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THE IMAGINED LEARNER IN NEOLIBERAL TIMES:

**Constructions of the South African learning subject in
education policy discourse and school practice**

by

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ABSTRACT
THE IMAGINED LEARNER IN NEOLIBERAL TIMES:
Constructions of the South African learning subject in education policy discourse and school practice

The purpose of this study is to develop a systematic account of how the learner is imagined in current education policy discourse and to describe how key policy discourses are translated and interpreted in two case study schools. The thesis focuses on the analysis of discourse at three levels: policy, the school, and learner subjectivity. The study offers insight into how the learner has been imagined in key education policies, how this imaginary has infiltrated the discursive framework of the school, how schools are implicated in shaping learner subjectivities and the extent to which learners are able to draw on other discourses to resist interpolation.

Using Foucauldian discourse analysis supplemented by aspects of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, particular policy discourses regarding the imagined learner are examined. A description is presented of how these discourses are translated in two secondary schools in the Western Cape. Ways in which learners in their final year of schooling interpret these discourses and position themselves against dominant constructs are described. The policy texts that are analysed are the *South African White Paper on Education and Training* (DoE: 1995) and the *Whole-school Evaluation Policy* (DoE: 2001). The two schools in which the research was conducted were purposively selected for their differences in demographic profile and academic performance. The research found that the schools also differed with regard to how the policy discourses were taken up, how they shaped learner subjectivity and the extent to which learners were able to resist normative constructs.

The study draws on Foucault's notion of governmentality to describe how policy shapes the internalisation of the values and culture of the school by the teachers and students as they actively engage in their own self-government. In both instances governmentality functions not only to control, discipline and normalise, but, simultaneously, to form subjects who are self-constituting in relation to available discourses.

The thesis argues that dominant discourses within the school reflect those in the policies, even though there was no evidence to suggest direct movement from one discursive framework to another. The policy text analysis described the predominant purpose of education as relating to economic efficiency, quality and productivity which was served by the efficiency and productivity of the schooling system. At the level of policy, the imagined learner was framed as one who would take his/her place within that economic order. Within the school context discourses pertained largely to the development of young people for the world of work. However this was *differently* translated in each school, suggesting that young people were prepared differently for the labour market through the assemblage of discourses that the school made available and desirable. This was illustrated through the themes of race and class, mimesis and emulation, and individualism versus collectivism.

Developing an understanding of the imagined learner as projected through policy and practice can contribute to the debate about the effects of market discourses in education with regard to the South African learning subject. More broadly, it can contribute to an understanding of how dominant discourses may be worked with and against in specific contexts of schooling.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work and that it has not been submitted before, for any purpose, to any other institution.

Signed:

Date:

University of Cape Town

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DEDICATION

Heather, I dedicate this thesis to you. I will always be indebted to you for empowering me in this most challenging and creative journey, and for believing that I would complete it.

University of Cape Town

ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

DoE	Department of Education
WSE	Whole School Evaluation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ERA	Education Reform Act
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
FET	Further Education and Training
EMS	Economic Management Sciences
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ASGISA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
SIP	School Improvement Plan
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
QA	Quality Assurance
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
SASA	South African Schools Act
ANC	African National Congress
UHL	University of Higher Learning (a pseudonym)
RCL	Representative Council of Learners

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I have been involved in a range of South African schools as a secondary-school teacher and as an education consultant over the past twenty years. My work has taken me to highly-performing, well-resourced suburban schools; small, under-resourced, semi-rural farm schools and overcrowded, poorly functioning schools located in the ganglands of the Western Cape. I have been struck by the ways in which the learner is constructed, and seeks to become a particular type of ‘subject’ in each of these disparate environments. This process concerns both how the learner is imagined within the discursive framework of the school and how the school configures itself to produce a particular type of learning subject. My interest in the imagined learner focuses particularly on how learners are shaped by the discourses that surround them, and the extent to which they are able to interrupt discursive formations and imagine themselves outside of normative constructs.

My intrigue with the notion of the ‘ideal’ learner within the school context extends to a consideration of how the learner is imagined in current education policies. This arises from my professional involvement in the area of whole-school development in seven schools over a period of four years. During this time my engagement with the Whole-school Evaluation Policy (DoE: 2001) alerted me to a particular assemblage of discourses that were foregrounded in the policy and the possible links between these discourses and the imagined learner. This interest in the imagined learner ultimately inspired a systematic investigation into how the learner is imagined in education policy discourse; how dominant policy discourses are translated in different school contexts and how learners position themselves against prevailing constructs.

In this thesis the terms ‘learner’, ‘pupil’ and ‘student’ are used to denote the learning subject. These terms are considered more closely in Chapter Three.

INTRODUCING THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to develop an account of how the learner is imagined in current education policy discourses and to describe how key policy discourses are translated, interpreted and enacted in schools. Using Foucauldian discourse analysis, I illustrate how particular discourses regarding the imagined learner are translated in two secondary schools in

the Western Cape. I then examine ways in which students interpret these discourses, position themselves against prevailing constructs and form their subjectivities.

The idea that the whole education system is – and always has been - driven by an imagined learner underlies the logic of this study. The imagined learner within an education context is a central point of reference for how the learning subject is constructed in policies and the ways in which learners are constituted within the context of the school. How the learner is imagined relates to the purpose of education, which shapes the schooling system. This in turn influences learner subjectivity. I begin by asking, therefore, how those in power envisage the ‘ideal learner’, or, more specifically, what those in power want learners to become upon completing their schooling.

The notion of the *imagined learner* presupposes the existence of a set of normative assumptions and ideals which, as Soudien (2007) suggests, ultimately become appropriated as social virtues. As a tool of governance, this functions as a regulatory mechanism of order and control “a site for regulating the conduct and actions” of citizens (Burns, 2008: 351). The school’s role in reinforcing normalised constructs is an important area of enquiry in this study. Very often, the inheritance, adoption and articulation of normalising discourses become a school’s “default mode” (Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006: 33). As these authors point out “its formation is not announced but assumed; it is maintained by unspoken agreements; it requires very little to sustain it and make it functional; and it can remain out of sight or slip easily from view” (2006: 33). An enquiry into normative assumptions with respect to the imagined learner interrupts its formation, rendering it visible and open to critique.

An understanding of the imagined learning subject requires a multi-levelled examination of dominant *policy discourses*; the *discursive framing* of the school environment, as well as the *techniques and strategies* employed within the environment which work together to develop a particular regime that prescribes actions and behaviour (Masschelein & Simons, 2002).

It is with this layered focus of enquiry that I approached the analysis of discourse at three levels: policy, the school and learner subjectivity. My methodological approach includes case studies and discourse analysis of selected policy texts as well as school texts taken from observations and interviews. This particular type of discourse analysis requires a degree of movement between text and practice because of its multi-levelled focus. To begin, two national policy texts are analysed: the South African White Paper on Education and Training

(DoE: 1995) and the Whole-school Evaluation Policy (WSE) (DoE: 2001). The reader is referred to Addenda A and B for the relevant extracts of both policies.

The school-based research took the form of observation and interviews in two co-educational public secondary schools in the Western Cape: Glen Ridge High and Ubuntu High. Glen Ridge High is located in an affluent residential suburb, while Ubuntu is located not far away, but in the middle of a busy, urban mixed residential and business centre. The socio-economic difference between the two schools is suggested by the disparity in school fees. While the annual fees at Glen Ridge High in 2011 were R20,165 per pupil, school fees at Ubuntu High were R450 per annum. As a comparatively privileged, ex-Model C¹ school, the Glen Ridge High school fees were unaffordable to poorer black children; while those who lived closer to the school were able to afford the fees and gain admission (Dornbrack, 2008). Ubuntu High, on the other hand was an historically disadvantaged school, attended predominantly by Xhosa-speaking learners. The number of pupils in each school varied slightly, with over 1000 at Ubuntu and 900 at Glen Ridge. Differentiation between these schools was regarded as important in determining how the different discursive frameworks shaped learner subjectivity.

This chapter presents the research focus and context of the thesis, together with an overview of the conceptual framework and methodological approach.

RESEARCH FOCUS

As will be illustrated in the literature review, there is consensus that education has been fundamentally affected by market influences. In this study, I describe the extent to which market discourses converge around particular notions such as success and productivity. Such notions may be located at policy level and infiltrate the discursive framework of schools. This is not to suggest that these concepts are entirely new in education, or that they were absent from previous policy discourses. What is argued instead is that the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a *decisive shift* with respect to the focus of education policy discourse, and a *foregrounding* of a particular set of notions which cohered around a new market logic.

Ball (1994) described new trends in education as a new 'economy' of power, the aim of which was to reform the public and welfare services by introducing new forms of

¹ In 1992 all white schools were converted to Model C Status. As such they were state-aided and governed by a school governing body. Additional teachers (over and above those employed by the state) received salaries from school fees which were raised. This usually meant an increase in school fees, which resulted in the majority of black children being excluded due to financial constraints (Dornbrack, 2008: 2).

accountability, standardisation and competition. Underpinning the shift in reform policies was a general overhaul of school values that focused on training young people to become “self-managing individuals with an eye to their economic futures” (Burns, 2008: 344). Changes in education during this time therefore reflected a broader social transformation that has affected many, if not all spheres of modern life (Biesta, 2004; Burns, 2008).

What significance do these changes in education have for the imagined learner? In responding to this question I argue, as Jacklin (2011: 1) does, that the general purpose of schooling is to produce particular learner identities, “both as an end in itself and as a means to influence the broader social, economic and political formation”. Particular representations of identity are constructed in education policy as a response to the political, economic and social agenda of the government in power. More specifically, as Jacklin suggests,

... the way in which the threshold between schooling and society is mediated (is) through an imagined learner as product of schooling. The significance of this mediation is the potential for introducing coherence to the otherwise impossibly complex task of imagining a different system. The imagined identity of the learner as product of the education system is the compass that guides the process of redesigning that system (2011: 1).

In exploring discursive constructions of the imagined learner and their constitutive effects for the learning subject, my intention is not to contest the need for schools to prepare young people for economic participation, but rather to problematise the effects of normative constructs with regard to the imagined South African learning subject. My focus aligns with Youdell’s (2004) notion of “educational triage” which refers to the need, within a marketised context, to understand the impacts of education markets by drawing together an analysis of *policy reforms*, the nature of *institutional responses* to these reforms and the day-to-day *school practices* that constitute particular types of subjects.

It is useful at this point to define marketisation and to elucidate how this applies to an education context.

BACKGROUND

Marketisation

“Marketisation” may be broadly defined as occurring when the “market infiltrates all aspects of the organisation” (Blackmore, 1997: 3). Local privatisation and dependence on the market

become expressions of a global economic agenda as the citizen is replaced by the consumer. Marketisation therefore refers to the transfusion of private sector values into the public sector, resulting in the public system being increasingly regulated by the market. *Education marketisation*, more specifically, refers to the infiltration of market values and practices into the *education context*. Kenway, Bigum, Fitzclarence, Collier and Tregenza (2007: 9) consider the consequences of education marketisation in terms of the types of citizens that are produced and argue that the main imperative of market reform policies is to “produce future citizens who are dedicated and uncritical consumers and dedicated and docile workers”.

Practices of accountability, performativity, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, new managerialism and competition characterise the market trend in education. This ethos is articulated through education reform policies; commercial interests in education; new corporatist models of school management and the curriculum.

The school curriculum must be acknowledged as a critical medium through which education policy penetrates the school and affects the learner. A key way in which this is demonstrated is in the emphasis of subjects such as mathematics and physical science over history and art. Because the curriculum is implicated in social change, it is the most direct bridge between policy and the learner. The idea of the learner being imagined in terms of a future place in society signals a double move which pervades all levels of schooling: *who the imagined learner is* and *what needs to be taught in schools* in order for the learner to be equipped for the future. Despite the importance of curriculum as a response to social change, this is not a focus of the study. My enquiry focuses on how the learner is imagined in the selected policies, and how the two schools in the study configure themselves to produce the ideal learning subject.

As mentioned, the 1980s and 1990s marked a critical transition in education, from a socially-democratic, ‘welfarist’ (Ball, 1990; Biesta, 2004; Gewirtz & Ball, 2000) education system to that of a market-driven, neoliberal model. The link between a market approach and neoliberalism is addressed in detail in the literature review that follows in Chapter Three.

In the following section, I demonstrate the shift from liberalism to neoliberalism by highlighting key education policy reforms, first within an international context, and then a local one.

Liberal education practice and discourse

Liberal discourses in education include those that relate to professionalism; equality of opportunity; social justice; citizenship; and consultative and cooperative engagement (Gewirtz & Ball: 2000). Participative and professional forms of management and administration reflect an “articulation of modes of power which connect the structures, cultures, relationships and processes of organisational forms in special configurations” (Clarke & Newman, cited in Gewirtz & Ball, 2000: 254). Educational liberalism is characterised therefore by a public-service ethos central to which are values of equity and care; freedom; autonomy; the rule of law; rights and responsibilities (Christie & Sidhu, 2006).

The discursive shift from liberalism to neoliberalism has not been continuous or unambiguous. In addition to possible discursive overlaps *between* liberal and neoliberal concepts, there are also tensions and contradictions *within* each. It is not my intention to trace the relationship between liberalism and neoliberalism, but rather to understand the constitutive effects of those discourses that have been referred to as *neoliberal* and that have infused the education landscape in the post-liberal period. I turn now to the United Kingdom Education Reform Act of 1988 which marks the beginning of the infiltration of new market trends in education in the UK and internationally.

This Eurocentric starting point suggests a relationship between education reform in South Africa and in the United Kingdom. This was particularly marked in 1994 by South Africa’s readmission to the Commonwealth, signalling similarities internationally, and specifically in Anglo post-colonial countries. A significant way in which the relationship between Commonwealth countries was articulated was through policy reform trends. My focus on education reform in the United Kingdom also stems from the richness of scholarly literature that emanated from this region during this period.

The 1988 Education Reform Act and the shift to neoliberalism

The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) was introduced in the United Kingdom, heralding a new culture of accountability in education which became evident across the globe. This legislation within the education domain may be seen as the outcome of the explosion internationally of the “audit culture” (Apple, 2005; Power, 1994). Further, new trends of accountability mirrored the growth of international governance indicators at the inter-state level. Buduru and Pal (2010) regard interstate accountability as a driver of public

management reform which was used to “measure the performance of governments, the quality of public institutions, as well as people’s perceptions of various aspects of governance” (UNDP, n.d., in Buduru & Pal, 2010: 512). At the interstate level, therefore, external indicators were used as a way to measure performativity between multi-national agencies and states. Significantly, in education these indicators were used between states and schools.

The ERA, described as “the most influential piece of educational policy” in the twentieth century, involved the overhauling and restructuring of the education system (Morley & Rasool, 1999: 10). Schools were reconfigured as small businesses whose income, as Gewirtz states, “...was to become dependent on their success in attracting customers within competitive local school markets” (cited in Biesta 2004: 233). This Act, according to Burns (2008), marked the beginning of education marketisation by injecting competition; accountability and standardisation into the education arena. In addition to restructuring reforms, the decentralisation of schools was enforced by devolving power and management to local school communities. The principle of examination as the “formal testing and signifier of ability” (Morley & Rasool, 1999: 11) sanctioned by the ERA, was extended in the 1990s by shifting the focus from individual students to educational institutions. It aimed to measure academic performance, with the result that “targets, goals, [and] outcomes could be identified and worked for” (1999: 12). This more rigid, standardised model of testing signified a shift towards training young people for participation in the labour market.

Through the ERA, market sentiments become objectives to be transmitted into the international educational domain through a new-order market rhetoric.

The South African context: new democracy, new choices

In the context of South African education policy, similar trends may be traced. Preceding the 1994 elections, the Eiselen Report (1951) and De Lange Commission (1981) represent two examples of apartheid versions of liberal policy reforms. The focus on the independence of the nation underscored South Africa’s liberalist approach during this time.

The Eiselen Report in 1951 laid the foundations for the 1953 Bantu Education Act (Soudien, 2007). Important to mention about this report was the introduction of racialised education and the different ways in which racial groups were differently prepared both for citizenship as well as for participation in the market. Because the Eiselen Report was intended to generate a

semi-skilled work force, it met apartheid-based liberal educational demands, resulting in an increase of black enrolment at school from 24.5% in 1948 to 84.5% in 1994 (Sadie, 2005: 15).

In 1981, the De Lange Commission report focused attention on the private sector's role in schooling and the need to train young people for the economy. Although the commission was not immediately implemented, its significance was two-fold: first, its principles reflected a similar logic to those articulated in international education reforms during that time; second, the report provided a framework and rationale for education policy post-1994 (Jacklin, 2011).

The 1994 elections heralded political transformation in South Africa. However, the consequences of hundreds of years of colonialism, followed by decades of institutionalised racism, resulted in the perpetuation of complex, fractured identities. Despite high expectations that post-1994 political reform would promote greater quality, equity and redress (De Clercq, 2010a), Christie (2006: 379) asserts that in the climate of global neoliberal capitalism, "the ANC made the political choice to attune its macroeconomic policy to market-led economic growth". Jansen (2002) echoes this view. He talks about South Africa's role in the global economy as "conscious participation of the South African state within universalizing discourses about education and the economy". Fataar (2010: 7) adds, "[w]e became ensnared by a neoliberal, globalised discursivity and quasi-market dynamics in the distribution of educational opportunity". Market-based globalisation discourse led to the adoption of a new approach in education policy, marking a shift from the pre-1994 call for social justice and equality. The economic intentions of the post-1994 education Curriculum 2005 were clearly articulated in a national Department of Education briefing document on the development of outcomes-based education:

South Africa has recently undergone a political change which removed the oppressive government of the past forty years. A massive undertaking to reconstruct South African society and create economic growth is being undertaken in order to improve the quality of life of South African citizens and redress the inequalities of the past. In order to achieve this there is a strong focus on economic growth and job creation ... the transformation of the Labour Market is seen as being a key step in the creation of growth. This would require a clear change in the nature of the South African education system. Hence the move towards an outcomes-based approach to education. (Simpson, 1998, cited in Weldon, 2009: 139-140)

The adoption of a new approach in education based on economic growth supports Jacklin's (2011: 11) view that "1994 not only brought the end of apartheid, it also opened the door to the social imaginaries of globalisation".

The influences of global education trends on South African government rationality have resulted in a re-articulation of national policies at an international level. The aspiration of South African education policy-makers towards global education trends suggests that the representation in South Africa of the imagined learning subject may be located in a broader social imaginary. One of the effects of this was to prime the learning subject for the *global economic market*. In this respect, Tikly (2003: 168) asks whether, "having escaped apartheid's 'regime of truth', South African policy makers [were] increasingly ensnared in another, this time one that is global in origin".

The re-articulation of education policies precludes sufficient redress of the effects of South Africa's history of discrimination, in terms of how subjectivities are imagined and articulated. Thus opportunities for learners to grapple with their subjectivities in the context of a divided past have been framed in a particular way. Furthermore, the space for re-imagining new or different subjectivities constituted outside of a race and class-based frame was constricted by discourses that normalise and homogenise.

My purpose in this study is not to dispute the need for schools to prepare young people for economic participation. Nor am I refuting the value of education effectiveness in aspiring to goals of higher standards for the purpose of improved performance. My intention rather is to *develop an account of the constitutive effects of normalising discourses* for the South African learning subject.

Having outlined recent shifts in education policy, I broaden the discussion by examining market discourses more generally. In so doing I acknowledge the existence of multiple and competing discourses in the constitution of the learning subject.

Current market messages

The media are a key mechanism through which market discourses infuse the public domain. After the release of the 2009 matriculation results in South Africa, the headline of an article published in the Business Report of the *Cape Times* stated the following: "Matric result is economic failure" (Enslin-Payne, 2010: 15). In this article the director-general of the Department of Labour and president of the Black Management Forum was quoted: "The

learners of today are the economic managers of tomorrow. If they are not well-equipped we are signing our death warrant”.

Such messages overtly construct the learner as ‘product’ and attribute to this construction particular actions and behaviour that are enscripted in economic discourses. As Jansen (2002: 42) suggests, post-1994 education reforms were “lodged clearly and consistently within powerful economic rationales as the overriding motivation for ‘transforming’ apartheid education”.

The influence of multiple discourses suggests that policy is not the only discursive apparatus that infiltrates the school. Over and above discourses that are transmitted through the media are those that operate within the family. While discourses that pervade the home remain fundamental in the shaping of subjectivities, a child’s range of potential is influenced to a large extent by the school (Soudien, 2007). One then questions what role the school plays in shaping the South African learning subject. Because my interest is in processes of subjectivation, I ask specifically how young people are shaped by *discourses that are made available within the local site of the school*. Within an education context, this invites an enquiry into the constitutive effects of those discourses that predominate education policies and that infiltrate the school.

RATIONALE

The education system is driven by the idea of an imagined learner. The imagined subject of policy is directly related to the broad purposes of education. These purposes filter into the school, determining systemic practices. Through the discursive framework of the school, particular discourses are made available and desirable.

The school’s discursive framework reflects its culture, which, according to Bernstein (1975) may be understood in terms of the *expressive order* and the *instrumental order*. While the ‘expressive order’ relates to conduct, character and manner, the ‘instrumental order’ concerns the acquisition of particular skills and bodies of knowledge relating to the curriculum. The *relationship* between the expressive and instrumental orders is important as both represent articulations of the purposes of education, inherent in which are particular ideas of the imagined learner. In Chapter Five of this thesis, the WSE policy will be described as exemplifying aspects of the ‘instrumental order’ through which procedures and practices are transmitted for the acquisition of specific skills. This acquisition, according to Bernstein,

directly interacts with the school's 'expressive order' which is concerned with the 'character training' of pupils. It is the 'expressive order' that assumes an important focus in the study and is addressed in detail in Chapters Six and Seven.

Bernstein's 'complexes of behaviour' offer insight into how the learner is imagined within the school's discursive framework, and how particular discursive frameworks are shaped by the purposes of education. A broader understanding of current education purposes is useful therefore in signalling how the learner has been imagined within a particular context.

The 'expressive order' of the school relates to its disciplinary mechanisms which are configured to produce learners whose conduct and behaviour comply with a normative set of constructs. The *imagined learner* at the level of policy and the school relates to the *imagined self* at the level of learner subjectivity, in other words, how the learner positions him/herself against prevailing discourses.

In order to account for the constitutive effects of policy discourse, it is necessary to begin with an enquiry into the imagined learner at policy level. Developing an understanding of the imagined learner through policy and practice can contribute to the debate about the effects of market discourses in education. There is a substantive body of scholarship pertaining to the implications of education marketisation for leadership and management as well as for teachers. However, there has been no study to date which critically examines the constitutive effects of education market discourses for the South African learning subject.

