know - and I think a lot of white South Africans have kind of gone back into their laagers behind their barbed-wire and remote-controlled gates and so on, you know.'* [1]

*'I think the laager mentality is not confined to white people.'* [1]

*'A sense of great opportunity, excitement, openness to new experiences the whole time. But a kind of frustration with lawlessness, with a kind of corrupting influence as well.'* [1]

### *Positive but Uncertain (Anomie)*

A large number of participants spoke about living with a 'sense of uncertainty'. Uncertainty about the future, uncertainty about what to believe in and what to trust or depend upon. This uncertainty was identified in Chapter Two as 'anomie' - a feeling of being suddenly insecure and unprepared for the changes that confront people daily. What it shows is that even though apartheid had been difficult for many South Africans there was still a degree of certainty in peoples' lives. The change in Government brought with it a new uncertainty where the known became unknown and established values were challenged, uprooting peoples' sense of security. The participants spoke of an underlying fear of being unsafe, saying, 'their foundations are at times challenged' that there 'is a fear of having their basic value systems shaken and (that) they are afraid of the unknown' [1].

*'I think the edges are blurred. I think where we moving is blurred - for people generally. It's my own... perspective, obviously, but probably prior to our official democracy, roles were defined and people understood their position - be it good or bad - but they understood.. Now it's murky, and I think we're trying to move through a sort of hazy place, where things are not so defined.'* [1]

*'I think it is too fast. I just finished matric and I realised schools were being opened to all races and everything. I mean none of the students were prepared. Before the change we did not have enough discussions on it. I know the change was good but no-one was really prepared for it.'* [4]

### *Positive and Realistic*

It was encouraging to hear most of the participants say that South Africa was moving in the right direction and leaving the label of race state behind. These respondents were quite realistic about transformation and were all in agreement that ‘transformation and delivery take time and that miracles cannot happen overnight’ [4]. In fact participants in the educators and the preservice group showed political sophistication in accepting and understanding that ‘transitions are generally difficult’ demanding massive upheavals which require ‘large adjustments from the people in that country’ [1]. They posited that much of the difficulty encountered was because most South Africans were not adjusting to the change or were finding it difficult to adjust to the change. This slowness to change was attributed to two things: either the new insecurities facing South Africans or, as the older educators suggested, because people still need to learn the ropes of living in a democracy. The educators as a group, agreed, that even with ‘a core Constitution’ and ‘the openness to debate’ in place democracy cannot happen automatically. People are not born democratic and democracy exists ‘only on paper’ at the moment [1].

*‘My feeling was there is hope. That, even though we have a country fraught with differences and fraught with crime, amongst those young people, who attended classes, there was a great excitement to learn about one another.’ [1]*

### *Negative Features*

Focus group participants were unanimous in their agreement that crime in South Africa was one negative feature that could be ‘a possibly destructive feature of the new South Africa’ [1].

*‘The crime you know, the kind of treatment, the general lack of respect for law and order...it’s all about strong control and we need it.’ [1]*

*‘We just don’t feel safe in South Africa.’ [2]*

*‘I’m excited to be here, I wanna be here ... just living here with crime and having a child and wondering what kind of education am I gonna have for him ... should I move?’ [1]*

Other negative factors mentioned were the lack of jobs, corruption in Government and the perceived laziness of some Government officials. The older teachers [4] were particularly concerned about the presence of corruption and nepotism in Government. Many believed that Government officials were involved in government ‘for their own interest and the concerns of the people were not foremost’ or that ‘Government only considered delivering when elections came round’ and that during the hiatus they hibernated and ‘no-one could access them’.

The preservice students were more concerned about the lack of jobs, the failure of Government to deliver, xenophobia and, for some, racism. All the focus group participants spoke of racism but it was the preservice group who looked at racism from a different angle. Both groups, male and female, held a somewhat naïve view of racism seeing it as a possible misunderstanding between groups. To the male preservice group the emphasis on difference and race was, for them, at times, annoying. As one black male participant said ‘if we talk about rights it’s only about black people’ and it is with respect to black people being oppressed. He was of the view that other races need to be considered because at the moment ‘it’s all one way’ [3]. They believed that such an approach to race was exclusionary, often making people feel disconnected and unnecessarily guilty.

*‘The whites are happy with themselves and we are happy with ourselves.’ [2]*

*‘Its now not racism its like your personal feelings towards someone else.’ [3]*

*‘I don’t think its racism but there’s a kind of misunderstanding between one another but not to say there’s racial discrimination.’ [3]*

*‘Black people understand they have been oppressed, I understand that, but to keep us at that same standard and I feel like, I mean it makes me mad, don’t tell me I’ve been oppressed, non-stop, I mean we understand , okay?’ [3]*

#### *Change as a Personal Choice*

Participants made the point that people need to adjust and need to experience change at a personal level. All were in agreement that change of this nature is difficult and painful but without which ‘you may find yourself waking up in a foreign country’ [1].

*‘What I feel is there’s a huge change going on and I know people are not adjusting to the change.’ [3]*

*‘If you don’t all go through that change of heart then you can forget about it and that’s what’s worrying for me.’ [1]*

After completing the first section the general indication was that, even though change was confusing and uncomfortable, there was still hope. It was also encouraging to hear many of the participants acknowledge that teachers can make a difference and that change depends very much on one’s attitude in life.

*‘It depends entirely on one’s philosophy of life the way in which one views life because one must adjust because one grows.’ [4]*

### 5.1.2 Theme 2: Educational Change

The next series of questions focused on the changing face of education, from the changes in educational policy to the daily practice of teachers and educators. Although the participants were all in agreement about teachers having a responsibility to influence young learners many were unsure and unhappy about their own changing situation. The patterns that emerged in the focus groups with respect to educational change are as follows:

- Necessity of educational change
- Negative perception of change
- A teacher's role in change

#### *Necessity of Educational Change*

Participants were asked to discuss their view about the educational change in South Africa. All the participants agreed that educational change was necessary in order to fit in with and become part of the national change in the country. They also acknowledged that the past system was not a system that respected the rights of all South Africans, in fact, as was pointed out by the inservice group, the system was created to undermine and deny black people their right to an education of their choice. The preservice male group said that, 'the ideology behind the new education system was much better than the old one.' They agreed that the previous system limited the choice of what people wanted to study and that everyone was following 'some indoctrinated form of education'. The educators' group believed that change was necessary as the new curriculum 'embodied the spirit of the Constitution' [1]. A few inservice teachers felt quite strongly about the changing educational environment and their perception of the change was that it was drastic.

*'It has to be painful. Sharp and very painful. And there are drastic changes. Because you come up against something that has been implemented by the Government and while you are still trying to acclimatise to it something new come up so you are caught up in the thing cross firing, your morale goes down because you feel as if you are being overburdened. And your performance will also deteriorate.'* [4]

*'But I think in principle we agree the changes have had to take place...'* [1]

*'It was necessary in terms of the education that we went through whereby we were channelled.'* [4]

*'No-one was prepared for it (the change). They didn't have many talks or anything about getting the idea into pupils or even staff members. It just arrived at school and children did not know how to react, that created a lot of conflict. Change was good but no-one was prepared for it.'* [3]

The majority of the focus group participants said they support Outcomes Based Education (OBE) because it is interactive and moves away from authoritarian practices to a democratic method of educating. The inservice group expressly stated that they accepted the ideal of OBE but that their problems lay with Curriculum 2005 (C2005).

*'Ja, if I could say that that's a matter of semantics here because what normally happens where you get OBE and Curriculum 2005 there's nothing wrong with OBE, OBE is just a method which is accepted and we know as teachers, all of us its not the method but the only problem which is there is concerning Curriculum 2005. So it means OBE is there to stay and there is nothing wrong with it and I fully agree with that.'* [4]

### *Negative Perception of Change*

These perceptions held could further be broken down into three categories, depicted as follows:

i) Standards and abilities differ: After expressing their initial acceptance of the need to change the participants then admitted that there were worrying aspects to the change. A number of the preservice students said that the standard of education had dropped to some extent and that this was due to the differing strengths and competencies of teachers. In their opinion these discrepancies influenced the high rate of failure in certain schools. The changes also affected the confidence of the older participants as the introduction of a new curriculum so late in their teaching careers was a new source of frustration and uncertainty. The inservice teachers said, initially, they had really wanted to learn about C2005 so that they could implement it in their schools, but at the same time they needed assurance that what they had tried and adapted over the years was not completely wrong<sup>47</sup>.