This study aims to draw out the interplay between discursive practices at the level of policy and the school, and to understand the implications of this (Youdell, 2004) with respect to the constitution of the learning subject.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions identified for research are:

How is the learner imagined in selected national education policy texts, and how does this reflect a broader ideological framing within the policy?

How are these discourses translated and interpreted in the school, with specific reference to the school's 'expressive order'?

How does the learning subject position him/herself against constructions of the ‘ideal learner’, and to what extent do learners draw on other discourses to resist interpolation?

In addressing these research questions, I focus on two aspects of learner subjectivity: first, *how* the learner is imagined and spoken of in selected national policy texts; and second, *who the learner becomes* in terms of this imaginary. In other words, how is the subject positioned and constituted within the school as an effect of policy discourse and how does the subject support or resist this positioning?

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Using elements of Foucault’s theory, I examine the constitutive effects of discourse in selected policy texts and in the daily practices of schools. In Foucauldian terms, this involves:

... recognising and challenging the very forces (including the structures, practices and relationships) that enable a particular understanding of the world to dominate, to be reproduced and, most importantly, to be regarded as legitimate and correct (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007: 91)

Adopting a Foucauldian perspective, I explore ways in which marketisation discourses permeate the school, influencing its discursive framework. The school’s discursive framework is transmitted through particular disciplinary mechanisms or ‘rituals of power’ (Jabal & Rivière, 2007) which, as will be described in the analysis, play a key role in constituting the learning subject.

I approach the notion of discourse by drawing on the work of both Foucault and Fairclough. While Foucault provides a conceptual frame, Fairclough’s discourse analysis is based on the work of Foucault (Peters & Besley, 2008) and offers practical tools for such an analysis of discourse.

Foucault reworked his theory of discourse at different stages of his writing (Howarth, 2000). While his earlier archaeological work emphasises the rules of formation that structure discourses, Foucault’s later genealogical approach “... examines the historical emergence of discursive formations with a view to exploring possibilities that are excluded by the exercise of power and systems of domination” (Howarth, 2000: 49). For the conceptual aspects of this study, I focus mainly on Foucault’s later notion of discourse reflected in his genealogical accounts of power/knowledge and subjectivity.

THESIS OVERVIEW

In this chapter, I introduce the study by outlining the theoretical dimensions and the general methodological approach. The rationale and research questions are provided along with an introduction to Foucauldian discourse analysis.

In Chapter Two, I present the conceptual framework in which the conceptual resources used in the study are highlighted. Particular attention is paid to Foucault's concepts of power, governmentality and discourse, as well as to the notions of the subject and subjectivation. In the literature review in Chapter Three, I demonstrate how the various aspects of the thesis have been approached in current scholarship.

Chapter Four sets out the research design and methodology. In addition to explaining my methodological and analytic approaches, I provide detailed rationales for these. The chapter includes a discussion of validity, reliability and ethical considerations.

The analysis of two policy texts is conducted in Chapter Five, while Chapters Six and Seven present the analysis of data constructed from observation and interviews which were conducted in the schools. The school-based analysis is drawn primarily from interviews conducted with selected Grade 12 learners in each of the two schools.

Conclusions are presented in Chapter Eight. The research questions are answered by drawing together the three levels of research: how the learner is imagined in the selected policy texts is linked to the different ways in which these discourses were translated and interpreted in the schools. This in turn is related to how learners positioned themselves against constructions of the 'ideal learner', and the extent to which they were able to draw on other discourses to resist interpolation.

In the chapters that follow, I explore how policy is used as a regulatory and disciplinary mechanism of government. The effects of policy discourses are regarded in Foucauldian terms, not just as a result of imposition from above, but, more broadly, in terms of the actions of subjects themselves. To this end, focus is placed on how subjects are imagined and constituted, and moreover on *how they constitute themselves* by recreating or resisting interpolation.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Overlaying the three levels of analysis (policy, the school and the learner) are Foucault's theories of *power*. The concept of power is explored in this chapter and is linked to the notions of *governmentality*; *discourse* and the *subject*.

POWER

The notion of power, as used in this study, embodies key elements of Foucault's work, including governmentality, discourse, subjectivation and discipline. These concepts provide a framework for understanding ways in which human beings are constituted and constitute themselves as subjects.

Foucault's notion of power challenged the contemporary view, in which truth was assumed to be politically neutral, operating outside the domain of power (Humes & Bryce, 2003). Instead of operating as a top-down coercive force of domination, power for Foucault was both coercive and productive – preventing some forms of behaviour and enabling others:

... [P]ower would be a fragile thing if its only function were to repress, if it worked only through the mode of censorship, exclusion, blockage and repression ... exercising itself only in a negative way. If, on the contrary, power is strong this is because, as we are beginning to realise, it produces effects at the level of desire – and also at the level of knowledge. Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it (Foucault, 1980: 58).

As a complex network of relations, power was regarded by Foucault not only as circulating throughout macro processes of politics and society, but as operating on a micro level between people and institutions and as potentially present in all everyday exchanges and social encounters (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999). In fact, as suggested in the following extract, Foucault was more concerned with relations of power and the ways in which the subject is constituted therein, than with power as a concept in and of itself:

I scarcely use the word power, and if I use it on occasion it is as shorthand for the expression I generally use: relations of power ... I mean that in human relationships, whether they involve verbal communication ... or amorous, institutional, or economic relationships, power is always present: I mean a relationship in which one person tries to control the conduct of the other. So I am speaking of relations that exist at different levels, in different forms; these power relations are mobile, they can be modified, they are not fixed once and for all (Foucault, 1980: 291 – 292).

Because, for Foucault, no power relation represents total domination, freedom and resistance are *inherent* in every power relation. It is this “measure of freedom” (Anyon, 2009: 14) that makes possible the task of the subject to challenge prevailing discourses and expose their limitations (Gillies, 2008).

The exercise of power cannot be separated from the production of knowledge. As Foucault points out in *Discipline and Punish* (1977):

... we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and interests (1977: 27).

He continues:

We should admit rather that power produces knowledge ... that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (1977: 27).

Truth and knowledge can therefore only ever operate from within a particular domain of power and, similarly power cannot be exercised without knowledge. For Foucault, truth was “... linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which induces and which extend it” (Foucault, 1984b: 74, cited in Rabinow).

GOVERNMENTALITY

Through the notion of governmentality, Foucault developed an approach to political reasoning which he traced historically and also used as a critique of neoliberalism (Olssen, 2003). For Foucault, political reason or rationality was regarded as a form of discourse which itself contained “theories and ideas that emerge in response to concrete problems within a determinate historical period” (2003: 196). This idea is significant in that, according to Foucault, political reason constitutes a form of disciplinary power, engineered through the state to exercise control, for the purpose of shaping particular forms of conduct.

Governmentality refers to “the activity that consists in governing human behaviour” (Foucault, 1979: 74). Foucault’s often quoted maxim, ‘the conduct of conduct’ represents the rationalised endeavours of governmentality as a particular type of action, to shape and direct conduct towards an end result (Rose, 1996). In other words it is a way of conceptualising the exercise of power by nation states through rationalised programmes or strategies, in order to

shape the actions of individuals. Governmentality refers both to the practices through which power is exercised by modern governments over their populations, and “...the rationalities by which these practices appear ‘normal’” (Christie & Sidhu, 2006: 450).

Operating at a macro and micro level, governmentality is articulated both through policy and practice as it shapes the internalisation of the values and culture of individual subjects as they actively engage in their own self-government. Significantly, governmentality functions not only to control, discipline and normalise, but simultaneously, to make subjects *productive, and fulfilled* and therefore to willingly engage in their own subjectivation.

Government, here, does not indicate a theory, but a certain perspective from which one might make intelligible the diversity of attempts by authorities of different sorts to act upon the actions of others in relation to objectives of national prosperity, harmony, virtue, productivity, social order, discipline, emancipation, self-realization, and so forth (Rose, 1996: 29).

As an “exemplar of modernism” (Hayes et al., 2006: 132) the school exists as a site into which values of neoliberalism are injected, and a context in which the learner is shaped as a particular sort of subject. Because as individuals we are constituted and regulated through systems of power, policy becomes an important technology of power – a strategy of governing that fosters and shapes people’s subjectivities. As a form of analysis, governmentality addresses “both the practices by which modern government exercise control over their populations, and the rationalities by which these practices appear ‘normal’” (Christie, 2006: 374).

This conception of power offers insight into current education discourses and the critical role that the learning subject plays in being utilised as a productive resource. As Tikly (2003: 162) indicates, it marks the emergence of “... a distinctly new form of thinking about and exercising power in certain societies”, and functions as a mechanism through which conduct may be shaped in the fulfilment of particular goals. Rose (1999:3) makes the point that “[t]o govern humans is not to crush their capacity to act, but to acknowledge it and to utilize it for one’s own objectives”. In order for productivity to be effectively increased subjects need to be known or identified, so that they may be fashioned as subjects and may engage actively in their own self-constitution.

If governmentality is the activity that governs human behaviour, discourse may be regarded as the mechanism through which governmentality operates. The relationship between governmentality, discourse and subjectivation is examined in the sections that follow.

DISCOURSE

Overriding Foucault's work is the notion of discourse as a form of sense-making, through which the social production of meaning takes place, through which power relations are maintained and through which the subject is constituted (Kenway, 1990). Discourse does not function merely as a set of statements which translate reality into language. It represents a complex set of practices which helps us to grasp its own conditions of existence and to understand how what is 'said' relates to what is 'sayable'. As such it is the medium through which power operates, regulating expectations and actions and defining behaviour accordingly.

Foucault stresses the point that discourse is far more than words – it is legitimated as 'regimes of truth'. As such, an analysis of discourse enables us to grasp how "what is said fits into a network that has its own history and conditions of existence" (Barrett, 1991: 126). Because discourses form regimes of truth they are imbued with capacities of inclusion and exclusion as certain ideas and statements which are characterised as true are kept in circulation, and conversely, those regarded as false, are excluded. Foucault (1989: 30) asks "... how is it that one particular statement appeared rather than another?" and later he says,

... we must grasp the statement in the exact specificity of its occurrence; determine its conditions of existence, fix at least its limits, establish its correlations with other statements that may be connected with it, and show what other forms of statement it excludes" (1989: 30, 31).

The inclusion and exclusion of particular discourses alluded to here is linked to the issue of *access* to the production of discourses as well as to the adoption of discourse types. The types of discourses that are included in policy texts demonstrate ways in which certain discourses assume positions of 'truth' while others have been excluded altogether. This is visited in more detail in Chapter Five.

Foucault (1989: 30) posits that in every social order "the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to certain rules and structures". In this sense discourse is regarded as being self-defining in terms of what can be included and

what must remain silent, while 'manifest discourse' is "no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say; and this 'not-said' is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said" (1989: 28).

Developing these concepts in the context of education, Ball (1990) states:

Educational sites are subject to discourse but are also centrally involved in the propagation and selective dissemination of discourses, the 'social appropriation' of discourses. Educational institutions control the access of individuals to various kinds of discourse (1990: 3).

Through the process of schooling, the learner is therefore constituted as subject – "both in the passive processes of objectification, and in an active, self-forming subjectification ..." (1990: 3). Fairclough (1989: 29) identifies education as an example of a 'social order' embedded in which are various types of 'practice'.

'Orders of discourse', according to Fairclough (1989: 31), refer to discourses that are associated with a particular social order and its related practices. In order for discipline to be an effective practice through which power is exercised, subjects must be capable of action and it is "through mobilization into discursive regimes that people become active subjects inscribed with certain capacities to act" (Edwards, 2008: 23). Subjectivation therefore requires *willingness* on the part of the subject. In the context of education, the very act of learning is contingent upon learners "... bring[ing] forth their subjectivities for disciplining so that they can become a particular type of person" (Ball, 1990: 25). However, all exercises of power must involve resistance.

In the following section the link is made between governmentality, discourse and power, and an explanation of the subject is considered.

THE 'SUBJECT' AND SUBJECTIVATION

Subjectivity is not regarded here as being synonymous with 'identity', as, although it encompasses identity, its meaning extends beyond this term. More substantially, subjectivity involves "... the process of becoming a human being and moving into a state of consciousness of oneself and of the world around one and one's relationship to it" (Soudien, 2008: 1).

Moving away from Enlightenment notions of the individual as a foundational or autonomous self, Foucault regarded the subject as being constantly constituted – and self-constituting –

through discourse and power. An understanding of the subject therefore could not be based on a particular theory or philosophy as Foucault regarded the subject as being constituted differently in different situations and discursive practices. In an interview a year before his death, Foucault explained that his real concern was in the ways in which human beings were constituted as subjects through configurations of power, as an intrinsic element of the production of discourses (Peters & Besley, 2008). These configurations of power have emerged through various disciplinary institutions, one example of which is the school.

Foucault's notion of 'subjectivation' explains how the subject is constituted through discursive and institutional interactions rather than existing as a sovereign, rational individual. The important point here is that the subject is understood as continuously engaging in becoming conscious *through discursive processes*.

Significant in the Foucauldian notion of the subject are the constitutive practices he refers to as 'technologies of the self': the practices by which individuals *act upon themselves*, and form themselves as subjects. These strategies constitute ways in which individuals' understanding of themselves in terms of *what is expected of them* is internalised. The capacity of subjects to act upon themselves or engage in self-government is contingent on the subject's capacity to act or perform actions (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1994b).

In his lecture on Subjectivity and Truth, Foucault described this self-fashioning as "... the government of the self by oneself in its articulation with relations with others ..." (Foucault, cited in Rabinow, 1994b: 88). As a result the subject engages in constituting him/herself in a particular space in relation to the discourses and power relations encountered. As Prinsloo (2007) suggests:

It is from the available repertoire of systems of ideas that people can constitute themselves and be constituted in the process. Possible "imaginings" are enabled through the available discourse in circulation at a particular time in a particular space (2007: 192).

It is through the self-fashioning process – 'technologies of the self' – that subjects come to internalise values and norms through accepting, desiring and aspiring to achieve congruence between personal internal objectives and objectives that are external to themselves (Edwards, 2008).

Subjectivation therefore requires that the individual is invested with capacity, freedom, utility and productivity and it is through a system of normalising judgments that this is maximised. Foucault asserts that the “power of the Norm appears through the disciplines” and that, “... like surveillance and with it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power at the end of the classical age” (1977: 184).

In the following section the school is presented as an institution in which power is exercised through disciplinary techniques such as surveillance, normalisation and judgement. This relates to how the school configures itself through this disciplinary apparatus to produce a particular type of subject.

DISCIPLINE, SURVEILLANCE AND NORMALISATION

As an institution emerging within the modern nation state, the school becomes a critical structure in which power is exercised through *discipline*. Again, this does not refer to a top-down imposition of punishment, but rather to a type of *regulatory power* which pervades the school and codifies behaviour according to what is regarded as acceptable and desirable. Disciplinary procedures serve to normalise and regulate behaviour through observation and judgement. In *Discipline and Punish* (1977: 24), Foucault elaborates on the notion of the regulatory effects of disciplining:

... punitive measures are not simply ‘negative’ mechanisms that make it possible to repress, to prevent, to exclude, to eliminate; but ... they are linked to a whole series of positive and useful effects which it is their task to support ...

The notions of discipline and judgment are embraced in Bentham’s panopticon – a metaphor of surveillance explored in depth by Foucault (1977: 195) in *Discipline and Punish*. Hoskin (1990) highlights the etymological relevance of the word ‘docile’ in its application to an education context. The word ‘docile’ is derived from the Latin ‘docilis’ meaning teachable. The ‘micro-technologies’ through which discipline is exercised integrate processes of power and knowledge “... in the organization of space and time along ordered lines, so as to facilitate constant forms of surveillance and the operation of evaluation and judgment” (Hoskin, 1990: 31).

In Foucault’s work, surveillance also represents systems of punishment which operate as disciplinary, regulatory mechanisms making it possible “... for a single gaze to see everything

constantly” (1977: 173), and thereby to monitor and control the actions of subjects. Being under surveillance, individuals then self-discipline to regulate their own behaviour so as to ‘normalise’ themselves. In *Discipline and Punish* (1977) Foucault illustrates the relationship between normalisation and homogeneity:

In a sense, the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialities and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another. It is easy to understand how the power of the norm functions within a system of formal equality, since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences (1977: 96).

Disciplinary power is exercised through its invisibility, and although activated through multiple disciplinary practices, it is at its most powerful “when its exercise of power is veiled” (Gunzenhauser, 2006: 249). As Foucault points out:

In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection (ibid.) ... He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection (Foucault, 1977: 203).

In the final section of this chapter, the ‘problem’ of the disciplined subject is explored from the perspective of certain scholars who have critiqued Foucault’s subject on the basis of the elision of active social agency (Fairclough, 1992; Gunzenhauser, 2006).

POWER AND AGENCY: CRITIQUING FOUCAULT

A number of different authors have suggested ways in which Foucault may be critiqued. Anyon (2009) suggests that Foucault mentions, but never codifies different ways through which resistance to power takes place. Butin (2006) attributes the lack of agency in the Foucauldian subject to the absence of a foundational self. With regard to the problem of agency, Barrett (1991: 153) quotes Giddens: “Foucault’s history tends to have no active subjects at all. It is history with the agency removed. The individuals who appear in Foucault’s analyses seem impotent to determine their own destinies”.

Butin (2006: 372) critiques Foucault’s work in its application to an education context by suggesting that his theory does not “... help us to *do* anything”. He associates Foucault with

other “entrapment writers” who “... betray a sober recognition of our limited ability to shape or escape the present” (Chowers, cited in Butin, 2006: 376). In discussing Foucault, Bernstein (in Schmidt & Wartenberg, 1994: 305, 306) echoes this view:

He is constantly tempting us with his references to new possibilities of thinking and acting, of giving new impetus to the undefined work of freedom, of the need to grasp the points where change is possible and desirable, and of determining the precise form this change should take. But the problem is that these references to new possibilities and changes that are desirable are in danger of becoming empty and vacuous unless we have some sense of which possibilities and changes are *desirable* – and why.

I wish to counter these views by arguing that these critiques do not take cognisance of Foucault’s concept of power and resistance. Power, for Foucault, concerns relationships between *free* subjects. Because freedom is inherent in the subject, in every relationship there exists the possibility of resistance. The project of the self is not to transcend history but to exercise resistance by working within dominant discursive formations. As Foucault says,

I do not think that a society can exist without power relations, if by that one means the strategies by which individuals try to direct and control the conduct of others. The problem, then, is not to try to dissolve them in the utopia of completely transparent transaction but to acquire the rules of law, the management of techniques, and also the morality, the ethos, the practice of the self, that will allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible (Foucault, 2000, p. 298, cited in Christie, 2006: 449).

Foucault stresses the point that power relations are possible “only insofar as the subjects are free” (Foucault, 1984: 292) and that this means that within power relations there is “necessarily the possibility of resistance because if there were no possibility of resistance ... there would be no power relations at all” (1984: 292). The point that needs to be emphasised is that resistance is intrinsic in every relation of power, since power implies a free subject. Although the subject is constituted through discourse, it is perpetually open to the possibility of critique. According to Gunzenhauser (2006: 254):

The practice of freedom ... is a stance in relation to certainty, an incredulity toward foundations and essences, a radical appreciation for “persistent critique” (St. Pierre 2002), not for the sake of critique but for the possibilities that arise.

The task of the subject is therefore not to find ways to escape the discourses but to “acquire the rules of law” (Foucault, cited in Christie, 2006: 449) and to work *within* discursive formations to shift them. The exercise of freedom is not about disentanglement from

discourses but about using them in disruptive ways. This is to wedge cracks within the discourses; to expose and destabilise them so as to render them “permanently open, permanently contested, permanently contingent” (Butler, 1995, cited in Christie, 2010: 4).

In this study I suggest that the capacity to rupture discursive practices and to assume alternative positions becomes possible at intersections where alternative discourses are enlisted. These junctions mark the points at which change is possible, where the self becomes actively engaged in subjectivation processes.

With this critique in mind, it would be useful, when applying Foucault to this study, to consider the possibilities for resistance on the part of the learning subject against dominant discourses. As will be described in Chapters Six and Seven, one way in which subjects exercise their agency is through challenging the limitations set by discourses which normalise relations of power and unequal subjectivities (Christie, 2008: 380). This aligns with Foucault’s acknowledgement of the capacity of individuals to resist normalising discourses and to constitute themselves as *different kinds of subjects* (Jabal & Rivière: 2007).

Finally, a number of different authors have made suggestions about ways in which normalising discourses can be challenged. I end this chapter by acknowledging some of these views.

In addition to subjects developing the capacity to challenge normalising discourses, it is necessary to acknowledge the potential role that the school can play as a site for generating “renewal, resistance and reformulations” (Greene, 1982; Giroux, 2003 cited in Butin, 2006: 377). Guzenhauser (2008) draws on Foucault who emphasises the need for guidance from a mentor figure through whom the subject may be empowered with the capacity to engage in continual critical questioning and critique. Worthman (2008: 443) describes this as developing in the learning subject the ability to “... [reverse] the panoptic framework and [turn] the gaze back upon existing power structures”, and Hamann (2009: 38) refers to this as inventing different forms of critique. He recommends that we develop ‘counter-conduct’ strategies as a way of combating the disciplinary effects of power. Marshall calls for being “constantly vigilant against ever dangerous forms of subjugation or domination” (Marshall, cited in Guzenhauser, 2007: 28) and Ricken (2006: 557) posits the need to formulate criticism as “practice of de-subjugation”. Added to this, and embracing these views, is the need to adopt “... a more radically, personal stance toward oneself and others” (Guzenhauser, 2008: 2231) through which the subject questions how he/she has been positioned in relation to

others within a particular power relation and what the consequences of this positioning are. This perspective sees subjects as “shaped by discursive practices, yet also capable of reshaping and restructuring those practices” (Fairclough, 1992: 45).

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CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This study explores notions of the imagined learner in South African education policy discourses and how this imaginary is translated into school practices and learner subjectivities. The study does not explore issues pertaining to identity construction through a particular lens such as race, gender or class. Nor is it based on a psychological or psycho-social perspective in exploring identity formation. Instead, the focus is on the ‘production of subjects’ (Masschelein & Simons, 2002) or the ‘subject-in-process’ (Mills, 1997), from a Foucauldian perspective.

Usually in South Africa an approach that examines the learning subject involves an enquiry into identity politics that focuses on *race and culture* (Carrim, 2003; Carrim & Soudien, 1999; Cross, 1992; Dlamini, 2005; Dolby, 2001; Dube, 1985; 1990; Gaganakis, 1990; Habib, 2004; Jansen, 2009; Jensen & Turner, 1995; McKinney, 2006; Mda, 2006; Steyn, 2001; Vally & Dalamba, 1999;); *gender* (Pullen, 1996); *class* (Soudien, 2004); *social relations* (Chisholm, 2004; Pendlebury & Enslin, 2004; Pinnock, 1997; Wexler, 1992); *literacies* (Nongogo, 2006; Prinsloo, 2007); *curriculum* (Weldon, 2009) and *political changes* (Everatt, 2000). Other theorists have approached their studies on identity by incorporating a number of these elements in combination; these include Fataar (2010, 2009); Ramphela (2002); Seekings (2006); Soudien (2007); Stevens & Lockhat (1997).