*'It would have helped to speak to teachers at schools, saying yeah but you're actually doing it, from experience you're doing this. It just suddenly felt like everything I have ever done is now defunct.'* [4]

*'I've been teaching for 24 years, I acquired that experience for all those 24 years now I must go and get to do something new within a week, it's not feasible.'* [4]

ii) Inadequate and hasty implementation: The educators group believed that they were the fortunate ones, during the change, because of their connection to the College of Education. Most were of the opinion that change had been 'imposed' in schools and on teachers whereas, in the School of Education, educators were given a degree of deliberation and freedom to change. They pointed out that teachers

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<sup>47</sup> Admittedly not all the inservice teachers shared the same view and many believed the changes were challenging and exciting.

were battling with the extra responsibilities demanded by an outcomes-based approach and they were doing this without the appropriate support systems in place and with an unfriendly new curriculum.

*'I think all of us support a teaching and learning approach - it embodies the sentiments of outcomes based education but when everything you do has to be run over by a range statement and up the back of an assessment criteria and fine tuned by a performance indicator it becomes worse than going to pick and pay.'* [1]

*'It has resulted in many teachers resigning because they could not take the pressure. In fact to some people it made them feel as though they knew nothing and they are nothing, they are not worth it. They could not cope with the demands.'* [4]

*'I feel very angry about it actually...and if I was in a school I'd be even angrier y'know.'* [1]

Participants complained that the Government, more specifically the Department of Education, had 'no real interest in the welfare of teachers and this has brought about feelings of resentment and anger' [4]. The inservice group said that they felt abandoned by the Department of Education. Participants were of the view that Government was more concerned about ensuring hasty implementation of change and was not that concerned about the teachers' daily reality. The Government was seen as autocratic and undemocratic and this perception could negatively influence the future implementation of a new curriculum.

*'It's kind of very administrative heavy, curriculum 2005, so eventually the teacher is basically an administrator and the way in which it was actually implemented was very top down, they really did not do a very good marketing job, in that sense it was very undemocratic.'* [1]

Because of the Government's haste, participants said, implementation problems were exacerbated by the disorganised and inadequate training offered. Most of the participants were of the opinion that the training being offered was a roughly put together attempt at training in a short space of time. As one educator expressed, 'it's a bit like playing broken telephone' [1]. The general perception is that the training was handled in an unprofessional manner and that Government and the Department of Education used autocratic and blaming tactics to cover up their own inadequacies.

*'So everybody was blaming everybody else. The handouts which I eventually got were unreadable, lots of things like that, I think it frustrated people and they decided that it's a waste of time, I'm not going anymore. Let OBE infiltrate the schools and then I'll face it when it comes my way... people just gave up.'* [1]

*'Especially with the Department of Education, they are confusing.'* [4]

*'Added to this confusion is their attitude (Dept. of Education) that they take some of us as if we are against this (change). There is this perception that whatever they are expecting from us is not*

*up to scratch. They say its because we do not want to work, that's the attitude of the Department. They say 'you are lazy' and they go to schools harassing teachers saying they're not doing anything. That attitude is causing great mayhem in schools, creating low morale.'* [4]

Many of the inservice teachers said that they resented the perception, held by the Department of Education, that teachers were 'against the change'. Most participants took pains to point out that they accepted the enormous challenges ahead both at school and in University. All the focus group participants and respondents<sup>48</sup> were studying further because they wanted to improve their knowledge and skills. Some were there because of a recent promotion whilst others were hoping to upgrade their studies or improve on their teaching experience. The resulting uncertainty and frustration could possibly have been avoided if the training provided by the Department of Education, had adequately answered the questions the teachers were asking.

When introducing change extra demands and stresses were placed on experienced teachers. This added burden coupled with the lack of financial reward and insufficient job security led to some of the older participants wanting to leave the profession. Many said the Government had not consulted properly with people on the ground and teachers believed that their input was not of value so they lost interest and gave up, they said the whole process frustrated and annoyed them.

*'I've never attended so many meetings in my life but half the time I'd arrive at the last minute and not understand what was happening but I would go along anyway because I thought at least this was an opportunity to get involved and there were a lot of teachers from districts who were invited to come along.'* [1]

*'There were many people who were not part of the meetings ... I went for the first time and it did not make much of a difference anyway.'* [1]

*'There's major resistance to change now which was created in its implementation which I think is ironic but nonetheless its happened...'* [1]

iii) Positive attitudes: The frustrations encountered in the early stages of change may carry over into the implementation phase of any new curriculum [Fullan, 1991]. This can influence the manner and the attitude in which change is taken on. Which explains why a greater number of positive messages were encountered in the preservice group interview. The preservice students were exposed to the new system from the start of their training; it was not something completely new. This may also explain why the preservice group were not as flustered about the lack of clarity in the new curriculum as were

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<sup>48</sup> To the questionnaires.

the older educators. (Most inservice participants were experienced teachers, some with over 20 years experience).

### *Perception of Teachers' Role*

Even with all the problems cited above participants, specifically in the educators group, accepted that change was a process and that, 'change is not something that can happen overnight through osmosis' [1]. There is also an acceptance by participants that teachers hold a particular responsibility to contribute to change.

*'It means being an agent of change we are the ones who can bring about change so that that it can become what will make us comfortable and feel proud about. So no-one else other than us can bring about change and be involved in the process of change.'* [4]

Nearly all the research participants said that they hold a unique position with respect to bringing about transformation in South Africa. What was needed, they said, was more encouragement and support.

*'I love children and I wanted to contribute something to society so I chose to be a teacher.'* [4].

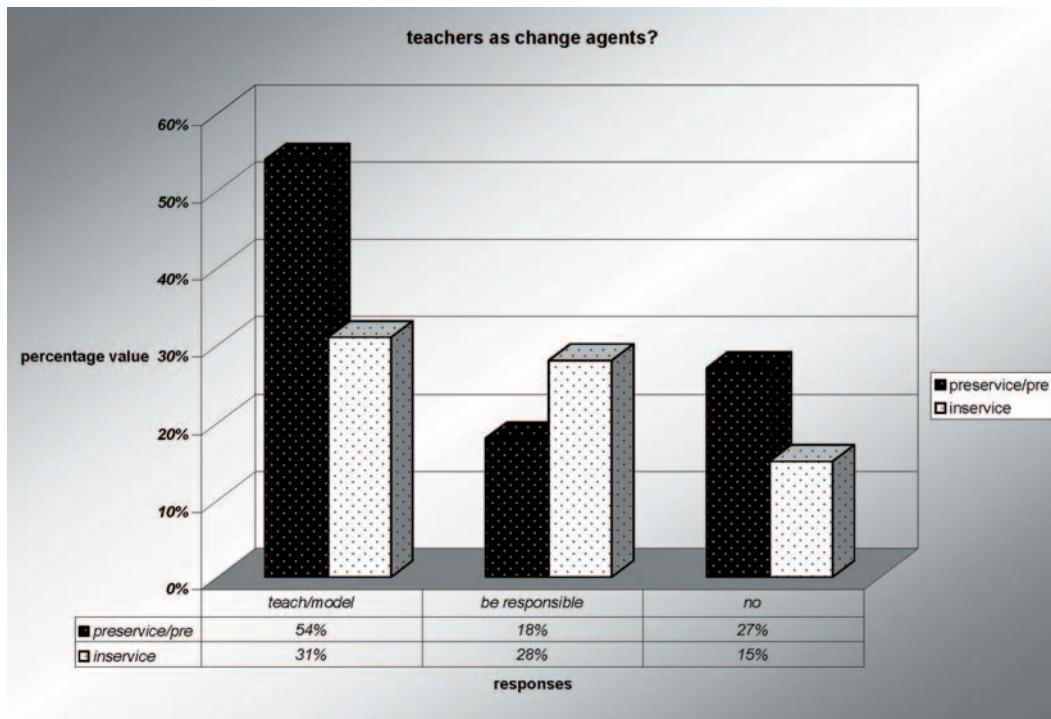
*'Well for me if I talk as a teacher I think, like a teacher, my job is to bring up people that can be useful to our country because we need people who can be assets to our country who can improve the economic state of our country.'* [2]

### **5.1.3 Theme 3: Teachers as Agents of Change**

Responses to questionnaires

In this section educators were asked, 'Are you, as a teacher, an agent of change?' and 'How can teachers contribute to change?' (Q5, Q6). Respondents were then asked if during the post 1994 period they had felt more empowered as teachers (Q7). Of the 39 inservice responses 23 said they were agents of change. 6 said they were not, mostly citing reasons of powerlessness and uncertainty because of Outcomes Based Education (OBE). Out of the 11 preservice responses (precourse) 4 said they were agents of change, two said no and 5 said they would be in future. In the post test out of 25 responses 21 said they were agents of change and two said no. How inservice and preservice respondents interpreted their contribution to change differed. This is depicted in graph B.

The inservice respondents indicated that their contribution to change took place both in and out of the classroom. Within the classroom 25% said that they were teachers of skills and knowledge. On the other hand 60% of the preservice respondents said that they were agents of change because of their ability to influence young learners and their ability to pass on values and beliefs.



**Graph B: Teachers as agents of change**

Patterns revealed in the focus group interviews are reflected below:

- Personal perceptions (influence change)
- taking on responsibility
- the school environment
- language diversity
- innovation within teaching

### *Personal Perceptions*

Although teachers may see themselves as agents of change some factors could interfere with this perception. Factors such as the teachers' personal attitudes and also the attitudes reflected by the people around them – in their home and workplace. Many of participants from the educators group and the inservice group said they were concerned about teachers who were unwilling to go through change. They wondered how democratic values and attitudes could be modelled to learners if the teachers themselves did not believe in those values and attitudes. Learners are not deceived and can detect when there are discrepancies between what is said and what is done. As a participant said, 'kids are very

good crap detectors.’ Several of the inservice participants were of the opinion that the changes<sup>49</sup> being discussed were superficial and that, in reality, nothing had changed after all.

*‘It also boils down to if somebody wants to change, you cannot be an agent of change if you don’t want to be changed yourself and you cannot impart principles like that (human rights and the constitution) if you don’t believe in them yourself... I can only do my bit from my part... I don’t know the solution for people who don’t want to change.’ [1]*

*‘If the teacher is not willing to change how will the teacher reflect the change?’ [1]*

### *Taking on Responsibility*

In the focus group interview participants agreed that, as teachers, they have a responsibility to contribute to change through education. The degree of the responsibility varied depending on what the inservice group referred to as; ‘each person’s individual circumstances’.

*‘Its almost like dying and been born again into a completely different world and suddenly we have, what can I say, there’s so much information ... it would take 30 years for South Africa to transform into a true democracy.’ [1]*

### *The School Environment*

Inservice participants said that at the schools where they were based, the introduction of a more democratic educational system was taking some time. The general view was that there was reluctance, on the part of some schools, to adapt to a new system and that even with significant changes in educational policy these schools continue to implement change at a superficial level. The educators believe that if the Government wishes to introduce a culture of rights and move towards democratisation of schools then it needs to recognise the needs of the whole school and ‘everyone (in the school) should learn about rights’.

Most of the inservice participants believed that principals had an adverse influence on change in the school as many were hanging on to an old school ethos. The reluctance of a principal and his/her insistence on maintaining a past school ethos resulted in the assimilation of both learners and staff into the mainstream of that school, losing an opportunity to create a diverse learning environment. A small number of educators pointed out that the people most likely to become assimilated into such an ethos would be black learners, particularly those placed in the old Model C schools.

*‘It’s a maintenance thing. I think that if you were in a predominately white area and you get a black influx it doesn’t matter if the school is even majority black. A sort of ethos - the prior ethos*

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<sup>49</sup>Taking place at a National level and at schools.

*is maintained - and they keep on with that because I think its more difficult for people there to undergo the change when they don't need to. If you had to look at the pupils, who does the most changing then, probably the black children are going through the most change.' [1]*

According to the educators the problems with the principals' resistance to change could be due to the fact that principals have not been trained to cope with transformation. This could also be why there is so much conflict between teachers and principals<sup>50</sup>. The educators and the inservice participants said that they believe principals are hanging onto their power and, at times, things are deliberately done to maintain a power imbalance so that teachers who want change are unsupported. In the journals many of the inservice writers said principals were not filtering down information to teachers or were selective in the information they filtered down. Some principals alienated and deliberately excluded certain teachers from the decision-making processes at school. All of this led to feelings of frustration, exclusion and powerlessness amongst the teachers. The following extracts were taken from some journal reflections:

*'At times, the staff does not feel that they are in a democratic environment in the school. Everybody does not have the right to be heard. Oh, you can say what you want (if you have the guts) but normally you either get ignored or you get 'the look.' [inservice, female]*

*'My school does not approve of LRC (Learners Representative Council). Head prefects are the ones who are given some responsibilities like making sure that the class is not noisy in the absence of an educator... In this case the LRC do not serve as a mouthpiece of the learners in the school.'* [inservice ,male]

*'I must admit I studied in the pre-apartheid era and then the post-apartheid era and there is such diversity in the subject education... I feel that many people feel threatened by new knowledge and change because they are pretty settled in their ways... I can honestly say that every time I suggest a new idea from my studies there is no way I can get it through to my principal.'* [inservice, female]

### *Language Diversity*

Many of the participants said that presence of diverse language groups in schools was another cause for conflict. Often schools, previously used to dealing with only one language group, were now finding that they are ill equipped to deal with such diversity. The result of this is a lot of unhappiness and misunderstanding which is not only taking place in the classroom but in the staff room as well.

*'Democracy for education put emphasis on equality, which I do not see happening in my school. There is a division of racial groups. It does not look like a well-organised school, it is just an*

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<sup>50</sup> In subsequent courses and data collection the problem with principals is more apparent as further changes take place from the bottom the lack of change at the top stands out.

*animal farm where some are more equal than others. The black teachers have their own table and speak their own vernacular language. The white teachers have their own table speaking English. The gap is widening each day, the two groups cannot tolerate each other.' [journal, inservice female]*

In one journal entry an inservice teacher wrote; 'We as teachers do not have a problem with the blackness of the school, what we do have is a problem with the language barrier.' She also went on to say, 'Some of the children get 'dumped' in grade one without speaking or understanding English, for example. No support is given from home, the reason being that the parents are afraid that the child will loose the use and love for his mother tongue.' This teacher then went on to ask, 'why then put them in an English school?'

### *Innovation in Teaching*

Even where schools are reluctant to change the more progressive teachers in those schools continue to incorporate their own changes into the classroom. Many of the inservice teachers said they do their best to introduce the changes they have learnt about. Unfortunately outside the classroom the lack of tolerance and respect between teachers and sometimes the principal undermines and demotivates even the most dedicated of teachers. Fullan [1991; 55] said, when writing about educational change in Montreal, Canada, that 'many teachers are willing to adopt change at the individual classroom level and will do so under the right conditions<sup>51</sup>. Without the right conditions the innovations adopted by teachers will be individualistic and unlikely to be spread to other teachers.

*'The body with the most democratic rights are the children. They have the right to be educated and to be listened to. This does happen. The overall job of the teacher is to educate and we do this with love. Any educator that is in the system must love his/her profession (we are definitely not doing it for the money.' [inservice, female]*

*'I integrate learners diverse cultural and language experiences and backgrounds into meaningful language learning within the classroom... I immerse learners in a rich bath of a positive, non-threatening environment in which the learners and I create.' [inservice, female]*

*'Unlike my colleagues I enjoy a class that talks to one another and makes a noise.' [inservice, female]*

This was not the case for all schools and some of the inservice teachers wrote in their journals about schools that have tried to set up democratic structures and move towards transformation. What is worrying is the fact that these accounts happened to be in the minority.