This study has not approached subjectivity through a specific lens such as those identified above; instead, my approach allows the subject to be problematised in terms of the way it is imagined and constituted within the particular context of the school. This perspective is based on an understanding of the self as continuously shaped and constituted in discursive practices.

The literature is clustered into three main sections. The first section contextualises the study by tracing how the *shift from liberalism to neoliberalism* has been portrayed in the scholarship with a view to understanding implications for the neoliberal subject. After setting this context, I consider how the literature views *the effects of neoliberal reform policies on various aspects of the school* and its impact particularly on the learning subject. The third and final section focuses more specifically on how the literature regards the *constitution of the learning subject as an effect of education marketisation*.

THE SHIFT FROM LIBERALISM TO NEOLIBERALISM

The transition from liberalism to neoliberalism is a useful starting point in order to understand the ‘task’ of the *neoliberal* government, as opposed to that of the *liberal* government, in affecting the changing role of the subject. Various Foucauldian scholars have been drawn upon in this section to help create an understanding of the shift in governmentality and how the subject is implicated in this shift.

Apple (2005); Hamann (2009); Olssen (2003; 1996) and Read (2009) distinguish between classical liberalism and neoliberalism by way of the differing degrees of emphasis on economic activity. Focusing on exchange, classical liberalism represents a construction of spaces in which the state, the economy and the individual function autonomously. Within this construction, market exchanges can operate independently, as a rationality separate from the state ensuring and securing individual freedom (Olssen, 2003). Tikly (2003) suggests that the fundamental concern of the liberal state is that of security as a base for prosperity, and at the heart of this concern is the functioning and performance of the economy. The task of the liberal government is therefore to develop programmes and technologies to protect the public good for the purpose of exchange. Neoliberalism, on the other hand, is described by Read (2009) as not only political, but as extending the process of economic activity into the entire domain of human existence. *Exchange* is substituted with *competition* as a rationality that infiltrates every aspect of social life. Foucault (1979: 79) describes neoliberalism as seeking to “... extend the rationality of the market, the schemes of analysis it proposes, and the decision-making criteria it suggests to areas that are not exclusively or not primarily economic”.

The shift from exchange to competition requires of neoliberalism a new form of governmentality – a new way in which people are governed and through which they govern themselves. This new element of the governmentality of neoliberalism is the rendering of freedom to subjects as in order for neoliberalism to effectively operate, its subjects must have liberty to act and to be empowered with the capacity to make choices based on their interests and desires rather than on “rights and obligations” (Read, 2009). Coupled with this freedom is the necessity for the state to tightly manage the *conditions* required for competition. Therefore, according to Olssen (2003):

Not only must government block and prevent anti-competitive practices, but it must fine-tune and actively promote competition in both the economy and in areas where the market mechanism is traditionally least prone to operate (2003: 198).

If the role of neoliberal governing is to intervene in encouraging competition in the economic arena, as well as in areas in which “the market mechanism is traditionally least prone to operate” (2003: 198), education becomes a powerful apparatus of governmentality through which the capacity of individuals to be productive may be increased. Goddard (2010) illustrates the role education assumes as a form of government:

Education is assigned the responsibility of forming individuals who will have the attributes, capacities and attitudes necessary for our society’s economic prospering and it is enjoined to produce subjects who will be active in the conduct and construction of government through the exercise of freedom (2010: 355).

Education, as a practice of neoliberal government, is therefore oriented towards a market framework designed to yield an end product, as “the state seeks to create an individual that is an enterprising and competitive entrepreneur” (Olssen, 2003: 199). The fundamentally new subject of neoliberalism – *homo economicus* – is required to fulfil a totally new construction of what it means to be human, marking a shift from the subject as ‘exchange creature’ to that of ‘competitive creature’ (Read, 2009). The term ‘homo economicus’ was used by Foucault to describe a modern, liberal subject of governmentality, “... a biopolitical subject of power/knowledge” (Hamann, 2009: 53) who acts in accordance with his [sic] needs and desires. This new image of the neoliberal subject endeavours to ensure that individuals “... are compelled to assume market-based values in all of their judgments and practices in order to amass sufficient quantities of ‘human capital’ and thereby become ‘entrepreneurs of themselves’” (Hamann, 2009: 38). The subject of neoliberalism – the entrepreneurial self – is an individual constituted through discourses that shape the way in which experiences, relationships and attitudes are ‘read’, while at the same time *shaping* those experiences, relationships and experiences (Masschelein, 2001). The transfer from exchange to competition necessitates new ways in which subjects are constituted and new ways in which the subject understands and organises him/herself.

While relations based on exchange were considered to be natural, Hamann (2009) regards those based on competition as ‘artificial’. Because “... neither the market nor economic competition between individuals is a natural reality with self-evident or intrinsic laws” (2009: 42), state intervention is necessary to ensure that the conditions that enhance competition are

fostered. This requires that values and principles of neoliberalism "... must be actively instituted, maintained, reassessed and, if need be, reinserted at all levels of society" (2009: 42). Significantly, the type of subject that must be produced according to this rationality is one "... that must be brought into being and maintained through social mechanisms of subjectivation" (2009: 42). In this sense, neoliberalism functions to produce subjects who are free "[b]ut their freedom is shaped, conditioned, and constrained within a form of subjectification characterized by increasing competition and social insecurity" (2009: 51). There is a crucial paradox here: although neoliberalism *appears* to empower subjects with freedom and although power becomes less visible and less repressive, it also becomes more insidious. Fairclough (1989: 37) describes this paradox as the "... tendency of the discourse of social control towards simulated egalitarianism, and the removal of surface markers of authority and power".

The important point is that inherent in neoliberalism is the *presumption* of freedom and equality on the part of the subject (Hamann, 2009). This does not imply that social and economic disparities do not exist, but it suggests a shift of responsibility for these conditions from the state to the subject. In other words, socio-economic divisions are attributed to failures on the part of the individual rather than the state. In this sense, Hamann holds that "[n]eoliberal subjects are constituted as thoroughly responsible for themselves and themselves alone because they are subjectified as thoroughly autonomous and free" (2009: 50).

Autonomy is thus regarded as a critical requirement for productivity and competition. Attributes of autonomy and competition are not only required for the individual's management of social relations, but are qualities that need to be internalised within the individual him/herself. The individual subject is therefore expected to develop a productive and entrepreneurial relationship towards itself (Masschelein and Simons, 2002). This requires a new kind of self-management or self-government which pertains to all aspects of life: relationships, career and learning.

The point taken from the above discussion is that in order for neoliberalism to operate optimally, *conditions amenable to fostering competition* are required – and that these conditions *extend beyond the economic market*. Such conditions necessitate new forms of control – new mechanisms of vigilance and surveillance such as 'performance appraisal' (Olssen, 1996). Olssen elucidates this view:

In this model the state has taken it upon itself to keep us all up to the mark. The state will see to it that each one makes a ‘continual enterprise of ourselves’ ... in what seems to be a process of ‘governing without governing’ (1996: 340).

Moreover, the strategies and techniques that define these ‘conditions’ are accompanied by the construction of a particular set of discourses – a certain way of speaking and writing. According to Masschelein and Simons (2002):

This discursive horizon and these techniques and strategies ... install and develop a certain regime that determines what can be seen and what can be said; they imply that we are positioned in this space and this society in a certain way (2002: 591).

The literature that is reviewed in the following sections extends the discussion of neoliberalism by illustrating the *implications* and *permutations* of neoliberalism for its effective and sustained governmentality. Fostering competition through the creation of market-based mechanisms of governing involves the creation of a social environment that values and prioritises individualism as well as the establishment of a set of discourses that offers new terms and formations in which we can relate to ourselves and to others and “... in which we can speak the ‘truth and represent valid knowledge’” (Masschelein, 2001: 4). The overarching point is that the market must suffuse *all aspects* of society so that individualism and competition can be generated and sustained through the mechanisms of governing. Marketisation discourses ensure the infusion of market-based values which shape and regulate the actions of individuals in order to bolster and safeguard the conditions required for neoliberal governmentality. Moreover, it ensures that new terms and categories redefine the individual with respect to how he/she regards him/herself and the role he/she is expected to play. The position of the subject therefore becomes critical in maintaining an environment conducive to neoliberalism. And it is through educational strategies and discourses that the subject is primed to fulfil this objective, both at an individual and inter-personal level.

Having traced the shift from liberalism to neoliberalism in current scholarship, the next section draws on selected studies which focus more directly on the infusion of market discourses into the school, and their effects on the shaping of the learning subject.

IMPLICATIONS OF MARKETISATION FOR EDUCATION

This section focuses on the *implications of marketisation for education* in three ways: first, it examines the *impact of accountability on social relations* within the school and the consequences of this for the learning subject; second, it presents studies on the *impact of*

marketisation on the curriculum; and third, it reviews the scholarship of *accountability, performativity and quality*, and their effects on the shaping of subjectivities. The section ends with a discussion in the literature of *school evaluation as a disciplinary mechanism* and considers how this influences subjectivities.

Before beginning this section, I wish to draw attention to the following studies which address the impact of school restructuring and marketisation for school principals and teachers: Angus (2004); Ball (2004; 2003; 1990); Blackmore (2004; 1997); Bottery (2006); Comber (1997); Fleisch & Christie (2004); Gewirtz & Ball (2000); Jansen (2004); Masschelein & Simons (2002); McInerney (2003); Rasmussen & Harwood (2003); Sachs (2001); Simons & Masschelein (2006) and Whitty & Power (2003).

The referencing of this literature acknowledges the impact of market trends for all who are involved in education. Kenway (1990: 167) suggests that “hegemonic discourse ... within a particular field of social relations” implies a homogenising discursive prevalence throughout that ‘field’. The subject is constituted therefore not only through prevailing discourses, but through direct contact with others who themselves have been subjectivated through market discourses. Both principal and educator, whether compliant or resistant, are enmeshed in multiple relations of power and normalisation practice. Although I am primarily interested in the constitution of the learning subject, it is not the learner alone who is shaped – or at the very least impacted – by market discourses.

In the sections that follow, the scholarship focuses on how the learning subject is implicated through neoliberal reform policies and, more specifically, how through market discourses the learner is subjectified.

The impact of marketisation on social relations and subjectivities within the school

Biesta (2004) is interested in the kinds of relationships that are produced within a ‘culture of accountability’. He maintains that the shift in the school towards a marketised environment has resulted in the re-definition of social relations in economic terms rather than in political terms. In this sense relationships are defined in terms of ‘providers’ and ‘consumers’. He speaks of the ‘depoliticization’ of the relationship between teachers and students in as much as their interactions focus primarily on “... questions about the ‘quality’ of the provision ...

and individual value for money ... rather than on questions about the common educational good ...” (2004: 242).

The theme of social relations based on economic terms is developed by Masschelein and Simons (2002). According to these authors, because subjects are always positioned in ‘relations of competition’ with others, the learner is constituted as entrepreneur: “Enterprising qualities can be defined only by reference to other enterprising individuals ... and not in relation to any stable norm” (2002: 600). Social relations are conceived as consequences of entrepreneurial choices. As self-managing entities, individuals function separately from each other and are “exposed to a mode of comparison and competition in which our survival is at stake” (2002: 600). These authors see the ideal learner as interpellated as an ‘entrepreneurial self’ – an individual who is autonomous and self-managing:

The entrepreneurial self is an active, counting and calculating self. It counts with itself, it keeps its own account and is accountable. It adopts a critical-objectivating attitude towards itself ...” (2002: 595).

The characteristics of comparisons and competition are therefore regarded as integral to the entrepreneurial self.

A further effect, in Biesta’s (2004) view of social interactions in economic terms, has been the ‘deprofessionalization’ of relationships. The issue of teachers’ professionalism being undermined as the focus shifts from the needs of the learner to the demands of accountability thus impacts on the learning subject, and more broadly on the discursive framework of the school.

The redefining of relationships within the education arena represents a widespread shift in values, fashioning not only the identities, but the self-perception of subjects (Biesta, 2004: 242). Biesta’s “culture of accountability” or “new moral environment” aligns with the view of Gewirtz and Ball (2000): subjects find themselves deeply ensnared in the powerful mechanism of governmentality. The relations of power that are set up make it very difficult for the development of “... mutual, reciprocal, and democratic relationships” (Biesta, 2004: 243), in other words relationships that are based on responsibility and a concern for the common good. The reconfiguration of relationships is accompanied by the construction of new subjectivities within the school. This is illustrated by Gewirtz and Ball who discuss the effects of the shift from welfarist values such as equity and social justice, to corporate, market-driven values such as efficiency, competition and managerialism, all of which bring

into play “a new moral environment” (Gewirtz & Ball, 2000: 226). The production of new subjectivities associated with neoliberalism echoes the work of Barnett, Clarke, Cloke and Malpass (2008); Hamann (2009); Masschelein and Simons (2002); Olssen (2003); Read (2009); Schmidt & Wartenberg (1994); Steiner (2008); amongst others.

The particular types of social relations generated within the school reflects the school’s ‘expressive order’ (Bernstein, 1975), which, as mentioned in Chapter One, is concerned with the ‘character training’ of the learner. As suggested, ideas about conduct and character relate directly to the school’s ‘instrumental order’ which represents formal learning and the acquisition of specific skills. The interconnection between the two complexes of behaviour is important, as both ‘orders’ function to constitute the learner as the imagined product of schooling. Although the focus of this study is the *expressive* function of the school, I include a brief section below on how the literature views the implication of marketisation in terms of its impact on the curriculum, and hence on the ‘instrumental order’. This discussion signals the analysis of policy texts in Chapter Five.

Marketisation and the curriculum

As will be described in Chapter Five when analysing the White Paper on Education and Training (DoE: 1995), the economic discourse of Curriculum 2005 underpinned the need for particular skills that were envisaged for successful modern economies. Content-based subjects were back-grounded while mathematics and science assumed central focus as these subjects were considered to be linked with the needs of the market. Blackmore (2004) regards the particular form that the curriculum took to have been marketised by shifting the focus from process and inputs to outcomes. The focus on outputs and outcomes relates to the emphasis of neoliberal reform policies on accountability, performativity and quality discussed earlier in this chapter. These elements are addressed by Simons and Masschelein (2006) below.

Accountability, performativity and quality

Drawing on Foucault, Simons and Masschelein (2006) describe accountability in education as part of a particular governmental regime. Accountability discourses and technologies, according to these authors,

... do not *represent* the reality of education but instead *create* or produce the reality of education... these practices install a ‘regime of visibility and sayability’ ... of what and how people can and should think about themselves and others” (2006: 293).

Performativity is the school's mechanism for demonstrating quality, to the extent that, according to Simons and Masschelein, discourses about education have become conflated with discourses about quality assurance. As will be described in the policy analysis section, the achievement of quality is closely linked to the notion of excellence, which according to these authors, means "the best performance judged according to a well-defined set of quality indicators" (2006: 298).

The need for accountability is therefore regarded as a critical strategy for achieving quality and success. This rests on the assumption that performance can be measured through standardised outcomes and that these outcomes or indicators provide a tool through which success can be evaluated and measured. Whole-School Evaluation (DoE: 2001) is offered as a performativity-based model which frames systemic outcomes.

Masschelein and Simons (2002) are interested in ways in which mechanisms of accountability, quality and excellence shape subjectivity. They relate this to the notion of entrepreneurship, which they regard as a form of self-government. The subjectivation of learners as entrepreneurs implies that this type of subjectivity is not bestowed upon individuals by others, but is internalised in the self. The individual is constituted as an "entrepreneurial self" (2002: 595), as quality and excellence are inextricably bound up with entrepreneurship. Rather than being driven towards an external demand, quality is regarded as an *attitude* of the entrepreneurial self.

In Comber's (1997) view, the meaning of quality is framed within a managerial discourse – a 'keyword' deployed across different domains of the school. Quality therefore extends beyond the boundaries of school work, describing a "new code of behaviour" for learners: "Here the quality discourse brings new sites of surveillance together – literate behaviours, physical behaviours and implied attitudes – and in so doing spells out what a quality student does not do" (1997: 393).

In the following section the notion of surveillance is considered in relation to school evaluation. This once again pertains to the analysis of the WSE policy and relates to earlier discussions on accountability and performativity.

School evaluation as a disciplinary mechanism

Youdell (2006) describes school evaluation as a type of 'productive power' through which subjects are constituted and constrained. According to Barrett (1991), Foucault's notion of

productive power and subjectivation offers a conceptual understanding of the process through which the subject is constituted:

... *how* major shifts such as the increased disciplining of individuals in modern western society had taken place, and *how* one could show the political and economic dimensions of changes in power (1991: 136).

Subjectivity is therefore fashioned through shifts in governing in which the ethos of competition and enterprise is prioritised and enscripted in neoliberal discourses.

Integral to the practice of evaluation is the concept of discipline, a technique through which power is exercised. The disciplinary, and hence regulatory, power of school-effectiveness discourse exemplified in the WSE policy, presents a medium through which evaluation becomes a meaningful and acceptable practice. In this sense the school becomes amenable to “... intervention and regulation, with documentation, computation and evaluation as the main instruments or technologies for achieving this” (Edwards, 2008: 23).

The extent to which evaluation processes are linked to performativity is addressed in Perryman’s (2006) paper on panoptic performativity and school inspection, wherein she links school-effectiveness theories to performativity, discipline and surveillance. She considers school-effectiveness as a ‘recipe’ (2006: 150) for determining performativity and normalisation:

... all schools can follow the same recipe for success, and any deviation from this norm can be an indicator that a school is failing, which of course ignores the individual socio-economic contexts in which schools are located (2006: 150).

Perryman associates the positivist nature of evaluation with the ‘audit explosion’. As both Power (1994) and Rose (1999) suggest, the relative role of audit within “the new rationalities of advanced liberal government” has shifted “... from a relatively marginal instrument in the battery of control technologies to a central mechanism for governing at a distance” (Perryman, 2006: 150). Audit may be seen as a mechanism of governmentality in as much as its power derives from its capacity “to act upon systems of control” (2006: 150).

The disciplinary function of evaluation is evident, as Perryman suggests, in its regulatory effects. Although the institutional authority may be invisible, the objects of power, namely the educators and learners are “visible and supervised” (2006: 154). The implications of continuous observation and ongoing surveillance are that individuals come to anticipate what

is expected of them, and hence fashion their responses accordingly. Through being constantly observed, they perform in a manner that accords with what is expected of them. In this sense, Masschelein and Simons (2002) echo the point that subjectivity does not imply that the self is an empirically identifiable entity but that it is something that one must become – something that needs to be enacted.

The focus on the regulatory effects of evaluation for the learning subject, provides a valuable backdrop to the final section of the literature review. In the section that follows I illustrate how the literature views the *constitution of the learning subject through current market discourses*. This is considered primarily from the perspective of South African scholarship, although at times international studies have been drawn upon. The section is organised into three sub-sections: the use of the term ‘learner’ in South African education discourse; human rights discourse and the learning subject; and productive power and subjectivation.

THE LEARNING SUBJECT

Fataar (2010: 6) holds that the sociology of South African education “lacks a rigorous account of the educational subject”, and asks how subjects are positioned to encounter and engage with their education. Soudien (2008; 1999) examines subjectivity in the context of South African education policy by addressing the relationship between policy and identity.

The focus of Soudien’s papers is how the 1996 South African Schools Act (SASA) (DoE, 1996) is implicated in the re-definition of the learning subject. Soudien is interested in uncovering how the subject is imagined in education policies, and examines ways in which the subject comes to “a sense of self-awareness” (2008: 3). He suggests that education historically has misunderstood the child it has served, just as now, 340 years after the introduction of formal education in South Africa, the child continues to be “misrecognised”. He posits that current education policies “read them in ways that are dismissive of and in some ways contemptuous of their histories and ... impose on them ways of being and becoming that are profoundly discriminatory” (2008: 3). According to Soudien, “[w]e understand economic injustice but the injustice which relates to becoming a subject or a human being ... we understand poorly, and historically have done so” (2008: 4). He attributes in part, the failure of modern education to this “injustice” and suggests that the task of policy-making needs to be approached with more sophistication.

The kind of injustice to which Soudien refers, may be "... located in our policy and the way the policy is implicated in the process of becoming human" (2008: 7). The opportunity for exercising agency for young people in the pre-democracy years through social and political activism has, ironically, been demobilised in the post-apartheid decades. It is in this sense that the learning subject has been 'misread' and 'misrecognised'. Soudien's research relates to that of Neocosmos (2006) in dealing with the transition from active citizenship as people exercised their agency during the 1980s, to passive citizenship during the 1990s and beyond, as agency has shifted to the state. Through legislation such as SASA, Soudien asserts that the legitimacy of young people has been undermined as a result of the redefinition of their identities.

I now turn to the use of the term 'learner' in South African education policies. The relevance of this in the context of the study supports Biesta's (2010) assertion that *how we refer* to those who are subject to education matters. From a globalisation perspective, Masschelein and Simons (2002: 202) ask:

... who are we or who are we supposed to be, who are we invited to be, who are we *interpellated* to be ... as inhabitants or citizens of a globalised world? What kind of people are supposed to live in this world? And, of course how are we to think of education in relation to these inhabitants?

At various times in South African education different terms have been used to describe the school-going child/young adult: 'pupil', 'scholar', 'student' and since 1994 – 'learner'. Edwards (2002: 354) notes the significance of the shift from the notion of 'student' to 'learner' with regard to discourses of lifelong learning. This redefinition is critical in the re-shaping of subjectivities and the construction of the 'enterprising self'. Lifelong learning, according to Edwards, is a strategy associated with contemporary governmentality, through which enterprising qualities are internalised. The necessity for the subject to engage in lifelong learning is critiqued by Rose (1999):

The new citizen is required to engage in a ceaseless work of training and retraining, skilling and reskilling, enhancement of credentials and preparation for a life of ceaseless job seeking: life is to become a continuous economic capitalisation of the self (1999: 161).

In the South African context, the term 'learner' as used in the policies is normalising and idealising of the subject in that it invokes the assumption that all children share the same history – "that the playing field is now level ..." (McLaren & Torres, 1999: 62). The

consequence of the submerging of individual subjectivities, as Fataar (2010: 7) remarks, is that the “emerging subject ... struggles to articulate with the normative expectations of national imaginaries”. Morley and Rasool (1999: 122) introduce the notion of the “universal subject” – reflecting an identity that is “homogenized, ungendered, non-racialized”, although the values embodied in the idea of the universal subject are not commonly available to all. As Soudien (1999: 10) elaborates:

Subjectivity in this development is, moreover, encoded doubly in the text. It is framed in the traditional Western epistemological tradition as the autonomous and rational subject, but also the *subjected* subject. It is in this duality that the text reveals that which is privileged as presence and that which is disprivileged as absence.