<sup>51</sup> Fullan [1991] sees these conditions as an innovation that is clear and practical, a supportive district administration and principal, opportunity to interact with other teachers, and outside resource help.

#### 5.1.4 Theme 4: Support and Knowledge of Democracy

Responses to the questionnaires:

Respondents were asked if they supported the ideal of democracy. Over 84% of the inservice respondents and 70%<sup>52</sup> of the preservice respondents indicated that they did. A further 13% of the respondents in the inservice group indicated that they supported democracy but qualified their support based on the Government's ability to fulfil its promises. Here democracy is perceived as a contractual arrangement between the state and its people, rather than a way of life. In the preservice group most of the results were similar except for a few (2%) who were ambivalent about democracy. Their comment was, 'as long as things are okay then I do not care either way.'

Patterns revealed in the focus group interviews are as follows:

- naïve understanding of democracy
- lack of clarity
- theoretical view of democracy
- negative perceptions
- little knowledge of the Constitution

##### *Naïve Understanding of Democracy*

Both the preservice female group and the inservice group understood democracy to be dependant on service delivery - what the Government can do for its citizens. When this response was explored the participants said that they had no power in the processes of democracy and that it was up to the Government to take charge of the problems facing people day to day. Problems like unemployment, crime, the high birth rate or foreigners were seen as 'someone else's' responsibility. And this 'someone else' was a person or entity with power such as Government or a company.

*'I think the Government must try and inter-act with those companies to try and employ the people because it is difficult to tell yourself to improve if you can't get a job after all, that's because the problem is the Government's.'* [1]

*'I feel the Government should get involved in what happens, like actively involved.'* [2]

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<sup>52</sup>This preservice group of respondents was made up of the 10 preservice students that had not participated in a democracy and human rights course.

Even though the participants in these groups indicated a blind hope, at times, that Government had the power to address problems like poverty and unemployment this view altered slightly when participants were asked whether citizens are ever responsible in a democracy.

*'But actually you have to start by doing something for your country and then eventually something will happen for your community, you hope.'* [2]

*'You get one rubbish bag coming in now, if you're lucky they'll pick it up at the end of the road. Now my father would say he would dump the rubbish across the road, I'd say to him, 'you can't do that why don't you dump it yourself?' He says 'It's not my job, it's the municipality's job. I think that's the wrong attitude y'know.'* [3]

### *Lack of Clarity about Democracy*

Although the average respondent<sup>53</sup> and focus group participant said they support democracy they were not clear what formulation of democracy they supported. The participants' understanding of democracy varied amongst the groups as did the level of interest shown towards the topic. Of all the interviewees it was the educators who showed a depth in their understanding of democracy and this enabled them to spend some time on debating concepts at a philosophical level. Other groups showed less confidence in debating the notion at any depth but, across the board, participants recognised that democracy meant something more than just voting. Many of the participants were quite prepared to acknowledge that South Africans, themselves included, still need to learn a lot more about the meaning of democracy.

*'Just to get back to the election thing I think there is an intersection between representational / participatory democracy as well, I mean representative democracy seems to work, get people votes and it goes quite peacefully but I don't think we actually have participatory democracy even vaguely in that direction. There are good things to work on and that sort of thing, but in terms of practical democracy, I think that's where a lot of tension lies you know, we're sort of stuck.'* [1]

*'It is a democratic country, we voted and you had your own choice but still you cannot phone someone up there to provide facilities for your school or things like that.'* [2]

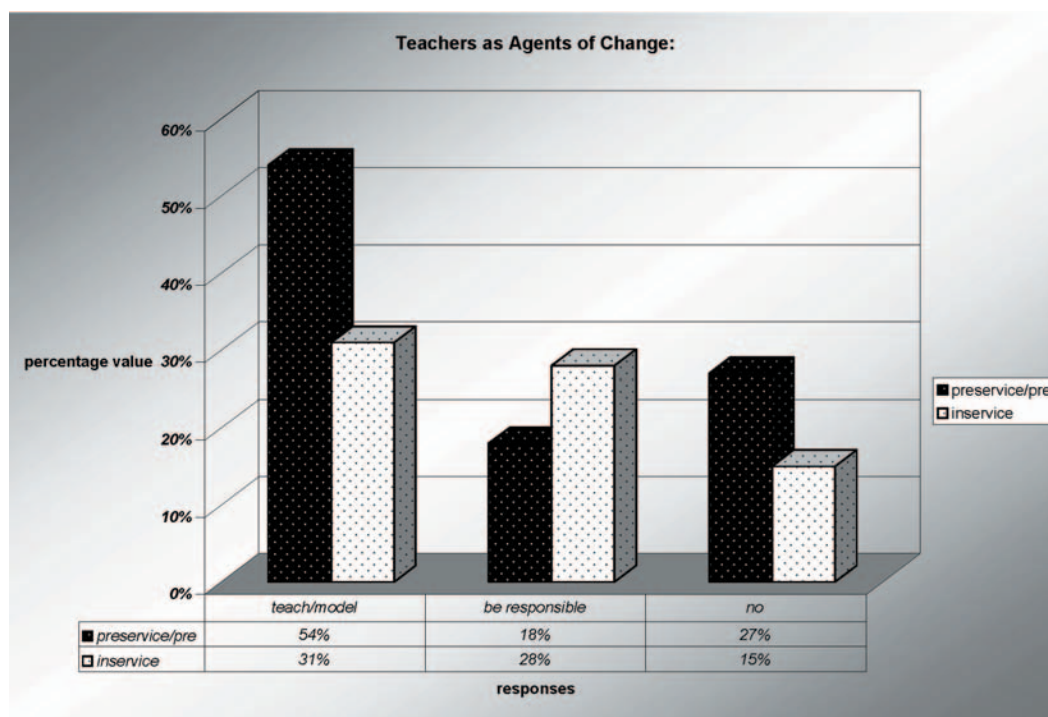
*'There's no proper understanding about democracy so a lot of people are not educated as such. We just know it means equality and non-racism but broadly speaking people don't really know what is happening.'* [3]

Some of the younger preservice respondents said democracy 'means rights', being able to say what you feel, being free. This was reflected in the responses to the questionnaires. 54% of the preservice students and 51% of the inservice group said democracy was about giving people rights and freedoms<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> Respondent to the questionnaires - instrument 2

<sup>54</sup> Broken down further 23% of the inservice group specifically spoke about having a right to be heard and only 9% of the preservice group spoke of having this right.

Of the inservice group 14% said democracy was a means of participating in government. Preservice respondents in the pre-test did not mention citizen participation and in their post-test only 24% said participation was important (Graph C).



**Graph C: The meaning of democracy**

In the focus group interview older inservice respondents said that they felt democracy meant enriching your pocket, or having certain people who are ‘enjoying the gravy train whilst others suffered.’

*‘Democracy’s nice. I mean, you can basically say how you feel and what ever.’ [3]*

*‘Democracy means freedom and rights...’ [2]*

*‘Democracy to that man in Mozambique, I mean not Mozambique, to Mugabe is to enrich your pocket...that’s the meaning of democracy to them and sharing with the masses, you know, is not democracy.’ [4]*

#### *Democracy as a Theory*

The educators group said that they had difficulty defining democracy because the concept is ‘quite slippery’. It was suggested that one solution to this could be checking ‘certain signposts that indicate whether democracy is in place in some way’. The ‘signposts included concepts like equality, responsibility, respect and the need for constant checks and balances.’ Most accepted that the procedural elements of a democracy were in place but to move away from the ‘theoretical aspect of it’ and to apply it practically was the ‘scary part.’ It was also pointed out in the discussion with this group that

‘democracy is almost defined by what it is not’. Most of the participants acknowledged that democracy needs a lot of hard work and ‘what is frustrating for all South Africans (with respect to this) is the fact that they have no security, security with respect to ‘a very basic level of human rights - like will we get home alive?’

*‘I think we’re certainly on the way, but there is fuzziness also, we need to fine tune our idea of democracy and the actual implementation. I think the signposts are there but we need to work very hard at those elements that I think are frustrating all South Africans - this feeling of security.’*  
[1]

### *Negative Perceptions*

The most negative responses about democracy came from some of the inservice teachers who spoke with cynicism and disappointment, although many did concede that they would never go back to the past. These mixed views were apparent in the responses inservice teachers gave in the questionnaires. In the questionnaires 46% of the inservice respondents indicated that even with a bill of rights in South Africa not everyone has rights. But even with this cynicism the general view was as one focus group participant expressed it, ‘although democracy had not changed my life much, it was the right thing to do because everyone else was becoming democratic’ [4].

*‘As a white person you are seeing the change that we are now involved, black people are now involved but we don’t see the change because they are still doing the same thing.’* [4]

*‘I still feel that is change and it is visible everywhere, more especially we could not talk, (we’d have to do this in secret).’* [4]

*‘It is going in the right direction though that direction we won’t see it, as I said, now, but it is because almost every country in the world is now democratic we are the only ones left.’* [4]

### *Little Knowledge about The Constitution*

Because very few people in the interviews, aside from the educators group, indicated more than a rather thin awareness of democracy it was necessary to explore the extent of all the participants’ understanding of the new South African Constitution and human rights. Out of all the participants everyone had heard of the Constitution and many had received a version issued at the time of its release. As far as having an awareness of its content or its application there was a general thinness of knowledge in all the groups. Almost all of the participants said that they had, at some time, seen or owned a copy of the Constitution but had never read it because ‘it is not reader friendly, in fact it was boring’ [2]. This is probably why most of the participants have a superficial understanding about the Constitution and the bill of rights.

Once again, out of all the groups the educators were more able to comment on the Constitution with some background knowledge. As a group they pointed out relevant sections contained in the Constitution and a few had participated in a course where the Constitution was used to some extent. Some said they used sections of the Constitution in their teaching but as a whole they had a deeper understanding of democracy than of the Constitution. A relevant point made by this group was about the gap between the Constitution and the people of South Africa. Very few people know or would even try to claim their Constitutional rights because they remain unaware of how to do so.

*'Some of us look up a section to refer to and with the Constitution, we did a course on the 1996 Schools Act, school policy, so she went into some detail in the course. Its good for what you need, I think generally...' [1]*

*'There's this huge gap between what people say - its my constitutional right, but I don't think the people of South Africa are informed about how they claim their constitutional right. What process is affordable? I think there's an enormous amount of ignorance about it. What if it's your constitutional right for your child to attend school but you don't have the school fees, you don't have the money for the school uniform, what do you do, what's the process?' [1]*

*'The Constitution has to be lived not just presented.' [1]*

*'But that's the point, in a sense we don't really know what's in it. We don't, it's been gazetted but we just don't read it.' [1]*

Most of the participants in the preservice and inservice group were unclear about the components of the new Constitution and in the male preservice group participants were not aware that the bill of rights had been incorporated into the Constitution. Many said they thought it was a separate document. Of all the groups the male preservice group were the least aware of what the Constitution contained. This group did express the opinion that the Constitution is important and that the Government should provide ongoing information for citizens so that we can become more informed. The female preservice group were able to give a basic definition of a Constitution and to identify structures contained therein but no-one could recall its origins. A few inservice participants said they were concerned about the Constitution and how it may interfere with people's 'cultural beliefs'. All the groups agreed that responsibilities were important with respect to rights but not one could say what these responsibilities are. The inservice group admitted that they were not that clear about the Constitution and the bill of rights either but that they really would like to know more so that they could use it to their advantage.

*'The things that are written in the Constitution you find they are written but you don't know which door to go in. Because it is written there you find yourself in a situation whereby you need to go*

*and address the issue but you don't know who to talk to. Especially for the people on the ground they have no idea.'* [4]

*'...the best thing for the Department, for Government to do, is educating people about their rights and the Constitution... it would help. Start with the teachers 'cos we will spread it.'* [4]

*'With democracy I think there is a lot of responsibility and people don't take responsibility... they think everything just happens so there's no form of responsibility and accountability.'* [3]

What is apparent is not what the participants did or did not understand about the Constitution but how little they felt its relevance in their lives. This does not mean that teachers are not interested in knowing more about the Constitution or that it was not important to them but the perception was that the relevance of the Constitution to their lives had never been made clear. When asked, 'would you participate in a course about - the Constitution - democracy - human rights?' there was an overwhelming 'yes', from the focus group participants and the respondents to the questionnaires<sup>55</sup>. The only group that had reservations about participating in a course on human rights were the male preservice focus group who said that a course like this could be 'boring' because it would '*emphasise race again*' (My italics). Many of the other participants pointed out that if they did participate in such a course it would need to have components that are useful to teachers and will provide them with some answers to 'real life problems' both at school and in their daily lives.

*'Going back to what you said about the Constitution being everybody's and therefore democracy and issues of civics are the responsibility of everybody... In fact if you do it (teach the Constitution) in the context of how they grow within the law or how people deal with their problems, or how it affects other cultures that you have to show respect and tolerance and so on... then it's something more.'* [1]

*'My experience is that the way we've been taught you know, the way it's been put across, it does not feel like I'm part of it. It feels more like it's to people who have been oppressed, black people. It's never about white people ...it's always boring, well maybe not boring it's just that I'm not connected to it.'* [3]

*'Well I'll have to agree with you because in education if we do talk about rights it's only black people, black people have been oppressed but what about other races, it's all like one way - as a black person it's annoying, you have to develop a broader subject.'* [3]

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<sup>55</sup> Of the 25 questionnaire respondents in the preservice group who had participated in a Street Law and democracy course 100% said yes to a course on Democracy, the Constitution and human rights. Of the 39 inservice respondents 29 said yes to such a course the other 10 did not complete the questionnaire. All the 11 preservice students said yes to such a course.

### 5.1.5 Theme 5: Enhancement of Democratic Practice

Patterns that emerged in the focus groups are as follows:

- A young emerging democracy
- Theory is separate from practice
- defining citizen participation
- citizenship and national identity

#### *A Young Emerging Democracy*

What the above discussion about democracy and the Constitution revealed was that very few of the focus group interviewees were negative about democracy. But they were of the view that democracy did not necessarily mean equality for all, at least not at the present moment. Most people accepted that South Africa was a fledgling democracy and that it was going to take time, hard work and tenacity to make our democracy work.

*'We've got freedom of movement, we can move from one place to another. But its for those who are educated and those who can move from one place to another especially those who are working right now. But you don't have freedom to move... if you are unemployed.'* [3]

*'We have got to be strong to face the challenge.'* [4]

*'Ja, we're getting there but it takes a long time ... but we will get there, but if everyone works at it we will get there.'* [2]

Participants were in agreement that certain matters needed to be addressed before South Africa could be considered democratic. Although there was no consensus on what these matters may be there was consensus about needing a common understanding or definition of democracy. All agree that citizens and Government officials need to know 'what they are working for as South Africans' [4].

*'Not really understanding the demands and maybe then sinking back into what we had before - if you just look at some of the things in Government, going back to the old thing of having things imposed on us. When initially it was about giving people a voice and giving a contribution to getting papers - white papers or green papers or whatever. To peruse and give feed back. I haven't seen that happen in ages.'* [1]

#### *Theory is Separate From Practice*

Many of the participants agree that the confusion about democracy can be related to the fact that democracy exists on paper and that citizens do not 'feel' democratic. Participants said that citizens need

clarity about how to participate and how to take responsibility, outside of voting. In the educators group the question asked was; how do we apply a theoretical concept in practice, especially when people do not feel as though ‘democracy is part of us’ because ‘apartheid was so successful’.