The term ‘learner’ within the context of market discourses signals ways in which the idea of the homogenised subject is consistent with aspirations of the market. Biesta (2010: 541) locates the word ‘learner’ within the context of what he refers to as “the new language of learning” and as such associates this word with vocational education and lifelong learning. However, for Biesta, the term ‘learner’ does not infer the notion of ongoing learning as emancipatory. This term instead is “constructed in terms of a *lack*”, the implication being that “the learner is the one who is missing something ... who is not yet complete ... not yet knowledgeable, not yet skilful, not yet competent, not yet autonomous...” (2010: 541).

As suggested in the literature, normative constructs pertaining to the ‘entrepreneurial self’ position the South African learner as an enterprising individual who is engaged in vocational training and lifelong learning. The assumption that all citizens have equal opportunities irrespective of their differences underscores the prevalence of human rights discourses in post-1994 policy rhetoric. In the next section I focus on how human rights discourses are viewed in the scholarship.

Human rights discourse and the learning subject

Christie (2010; 2006) explores human rights discourse in policy reform in post-apartheid South Africa. Through the mechanism of governmentality she maintains that the population is framed in terms of non-racism and equal rights. Similarly, Spreen and Vally (2006) examine human rights discourse in South African reform policy, suggesting that despite pretensions of democracy, the ‘rights’ discourses disguise fundamental social differences between people:

The language of rights masks privation and obscures this reality by presenting rights as if they are common to all despite the fact that they are unattainable for the majority (2006: 353).

The reliance on human rights discourse pre-empts certain assumptions and claims. One such notion is that despite difference, all citizens have equal opportunities and that "... economic and social 'success' is simply about taking responsibility for oneself and one's community" (Burns, 2008: 345). These assumptions are based on the underlying faith in the essential "fairness and justice" of markets (Apple, 1999) and undermine opportunities for critical reflection and questioning about ways in which context defines who we are and how we are constituted. Claims, furthermore, that a market logic in education is foundational for the improvement of performance are not borne out in the research on the impact of marketisation, according to Ozga (2006).

The language of rights reflects neoliberal macro-economic policy discourses which, as Christie (2006: 378) suggests, "... are based upon particular domains of knowledge which normalise what may and may not be said". Neocosmos (2006: 357) holds that this discourse serves to de-politicise popular politics and to produce a "passive citizenship dependent on power ... for its existence". He distinguishes between 'passive citizenship' which presupposes equality bestowed by the state, and 'active citizenship' based on political agency. Referring to South Africa's political history, Neocosmos discusses the transition between the two forms of citizenship: "... the popular inclusive conception founded on active citizenship and the state conception founded on indigeneity and political passivity" (2006: 364). The exercise of political agency, demonstrated for example during the 1980s is undermined by post-1994 human rights discourse, which he considers as an obstacle to active citizenship and, therefore to the development of emancipatory politics.

The notion of 'active' versus 'passive' citizenship echoes Simons and Masschelein's (2006) scholarship on educational quality which constitutes a particular governmental regime. These authors suggest that this regime requires 'entrepreneurship' as a form of self-government, as a way in which the 'conduct of conduct' is ensured. The 'entrepreneurial citizen' has taken the place of the 'social citizen':

While the 'social citizen' refers to the form of self-government in the past social regime of government, the figure of the 'entrepreneurial citizen' or 'entrepreneur of the self' refers to the form of self-government promoted and stimulated today" (2006: 296).

Similarly, Apple (1999) highlights the depoliticising of certain practices in economic capitalist systems by ‘economising’ them instead.

The idea of passive citizenship resonates also with Masschelein and Simon’s (2002; 602) concept of ‘immunisation’ which they consider to be the consequence of the transformation of social relations: “... a transparent rule, norm, contract or agreement” in which every task undertaken is viewed “within an economy of calculable exchange” (2002: 602). Passive citizenship and immunisation intersect at the point of diffused social activism as a consequence of individualism and entrepreneurialism. In the view of these authors, interpellation of this kind induces immunisation in that, “... for all the importance of interaction with the environment and with others in this environment, individuals are addressed in the first place as separated and isolated from each other” (2002: 602). The notion of the collective is thus obfuscated as values of individualism, entrepreneurialism and competition are foregrounded.

The consequences of education marketisation for the learning subject are explored by Youdell (2006) from a different angle. Drawing on the work of Judith Butler, she uses Foucauldian theory to link the constitution of subjects with the reproduction of educational inequalities and exclusions. In the next sub-section Youdell draws on Foucault’s theories of power and subjectivation to conceptualised processes through which learners come to be “particular sorts of subjects of schooling” (2006: 33).

Productive power and subjectivation

Youdell’s study on productive power and subjectivation offers insight into *who* the learner is and *how* the learner has been imagined at policy level. The subject is constituted in and through discourse, and, as such becomes that which it is imagined and named. Although the ‘naming’ may appear to describe pre-existing subjects, Youdell asserts that the notion of ‘discursive performativity’ defines the constitution of the subject through “the very act of designation” (2006: 36). The importance of discursive performativity in this study has to do with the designation of the imagined learner in South African education discourses. As Youdell suggests, subjectivation involves more than the constitution of the subject; it implies a process of exclusion, of what the subject cannot be.

Youdell’s scholarship on performativity supports Thompson’s (2010) study in which the idea of the ‘good student’ is linked to performativity. This defines how “... the student is

continually positioned in a relational way to produce a negotiated identity” (2010: 416). Thompson’s research, which examines the construction of the ‘good student’ in three schools, found that the good student was one who was disciplined; individualistic; hard working; well behaved; respectful of authority; moralistic; organized, and involved in the school community. In his study he found that for the ‘affiliated good’, involvement in the institution was more important than academic success. Thompson’s assertion that subjects who are affiliated to the institution are more governable than those who are not, is particularly noteworthy in the context of the imagined learner in this study.

The disciplining of learners in schools as viewed by Thompson, echoes Goodson and Dowbiggin (1990) who argue that ways in which learning subjects are shaped in schools are reminiscent of some of the ways in which knowledge systems were constructed by French psychiatrists in the nineteenth century. Underpinning both processes of disciplining is the reliance on docility: in order for the body to be acted upon it must be subjected or made submissive. Through particular disciplinary mechanisms, the body is equipped for utility or productivity. According to Goodson and Dowbiggin, relations of power between “professional and client” are legitimised, out of which emerge “both a ‘discipline’ and a mode of disciplining self, body, emotions, intellect, and behaviour” (1990: 105). They quote Foucault, who asserts in *Discipline and Punish* “‘the disciplines’ become ‘general forms of domination’ which create subjected and practised bodies, ‘docile bodies’” (1990:106). However it is not only the subjectivities of the individuals who are disciplined in particular ways, but it is also the professions themselves which are disciplined.

The disciplining of the professions is regulated by external measures such as performance based on standardised testing. This type of ‘productivism’ will invariably shape learner subjectivity as pressure is placed on learners to strive towards higher levels of performance which becomes the measure of success. The notion of learner self-worth thus becomes contingent upon external reward. According to Usher and Edwards (in Humes & Bryce, 2003: 181), the disciplining and regulating of subjects through discourses of performativity lies at the heart of education, the task of which is “to operate in the most efficient ways to provide individuals with the learning they require to optimise their contribution to the social system”.

Bottery (2006) makes the point that the infiltration of marketisation in education has been a slow, subtle process that has taken place over time with the result that the change in education practice has become naturalised and normalised. He draws on Fergusson (cited in Bottery,

2006: 16) who suggests that an ‘acculturation’ takes place as individuals come to “... live and be imbued by the logic of the new roles, new tasks, new functions ... in the end [they] absorb partial re-definitions of their professional lives, first inhabiting them, eventually becoming them”. Through being subjectivated, principals and educators are shaped through normalising discourses and practice, and this, I suggest has a profound effect on the learner who in turn is most powerfully constituted through this complex, multilayered process.

However, according to Gewirtz and Ball (2000) resistance to normalisation does take place. A site of contestation may be set up within the classroom as some educators resist the influences of market discourses. This idea of resistance is central to Foucault’s notion of power, a point which was discussed in the previous chapter and is clearly outlined in his essay on ‘The Subject and Power’ (Foucault, 1994a). Foucault makes the point that “power is only exercised over free subjects” (1994a: 342). He continues:

By this we mean that individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several kinds of conduct, several ways of reacting and modes of behaviour are possible’ (1994a: 342).

Resistance is therefore always possible in relationships of power. The task according to Foucault, is for every subject to work within the discursive formations and to find the cracks and ruptures therein (Foucault, 1972). Resistance to dominant discourses is regarded by Gunzenhauser (2007) as the task of the educator. He explores resistance to normalisation technologies and maintains that educators need to be prepared and equipped to resist normalising practice within the school. He maintains that teachers who are engaged in their own ‘project of freedom’ (2007: 30) are those who would be most likely to encourage the same in the learner. From a Foucauldian perspective, Gunzenhauser asserts that normalisation must be challenged in order that the subject is able to see possibilities that would otherwise have been foreclosed. Underscoring the need for critique, Bottery (2006) posits that neutrality is not an option.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have assembled a variety of studies to illustrate how different scholars have viewed some of the key topics of this thesis.

In the chapters that follow, the thesis will approach the study of education policy texts from the perspective of its situatedness in the social context in order to describe how the learning

subject has been imagined and shaped. I suggest that the subject is continually engaged in processes of being constituted: rather than being fixed or determined, subjectivity is negotiated through discursive and institutional interactions. Through socialising mechanisms, the subject is understood as engaging in processes of knowing and understanding him/herself. Education is regarded as a key socialising mechanism of governmentality, which is a central generator of a specific set of discourses.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to develop an account of how the learner is imagined in selected policy texts; how dominant policy discourses are translated in the schools and how learners position themselves against normative constructs. The study was designed as a particular type of qualitative discourse analysis, and because it relates to policy, the school and the learners, it required movement between text and practice. In this chapter I set out the design of the study. This involves an explanation of *what* I intended to draw from the field and *how* I intended doing so, in order to generate a description of how the learner is imagined in the policy texts; how this imaginary is translated and interpreted in the school and ways in which students position themselves against dominant notions of the ideal learner.

The chapter is divided into three parts. In the first two sections, the discussion is organised around the three levels of data analysis: policy; the school; and the learners. Reasons are given for the choice of schools as well as for the chosen methods of analysis: interviews; observations and school-text analysis. I then explain the procedures followed for the interviews and observations, and for their analysis. In the third section, the discussion centres on validity, reliability and ethical considerations. I briefly consider the position of the analyst before concluding the chapter.

The focus of this chapter is the research design, the importance of which is discussed by Peter Freebody (2004: 68) who makes the following points:

...it is the clarity, comprehensibility and comprehensiveness of the researcher's description of methods – as they fit into the larger methodological framework of the project – that constitutes the report as 'research'. It is the defensibility of these methods as technologies for reasoning our way from the research questions to the conduct undertaken by the researcher and on to the production of findings that can count as answers to the original questions that defines the reliability, significance and value of the project. It is the ability of method to act as the bridge from questions to reasonable answers that distinguishes research from other ways of, perhaps perfectly reasonable in other terms or settings, of asserting knowledge and opinion about education.

The idea of design as the harmonious fitting together of the various components of the study is highlighted by Maxwell (1996). Emphasising the importance of an explicit research design, he speaks about design as an ‘order’ or ‘system’ (1996: 2003).

This study was approached at three levels. For the analysis of policy, two national education policy texts were selected and for this Fairclough’s analytic resources were enlisted. For the school analysis, two schools in the Western Cape were selected. Observation of school assemblies was conducted to generate a picture of the school and certain school texts were also analysed for this purpose. The third component of the design involved examining learners’ responses and for this interviews of Grade 12 learners took place. An interpretive thematic approach was used to analyse interview and observation data.

THE DESIGN

In order to generate a description of the imagined learner a case study approach was adopted. The approach aligns with that of Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 52) who explain that the defining features of a case are the “multiplicity of perspectives which are rooted in a specific context”. In this study the case was premised on generating a description of the imagined learner at different levels and from different perspectives. This comprised the analysis of portions of two national policy texts as well as the analysis of observation and interview texts in the two schools.

What follows is a detailed explanation of the study: beginning with the policy analysis component, I briefly describe the two texts, provide a rationale for their selection and the reasons for selection of the particular portions of the texts. Similarly, the school-based component includes a motivation for the selection of the schools, a background to the two schools; a rationale for the chosen methods of data construction (observations; interviews and analysis of school-based texts) and the procedures followed for the interviews.

POLICY TEXT ANALYSIS

The texts that were selected for analysis included portions from two national policy documents: the *South African White Paper on Education and Training* (DoE: 1995) (Addendum A) and the *Whole-School Evaluation Policy* (DoE: 2001), (Addendum B).

The White Paper on Education and Training: rationale for selection

It is often the case that the actual purpose, principles and objectives of a particular policy or group of policies, is explicitly stated in the early stages of writing the policy and that these early processes therefore express the policy's values more explicitly. Ball (1994: 26) maintains that exploring early policy processes is an important strategy "... for linking and tracing the discursive origins and possibilities of policy, as well as the intentions embedded in [them]". The introduction to the White Paper itself states that the document "describes the first steps in policy formation..." (White Paper, 1995: 6). More specifically, as Jacklin (2011: 2) suggests, the imagined identity of the learner is represented most explicitly in the early stages of initial conception rather than in the later stages of elaboration and translation into legislation. This, Jacklin explains "... is because early versions of policy are more likely to make explicit the reasoning and justification which supports the policy".

White papers are therefore useful documents for understanding policy values over and above the policies themselves. In general, the purpose, principles and objectives that are initially *explicitly* presented in the white papers become *implicit* in later policy processes (though they may also transform or disappear altogether). In this case, early conceptions of the imagined learner as future economic participant are clearly located in the White Paper whereas these notions are less overtly articulated – although present – in subsequent policies.

An analysis of sections of the White Paper on Education and Training therefore provided clarity into some of these initial concepts. In addition to the White Paper offering cogent insights into statements of purpose and values pertaining to the imagined learner, this document was deemed relevant in that, as a national policy, it presents the first guidelines on post-apartheid education in South Africa (Christie, 1996), outlining the "new priorities, values and principles" (White Paper, 1995: 6) for education and training.

Reasons for the selection of Chapters Two, Three and Four of the White Paper

As suggested earlier, the 1995 White Paper on Education and Training presents the first guidelines on post-apartheid education policy. As a White Paper, this document precedes policy processes, foregrounding an 'integrated approach' to education and training (Christie, 1996: 407). Chapter Two of the White Paper, "Why Education and Training", sets out to describe this integrated approach by identifying education and training as the two "essential

elements” of “human resource development”. This chapter was selected for analysis because it clearly explains the integrated approach to education and training. As will be suggested, this has significant consequences for how the learner is imagined and for the type of learner that is to be produced by the post-1994 education system. Chapter Three, “Transforming The Legacy of The Past” was selected as it is in this section that the integration of education and training is positioned within the broader South African context, both politically and historically. The types of discourses enlisted in this section are considered important, particularly those that represent the conflicting notions of human rights and human resource development. Chapter Four, “Values and Principles of Education and Training Policy”, was included as it is in this chapter that the values and principles of education and training are identified and explicated. This chapter not only provided important insights into how the White Paper positioned itself against global education trends, but also offered an explicit articulation of the imagined learner. The three chapters selected for analysis comprise twelve pages and appear at the beginning of the White Paper. As indicated, these chapters were considered salient in terms of their references to the purposes of schooling and, more specifically to the imagined learning subject.

The Whole-school Evaluation Policy (WSE): rationale for selection

As mentioned in earlier chapters, the WSE policy exemplifies the ‘instrumental order’ of the school (Bernstein, 1975: 38). Given this study’s focus on the ‘expressive order’, the reason for its inclusion is that it informs an understanding of the discursive framework of the school, which, to a large degree reflects the school’s ‘expressive order’.

Although this policy does not make explicit assertions about the imagined learner, inherent in its principles, objectives and outcomes are specific ideas about the learner as projected ‘product’ of schooling. Key to the WSE policy is the management of evaluation and accountability, integral components of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in its original form. In spite of the recent shift away from OBE, according to the Deputy Director General in the Department of Basic Education, “the purpose, values and principles of the curriculum remain the same” (Mosuwe, 2010).

The WSE policy therefore remains a pivotal legislative document in South African education, requiring that schools conduct an annual self evaluation process which constitutes a key component of their School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP is submitted to, and assessed by the Provincial Departments of Education on an annual basis. Significantly therefore, although the WSE policy is explicitly concerned with evaluation, performance and accountability rather

than with ideas about the imagined learner, what is of interest is the extent to which evaluation and performance-based discourses infiltrate the school's discursive framework, functioning to position and constitute learners in particular ways.

The rationale for the inclusion of the particular portions is explained in the section below.

WSE Policy: reasons for the selection of the Background and context and Key Elements of the Policy (Aims; Whole-school evaluation and quality assurance; Principles)

These portions ('Section 1' and part of 'Section 2') were included because they explain the policy's central themes, concepts and notions. The purpose of limiting the analysis to these areas was that it is in these early sections that the policy's key sentiments are explicated. The selected portions appear at the beginning of WSE policy, following the 'Minister's Forward' and consist of five pages. The remainder of the text demonstrates a discursive shift from a conceptual description to a more pragmatic focus on the 'approach' which addresses the specificities of evaluation such as inputs, processes, outputs, performance ratings and responsibilities.

SCHOOL-BASED ANALYSIS

The research was conducted during 2011 in two secondary schools in Cape Town which I refer to by their pseudonyms: 'Glen Ridge High' and 'Ubuntu High'.

My objective in conducting school-based research was to understand firstly, how policy-based discourses relating to the imagined learner were translated and interpreted in schools, and secondly, to describe the effects of these discourses on the constitution of the learner. I was particularly interested in how constructions of the imagined learner varied in different school contexts. By taking the research into the schools, a space was opened for understanding how contestation took place within the school and how learners may be resistant in their subjectivation processes.

The research was conducted in secondary schools as this is a crucial context in which young people begin to engage more actively in processes of self-understanding and self-construction. As they become more emotionally and cognitively mature, awareness of the self and the other is increased. This, coupled with greater curiosity awakens consciousness with respect to personal subjectivities. The choice of Grade 12 learners as interviewees was based on the

understanding that young people in their senior years at secondary school are closer to the adult phase in terms of decisions regarding tertiary education and career choice options. Pupils in the final year of schooling therefore have greater capacity to look retrospectively at their secondary school years, while simultaneously having begun, in many cases to look forward toward their future.

The reason for conducting the research in *two* schools was to explore whether the construction of the imagined learner worked differently in different schools. While two schools would yield sufficient data to enable comparisons to be drawn, confining the analysis to two schools only would help keep the project contained. The choice of Cape Town based schools was based on logistics. The research objectives did not require that the schools be located in a particular city, area or province. Rather than location being an important criterion in terms of selection of schools, *difference between the schools* was regarded as a critical objective. This is explained in the next section in which I discuss the background to the two schools.

Background to the schools identified for research: Glen Ridge High and Ubuntu High

Glen Ridge and Ubuntu High schools provided a useful source of comparison in that they occupy opposing points on the spectrum with respect to class; demographics and levels of performance, yet both schools value academic performance highly and both emphasise the need to prepare their pupils for tertiary education. In terms of the research questions, I was interested in how policy discourses were translated in context. In as much as *context frames translation*, I was motivated to find two different schools for the research. Glen Ridge High represents a degree of racial and cultural diversity: most of the students are white¹ and coloured while a small percentage are black. Ubuntu High on the other hand is more homogenous, comprising only black students. While Glen Ridge has been ranked one of the highest performing government schools in South Africa in recent years, Ubuntu would be regarded as a functional² yet relatively poor performing school.

¹ Although the categories, 'white'; 'coloured' and 'black' reflect apartheid-based designations of race, their relevance here is to delineate the greater heterogeneity of Glen Ridge High, as opposed to the more homogenous Ubuntu High community. Schools continue to be divided along the lines of race: the enormous disparity in school fees means that the majority of black people are unable to afford to attend former 'white' ex-Model C schools, and are forced instead to attend schools located in the townships.

² Functionality here refers to schools in which systems have been implemented to ensure that teaching and learning takes place. Teachers mostly arrive for their classes on time and most students are motivated to perform well.

Another critical difference between the two schools concerned the link between the schools and the communities they serve. Most of the 900 students who attend Glen Ridge High reside in its immediate vicinity while in the case of Ubuntu, 99.9% of the 1 200 students travel from afar – in most instances from the surrounding townships³ but in some cases from as far afield as Paarl and Hout Bay⁴. All of the Ubuntu students make use of public transport. Most of the Glen Ridge High students who live too far to walk or cycle to and from school make use of private transport. There is a small percentage that relies on public transport.

In both schools location is important with respect to how the schools perceived themselves. In the case of Ubuntu this is particularly significant: as an ‘out of community’ school, they regarded themselves as ‘different’ from the township schools, associating themselves more closely with the higher performing neighbouring schools.

Both schools strongly emphasised performance: while Glen Ridge strived for ‘academic excellence’ Ubuntu prided itself on ‘improved performance’. Pupils at Glen Ridge enjoyed a highly resourced school with functional equipment and modern facilities. At Ubuntu there was no school hall and many of the fifty classrooms were constructed out of basic pre-fabricated material, resulting in extreme temperatures throughout the year. This, coupled with an average of forty five to fifty students in each class (as opposed to between thirty and thirty five at Glen Ridge) made for difficult learning conditions.

Differences such as these were regarded as significant to the study in terms of how normalising discourses were translated within divergent school contexts and how students’ positioning of themselves against dominant school discourses might vary.

School interviews

Students from diverse backgrounds, who were at different levels of academic ability and different degrees of school involvement, were selected for the interviews so that the participants represented a cross section of Grade 12 school-goers. As Scott and Usher (1999: 109) state, class, race, religion, gender and ability constitute power relations which need to be conveyed by the researcher and establish an important backdrop to the responses provided.

³ The term ‘township’ refers to a black residential area originally created by the segregationist policies under apartheid rule (Swartz, 2010: 308). These townships are located on the outskirts of the city.

⁴ Students travelling from the Paarl and Hout Bay townships would spend an average of two to four hours per day on public transport.

This comprised an important element of the analysis, as will be illustrated in Chapters Six and Seven.

In both schools the principals were interviewed as well as Grade 12 pupils and teachers. Ten interviews of teachers were conducted (including the principal) at Glen Ridge High and fifteen learners were interviewed. At Ubuntu High, fifteen students and five teachers (including the principal) were interviewed. The disparity in the number of teacher interviews in the two schools was on account of fewer teachers at Ubuntu who were willing to be interviewed. Explicit reasons were not given for this, however the principal mentioned during his interview how popular the school was as a site for research and that some teachers were not always willing to offer their time to researchers.

By involving different categories of subjects in the research process, a more complex understanding of the imagined learner could be reached. Furthermore the principals' and teachers' perspectives offered a range of insights that resonated - or conflicted with - the lived experiences of the learners. Our interest as researchers, as Maxwell (1996: 17) reminds us, is "not only in the physical events and behaviour that are taking place, but also in how the participants ... make sense of this and how their understandings influence their behaviour".

Procedures for conducting the interviews

In both schools thirty consent forms were given to the principals who were asked to distribute them randomly to the Grade 12 learners. I stipulated that a cross section of pupils be given forms, that an equal number be handed to boys and girls and that the forms be distributed to pupils who ranged in academic ability and in levels and degrees of school involvement. In the case of Glen Ridge I specified furthermore that I wished to interview pupils from the different religious faiths as well as those who regarded themselves as atheists. My intention in making this request, once again, was to generate a variety of responses and perspectives. At Ubuntu, this specification was not made as almost all the pupils were Christian.

Once the forms had been completed by the students and signed by their parents or guardians they were to be returned by a stipulated date. Each student was then contacted and an interview time was scheduled. Twenty consent and information forms were distributed to the principals and to the Grade 12 teachers in each school for the purpose of the teacher and principal interviews. (Please refer to Appendices A and B for the learner and teacher consent forms). All interviews took place outside of teaching time, at the convenience of the respondents.

Participants were initially briefed as to the purpose of the interviews, and the manner in which responses were recorded was explained. Most interviews lasted forty-five minutes to an hour.

Construction of interview schedules

Prior to formulating the interview schedules (Appendix C), a list of questions was compiled. My intention was to identify questions based on the research questions, that pertained to all aspects of the school-based research and that would help develop an account of the imagined learner in the school (see Table 1 below). In the first section below, eight questions were formulated which applied to all three sources of school-based data construction: observation; interviews and school-based texts. Thereafter, I classified separate questions for each of the three areas. Based on this framework, the interview schedules were compiled.

Table 1: Framework for describing translation and interpretation of policy discourse in schools

OBSERVATIONS	INTERVIEWS	SCHOOL BASED TEXTS
1. What <i>words</i> are used to describe the learner and how is the learner <i>referred</i> to? 2. What <i>references</i> are made to the <i>type</i> of learner that <i>attends</i> the school? 3. What <i>references</i> are made to the <i>type</i> of learner that the school wishes to <i>attract</i> and <i>produce</i> ? 4. What <i>values</i> are foregrounded in the school? 5. What references are made to the notion of <i>citizenship</i> and the <i>world of work</i> . 6. What competing discourses emerge with respect to the learner or the learners' role in society? 7. What are the silent discourses? 8. How is the subaltern mediated and to what extent are silent discourses linked to the subaltern?		
OBSERVATIONS	INTERVIEWS	SCHOOL BASED TEXTS
9. What spaces are occupied by various people during assemblies? 10. Who is given a voice during the assemblies? 11. What is the focus of the assemblies? 12. What is the nature and purpose of wall displays and what is the content of notice boards?	13. What is the content of the responses? 14. What questions appear easier for participants to answer and which require clarification? 15. What additional discussion takes place over and above the questions asked?	16. What is the actual text and what is its purpose? 17. What texts have been used to promote the school and how is this achieved? 18. What key values; messages or principles are embedded in the texts? 19. Who is the author/s of the text and whose voice/s are expressed? 20. Whose voices remain silent? 21. In what way is the school projected in the text?

Coding of data

Pseudonyms were used at all times when referring both to individuals' names and the names of the schools and in most cases respondents selected their own pseudonyms. (Please refer to Appendix D for a list of pseudonyms). The actual source of the data constructed from *observation* and *school texts* is explicitly stated during the analysis (such as school website; assembly; meetings and so on).

In the next section, the method of observation is explained, with special reference to the observation of school assemblies.

SCHOOL OBSERVATION

Observation of school events and practises was conducted in each of the two schools over one academic year. Observation allowed me to look for moments "... in which subjects are constituted and in which constituted subjects act" (Youdell, 2006: 513). For the purpose of this study, these moments were most visibly observed during school practices and events in which the schools projected themselves to their internal school communities as well as to their broader parent communities. School events observed were assemblies; meetings; prize-giving/award ceremonies and valedictory ceremonies. School practices referred to spatial arrangements; discipline; values; ethos and organisation. Observation of school events and practices coupled with the analysis of school texts provided a plethora of data from which to develop an account of the school's 'expressive order'. In the following section the observation of school assemblies as well as other events is described in more detail.

Observation of school assemblies

Assemblies provided a key focus of observation as in both schools they were the central forum through which the 'expressive order' of the school was communicated. This was conveyed both through unspoken disciplinary practices as well as through spoken messages. Additionally, the assembly represented the entrenchment of ritualised practices. The importance of routine and regularity for the purpose of the study was based on the normalisation of discourses (both spoken and non-verbal) through their repetition and frequent occurrence in the daily life of the school.

Assemblies that were observed were those that took place in the first three months of the year as it was frequently the case that the school's values were vocalised more emphatically during the first term for the benefit especially of the new pupils. Similarly, during these assemblies the school's disciplinary strategies were frequently clarified and reinforced. In addition to regular assemblies held at the beginning of the year, 'special' assemblies were observed, such as those in which students were honoured for special achievements. These typically took place either at the beginning of the year when students who achieved highly the previous year were acknowledged, or at the end of the year in order to honour those who had achieved over the course of the year. All the assemblies observed required compulsory attendance of all learners.

The schools' 'expressive order' was not limited to the *spoken word*. For this reason attention was also paid to the observation of *school practices*, that is to the broader *non-verbal signifiers* such as disciplinary mechanisms; tradition and spatial arrangements. Included in these categories were the seating of staff members, head prefects and prefects during assemblies; the singing of hymns and anthems in assemblies and the reciting of prayers.

Formal 'public' school events and practice

In addition to the assembly, particular forums were selected for observation if I regarded them as opportunities for the school to promote itself to members of the school community or broader public. In line with Howarth's (2000) notion of language as a public institution and resource, I regarded prize-giving events, valedictory ceremonies and induction meetings for new parents as constituting formal 'public' school practice. These events are referred to as 'public' functions as they were extended to all members of the school community, including the families of the pupils. Both public and private forums (events such as assemblies that did *not* extend to the broader community) provided opportunities for the school to portray its identity in ways that were both explicit and implicit or symbolic.

Analysis of school texts

It is important to acknowledge the difference between the *spoken* word and the *written* word: while speaking reflects a more spontaneous form of expression (as in the interviews and observations), the written word represents a more considered process of articulating a particular thought or idea (Janks, 2010). The rationale for analysing data constructed from both was based on the value of the different modes of discourse in the study. In the following section I offer a

more detailed explanation of the school-based texts and the reasons for their inclusion in the study.

Rationale for the inclusion of school-based texts

The study of key school texts included documents such as vision and mission statements, websites, advertisements, newspaper headlines and prospectuses. These texts helped develop an account of the school's discursive framework, embedded in which were key messages of the imagined learner. Through these texts, messages were transmitted internally, to the school community itself, and to the broader external community. The inclusion of school-based texts in addition to observation and interview texts, provided a broad repertoire of discourses, supporting Ball's (1990: 3) view that educational institutions are not only subject to discourse but they are also "centrally involved in the propagation and selective dissemination of discourse". In this sense they "control the access of individuals to various kinds of discourse". The different types of discursive contexts used in the study furthermore offered intertextual opportunities, in which particular values or messages could be analysed both within and across texts.

Having described *what* the study involved, the second section of this chapter focuses on *how* I approached the study.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Interpretive, thematic approach

The research questions listed in Chapter One were amenable to an interpretive, thematic approach which is in keeping with a Foucauldian discourse analysis as this focuses more on the macro, rather than on the "structural/grammatical/linguistic/semiotic features that *make up* the text ..." (Graham, 2011: 671).

Overlaying the analysis of observation and interview texts, I was concerned with dominant themes as well as those discourses which were silent or absent. Light was shed on the absences by focussing first on the *presence* – on that which was explicitly articulated within the discursive framework of the school. Discourses pertaining to the imagined ideal learner within the schools offered valuable insight into *non-ideal* learner conduct. This illuminated the effects of the school's discursive framework in constituting subjectivities – not only for those who regarded themselves as fulfilling this 'ideal', but for those who believed they did not. An

example of silent discourses reflecting the *non-ideal* type of learner at Glen Ridge pertained to behaviour that was perceived as being too critical or challenging and at Ubuntu this related to late-coming and pregnancy. This will be returned to in Chapters Six and Seven.

Ideal and non-ideal subject-positions represented voices that were dominant as well as those that were non-dominant. The incorporation of different ‘voices’ in the analysis generated an understanding of how discourse was used as an instrument of power through which different subject-positions were made possible and through which the subject was constituted.

Competing and contradictory discourses were also explored thematically. Drawing on Butler, Youdell (2006: 514) makes the point,

... discourses do not need to be explicitly cited in order to be deployed. Rather, multiple discourses are referenced through the meanings, associations and omissions embedded in the historicity of apparently simple and benign utterances and bodily practices.

Central to Foucault’s work is the principle “... that discourse unfolds unevenly across institutional sites, and often the ‘uptake’ of particular discourses in local sites and texts is idiosyncratic and unpredictable” (Luke, 1995: 28). Therefore, in exploring how the learner was imagined and constituted through dominant discourses, it was also through mechanisms that were unspoken, as well as through discursive discontinuities and contradictions, that this was thematically described.

As highlighted in the following section the thematic, interpretive approach was amenable to Foucauldian discourse analysis as used in this study.

Foucauldian discourse analysis

Foucault’s work offers an approach which enables one to look at the formation of subject positions in discourse and to examine discourse patterns that have become normalised. In this study, this invites an enquiry into the type of subject who forms the imagined learner of the policies, and how this subject is discursively constructed and positioned. A Foucauldian approach enables one to examine the discursive framing of the subject in relation to discourses of economy, society and culture. It is therefore a way of denaturalising everyday patterns of speaking by making available and visible that which is often invisible or assumed to be unavailable. Norman Fairclough’s (2003; 1992; 1989) theorisation provides a useful way to work with Foucauldian notions of discourse, in that it provides a framework and tools for data analysis.

The first research question (Chapter One, page 11) asks how the imagined learner in the policies reflects a broader ideological framing. By examining the relationship between contemporary dominant discourses and wider social, economic and political processes (Janks, 1997; Luke, 1995; Taylor, 2004), it is possible to examine relations and practices of power that have become part of the “natural flow of talk and text in institutional life” (Luke, 1995: 12).

Discourse analysis in the school context, as signalled in the second and third questions, was particularly helpful as, in addition to the analysis of the *written* and *spoken* word (observation and interview texts), this methodology was used to describe *visual* representations such as spatial arrangements and displays. Fairclough (1989: 27) makes the point that ‘visuals’ can accompany the verbal, and help determine its meaning. Moreover, *hidden* or *silent* discourses could also be described with respect for example to the school’s values and ethos – as could the *effect* of the messages on the *participants*. Through this type of discourse analysis therefore, a mechanism was provided to describe the deeper meanings behind the ‘said’ as articulated by speakers, participants and texts, while simultaneously offering insight into the ‘unsaid’, as in the *attitudes and interests* of the speakers.

Although ‘truth’ is a function of discourse, the purpose of a Foucauldian discourse analysis in this study, rather than analysing the ‘truth’ of a statement or notion (Graham, 2011: 667), was to describe *how* and *why* these truths were constructed, how they came to be accepted and normalised and what their consequences were. In other words the purpose of this analysis was to describe how these discourses operated to present the ‘truth’ within broader social, economic and political power relations and how, within the context of the school, they functioned as disciplinary techniques that shaped and constituted the learner.

The integration of Fairclough’s analytic tools within a Foucauldian framework forges a close link between the theory and method in that it provides both a theory of discourse and a resource with which to analyse the discourse. While there are important differences between Foucault’s and Fairclough’s work, the *constitutive nature of discourse* underpinning both theorists’ work enabled me to draw on both at different times in the study. To this end, for the analysis of the policy texts, emphasis was placed on *description* through the extrapolation of themes and concepts. This, together with *interpretation* and *explanation* made it possible to search for connections and causes which were hidden (Fairclough, 1992) in order to expose gaps and silences, and to render the invisible, visible.

Policy text analysis

The questions below informed the policy text analysis in that they helped illuminate relevant data in the policies.

Table 2: Questions for the analysis of policy texts

<i>QUESTIONS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF POLICY TEXTS</i>
<p>1. Policy-related questions</p> <p>1.1 How are the purposes of education defined, as articulated and represented in the texts?</p> <p>1.2 Emerging from this, what are the competing discourses that emerge in the texts?</p> <p>1.3 What are the silent discourses?</p>
<p>2. School-related questions</p> <p>2.1 How are the purposes of the school defined and represented in the policies?</p> <p>2.2 How is school success understood and articulated within the policies?</p>
<p>3. Learner-related questions</p> <p>3.1 How is the 'ideal' learner represented and articulated in the policies?</p>
<p>4. Questions that relate to broader social purpose</p> <p>4.1 What are the value preferences that underlie the policy texts chosen for analysis and how are these values framed within policy discourses?</p> <p>4.2 How do these values relate to broader social purposes?</p> <p>4.3 What are the silent discourses pertaining to the purpose of education?</p>

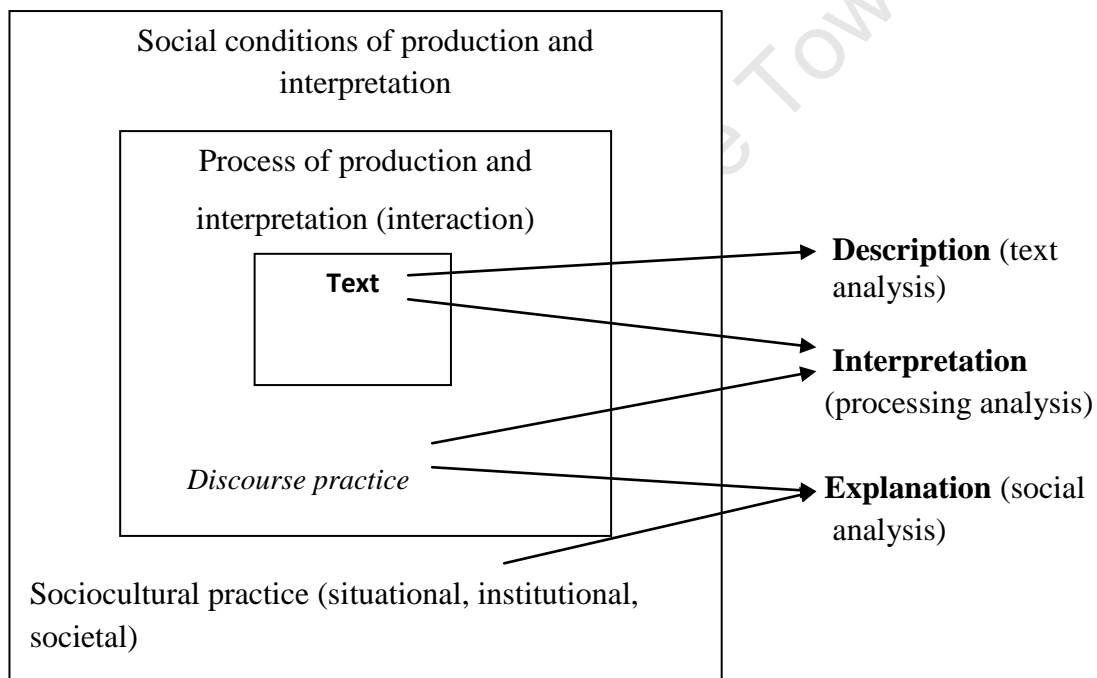
These questions were based on the research questions; the research focus and the analytic framework, and will be addressed as part of the policy text analysis in Chapter Five.

In the next section the instruments for the analysis of the policy texts are explained.

Analytic tools for the construction of data for policy texts

In this section I describe in more detail Fairclough’s analytic resources based on his three-box procedure (Table 3): *Description*, *Interpretation* and *Explanation*. In keeping with this model, the *description* stage deals with the formal properties of a text; *interpretation* is concerned with intertextuality or the interaction between texts and the *explanation* stage pertains to the relationship between the texts and the broader social context. These stages are outlined in the table below, and described in more detail in the following sections.

Table 3: Discourse as text, interaction and context, (Fairclough, 1989: 2; Janks, 1997: 329)



Description

The analysis of policy texts during the description stage was based on dominant terms and phrases that occurred within the texts. I regarded dominant discourses as those that were repeatedly stated or referred to within a text and that could be linked to similar discourses across the two texts. Various grammatical features were used as analytic tools and the analysis was organised into thematic groups. The following formal features were utilised for the purpose of the *policy text* analysis and have been borrowed from Janks (2010: 74):

lexicalisation (the selection or choice of wording); *lexical cohesion* (the connections across stretches of texts by synonymy; antonymy and collocation or associated words); *pronouns* (ways in which the text refers to the subject(s) and therefore give insight into the relational value of words); *metaphor* (ways in which the texts brings together ideas for the purpose of creating an effect); *semantic relations* (ways in which consequential links are made between phrases, clauses and sentences) and *nominalisation* (transforming a process into an object or entity, or a verb into a noun).

The choice of the above-mentioned analytic tools was based on their appropriateness as resources to de-code the text for the purpose of describing how the learner is imagined in the policies. The use of metaphor and pronoun in both policy texts helped construct a discursive framing that enhanced meaning through association. Metaphor described ways in which various images and ideas within the texts were conflated. Semantic relations served to convey causal, 'logical' connections between phrases, clauses and sentences. Of particular interest in this study, was nominalisation. This was a strategy used in the texts to create the elision of agency (Fairclough, 2003). By eliminating responsibility through normalisation, a sense of authority and credence was established.

The instruments used for the policy text analysis worked together to generate coherence, plausibility and legitimation. They provided a mechanism through which the texts could be de-coded and therefore helped construct the policies' meaning at a *less explicit level*. Lexicalisation and lexical cohesion were mostly used in the analysis and are explained in more detail below.

- Lexicalisation

Janks (2010: 74) refers to lexicalisation as the selection or choice of *wording*. This directed my attention to those words or concepts that were *foregrounded* in the policy texts. Once identified, the words were lifted out of the texts and were later used to inform an understanding of how policy discourses were translated in schools. Words were regarded as themes if they were repeated throughout a text – either through the use of the identical word, or through the use of synonymy. Once the themes were identified and developed, intersecting patterns and recursions began to emerge. In this way themes were analysed both within and across texts.

- Lexical cohesion

Through lexical cohesion my attention was drawn to the *connections of words across texts*. Overall, the use of these features as well as metaphor, nominalisation, pronouns and semantic

relations worked in different ways to describe how legitimation and authority within the policy texts was established.

Having explained ‘description’ as a dimension of analysis, I now describe how ‘interpretation’ is used in the study, and thereafter focus on ‘explanation’.

Interpretation

This dimension of analysis describes *meaning-making* and depends both on that which is made *explicit* in a text as well as that which is *implied* or assumed (Fairclough, 2003). For the purpose of this study, the interpretation stage allowed me to focus on *intertextuality* which highlights the link *between* texts. Intertextuality underscores *context*, and the extent to which historicity is embedded in broader social practices. While this points to the potential productivity of texts to enable social and cultural change, it also suggests that this productivity is limited and constrained by relations of power.

Texts are not random or arbitrary, but are interconnected networks comprising recursive statements, thoughts and claims which comprise available discourses for the reader or viewer (Luke, 1995). Foucault holds that “[t]here can be no statement that in one way or another does not reactualize others” (Foucault, 1972: 98, cited in Fairclough, 1992). Texts cannot be seen as existing in isolation, but absorb aspects of other texts on which they are predicated. Drawing on Bakhtin (1986), Fairclough (1992: 102) asserts that the text:

.... (r)esponds to, reaccentuates, and reworks past texts, and in so doing helps to make history and contributes to wider processes of change, as well as anticipating and trying to shape subsequent texts.

Explanation

The objective of this dimension is to describe discourse as integral to *social processes* by “... showing how it is determined by social structures, and what reproductive effects discourses can cumulatively have on those structures, sustaining them or changing them” (Fairclough, 1989: 163). The explanation stage enabled me to look for patterns within a text that described ways in which *discourses are at work in society* and how these discourses represent notions of the imagined learner. In this study the explanation stage ultimately described the *effects* of discourse in constituting the learner.

Interaction between the three stages

Drawing on Fairclough, Janks (1997) underscores the interrelatedness of the three processes, namely the *text* itself which is the object of analysis; the *process or interaction* through which the object is produced and received (process of production and process of interpretation) and the broad social and historical *context* that governs these processes. Each of these three elements corresponds to three dimensions of the analysis: *description*; *interpretation* and *explanation* and are interactive and interconnected.

Having described the analytic resources with which to describe the imagined learner in the selected policies, I now turn to the school context.

Observation and interview texts: resources for the construction of data

For the analysis of the *observation* and *interview texts*, an interpretive, thematic approach was used. Once themes and patterns were established across the various texts, continuities and ruptures could be identified. From the analysis, a description was developed of how dominant discourses were translated and interpreted in schools – and how subjects positioned themselves against these discourses.

The responses that were elicited from the interviews generated the data for analysis. In interviews, the movement from a structured to semi-structured approach fell on a continuum: while some interviews closely reflected the schedule, others required greater flexibility. This occurred particularly during the Ubuntu interviews where, because English was not the mother tongue of the participants, at times more explanation or elaboration of questions was required. Occasionally, even when language was not an issue, responses at both schools deviated from the schedule if for example the participant wished to discuss a particular experience that might have been triggered by one of the questions. The responses that are included in Chapter Six and Seven are those that conveyed *general consensus* regarding a particular question. Where different views were offered, this is acknowledged in the analysis.

The analysis of data constructed from interview texts was based on *verbal responses* rather than facial expressions and physical gestures. Although the scope of discourse analysis extends beyond the written and spoken word, my rationale for limiting the analysis to the spoken word (in the case of the interviews) was that for the purposes of this study, verbal responses yielded sufficient data.