*‘Apartheid was very effective and it gave us our identities and it is true and I know a lot of people say it but the difficulty is now, the assumption is that, here’s a new rule and you all feel this way. Even people who constructed the laws, the new ones, are still trying to assimilate what it is, what it actually means. They were lawyers for heaven sakes, they only know the words, the feeling they’re not in touch with.’ [1]*

*‘There’s this huge gap between when people say it’s my Constitutional right but I don’t think the people of South Africa are informed about how do they claim their constitutional right.’ [1]*

*‘I think also we are ignorant really of what the demands of democracy are, I really do. I think that we want it in theory and I think we do with all this striving towards it and maybe its not happening quick enough and we don’t see results but there aren’t results, I think, because we don’t quite understand what being tolerant means, you know.’ [1]*

Several participants said that the uncertainty could be attributed to democracy being an abstract ideal with abstract values like tolerance, respect, and responsibility. These values were perceived as difficult conceptually, particularly where they have not been part of ones’ upbringing. Many said they were concerned that without access to simple, useful information about democracy there could be a greater level of misunderstanding which could in turn influence citizen participation and ultimately consolidation of our new democracy.

*‘I think we’re certainly on the way, but there are, as we said the fuzziness also - we need to fine tune, and that is that, our idea of democracy and the actual implementation of it.’ [1]*

#### *What is Citizen Participation?*

Participants agreed that being a citizen in a democracy meant taking on more responsibility. But very few participants believe that participation is really possible. Some said that they are too busy whilst others expressed a concern about where to go to participate and ‘who would listen?’ [2]. Only the male preservice group and a few men in the inservice group were of the view that citizens in South African are able to implement change.

*‘The things that are written in the Constitution you find that they are written but you don’t know which door to go to.’ [4]*

*‘We should be proud as South Africans because now we can implement change. Just like one guy who got a ticket for parking wrongly, he was very happy because he says okay so the system works.’ [4]*

*'Isn't that just theory? I mean in reality what more are any of us doing, other than going to vote? Because its all very well to say that the Government by the people for the people, who are the people, and are those people... have they been given a gateway into the knowledge, skills and attitudes that can make them worthwhile participators?'* [1]

Participation on the other hand is possible if a citizen also happens to be a teacher. Most participants and respondents agree that teachers are agents of change and that teachers have always played an 'important role for every citizen because in every successful person there's a teacher behind them' [preservice female]. Teachers are the role models for future citizens of South Africa. One of the educators commented that as much as she accepts this role, as an agent of change, it is not always that easy to participate, be a responsible citizen and represent personal interests as well 'because it can all become too much, sometimes' [1].

*'So I think that being in the teaching that we are, that has raised much more in us of wanting to do something for our country than in people that aren't really affected, they go to work they do their work and (come back) but they're not affected, really, with the people.'* [4]

*'Its hard to keep participating. Its fine to be responsible but you can't be responsible all the time in every sphere, like, I mean my body corporate, exactly the same, be here, be representative, be a voice and then on the school board and in your whatever and it just demands a hell of a lot. Even if the processes are effective and I'm not joking about bureaucracy because I think one does get bogged down and things don't happen, maybe its somehow empowering people to choose areas to be effective. Rather than have this overwhelming sense of having so much to do and I can't do it all, so I won't do any of it.'* [1]

### *Citizenship and National Identity*

Other common responses to the question of citizenship in a democracy related to people being patriotic and having a national identity. These participants believed that as citizens in a country people were given a sense of belonging and a unique identity, unique from the rest of the world. Others, in both the educators group and the preservice group, were of the opinion that it meant having a piece of paper identifying one as a citizen to a country. Some of the inservice teachers said they believed being a citizen meant being positive about South Africa because for some there is no where else to go to. In relation to speaking about national identity many participants said that they were concerned about the change of national identity and the lack of pride in citizens about their country. Some of the inservice teachers and educators felt that this lack of pride could be attributed to low self-esteem that many South Africans have of themselves and their country. Again the feeling of anomie crept into the discussion about citizenship because in the past there was a sense of certainty about being South African and that was now being

questioned and even condemned. Symbols of the past were being removed, old flags replaced by new ones, songs sung with pride and even love were looked down upon and people were being told to love something new and different.

*'I think that being a citizen in South Africa is really it's a sense of belonging but I think its also has something to do with one's culture that makes one unique from the rest of the world.'* [1]

*'I'd say it means being patriotic we have to make up really proud and the kind of citizens that have high self esteem like we've been mentioning that South Africans' do not have, have low self esteem that is why we glorify people from, for instance, America.'* [4]

*'You know why I think we've resisted saluting the flag and the national anthem and standing up straight because it was wrong , we knew it was wrong so then we were sort of anti that but were waiting for it to be really right before we all think it's okay to do it again.'* [1]

*'It's very difficult because we've been told to love something, believe in something and feel now you love this and you believe in this. Its difficult.'* [1]

## **5.2 DISCUSSION OF TRENDS**

In the above analysis the verbal responses of the groups have been clustered together. These clusters are an integral aspect of the first phase of the focus group analysis for it is here that I look through the eyes of the participants. In the second phase I disengage and look for trends or deviations from the trends. Both perspectives are then combined and discussed.

### **5.2.1 Response to Change Post 1994**

Participants commented that as a result of the uncertainty and/or disruption that South Africans encounter in their lives there is a tendency to avoid confronting problems by resorting to 'building laagers' - in both black and white communities. Very few participants speak of adapting easily to the change and many say they feel they need some time to adjust. What emerges is that change is highly personal in nature and that people need to be given an opportunity to understand change and to work through it in their own way. Change and how people adapt or cope with it depends on their individual beliefs, perceptions and context [Fullan, 1991; 127].

Times of transition and transformation are often perceived as painful<sup>56</sup>. Both the physical and emotional effects of change need to be considered when planning reform, particularly wide-ranging social reform as envisaged for South Africa. It is therefore important for paths of communication between all

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<sup>56</sup> Fullan [1991] warns of this.

stakeholders to remain open and transparent. This is where Young's model of communication between diverse groupings is important in promoting skills such as active listening and debate amongst all people in South Africa. A break - down in communication affects understanding between communities, citizens and Government and it can lead to misinformation, misunderstanding and uncertainty. Laagers are an instinctive reaction to fear of the unknown.

### ***5.2.2 Experience of Educational Change Post 1994 and Teachers as Agents of Change***

Change, as theorised by Fullan [1991], introduced a new set of fears and uncertainties into the educators' personal and professional lives. It is my contention that if educators, including pre and inservice teachers, see change in a negative light then it will not take place [see Fullan 1991]. Because the various groups interviewed are diverse in age, experience and culture I have summarised responses according to each group:

#### *Preservice*

The preservice teachers are interesting from the point of view that they are very young, often confused and full of contradiction. They are passive about the role they play in their own education and towards educational change. Where there is a marked difference between them and the older educators is that they are not frustrated by the new educational system and are far more accepting of C2005 – although they still speak of being confused by some of the terminology. The difficulty for democratic transformation is their seeming inability to recognise the part they can play in democratic change with respect to learners and themselves. The tendency is to view democracy as an abstract concept based on theory and removed from general classroom practice. Many preservice students hold the perception that democracy is political and not the concern of teachers. It is interesting how these young teachers separate their personal life experience from their practice of teaching and learning.

#### *Inservice*

Most participants in this group were of the view that change came from the top, i.e. it was imposed on them. This added to their stress. They feel unsupported, criticised and even superfluous. This is because, as mentioned by Fullan [1991; 36], change threatens to invalidate their work experience. Inservice teachers speak of their frustration, powerlessness and total demotivation. In response to such feelings there is a tendency to withdraw or become angry and frustrated. Such negative perceptions do not bode well for the implementation of change particularly with the older teachers who already feel their work

has been undermined, as mentioned above<sup>57</sup>. The few teachers who said they felt motivated about change were either young, and facing an opportunity of advancement within a school, or are lucky enough to be placed in a progressively changing environment – there are very few of these. An important, and to me, obvious ingredient needed in such time of massive change is support from a number of different sources but mostly from within the school itself - within the school, principals need to be supportive of their staff and encourage change and collegiality.