The analytical model developed for this study is presented in figure 1 below:

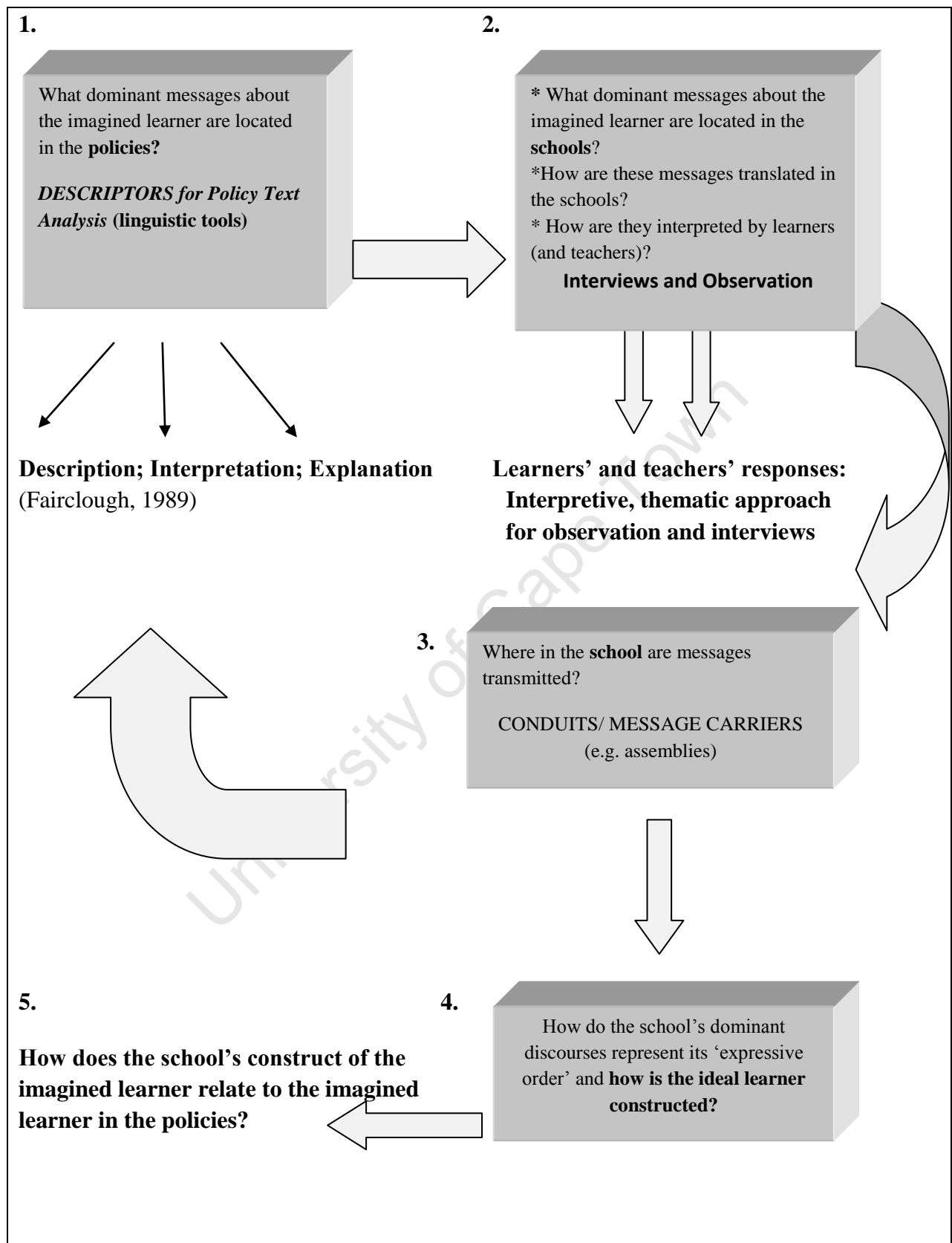


Figure 1: Analytic framework

Following the analytic framework, the next section focuses on the strengths and limitations of policy text analysis and the analysis of observation and interview texts.

Strengths and constraints of analysis of policy texts

Mouton (2001: 166) describes the analysis of texts and documents as an “unobtrusive (non-reactive) method, which means that errors associated with the interaction between researchers and subjects (such as observation effects) are avoided”. While the qualitative analysis of texts is unobtrusive on the one hand, it may on the other be regarded as creating constraints and reducing the research lens by precluding the perspective of subjects. This potential drawback has been addressed in this study by the inclusion of the participants’ perspective, a component which is regarded as key to the analysis.

The reliability of the representativeness of the text for the study is another possible limitation of this mode of enquiry. For this reason, a clear rationale was presented earlier, both of the texts themselves as well as of the portions of the texts selected.

A related constraint that may occur in policy text analysis is that of the data being inadvertently configured to influence a particular set of findings that might reinforce the researcher’s theoretical assumptions. This potential problem which is one of validity, is discussed later in more detail.

Strengths and constraints of analysis of observation and interview texts

Observation, by its very nature implies a degree of separation between the observer and that which is being observed. In this study, the detached stance allowed me to gain a clear view of the activity being observed without being influenced by the agendas of the participants (Scott and Usher, 1999). This enabled me to adopt a position of witness rather than participant, and to document the events as observed without data attenuated by inter-personal relationships. On the other hand, a limitation of the observation (and interview) method is that it is time-consuming: it was frequently the case in the study, for example, that assemblies were observed and interviews conducted that did not generate useful data.

Although the construction and analysis of interview and observation texts is time-consuming, this type of methodology was amenable to the research questions, as explained earlier. Furthermore in using texts generated from observation and interviews *in conjunction with* policy texts, I attempted to provide a research archive that was diverse and multi-layered. This

is particularly important as a limitation in using policy text analysis singularly is the total reliance on the policies as original source material. The depth and richness of the interview and observation texts offered greater complexity and multi-layering in the research process.

VALIDITY, RELIABILITY and ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Discourse analysis as used in this study is concerned primarily with translation and interpretation. Because the nature of the study was an enquiry into how the learner is imagined in the policies and how dominant discourses are translated and interpreted in the schools, the study required multiple sources of data construction.

In the three-pronged approach (policy, school and learner), multiple methods were used to enhance validity. The multi-level method was used in the construction of data, which included policy text analysis as well as analysis of observation, interviews and school texts. This strategy generated a wide assortment of texts for analysis. The selection of data was justified in an attempt to lend integrity to the research project.

Brown and Dowling (1998: 143) hold that “the term reliability can be expanded to include the measure of the extent to which the data presented is representative of the data generally”. In this study reliability was sought by “presenting the data in different forms” (1998: 143) and by clearly justifying the choice of texts and the selection of specific portions.

Stemler (2001: 7) asserts that in qualitative research, validation is enhanced by incorporating multiple sources of data and methods, including interviewing different role-players to get a sense of the participants’ perspective. In this study, an effort to establish validity and reliability was made through the multi-level research strategy, the elements of which were repeatedly cross-referenced and engaged with. This allowed the research questions to be augmented from different angles. However validity cannot be regarded as belonging to a particular method. As Maxwell (1992: 284) states, “[v]alidity is not an inherent property of a particular method, but pertains to the data, accounts, or conclusions reached by using that method in a particular context for a particular purpose”. Validity is therefore relative to a particular context of enquiry and to the understanding that emerges within that context.

Maxwell’s (1992) discussion of ‘Validity in Qualitative Research’ outlines the different threats to validity that need to be addressed. First, and most significantly, are potential problems pertaining to accuracy. This element of validity, referred to by Maxwell (1992: 286) as ‘descriptive validity’, is of fundamental importance in qualitative research. In this study,

accuracy was achieved in various ways. Checks were put in place when conducting interviews by ensuring that the recordings accurately reflected the participants' responses. Interviews were professionally transcribed and transcripts were checked by participants for accuracy. The second threat to validity relates to interpretation, where the researcher may have a different understanding to the participants or interpret events differently. The process of recording the interviews, transcribing the recordings and giving the transcripts to the participants to read sought to address, to some degree, this second potential threat identified by Maxwell as 'interpretive validity'. This type of validity pertains to interpretations of meaning and is based on the language of the participants. Because discourse analysis was the chosen methodology, value was placed on the particular words and sentences used by participants. However, as Maxwell (1992: 290) suggests, "accounts of participants' meanings are never a matter of directed access, but are always *constructed* by the researcher(s) on the basis of participants' accounts and other evidence".

This is significant within a Foucauldian context as the meaning that is constructed and communicated by subjects is based on individual perceptions which are socially and historically constituted (Dornbrack, 2008: 81). Contradictory views or accounts were regarded as subjective responses to issues of power relations and the positioning of subjects, and were thus considered valid and 'truthful'.

A related threat to validity with regard to the interview texts, was the interpersonal dynamic that existed between the interviewer and the respondent. An understanding of that dynamic, "how it affects what goes on in the interview, and how the informant's actions and views could differ in other situations" is, according to Maxwell (1992: 295) "crucial to the validity of accounts based on interviews".

Similarly, the language in which interviews were conducted at Ubuntu was regarded as a potential threat to the reliability of the data. Because English was not the mother tongue of the speakers I considered using a translator in the interview process. This did not prove to be necessary as English was the medium of instruction at the school and pupils were able to express themselves easily. Although at times questions had to be re-framed or clarified, on the whole Ubuntu students responded with confidence and ease of expression. Even so, throughout the interviews I was aware of this potential limitation.

Maxwell's third threat to validity relates to generalisability – the degree to which the study can be generalised to other contexts, both empirically and theoretically. With regard to empirical generalisability, I do not make the claim that what happens in the instances described in this study may be applied to other instances. However, I do claim that this study offers *theoretical generalisability* in that one can bring this theoretical model to bear on other contexts in order to make certain empirical observations. In other words a specific kind of process takes place both within each element of analysis – policy, the school and the learner – and in the interaction between each of these levels. The translation and interpretation of policy discourses within the school, and the discursive shifts from policy to the school to the learner offers a theoretical model that may be applied to other aspects of educational research.

The selection of schools for the study was purposeful rather than random, and the two schools were specifically chosen because of their fundamental differences both with regard to their socio-economic status, and their standards of performance. My objective in the selection of these schools was to show through the analysis of data, that social processes and the effects of discourse are contingent upon the social context. With the support of a strong theoretical base, generalisability helps make sense of particular people or situations, while simultaneously showing "... how the same process, in different situations, can lead to different results" (Becker, 1990, cited in Maxwell, 1992: 293). In this study this was particularly interesting, as the policy discourses were transmitted to both schools in the same way, yet the ways in which the discourses were translated and interpreted differed. Similarly, the way learners positioned themselves against the school's dominant discourses also differed according to various factors and dynamics. (This will be evident in the analysis chapters that follow.)

Finally, attempts were made to ensure validity by forging links between the theory and the research methods. This enabled the different elements of the research design to interact with, justify and support the other. Simultaneously I endeavoured to ensure that the conclusions interacted with the theory, which in turn supported and framed the research questions. The different sources of data construction were used purposefully to generate validity, for example observation of events served to validate comments made within the interview process (Dornbrack, 2008). However, contradictions within and across texts were highly valued as this demonstrated degrees of contestation with regard to the complexity of the translation and interpretation of discourses and with regard to the constitutive nature of discourses.

Ethical considerations

The ethical concerns in this study pertained primarily to issues of confidentiality with respect to the students, the teachers and the schools. In this section I explain how I went about ensuring that ethical concerns were addressed and that ethical standards were met.

After receiving permission from the WCED to conduct research in the schools, meetings were scheduled between myself and the principals during 2010. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the nature of the study which was to be conducted in the schools from the beginning of 2011. A brief explanation of the study was offered and copies of the interview questions for the two different groups of participants were presented. Additionally, as illustrated, two information and consent letters were given to the principals – one for the educators and principal and the second for the parents and pupils. The purpose of the letters was to explain the nature and intention of the research project and to outline the ethical conditions pertaining to the study. Interviews were transcribed and, as indicated, interviewees were given the option of reading their transcript to ensure that the data recorded accurately represented their responses.

Interviews were only conducted if the pupils had agreed to being interviewed and written consent had been given by parents. Respondents were given the right to withdraw prior to being interviewed and this was made explicit in the letters. Respondents were also informed as to the duration of the interviews and in all cases respondents were only interviewed once. All respondents remained anonymous and neither of the schools was mentioned by name. Pseudonyms were chosen for the schools, and as mentioned, in most cases pupils and teachers chose their own pseudonyms. Similarly, pseudonyms were used for the names of tertiary institutions referred to by participants. In an effort to uphold the confidentiality of the schools, salient details which may have resulted in the schools being recognisable, were removed from the data.

When analysing policy texts and documentation, the formal ethical protocols of the University of Cape Town were adhered to. All quotations were clearly cited and referenced throughout the text and references used were listed at the end.

Subject-position of the researcher

My position as *researcher* relates to my position as *analyst* – in neither function could I regard myself as neutral. With regard to my position as analyst, Fairclough (1989) stresses the point that *text analysis* follows a similar procedure to *text production* in the sense that both analyst and producer may be seen as participating as ‘members’ in the process of engaging with text.

This understanding had a direct bearing on my position as researcher in that it required an approach that was self-conscious and critically reflective, both during the text analysis stage and during the interview context. As researcher, I understood critical reflection to mean the degree of scrutiny during the research process in terms of my objectives and rationale. More specifically this required an awareness of my own positionality as a white, middle-class woman and the influence this would have on the learners’ responses. At Ubuntu especially, participants’ inevitable association of me as occupying a position of power alerted me to the possibility of responses being more measured and less critical. For this reason, questions were worded in a non-threatening way, and required that learners engage their imagination in considering a particular scenario. Furthermore, a number of similar questions were asked in different ways, the intention being to bring to light inconsistencies in the responses.

To conclude, I regarded my position and positioning, both as analyst and researcher, as problematic, and was inspired by Comber (1996: 8) who suggests that researchers should aim for self-reflexivity. Throughout the research process I reflected critically on my motivation and purpose, and where appropriate offered a rationale for my approach. Marshall (2008: 18) considers the notion of problematisation from a Foucauldian perspective: distinguishing “... the history of *thought* from the history of ideas and from the domain of attitudes that might underline and determine behaviour”. Foucault speaks about the notion of ‘stepping back’:

Thought is not what inhabits a certain conduct and gives it its meaning; rather it is what allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and question it as to its meaning, its conditions and its goals (Foucault, 1984: 117 cited in Marshall, 2008: 20).

This action of stepping back is crucial for critical reflection. As Marshall explains:

It is a freedom to detach oneself from what one does, it is the motion by which one detaches oneself from what one does, so as to establish it as an object of thought and to reflect upon it as a problem (2008: 20).

CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the design of the research and an account of the procedures that were followed. First I presented a description of the study at the levels of policy; the school and the learners. At each level, a rationale was provided for choices made and backgrounds were presented where applicable. After describing *what* the study involved, the second section focused on *how* it was conducted. In the third section, the discussion centred on validity, reliability and ethical considerations.

Having explained what I intend drawing from the field, and how I intend doing so, I turn now to the three data analysis chapters. Chapters Five, Six and Seven are organised in relation to the different sources of data: Chapter Five deals with policy text analysis, Chapters Six and Seven with observation and interviews at Glen Ridge High and Ubuntu High respectively.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER FIVE

POLICY TEXT ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

My intention in this chapter is to describe, interpret and explain how the learning subject is imagined in the policies. Because this is not explicitly stated in the policies, I begin the analysis by examining more broadly the purposes of education *with respect to the learner*. This approach allows me to explore how these education purposes create a discursive framing through which ideas about the imagined learner become evident. Key terms identified for the analysis include ‘quality’; ‘performance’; ‘success’ and ‘productivity’. These terms which were derived from the texts themselves, were selected on account of their frequent recurrence throughout the portions chosen for analysis. Because of their dominance in the texts they are integrated thematically in this chapter.

The analysis begins with the WSE policy and follows with the White Paper. My intention for this sequencing is to first establish the *broader purposes of education*, as articulated in the WSE policy, and thereafter to describe the purposes of education *in relation to the imagined learner* more specifically, as articulated in the White Paper. The initial discursive framing of the WSE policy offers a context in which the imagined learner can be located. As the analysis progresses, a more salient, albeit conflicting description of the imagined learner emerges. The analysis of hybrid or conflicting discourses describes the polemic relationship between discourses. This in turn sheds light on how different discourses are woven together into the same text, how they represent different political agendas; how they work together to construct notions of the imagined learner and what the effects of this may be.

The analysis that proceeds in this and the following two chapters is based on the understanding that texts are instantiations of discourses and as such are manifest examples of how subjects are imagined and constituted. In keeping with my analytic framework, the analysis is organised thematically. In this chapter, the conduits for the messages or themes are the two policy texts. The core of the analysis comprises a description of *how* the themes are communicated in the selected texts – and for this Fairclough’s (1989) analytic instruments are used. What follows is a brief summary of Fairclough’s three-box model.

The relevant sections of both the White Paper and the WSE policy have been included as Addenda A and B respectively. Because of the length of both documents, the portions that have been attached are confined to those that were selected for analysis in this study.

AN OVERVIEW OF FAIRCLOUGH'S THREE DIMENSIONS OF ANALYSIS:

In Chapter Four, Fairclough's three-box model was presented. My intention in this section is simply to remind the reader how they will be applied in this chapter. Description, firstly, focuses on identifying and describing how particular words have been used in the policies (*lexicalisation*). During this stage of analysis, I examine how these words relate to other similar words across different texts (*lexical cohesion*). *Description* is accompanied with *interpretation* which enables meaning making to take place (Janks, 2010). The *explanation* or social analysis locates the texts within broader social contexts and enables the reader to understand the values and assumptions embedded in the texts. As indicated in Chapter Four, these three dimensions are not regarded as separate stages but are interwoven into the analysis.

Before proceeding with the analysis, I highlight the difference in meaning between '*policy as text and policy as discourse*' (Ball, 2006b: 44; 1994: 15). Because these terms are frequently used throughout this chapter, I wish to briefly explain how they interact with each other.

“Policy as text and policy as discourse”

According to Ball, policy is the product of complex and contested political processes that circumscribe a particular type of practice. Although policies are “textual interventions into practice” (1994: 18) they cannot *determine* practice as they will be translated differently in different contexts.

Policy as discourse draws attention to earlier discussions regarding governmentality and the extent to which ‘policy ensembles’ represent ‘regimes of truth’. As such, “words are ordered and combined in particular ways” while “other combinations are displaced or excluded” (Ball, 2006b: 48).

As Foucault (1980) says:

Society has its regime of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned ... the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (1980: 131).

While ‘policy as text’ involves ‘social agency’ (Ball, 1994: 21), ‘policy as discourse’ involves the *effects of policy* by shaping what can be said and thought, and moreover, “... who can speak, when, where and with what authority” (1994: 21). Thus, according to Ball, the effect of policy is primarily discursive: “... it changes the possibilities we have for thinking ‘otherwise’ thus it limits our responses to change, and leads us to misunderstand what policy is by misunderstanding what it does” (2006b: 49; 1994: 23). By its very nature, therefore, discourse is exclusionary.

Supplementing Ball’s ‘policy as text’/‘policy as discourse’ treatise, Gale (2001; 1999) includes a third element: ‘policy as ideology’. Through the analysis of policy text I show that at times of political change, discursive processes are deployed to obtain legitimacy and build consensus. According to Jacklin (2011: 4) “[p]olicies are the terrain in which the state attempts to shape the social imaginaries of a population, to affect and legitimate change”. Policy is regarded here as textual articulations of enscripted notions and assumptions – representations of a specific ideological framework, constructed within a particular historical and political context. It is the discursive apparatus through which new political directions can be defined and new subjectivities shaped.

RELEVANCE OF DATA: Policy text analysis

The relevance of the data was based on the questions outlined in Chapter Four, Table Two. I searched for information within the policies that corresponded most directly to these questions which framed ideas about the imagined learner. As suggested earlier, an important indicator of the relevance of content was how frequently words and phrases were used which related to the imagined learner, either overtly or implicitly.

The following table illustrates how many times each term was used in the portions selected from each policy:

Table 4: Terms used for analysis in selected portions of policies

Terms	WSE Policy		White Paper	
	Number of times used	Portions selected for analysis	Number of times used	Portions selected for analysis
'Quality'	9	Background and context	4	Chapter Three
	6	Key elements	10	Chapter Four
'Performance'	4	Background and context	1	Chapter Two
	3	Key Elements	1	Chapter Three
'Success'/successful			1	Chapter Four
			3	Chapter Two
'Productivity'			2	Chapter Three
			3	Chapter Four

The repetition of the above *terms* together with their *related concepts* within and between the two texts alerted me to the emergence of significant *themes* which were then followed through and described in the analysis. These themes which were produced from the analysis itself are introduced in the following section and will be referred to and substantiated throughout the analysis.

Themes produced from the analysis

The themes extrapolated from the analysis cohere around the two broad purposes of education: how the school system is configured to address the needs of the economy and consequently, how the learner is imagined (in the policies and in the schools) to facilitate this.

The four themes that were produced from the analysis are:

1. *Performance; productivity and marketability.*

As will be shown in the analysis, the terms quality; performance and success are closely linked to productivity. The effects of the relationship between these terms, as noted in the literature review, reflects a market based logic which underpins and informs the management and organisational criteria in schools. This results in the creation of a learning environment in which qualities of performance and productivity are highly valued. In accordance with the market, economic development requires high performance levels which are linked to increased

productivity and this is contingent upon improved quality. The ideal learner is therefore one who must be productive in order to be marketable. This discussion, which will be substantiated throughout the analysis, reflects the broader social purposes of education by signalling the relationship between marketisation and accountability.

2. Scaling up of local to global; and scaling down, as power is devolved to the schools

In both policy texts, references will be made to comparisons between South Africa and the rest of the world. This strategy functions to justify the policies' objectives by building consensus and legitimacy. While mechanisms are enlisted within the policies to demonstrate consistency between local and global education systems, this 'scaling up' is countered with a 'scaling down' as responsibility for the quality of school performance is placed on members of the school community. Through this elision of agency, discursive strategies will be identified which function to legitimate the shifting of accountability to the school and away from the state. Underpinning the 'devolution of power' theme is the implicit message about the ideal learner who must take responsibility for his/her quality education as a self-managing individual. As will be illustrated, it is this imagined subject who is envisaged as entering 'society' as an independent, self-managing economic participant. This leads to the third theme which relates to the need for a strong work force and the involvement of all sectors in the labour market.

3. Human rights discourses versus human resource development

The term 'human resource development' is used six times in the selected portions of the White Paper. This notion will be shown to be closely aligned with the first theme, *performativity; productivity and marketability* and is regarded as a fundamental purpose of education. The relationship between these discourses is established through the idea articulated in the White Paper, that the problems of the past such as discrimination and inequity are set against the solution of economic progress of the future. The underlying message is that the new education system will offer the opportunity to supplant past inequalities with promises of equal access to the labour market. A strong work force requires that *all* sectors of the community can contribute to economic development. As will be shown, the significance of this for the imagined learner is implied in the suggestion that it is the obligation of each and every citizen to participate productively in the labour market in order to prevent the recurrence of past imbalances.