In Chapter One I mention that without the necessary support during times of change teachers find it difficult to change and could emerge with feelings of alienation and inadequacy. This appears to be the case with respect to the inservice teachers and at varying levels with the other groups. What is apparent is that the policy makers and implementers of change were more concerned about the content and progress of change and, to a large degree, ignored the personal effect of change. This could be because, as Fullan [1991; 26] says, ‘cognitive goals are easier to implement.’ It certainly appears that much of the initial enthusiasm expressed by these teachers, was negatively influenced by the way in which change was seen to be implemented and also by the confusing array of messages that come with the new curriculum. Fullan [1991] warns that this can only end in disaster or, as I believe, in the older teachers pretending to change but not truly implementing or buying into change.

### *Educators*

Educators appear to be in a better position than most of the other groups interviewed but there is still uncertainty and lack of clarity. Their fortune lies in the fact that they have a greater opportunity to mix with other groups and to learn through others - through both students and colleagues. There is also a sense of support and collegiality, within the College of Education, although this varies between the different departments.

It is not totally negative as teachers and educators continue to perceive their role as unique and transformative. They have not lost the belief that teachers do and can innovate. It is encouraging that individual teachers continue to apply their newly learned skills in their own classrooms and believe in their ability to make a change in their learners’ lives through lived practice. What is noteworthy here is the tendency of teachers to innovate on their own. Such innovation is often based on personal beliefs without support and guidance. Teachers interpret change how they see it hence the need for clarity across the board and relevant input based on the teachers’ and educators’ context and linked to their understanding and practice.

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<sup>57</sup> The difficulty of learning new skills and behaviour and unlearning old ones is vastly underestimated [Fullan, 1991; 129]

### ***5.2.3 Support of and Knowledge about Democracy***

Many of the participants in the focus groups either offer an instrumental interpretation of democracy - based on service delivery, or they see it as an abstract academic concept. Interestingly this is a shift in perception from that mentioned in Chapter Two where democracy was seen as the opposite to apartheid [O'Malley, 1999]. When asked if they support democracy nearly all the participants answered in the affirmative but when asked what exactly it is they support no single, clear answer was extracted. People tend to see democracy as a word or a concept that is removed from and not part of their reality. What emerges is that there is a gap between policy, such as the Constitution, and the people. This may explain the sense of remoteness and powerlessness felt by most participants. The perception is that, as citizens, they have no control over what happens within the country and someone in authority makes decisions that need to be obeyed. Even where participants believe they have a responsibility to participate they do not know how this translates into practice. Most of the participants do not like the situation but cannot see what else can be done.

The gap between the Constitution and the people, or the gap between theory and practice, could threaten the legitimacy of our Constitution. I mention earlier on in Chapter Two that there must be a sense of ownership of the Constitution by the people of South Africa. If this sense of ownership is not cultivated in South Africans then the opportunity to build a genuine civic responsibility will fade. At the moment the participants speak of the Constitution lacking real meaning or relevance for them. This was not the intention of the framers of our Constitution. As Cachalia [2001; 385] says; 'the text of the new Constitution provides a foundation for an ongoing collective conversation on the meaning of the idea of a South African people.' Additionally educational transformation is supposed to be geared to help us to achieve the vision of a democratic civic culture. Curriculum 2005 sets out specific goals that contribute towards creating citizens who can play a constructive role in a democratic and equitable society. Unfortunately if educators continue to hold the belief that their opinions are not seen as relevant to the decision making processes then this could have and, as I contend, has had negative repercussions on educators' attitudes towards democracy and the South African Constitution. At the moment educational transformation is perceived as driven by technocratic, top-down decision makers thus reducing educators views of themselves and their relevance in the decision making processes. Because authority is perceived as too centralised, probably as a result of the educators' encounters with the Department of Education, there is a tendency to see participation as futile, time consuming or beyond their scope of experience.

From the discussions held with educators in Chapter Five I believe that in addition to the expressed request for clarity on issues around democracy and educating for a democracy there is an equal need to recognise the educators' subjective realities. Osler and Starkey [1996; 87] are quoted earlier in this report as saying; 'Teachers perspectives of their own identities... impact on the way they handle human rights and citizenship education.' So even when the educators say they support democracy and recognise the need to build a democratic culture in South Africa, as envisaged by the Constitution, they remain uncertain, even unconvinced, about how this can really take place and what their possible role could be. As educators the participants want to know how, for example, participation can make a difference to their, their family or their communities' lives in South Africa. They express concern about the idea of participating beyond the vote. In educational institutions citizenship participation needs to be encouraged, supported and seen to be working effectively for both educators and learners. This is not the practice. People in South Africa need information about and encouragement to participate in governance or believe in the relevance of participation in democratic processes. The positive message is that all educators say they want to know more. They are not discouraged, as yet. In fact it was the participants in the focus groups who asked for a course that could be developed specifically with educators and learners in mind. The participants say they would like a course that addresses both the formal content, looking at the Constitution and its relevance to South Africa and to education, and the manner in which democratic practice could be translated into an effective teaching tool and in time a life-skill.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

If educators, including the preservice and inservice teachers, cannot see the link between theory and practice there will be little likelihood of democracy taking root within institutions such as schools. Democracy must live and be seen to live. Abstract theories such as those debated in chapter two and chapter three remain dry and meaningless without a practical and real understanding of their relevance in the educators' lives. Even where educators express a concern about their powerlessness very few indicate a willingness or even an awareness that they can challenge unfair practices through legitimate channels. It is therefore important that both the theoretical and practical aspects of democratic education are taken into consideration when developing or planning reforms particularly with respect to educational practice. It is my contention that if educational reforms, such as Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement [RNCS, 2002], focus purely on the cognitive then results, such as those experienced with Curriculum 2005 and with other well intentioned efforts made towards transformation, are inevitable.

As argued above, the hasty implementation of uncertain concepts and unrealistic dreams will only lead to further frustration and alienation of educators and in turn their learners about/towards democracy. We cannot afford to lose the momentum of initial transformation, a miracle of modern political history [Ebrahim, 2001; 85]. What is interesting is that the fundamentals, the policies and laws, are in place yet implementation lags behind. In the book **Elusive Equity** [Fisk and Ladd, 2004; 62] it states; 'The country's capacity to develop policy far exceeded its capacity to implement it.' This resonates with my above argument that the tendency to use technocratic interventions and top down commands to speed things along can only undermine the original Constitutional intention to encourage the participation of South Africans. The constitutional requirement for transparency, participation and deliberation can, and has been, overlooked by Government bodies seeking instant change. Such top down processes can limit and even prevent the creativity and the agency of the citizens in a democracy. As a result the agency of our teachers and the future development of our learners is limited and contained.

Implementing a successful transformation programme is never easy because change is painful. Change should be seen and implemented as part of a multi-faceted process. Far reaching educational change needs therefore to occur at a number of levels from grassroots up and from top down. Lessons learnt from mistakes made whilst implementing Curriculum 2005 should be used to assist in the planning for future programmes. We should also look at programmes that have successfully encouraged public participation in decision making processes. One such programme that comes to mind is the public

participation programme that was set up by the Constitutional Assembly prior to the adoption of the new Constitution. Unfortunately programmes such as these take time, money and effort and even though the effort pays off many planners and implementers of change overlook this in their haste to implement new policy.

For the purposes of this report and working within the context of the College of Education, at Wits University, it is significant to say that a course, addressing the concerns and needs voiced by the educators, has been developed and offered to preservice students over the last few years. The intention behind the course is to engage education students in understanding the notion of a 'lived democracy.' The overall aim is to facilitate student movement along a continuum that starts with an understanding of the theoretical principles of democracy and then enable them to apply these principles to their professional practice as part of their course assessment. Obviously a course cannot address all the concerns expressed by the educators and it is the responsibility of other stakeholders, coming from Government and civil society, who have a role to play that is informative, supportive and empowering.

This research study has shown that there are certain factors that are relevant to the change process and within the educational context. It is my argument that if these factors are ignored or overlooked then the vision of establishing a culture of democracy and human rights in South Africa will never be fully realised.