4. *The conflation of public and private*

The three themes outlined above converge finally to produce the fourth theme, that is the conflation of public and private. More specifically this relates to the collapse of the notions of ‘society’ and ‘economy’; as well as of ‘citizen’ and ‘economic participant’. This overarching theme relates to each of the earlier themes in terms of the dual purposes of education, that is how the school system addresses the needs of the economy, and consequently how a particular type of subject is produced. As will be illustrated, the synthesis of the notions of public and private presupposes a new conceptualisation of the term ‘*society*’: rather than delineating a collective civil space, society will be shown to be equated with the *market* and thus regarded as an economic entity while *citizenship* will be shown to be synonymous with *economic participation* and *economic agency*.

Before proceeding with the analysis, I offer a background to both policies and highlight the links between the two texts.

Background to the WSE policy

Available to schools on the internet and in hard copy form, this twenty-four page document is aimed at principals and teachers. As is the case with the White Paper, it is a written document, and does not include diagrams or visual images. The Table of Contents is followed by the ‘Minister’s Forward’ and thereafter the document is divided into five sections with headings; sub-headings and numbered paragraphs. The policy ends with a two-page glossary of terms.

In Chapter One it was mentioned that the 1988 ERA in the United Kingdom heralded a new culture of accountability in education. As suggested, the ERA marked a new trend in education in which emphasis was placed on increasing excellence by enhancing the quality and standards of education. As an expression of Reagan and Thatcher’s ideologies, the ERA had a powerful influence on educational policy throughout the world as school organisation became reconfigured within a managerial discourse (Jacklin, 2011). This became evident in South African education through the introduction of accountability initiatives in schools.

After the signing of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Developmental Appraisal System (DAS) agreement in 1998 (De Clercq, 2010b), the Department of Education introduced the WSE policy in 2001 to look for and measure standards of quality and excellence according to performance and evaluation strategies. This national policy was part of “... a quality assurance system with standardised monitoring mechanisms to ascertain educational standards

across the country and promote greater school control and accountability” (De Clercq, 2010b: 104). In 2003 the WSE policy was included into the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) which was coordinated by a Quality Assurance (QA) directorate, the primary task of which was to monitor and evaluate educational standards across the province (2010b).

The WSE initiative represented a new wave of policy reforms in South Africa reflecting the shift internationally towards evaluation and accountability. While this policy does not speak overtly of the imagined learner, it highlights the infusion of a new set of discourses which have directly impacted on all aspects of the school. The emphasis on evaluation and accountability rests on the presupposition that success can be measured through evaluation instruments and that systems of quality assurance must assume a central place in education.

Background to the White Paper

The White Paper is a ninety-eight page document available on the internet. As a White Paper, this text is aimed at education policy makers as well as those with an interest in education and training. The document comprises thirteen chapters, the foci of which are represented in the chapters’ titles. Each chapter is divided into different sections which consist of numbered paragraphs. The White Paper opens with a list of ‘Contents’ following which is a ‘Message’ from the 1995 Deputy Minister of Education. Thereafter a list of abbreviations is provided as well as a ‘Note on Terminology’. The chapters that follow are organised into six ‘Parts’, beginning with the ‘Introduction’ in ‘Part 1’ and ending in ‘Part 6’ with the ‘Conclusion’.

The 1995 White Paper which initially outlined the suturing of education and training, provided the springboard for future neoliberal policy development, shaping school reform in South Africa (Christie, 2001) and the re-articulation of the learning subject as a particular ‘product’ of schooling (Jacklin, 2011: 1).

In 1981 the De Lange Commission focussed attention on the private sector’s role in schooling and the need to train young people for active participation in the economy. Although the commission did not result in direct implementation, its principles reflected a global neo-liberal logic in which the purposes of schooling were oriented to the economy and in which the learning subject was represented in relation to the workplace (Jacklin 2011). These key objectives were ultimately integrated into the White Paper of 1995.

As the first policy document on education and training by South Africa’s first democratically elected government (The White Paper: 1995), the White Paper provided the blueprint for

transformation in education and training by offering an integrated approach, outlining “a broad sweep of development initiatives that the government intended to take” (Christie, 2008: 130). Underpinning the White Paper was a revised interpolation of the learning subject – one that explicitly represented the new alignment between education and the economy and the perceived role of the learner as economic participant.

The 1995 White Paper on Education and Training heralded a new wave of policies and strategies aimed at addressing skills development in schools. The focus on the development of human resources required the forging of links between education and industry and was articulated through a range of initiatives both nationally and provincially. In 1996, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy was introduced by the Department of Finance, aimed at the rapid liberalisation of the South African economy. The Skills Development Act of 1998 was followed by the Human Resources Strategy for South Africa, first launched in 2001. Elements of the strategy pertaining to skills development were included in the Further Education and Training Act of 1998 affecting all grade ten to twelve learners in its aims to regulate further education and training (FET). FET introduced subjects such as Economic Management Sciences (EMS) and Information and Communications Technology (ICT), equipping students with skills that related directly to the needs of the market. These education policies were closely tied with ASGISA (Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa), an economic strategy implemented in 2007 based on the premise that the current skills shortage is the greatest obstacle to economic growth (Dookh, 2009: 4). A revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) was formulated in 2002 focusing on the creation of a lifelong learner who is both literate and multi-skilled. Alongside these policy developments, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) provided a single framework for linking education and training at all levels (Christie, 1996; Malcolm, 2001).

Following the White Paper, these policy initiatives signalled a wave of economic-based interventions, sharing in common the focus on human resource development. Underpinning these strategies therefore was the preparation of young people for participation in the labour market – a key objective of the White Paper on Education and Training.

Links between the two policy texts

Although each of the texts, formulated at different times, overtly conveys different purposes and objectives, both are national policies, the underlying principles of which are accountability;

performativity and the devolution of power. These principles are significant to the study as they highlight the ‘audit culture’ mentioned in Chapter Three. Apple (2005); Olssen (1996) and others have made the point that neoliberalism requires the constant production of evidence that things are being done ‘efficiently’ and ‘correctly’ through measurement and evaluation (Apple, 2005: 14).

ANALYSIS OF DATA: DESCRIPTION and INTERPRETATION

I begin the analysis by asking how the purposes of education are defined and represented in the selected texts (see Chapter Four, Table Two), in other words how the school system is configured to address the needs of the economy and how this education purpose relates to ways in which the learner is imagined in these policies.

This overarching question is addressed by describing key terms in the policies which pertain to quality; performance; success and productivity. As demonstrated in Table Two (page 57 above), these terms were arrived at through their recurrent use in the policies. A point that must be made at the outset is that the focus of the WSE policy is school evaluation which pertains to general *education management* rather than to the *individual learning subject*. Although ideas about the imagined learner are not explicitly stated as part of the *focus* of this policy, the relevance of the WSE policy to the learner must be stressed. Inherent in discourses of quality and performance are implicit notions of the ideal learner. As previously indicated, the implications of this for the learning subject become clearer as the analysis shifts to the White Paper. While the WSE policy defines education purposes in terms of the quality and success of the school as a whole (rather than the individual learner), I suggest that this policy is relevant to the study as the learner is implicated in – and constituted through – these policy discourses.

As will be demonstrated in the analysis, quality; performance; success and productivity are terms that were underscored in the policies. Both these texts therefore provide a general discursive framing which includes those elements about the school and the learner which have been articulated – as well as those that have remained silent.

‘Quality’; ‘Performance’ and ‘Success’

In the opening paragraph of the WSE policy (‘Background and Context’ section), the policy is introduced as a mechanism for ‘systematic evaluation’ and it is through this mechanism that *quality* is assessed and measured:

For many years, there has been no national system of evaluating the performance of schools, and there is no comprehensive data on the quality of teaching and learning, or on the educational standards achieved in the system. As a result, the National Policy for Whole-School Evaluation is being introduced. This complements other quality assurance initiatives conducted under the aegis of systemic evaluation, namely; accreditation of providers, programme and service reviews and monitoring learning achievements... (WSE Policy, 2001: 7).

This extract introduces the WSE policy by demonstrating the semantic relation between problem and solution (Fairclough, 2003). The absence, “**for many years**”, of a “**national system of evaluating the performance of schools**”; of “**comprehensive data on the quality of teaching and learning**” and of “**the educational standards achieved in the system**” has necessitated the introduction of the “National Policy for Whole-School Evaluation”. The ‘problem’ is the absence of such educational practices in the past, and the ‘solution’, the WSE Policy. The phrase “**as a result**” functions as a causal semantic relation of purpose, the effect being to directly link the *problem* with the *solution*. While WSE is not considered “**as an end in itself**”, it constitutes “**the first step in the process of school improvement and quality enhancement**” (WSE, 2001: 8). However, the use of the definite article ‘the’, as in “**the first step**”, implies objective consensus – in other words, that evaluation of the school is the one and only way to begin the process of “school improvement and quality enhancement”. The effect of the semantic relations between problem and solution – coupled with the use of the definite article conveys a legitimacy in the policy’s purpose which is to improve efficiency and enhance quality as schools are measured according to pre-set standardised criteria.

In the selected portions of the WSE policy, the repetition of the word ‘*quality*’ fifteen times demonstrates the extent to which this notion has been foregrounded. Additionally, the term ‘quality’ is introduced four times in the ‘Minister’s Foreword’ (which precedes the portions chosen for analysis). In conjunction with the repetition of the word ‘quality’ in the WSE policy, lexical cohesion is demonstrated by repeated allusions to the word ‘success’. In this policy, the meaning of the word ‘quality’ is thereby fused with the term ‘success’. Although the word ‘success’ is not explicitly stated in these sections, references are made to this term through synonymy and collocation. In the Background and Context section the following examples are noted:

The Policy indicates ways in which *very good schools* should be recognised and under-performing schools supported (my emphasis, 2001: 7)

The recognition of '*very good schools*' relates to the policy's 'intent' which is to "... **develop a world-class education system suitable to meet the challenges of the 21st century**" (my emphasis, 2001: 8). Part of the policy's purpose is to improve and evaluate the '*effectiveness*' (2001: 8; 9; 10) of the school. The term '*effectiveness*' is repeated four times in the portions selected from the WSE policy and relates to the term '*achievements*'. In Section 2.2, entitled "Whole-school evaluation and quality assurance" the policy states that its approach is to "... **(provide) the opportunity for acknowledging the achievements of a school ...**" (my emphasis, 2001: 10). This is reiterated in the section that follows, entitled 'Principles'. The first principle on which the policy is based states, "**The core mission of schools is to improve the educational achievements of all learners...**" (my emphasis, 2001: 11). The terms 'effectiveness' and 'achievement' are reinforced by notions of 'excellence' and 'good practice'. In Section 2.1 ('Aims'), the policy states that one of its aims is to "**(i)dentify aspects of excellence within the system which will serve as models of good practice**" (my emphasis, 2001: 10)

Through the examples of rewording quoted above, the terms and associated expressions construct a particular representation of the notion of 'success'. However with each additional expression used, new semantic features are added, with the result that a new more complex concept (Van Leeuwen, 2008) is crafted. A relationship of equivalence or synonymy is therefore set up between success, excellence and quality. However this relationship is infused with a more complex meaning. The use of overlexicalisation is employed here to construct and drive a particular phenomenon that pertains to both the particular ('**good practice**'; '**very good schools**') and the general ('**world-class education system**'). Underlying this phenomenon is the universally sanctioned logic that quality can be measured, and that the outcome of quality is excellence – the corollary of which is success.

In the next section the description and explanation of the terms 'quality' and 'performance' is extended to include 'success' and 'productivity'.

The relationship between quality; performance and success

The repetition of the terms 'quality', 'performance' and 'success' once again establishes a relationship of equivalence and synonymy. As with the notion of 'quality' described above, collocation sets up patterns of co-occurrence that link these different terms, creating a causal relationship between them. Once again the meaning becomes more complex as new terms are

added. In this section, the discussion of quality, performance and success is once again elucidated, suggesting that quality and success leads to improved performance.

Point 1.2.6 of the 'Background and Context' **“confirms that external whole-school evaluation is an integral part of the new quality assurance approach”** (WSE, 2001: 8) and asserts itself as being the **“cornerstone of the quality assurance system in schools”** (2001: 10). By being positioned as the social actor, whole-school evaluation is subjectified: it **“asserts itself as being the *cornerstone* of the quality assurance system in schools”** (my emphasis). The metaphor suggests that as the 'cornerstone', the WSE is the foundation of the quality assurance system in schools. This implies that the quality of education in schools is measurable according to a specific set of instruments and it is only through the WSE policy that such measurement is possible. As part of the same point, the policy states that:

It enables a school and external supervisors to *provide an account* of the school's current *performance* and to show to what extent it meets national goals ... This approach provides the opportunity for acknowledging the *achievements* of a school ...” (my emphasis, 2001: 10).

These extracts underscore the association between quality and success on the one hand, and performance and accountability on the other. The relationship between social actors is invoked as whole-school evaluation is personified while the learning subject is implicitly objectified and rendered passive. The second principle of the policy states:

All members of a school community have responsibility for the quality of their own performance. Whole-school evaluation intends to enable the contribution made by staff, learners and other stakeholders to improve their own and the school's performance, to be properly recognised (2001: 11).

Significantly, the positioning of social actors shifts as it is the members of the school community who are now activated and subjectified. The effect is the attribution of responsibility to the members of the school community for the quality of their own performance. The theme that emerges here is the scaling down of responsibility from the state to all members of the school community. In this extract whole-school evaluation is itself constructed as social actor: through personification, WSE is imbued with the quality of intentionality: **“Whole-school evaluation intends to enable the contribution made by staff, learners and other stakeholders...”**

The fourth WSE principle states that **“good quality whole-school evaluation must be standardised and consistent”** (2001: 11), while the sixth principle discusses staff development and training as being **“critical to school improvement”** (2001: 11). Here it states that:

A measure used by whole-school evaluation in judging a school’s performance is the amount and quality of in-service training undertaken by staff and its impact on learning and standards of achievement (2001: 11)

Whole-school evaluation is positioned once again as the primary social actor (**“a measure used by whole-school evaluation in judging ...”**). Although the **“amount and quality of in-service training”** is a ‘measure’ in judging a school’s performance, the lack of nominal reference with regard to who will conduct the actual training suggests that responsibility for the quality of school performance is placed once again on members of the school community. Through personification, the message is conveyed that increased school effectiveness and improved staff development, measured through standardised evaluation mechanisms, will enhance performance levels and that this will generate educational quality and success. However it is predominantly the responsibility of the members of the school community to ensure quality of performance. Inherent in this message is the ‘propositional assumption’ (Fairclough, 2003: 57) that standardised whole school evaluation is the singular, legitimate measure with which to judge a school’s performance and to improve quality assurance.

As the analysis shifts to the White Paper, the term ‘quality’ remains foregrounded. While in the WSE policy the notion of quality pertains to the functioning of the *school as a whole*, (which may be considered the policy’s primary purpose), in the White Paper the improvement of *the quality of education and training*, extends its purpose *beyond the school*. To this end **“quality assurance mechanisms will be developed to ensure the success of the learning process”** (my emphasis, White Paper, 1995: 19). It is interesting to note that a relationship is set up in this text between ‘quality’ on the one hand, and ‘productivity’ on the other:

The *productivity of the system* - what it produces in terms of personal learning, marketable skills, and examination results, in relation to what it has cost – is very low in much of the system. Improving *efficiency* and *productivity* is essential in order to justify the cost of the system to the public, to secure more funds for development when they are needed, to raise the quality of performance across the system, and thus improve the life chances of the learners (my emphasis, 1995: 20).

In this extract a particular logic based on efficiency and cost-benefit analysis (Apple, 1999) is conveyed. This is achieved through referring to education as ‘the *system*’ – to what ‘it *produces*’ and ‘what it has *cost*’. Such examples of market discourses in the White Paper normalise and legitimise the underlying purpose of education (‘the system’), which is to improve efficiency and productivity. The effect of the structure of the clauses and the use of the infinitive is to transmit a certain market-based logic while at the same time establishing rationality of purpose. This lends validity to the argument and once again establishes a particular mode of legitimacy. The *justification* of “**the cost of the system to the public**” provides a degree of moral rationalisation, as implicit in this is an unspoken commitment to the public of transparency and accountability. Based on this section of analysis the assumption can be made that “**improving the life chances of the learners**” is contingent upon the “**productivity of the system**”.

As evidenced from the analysis thus far, the terms quality; performance; success; efficiency and productivity reflect a particular discursive framework. In the following section these terms converge to form the broader theme of productivity as the analysis focuses on the integration of education and training in the White Paper.

The integration of Education and Training in The White Paper

Under the apartheid system, education and training fell under two separate ministries resulting in responsibilities being divided between the Department of Education and Labour Affairs (Christie, 1996). While schools assumed the role of academic preparation of learners supposedly for the purpose of attending higher education institutions, skills-based technical colleges and other industry-based organisations and providers prepared learners for more direct entry into the labour market.

According to Apple (1999) policy initiatives that have emerged from a neoliberal economic order have centred on creating closer links between education and the economy. In the White Paper, education and training are integrated and driven by the two ‘operational principles’ of *sustainability* and *productivity*. The White Paper states that “[t]he **expansion of the education and training system must meet the test of sustainability**” (1995: 20). Two related market metaphors closely associated with economic activities are employed to drive this point. First, the White Paper warns that the education and training system has not been given an ‘**open**

cheque book' by the government. This fiscal theme is reiterated through the use of a second metaphor, also reflecting economic sentiments: unsustainable development, according to the White Paper "... **is not development at all, but a kind of fraud practised on the people**" (1995: 20). Efficiency is thus equated with productivity – both are essential to "**justify the cost of the system to the public**". The use of market metaphors here conveys a particular message: improvement of efficiency and productivity justifies the cost of the system; this leads to the securing of funds, which in turn raises the quality of performance, serving ultimately to improve the life chances of the learners. The implications of the market discourses for the learning subject will be discussed in a later section.

The logic of this message is achieved through the *assumption* that efficiency is equated with productivity. 'Bridging assumptions' (Fairclough 2003: 57) are thus employed to secure a coherent link between parts of a text in order for the text to make sense. The effect of both market metaphors is to achieve legitimation through inducing the value assumption that efficiency and productivity are fundamental elements that will ultimately benefit the learner. Added to this, legitimation is sought through evoking a moral judgement of honesty and transparency. The phrase "**a kind of fraud practiced on the people**" is set against the preceding clause "**unsustainable development is not development at all**". The contrastive causal relation '*but*' separates the phrase from the clause. If unsustainable development is tantamount to "a kind of fraud practiced on the people", the implication conversely, is that *sustainable* development will enable honesty and transparency, that is, non-'fraudulent' practice. The broader logic framing this argument is that sustainable development *means* "**the expansion of the education and training system**" (White Paper, 1995: 20). Ultimately the point that is made in this text is that there is no alternative but to expand and integrate the education and training systems.

Through the above analysis I have attempted to highlight key terms and discourses in the selected portions of the WSE policy and the White Paper on Education and Training. Notions of quality; performance; success; efficiency and productivity have been described and interpreted in terms of their relevance to the study. These terms cohere around the theme of quality and productivity. The analysis thus far includes only marginal references to the learner, underscoring instead the *purposes relating to the school and to education in general*. The foregrounding in the two policy texts of these broader purposes is significant in providing a discursive framework for the policies.

I turn now to a description and analysis of the imagined learner in the selected policy texts. I approach the analysis using the same method applied above, namely describing and interpreting key terms and discourses in the texts. Foucault (1989: 28) warns against overlooking discontinuities in discourse, advising instead to be alert to “every moment of discourse in its sudden irruption”. To this end, a discussion of the *uneven* representation of the learner is included in the section that follows.

How is the ‘imagined’ learner represented and articulated in the policies?

I begin this section with a formal definition of the learner and focus in the next section more specifically on how the learner is imagined in the White Paper.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines ‘learner’ as “a person who is learning a subject or skill, a person under instruction”. SASA (DoE: 1996: 2), defines ‘learner’ as “**any person receiving education or obliged to receive education ...**”. No further explication or elaboration of the term ‘learner’ is offered in the Act. Instead, in the chapter entitled ‘The Learner’ (DoE, Chapter Two: 3), focus is placed on “**compulsory attendance**”. In SASA the use of the word ‘receive’ in relation to the term ‘*learner*’ is suggestive of passivity on the part of the learning subject. As receivers of education the term ‘learner’ is positioned as beneficiary, which connotes an element of non-participation in the learning process. Through this process the learner is rendered passive while the education management system is ‘activated’ by being positioned as the primary ‘social actor’. This will be returned to in later sections.

In the White Paper the term learner assumes a loosening of the distinction between learning that takes place at school and learning in the broader community context. The expansion of the education and training system ultimately implies the capacity for learners to engage in lifelong learning. Learning in school is equated with productivity which implies the acquisition of marketable skills. In fact, the ‘over-arching’ goal of policy is to “... **succeed in lifelong education and training of good quality**” (White Paper, 1995: 18).

Having presented a formal definition of the word ‘learner’, the analysis shifts in the following section to a discussion of *human resource development*. This term, as will be shown, is frequently positioned alongside human rights discourses. Competing discourses relating to these concepts will be described with regard to the articulation of the learning subject. Finally the discussion moves towards an explanation of broader social purposes.

Human resource development and the learning subject: The White Paper

In the White Paper the learner is given far more explicit attention than in the WSE policy as it is the learner rather than the school, that constitutes one of the White Paper's main foci. As discussed earlier, because this document represents *early policy processes*, it clearly outlines the “**new priorities, values and principles for the education and training system**” (White Paper, 1995: 6), which become less explicit and more diluted in subsequent policies. In the White Paper, the learner is articulated as an individual who values, has access to and succeeds in “lifelong education and training of good quality”:

The over-arching goal of policy must be to enable all education and training of good quality ... An integrated approach to education and training will increase access, mobility and quality in the national learning system” (1995: 18).

This extract links ‘quality’ discourses with those of education and training. The type of learner referred to here is one who is able to fulfil the criteria for lifelong learning, essential to which is the envisaged outcome of ‘mobility’. Easy movement from one learning context to another enhances “**possibilities for lifelong learning**” (1995: 18). As discussed in the literature review, lifelong learning is regarded as a strategy associated with contemporary governmentality, through which citizens are required to engage in “... ceaseless work of training and retraining, skilling and reskilling...” (Rose, 1999: 161). Such a vision prepares the learner for continuous enhancement of credentials and job seeking so that, according to Rose, the individual becomes engaged in a “... continuous economic capitalisation of the self” (1999: 161).