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## **APPENDICES**

**A.1 Focus Group Guide**

**A.2 Questionnaire**

## A.1 Focus Group Guide: February and March 2000

### Transformation in education: Democracy and Human rights education

#### 1. INTRODUCTION (15 mins)

(Standard Introduction)

A. Introduce yourself

B. Explain Focus Group research

1. This is a survey research project.

2. Be honest and say what you think, feel free to express yourself.

3. Feel free to disagree with one another, give your own opinions, even if they are different from others in the groups.

4. Everyone should participate in the discussion because everyone's opinions count.

5. Please raise your hand if you have something to say so I can call on you, keep your answers as short as possible.

C. Explain purpose of the group.

1. We are here to talk about what you know about democracy, human rights and the new Constitution.

2. The purpose of the research is to also better understand what you the teacher [and educators on the staff of] at JCE think about the transformation of education.

D. Explain the tape recorder

E. Have participants introduce themselves.

#### 2. MOOD (15 mins)

A. If you had to use one word or phrase to describe your feelings about South Africa these days, what word or phrase would you use {Briefly Discuss}



B. South Africa had its second elections in 1999 when once again, all South Africa citizens were able to vote. Since the first elections in 1994:

1. What has changed for the better?

2. What has changed for the worse?

3. What has impressed you?

4. What has disappointed you?
5. Have the changes been too fast or too slow?

C. Generally speaking, what do you feel about the way things are going in South Africa? Is the country going in the right direction or is the country on the wrong track?

### 3. LEVEL OF AWARENESS (20 mins)

A. What comes to mind when I say the word 'democracy'?



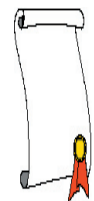
1. Would you say South Africa is democracy?
2. What makes you say that/ What are the key things?
3. How do you feel about South Africa's democracy?
4. What are the threats to democracy in South Africa?

**Probe: What about racial threat, in schools in colleges  
Are we dealing with racism in any way, is there a  
need?**

B. What comes to mind when I say 'South Africa's Constitution'?

1. How would you explain the Constitution?
2. How do you feel about South Africa's Constitution?
3. How important is it for South Africa to have a Constitution?

C. How many have you seen a copy of the South African Constitution?  
(HOLD UP A COPY OF THE CONSTITUTION /THE GOVERNMENT  
GAZETTE CONSTITUTION)



1. Have you seen this before?
2. If not, which copy of the constitution, have you seen before?
3. Where did you get your copy, can you remember?
4. Have you ever referred back to the constitution for anything, **Probe: Any information you needed, for a quick read?**

**What were you looking for/**

**What sections of the constitution have you looked at?**

**Or**

4. Have you ever done any research using the Constitution?

**Probe: What was your motivation to do research?**

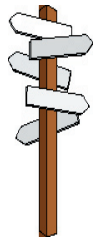
5. Do you know what this document contains?

**Probe: What about the Bill of Rights where would you find that?**

#### 4. IDENTIFYING RIGHTS AND PRIORITIES (10min)

Moderator Discussion:

A part of the Constitution ensures our basic rights as citizens of South Africa. This is known as our 'Bill of Rights' - and is listed in the front part of the Constitution. Rights such as the right to vote, the right for education and freedom from discrimination



1. What do you know about our Bill of Rights?

2. Having individual rights, does that mean anything to you?

Discuss ?

3. Do you think it is a good thing having certain rights protected?

**Probe: In what way?**

4. With our new Bill of Rights, does South African society automatically become rights oriented and respectful of others?

**Probe: What more if anything is needed?**

#### 5. EDUCATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY (40 MINS)

Moderator Discussion:

We have now spent some time talking about what we know of our new Constitution, and the rights we think matter most in our teaching and everyday lives.

Now I would like to spend some time discussing the changes that have taken place in education, if any, and how it has impacted on your life both personally and professionally.

A. Have you encountered any important changes in education over the last few years?

**Probe: what kind of changes, where, how?**

1. Do you feel that the change was in any way necessary?

2. If so, what do you think made the change necessary?

3. Can you think of anything that has specifically changed for you?

4. Are there any changes that cause some concern?

**Probe: What are they?**

5. How have learners responded to these changes? [You as learners in College and pupils at school.]

**Probe: has there been any resistance, in what way? What do you think would be the best way to deal with the learner's reactions?**



B. By now you've all heard about the new curriculum framework document 'Curriculum 2005'? Tell me generally what does this document mean to you?

1. In what way has it impacted on your teaching?

2. Describe your feelings or perceptions with respect to the changes.

3. How about on a personal level, have you changed in any way?

C. To the best of your knowledge, in the new curriculum, is there any mention of democracy and human rights? If so where would you find this mentioned?

Moderator input:

If no certainty from group then discuss the following: that in the learning area Human and Social Sciences it states that [it will] contribute to developing responsible citizens in a culturally diverse, democratic society with an interdependent world?

1. What do you think of the above rationale

**Probe: Good, bad, overly hopeful?**

2. How do you feel as students in education hearing this say for the first time? What is it saying to you?

**Probe: Unsure, a bit confused or confusing, what does it mean?**



3. More specifically tell me what does it mean to develop responsible citizens?

Go on to ask: What does it mean to develop these citizens in a culturally diverse and interdependent world?

THE HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES DOCUMENT SPECIFIC  
OUTCOME ONE AND THREE. READ THE OUTCOMES.

Outcome one: learners who will develop, meaningfully and critically, a sense of self worth and identity so as to have the confidence to exercise their full rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Outcome three aims to: develop learners that should be able to 'participate actively in promoting a just democratic and equitable society.'

1. What does this mean to you?
2. Could you do this? Develop learners in this way, how ?
3. Are you interested in learning more about democracy ? In what way?
4. Do you have any concerns/ worries?

D. Did you know that in the learning area life orientation the specific outcomes are founded on the conviction that a human rights culture should form the basis of South African society?

1. How would you approach this? or how do you?

Now, in the same way as we did earlier, I would like you to look at some of the specific outcomes related to this learning area and then we will discuss them. SPECIFIC OUTCOME THREE AND FOUR FROM THE LEARNING AREA LIFE ORIENTATION seek to instill in the learner, a respect for the rights of people to hold personal beliefs and values and to also demonstrate value and respect for human rights as reflected in Ubuntu.

1. Again what does this mean to you?
2. What do you feel when you hear these outcomes?
3. Are you interested in learning more about human rights and applying it?
4. Do you have any concerns?

E. Have you ever participated in any course yourself, a course that specifically looks at the concept of democracy education or human rights?

**Probe; a course that teaches you about human rights for example**

1. Would a course like this help in any way?
2. Would you participate in a course like this?
3. What should it look at?

Mainly theoretical or practical and emotional development or all three.

## 6. CITIZENSHIP: RIGHTS WITH RESPONSIBILITIES. (10 mins)

Moderator discussion:

We've discussed our Constitution, rights and education and now I want to close on a discussion about what we should be doing regarding our rights as citizens-what we think we can do and should be doing as citizens.

- A. What does it mean to be a citizen in South Africa?
- B. You know you have rights as citizens in South Africa. Do you think you have responsibilities as well?
- C. What do you think some of your responsibilities will be as a citizen of South Africa?
- D. Do you, as teachers have a responsibility to our younger citizens in any way? If so in what way?

## CLOSURE

- A. Would you like to add anything more to the discussion?
- B. Thank participants for their contributions.



## **Questionnaire**

1. How do you feel about the changes that took place in South Africa during 1994?
2. Did you vote in 1994?
3. Is South Africa moving in the right direction?
4. Do you believe teachers are agents of change?
5. Are you, as a teacher, an agent of change?
6. How can teachers contribute to change?
7. Do you, as a teacher, feel more empowered post 1994?
8. Do you support a democratic system?
9. Please give reasons for your answer to the above question.
10. In your own words describe what democracy means to you.
11. Have you seen, read, heard about or studied the South African Constitution?
12. What are Human Rights?
13. Would you participate in a course about – the Constitution, Democracy and Human Rights?

**Thank you.**