In addition to mobility, citizens are expected to develop flexibility, adaptability and to be innovative and self-managing in order to take their place in the modern economy. The ideal learner is one who is able to fulfil the requirements, as articulated in the White Paper of “successful modern economies and societies”:

Successful modern economies and societies require ... citizens with a strong foundation of general education, the desire and ability to continue to learn, to adapt to and develop new occupations, to take responsibility for personal performance, to set and achieve high standards, and to work cooperatively” (1995: 9).

The use of the term ‘citizen’ here is strongly suggestive of an individual with a desire and capacity for lifelong learning. Broader connotations of the term ‘citizen’ and ‘citizenship’ relating to social responsibility and activism are not included in this text. Instead, criteria for

citizenship have been supplanted with aspirations for continued learning and adaptability in developing new occupations. While economic participation is foregrounded in the notion of citizenship, discourses of social responsibility are absent. The equating of ‘citizen’ with ‘economic participant’ furthermore suggests a loosening of the distinction between ‘society’ and ‘economy’. In the above extract “**successful modern economies and societies**” are merged into a single unit, the basic requirement of which is to produce citizens who are equipped with the necessary skills for economic participation.

Over and above the aforementioned requirements for “successful modern economies”, individuals are expected to develop qualities such as:

... independent and critical thought, the capacity to question, enquire, reason, weigh evidence and form judgments, achieve understanding, recognise the provisional and incomplete nature of most human knowledge, and communicate clearly” (1995: 20).

These traits, according to the White Paper, should be encouraged by the curriculum, teaching methods and textbooks.

The White Paper calls for educational and management processes to ‘put the learners first’: “**Educational and management processes *must therefore* put the learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs**” (my emphasis). This sentence builds on the preceding one, which states: “**The over-arching goal of policy must be to enable all individuals to value, have access to, and succeed in lifelong education and training of good quality**”. This issue (Point 5: Values and Principles of Education and Training Policy: 18) requires closer analysis. It is significant in its direct reference to the learner, as it calls for the learner to be prioritised. However the *subject* of the sentence is not the learner – it is the *educational and management processes* which are empowered with the action of ‘putting’ the learners first. There is subtle but noteworthy irony here: implicit in this declarative sentence is the *positioning* of the educational and management processes as foregrounded – and prior to – the learner. In other words, in being ‘put first’ *by* educational and management processes, the learner is not prioritised at all, but remains *subject to these processes*.

Educational and management processes are personified as they have been tasked with the function of “... **[putting] the learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs**”. The words “*must therefore*” (“**Educational**

and management processes must therefore put the learners first ...”), is an example of an additive causal relation. This links the sentence with the preceding one, building on the previous sentence and justifying “**the over-arching goal of policy**” which “**must be to enable all individuals to value, have access to, and succeed in lifelong education and training of good quality**”. In other words, in order for this goal to be reached, learners must be “**put first**”. A further consequence elicited by this causal set of relations is implied in the final sentence in this section: “**An integrated approach to education and training will increase access, mobility and quality in the national learning system**”. The significance of Point 5, analysed above is that it is premised on a set of value assumptions: first that the “**over-arching goal of policy**” represents desired public consensus; second that all learners’ share the same needs, namely that of ‘lifelong education and training’ and third that an integrated approach to education and training will increase quality in the national learning system.

The title of Chapter Two (pg. 8) of the White Paper on Education and Training is framed as a question which asks ‘**Why Education and Training**’. The interrogative pronoun, ‘*why*’ presupposes a question, however the *absence* of a question mark implies that this title is more declarative *statement* than *question*, the effect being to conflate education and training and present it once again, as a desired, consensual and uncontested fact. Furthermore, the erasure of the implied subject and verb of this statement: “Why (*do we need*) Education and Training” rests on the assumption that the expansion and integration of education and training is unquestionably *what we do need*. The first sub-title of this section is entitled ‘An integrated approach’, which is followed by a second sub-section, ‘Inter-departmental cooperation’. The focus on *integration* in both sections reflects a major shift in education and training, away from “**viewing education and training as parallel activities**” implying a rejection of the “**.... rigid division between ‘academic’ and ‘applied’, ‘theory’ and ‘practice’, ‘knowledge’ and ‘skills’, ‘head’ and ‘hand’**” (White Paper, 1995: 9). The insertion at the end of this sentence of the metaphor ‘head’ and ‘hand’ supports the image created of binaries, culminating in the symbolic reference to the learner. Such division, characteristic of “**very old occupational and social class distinctions**” within South African’s past, is also equated with “**the ethnic structure of economic opportunity and power**”. The appropriation of the ‘head/hand’ metaphor, reminiscent of early Marxist rhetoric, is ironically suggestive of an inversion of language as this metaphor, having been extracted from its labour-oriented roots, is now enlisted to support an antithetical market logic. This discursive strategy functions to create legitimacy

as pre-1994 social democratic idiom is recruited in a document which was to foreshadow an entirely different vision for South Africa.

In the White Paper, a relation of *difference* is set up between the notion of apartheid distinctions and divisions on the one hand, and on the other, the vision of successful modern economies: “**Successful modern economies and societies require the elimination of artificial hierarchies...**” (1995: 9). This semantic relation of contrast positions the new integrated approach *against* the inequities of South Africa’s past suggesting a historical and political inevitability – that the ‘integrated approach’ which will create economic success is the *only option* for the country. The juxtaposition between the *apartheid* vision and the *post-1994* vision presents a ‘problem-solution’ (Fairclough, 2003: 91) relation. Once again a solution is offered to address the problem and, moreover, to ensure that the problem will not be repeated. The effect of the strategies employed here, as elsewhere in the White Paper is to establish legitimation through evoking rationality, credibility and authority. Legitimation is validated in the next point: “... **integrated approaches toward education and training are now a major international trend in curriculum development...**” (White Paper, 1995: 9). The re-scaling from local to global further justifies the process, as consensus shifts from the South African context to that of the international domain.

The blending of the terms ‘economies’ and ‘societies’ is noted as a crucial theme, the implication being that any distinction between these two categories has fallen away. The economy/society theme relates to the earlier notions of quality, performance, success and productivity both in terms of the purposes of education in producing a particular type of learner and in terms of the ways in which the school system addresses the needs of the economy through market discourses. The sequencing of words in the earlier extract is important: “Successful modern economies” introduces the sentence. The phrase “and societies” is added afterwards suggesting that the requirements of “successful modern economies” are prioritised over those of ‘societies’.

‘**Human resources development**’ is offered as a strategy underpinning the integrated approach to education and training. Although it is acknowledged in the text that an integrated approach to education and training will not in itself create a successful economy and society in South Africa, it is regarded at the very least as a prerequisite: “... **the Ministry of Education is convinced that this approach is a prerequisite for successful human resource development**” (1995: 9). The term ‘human resources development’ is repeated five times in

Chapter Two of the White Paper and once in Chapter Three. This corporate notion has been inserted into education rhetoric suggesting a blending of corporate and education discourses. The term ‘resource’, as in “human resource development”, is significant in the context of this study as it implies that people are constructed as resources for the labour market. Human resource development is closely aligned with the notion of success, as demonstrated once again in point 5 of Chapter Two:

Successful modern economies and societies require the elimination of artificial hierarchies, in social organisation, in the organisation and management of work, and in the way in which learning is organised and certified (1995: 9).

An important tactic employed here is the implicit positioning of the White Paper within a broader (non-South African) context (‘**successful modern economies...**’). The use of the plural in the words ‘economies’; ‘societies’; ‘hierarchies’ suggests that the White Paper is not referring only to the local South African context, and that, in proposing the integration of education and training, it locates itself more broadly within the global domain. The effect of the move from the local to the global is two-fold: first it establishes greater coherence and sense-making as *meaning* is derived from the knowledge that local policies are aligned with their international counterparts. Second, it *legitimises* the incorporation of education and training as international credibility is recognised. The overall effect of the rescaling of structural relations (Fairclough, 2003) from local to global is that the integration of education and training will result in South Africa becoming one of the “successful modern economies” alongside other international economies. The alignment of education and training, as suggested earlier, is considered a universal practice in Point 6, quoted above, which speaks about integrated approaches toward education and training as being “... **a major international trend in curriculum development ...**”. Once again the reference to “**international trend in curriculum development**” shifts the focus from the global to the local, the effect of which is to assume consensus that South Africa must position itself alongside global trends in policy-making.

How do competing discourses relating to the learner play out in the policy texts?

I continue with the analysis of the representation of the learner by describing polemic projections of the learner that have emerged from the above analysis. We are reminded that even when discourses are codified in formal policies, they are not fixed or static, but are uneven and discontinuous. I argue that clashes in discourses pertaining to the learner stem from

paradigmatic differences, resulting in inconsistencies with regard to how the learner is imagined within the policies. Competing discourses that apply to the learner that are addressed here are those of *human resource development versus human rights*. These discourses have been identified, firstly, because they have emerged from the analysis itself, and secondly because they work conjointly to depict the ideal learner, albeit it in inconsistent ways. The objective in this section is to *identify* this competing set of discourses; to *describe and interpret* how they represent the imagined learner and to *explain* what the effects of this representation may be.

Human resource development versus human rights

As conveyed in earlier discussions, there are frequent references in the White Paper to *human resource development*. In the sections chosen for analysis, these are interspersed (in both texts) with allusions to *human rights discourse*. I begin by giving examples of human rights discourse from both policy texts.

The White Paper (1995: 15) states that “... **learning opportunities for all will be based principally on constitutional guarantees of equal educational rights for all persons...**” Equal educational rights discourse is reiterated in the WSE policy which “**seeks to ensure that all our children are given an equal opportunity to make the best use of their capabilities**” (my emphasis, WSE, 2001: 7). In the second extract, the use of the first-person pronoun (“*our children*”) draws attention to the relational value of these words, implying that the children of South Africa are an integral part of a national community. This elicits a sense of familiarity with, and responsibility towards the nation’s children reinforcing the notion of rights and responsibility.

The next section of the policy states: “**The transformation of education in South Africa emphasises the right of all to quality education**” (2001: 8). As suggested, the human rights objective is flanked with the purpose of building a ‘world-class education system’:

The first intent is to redress the discriminatory, unbalanced and inequitable distribution of the education services of the apartheid regime, and secondly to develop a world-class education system suitable to meet the challenges of the 21st century (2001: 8).

These two objectives operate together to establish legitimation through their relational link. Within the context of whole-school evaluation, this implies that education transformation is

contingent upon systemic evaluation as articulated earlier in the policy. The expressed intention is that the *transformed* education system will be effective in redressing the “... **discriminatory, unbalanced and inequitable education services of the apartheid regime..**”, and linked to this, that it intends to “... **develop a world-class education system suitable to meet the challenges of the 21st century**” (2001: 8). The shifting of scale from the local apartheid system to the “challenges of the 21st century” is marked by the move from the past to the future. Past social and economic discrimination will be corrected as the future represents equal access for all to the labour market. Inequalities of the past are set against economic equality of the future. Legitimation is established through narrative, as demonstrated in the reference to the old apartheid system of education.

Van Leeuwen (2008: 21) describes this form of “legitimation through narrative” as ‘moral evaluation’ or ‘mythopoesis’. The injecting of moral good into human rights policy rhetoric reifies the discourse in as much as it “acquires moral force, which renders the values carried by its related terminology more irresistible among less powerful voices in the discourse” (Hill, 2003: 96). The implied assumption reached through these forms of legitimation is that the new education system will safeguard the country against the possibility of (renewed) discrimination, unbalanced and inequitable education - and as such will keep the country abreast with economic progress in order to “meet the challenges of the 21st century” (WSE, 2001: 8). Furthermore the new education system will offer the opportunity to supplant past inequalities with promises of equal access to the labour market.

In the White Paper, the section entitled ‘A transformative mission’ (1995: 15) reflects one of the principal priorities of the White Paper, namely “transforming the legacy of the past”. As such this document specifically locates itself “within the framework of the new Interim Constitution and Bill of Rights, and elaborates on the implications of these in general terms for education and training” (Christie, 1996: 410). The ‘moral vision’ is fused with notions of responsibility and accountability: “**It is now the joint responsibility of all South Africans who have a stake in the education and training system to help build a just, equitable, and high quality system for all the citizens...**” (White Paper, 1995: 15). However, it is the parents or guardians who have the “**primary responsibility for the education of *their* children**” (my emphasis). The shift of possessive pronoun, from ‘*our*’ (in ‘our children’) as demonstrated in the extract on page 91 above, to ‘*their* children’ is particularly significant in its relational value, as it emphasises here, as elsewhere in the White Paper, that it is no longer the state’s responsibility alone to build a “just, equitable and high quality system”, but that of the parents

or guardians. While parents have “... **an inalienable right to choose the form of education which is best for their children...**”, they will need to take responsibility for this “inalienable right”. More broadly, responsibility is vested in the citizens of the country as “the efforts of all South Africans will be needed to reconstruct and develop the national education and training system...” (1995: 16). The use of the adverb ‘*now*’, as in the extract quoted above “**It is now the joint responsibility ...**” (my emphasis, 1995: 15) represents a construct of time, eliciting immediacy and urgency. Underpinning the emphasis on the devolution of power is the implicit message about the ideal learner, who must take responsibility for his/her quality education as a self-managing individual. It is this imagined subject who will ultimately enter ‘society’ as an independent, self-managing economic participant.

Legitimation is achieved once again through moral evaluation, however implicit in the moral vision is an unspoken note of caution: *without* “the efforts of all South Africans” a “**just, equitable, and high quality system**” (1995: 15) may not be achieved. Alongside this is a further cautionary note with more explicit, and dire consequences – failure to take responsibility may result in parents losing their “**inalienable right to choose the form of education which is best for their children**” (1995: 17).

The “fundamental priority” of building a “just, equitable, high quality” education system is a “national task” (1995: 12), and one that is contrasted with the “**the denial of equal education rights**” in the post-World War II period, which “**constituted a direct attack on the human dignity and life chances of the vast majority of South Africa’s people**” (1995: 16). The shift from “the Post-World War II period” to post-1994 democracy signals the dawning of a ‘**new era**’. The metaphorical reference to the publication of the White Paper as heralding “... **not just a new chapter but an entirely new volume in the country’s educational development**” (1995: 16) conjures an image of a new age, resonating with the vision of the new South Africa. The effect of this ‘new era’ metaphor is to evoke the idea of innovation, opportunities and new beginnings. However, the “negotiated agreement” is “... **envisaged as a solemn pact**” (1995: 17), implicit in which is the warning that a possible breach would threaten the potential for “**peace and progress in our country**” (1995: 17). The magnitude of the ‘pact’ is alluded to in the direct comparison of the White Paper with the Constitution of the country. “...**[I]n its own way**”, the Education and Training Charter is “**as significant for peace and progress in our country as the Constitutional Principles on which the new Constitution will be based**” (1995: 17). The use of simile to equate the two documents elevates the stature of the White Paper to that of the South African Constitution. Similarly notions of ‘peace’ and ‘progress’ are

set side by side, suggesting that each is contingent upon the other, and moreover that in order for these ideals to be achieved, economic development, as enshrined in the “Education and Training Charter” is necessary. The use of the word ‘charter’ in relation to the White Paper invokes the pre-1994 unifying principles of democracy in the Freedom Charter.

Human rights discourses in the White Paper are strongly articulated in Chapter Four, entitled “Values and Principles of Education and Training Policy’. Point Two recognises education and training as “basic human rights”, which need to be “protected and advanced” by the state in order that “... **all citizens irrespective of race, class, gender, creed or age, have the opportunity to develop their capacities and potential, and make their full contribution to the society**” (1995: 17). Thus, at the outset there is a close alignment between discourses of human rights and human resource development. This synthesis is underscored by the notion of the ‘citizen’ who is regarded as being given equal opportunity to “... **develop their capacities and potential, and make their full contribution to the society**”. However, the development of ‘capacities’ and ‘potential’ is paradoxically limited to the domain of *economic progress*. Similarly, the idea of making “**their full contribution to the society**” (above) implies *participation in the economy rather than* social contribution or democratic citizenship. In this instance the words ‘economy’ and ‘society’ are once again used synonymously.

The principles acknowledged in this section include parental choice; access to education; redress of educational inequalities; equity; improvement of the quality of education; democratic governance; accountability; lifelong learning; curriculum choice; environmental education; sustainability and productivity. Underpinning these principles is a strong set of human rights values: “**The realisation of democracy, liberty, equality, justice and peace are necessary conditions for the full pursuit and enjoyment of lifelong learning**” (1995: 19). Ultimately the discourses of human rights and human resource development are woven together albeit with different emphases, culminating in the notion of *lifelong learning*. Lifelong training is an objective that is given precedence in the White Paper: “**The over-arching goal of policy must be to enable all individuals to value, have access to, and succeed in lifelong education and training of good quality**” (1995: 18). As mentioned, the ideal learner is therefore one who is primed to participate in lifelong learning and thus contribute to economic progress.

In the next section the analysis moves from description and interpretation to explanation. My objective in addressing the explanation stage separately is to highlight the value preferences that underlie policy texts in order to describe how discourses represent broader social purposes

and how they function to constitute subjects. To this end, I broaden the discussion to describe how ideas of the imagined learner represent broader social purposes.

EXPLANATION OF ANALYSIS

Rizvi and Lingard (2010: 63) hold that the value preferences that inhere policy texts are rooted in dominant global ‘social imaginaries’. These social imaginaries are not located in a neutral space, but exist in a context in which neoliberalism has become a dominant ideology. As illustrated in the above analysis, educational values are expressed with authority and legitimacy as national policies are aligned to global neoliberal imperatives, bringing “... factual and normative aspects of policy together in an effort to forge a shared implicit understanding of the problems to which policies are proposed as solutions” (2010: 79).

In the following section I examine the values that underpin performativity discourses. This discussion signals the relationship between marketisation and accountability, and reflects the broader social purposes of education.

Value preferences underpinning performativity

One of the overarching themes emerging out of the policy text analysis is *the scaling up from local to global* which is set against *the scaling down of responsibility* from the state to the schools (teachers, parents and learners). Rooted in this dynamic is a *performativity/accountability* model which is articulated in both policies. Ball (2006a: 72) captures this phenomenon in the following equation:

$$\text{Social markets/institutional devolution} = \text{raising standards (of educational performance)} = \text{increased international competitiveness}$$

I begin this section by looking at the relationship between marketisation and accountability in order to understand how the values that underlie accountability-based policies represent broader social purposes. This contextualises the earlier discussion of key terms by linking evaluation and performance-based school practice with the economic value of education. As mentioned, an important theme that links both policies is the need for accountability as a strategy for achieving quality and success - which rests on the assumption that performance can be measured through standardised outcomes and that these outcomes or indicators provide a tool through which success can be evaluated and measured. WSE is offered as a performativity-based model which frames systemic outcomes. The underlying notion here is

that performativity is measurable through a set of outcomes which permeates at different levels within the school and, although specified differently, are translated on the whole in terms of performance. Outcomes may be seen therefore as a series of translations that work together to establish a particular model which is contingent on performativity and accountability and thus suitable to a knowledge-based economy.

In the World Bank Report, *Lifelong Learning in the Global Knowledge Society*, a knowledge-based economy is described as “an economy in which knowledge is created, acquired, transmitted, and used more effectively by individuals, enterprises, organisations and communities to improve economic and social development...” (2003, pg 1, cited in Christie, 2008: 55). This dimension of knowledge production relies on a strong relationship between education, productivity and the economy and rests on the notion that “...economic development can be maximized through a process of constructive educational planning” (Morley & Rasool, 1999: 18). Although the principle of productivity pertains to the systemic development of the school, as indicated in the White Paper (“**the productivity of the system**”), its implications for the learner are evident in terms of three critical outputs: “**personal learning, marketable skills and examination results**” (White Paper, 1995: 20). Of these three outputs, ‘marketable skills’ and ‘examination results’ are strongly outcomes-based and are explicitly oriented around performativity, productivity and marketability.

In addition to corporate values such as efficiency, success, productivity and managerialism being transferred from the private sector into the school (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000), education itself becomes a marketable commodity through which quality assurance, performance and measurement are key criteria. Accountability and the measuring of performance through assessment criteria constitute regulatory mechanisms through which governments can ensure constructive educational planning and control. The analysis of both policies supports Christie’s (1996: 414) assertion that “... policy activity is not neutral, but grounded in values...” and that moreover, these texts may be seen as exercises of power “... aimed at preserving or bringing about desired arrangements”. Of particular interest is Christie’s (1996: 414) reference to the White Paper as:

... an attempt by the ministry of Education to produce an education and training agenda which offers an alternative set of problems and solutions to its apartheid predecessors and which attempts to set up new ‘rules of the game’.

This ‘problem’/ ‘solution’ strategy positions education and training as *the only viable option* to apartheid, and it is this fundamental discursive strategy that is implied in both policy texts.

Despite the global infusion of private sector values into the public sector, the 1994 elections in South Africa presented a historical and political moment for the country to re-model itself according to the pre-1994 vision of the social democratic movements. However, the new vision that was formulated in post-apartheid South Africa was fundamentally different to that of the liberation movements. Inherent in the post-1994 economic vision was a particular set of value preferences rooted in a global neoliberal framework. South Africa’s political choice “... to attune its macroeconomic policy to market-led economic growth” (Christie, 2006: 379) demonstrated the government’s conscious decision to participate in a new economic system closely modelled on international economic trends. The ideal of social democracy and social justice became subsumed in a new vision of the market – and human resource development became the means through which to ensure economic and social transformation. Christie (2008) asks whether this was the only choice available to the new government and draws on De Clercq to answer this question:

The Ministry of Education had several policy and strategy choices available to start transforming the uneven and discriminatory education system. It could have build on previous ANC policy work and options of the pre-election era and moved into implementation plans and strategies for action. It could have united the majority of the provincial departments around common policy priorities and plans for intervening in the education system. It could have mobilised, through well-focused campaigns and pilot programmes educational communities around the worst inherited problem areas ... Above all, it could have strategised and devised programmes to change the culture and ethos, as well as build the managerial and leadership capacity, of its own state bureaucrats ...” (De Clercq, 1997: 136-137, cited in Christie, 2008: 130).

In both texts analysed, the ‘problem’ of the *political injustices* of the past is set against the ‘solution’ of *economic progress*. Significantly the viability of the ‘solution’ is presented as being incontrovertible. Its *inevitability* authorises its legitimacy, foreclosing the consideration of other options.

In this section I have focused on how dominant discourses in the selected policy texts represent the ideal of economic growth and competitive advantage. This vision is based on the logic that global economic development requires high performance levels which are linked to increased productivity and this is contingent upon improved efficiency, quality and success. Pressure is

placed on educators and learners to improve performance levels which are measured through systems of evaluation. Ultimately the educational goal is to enhance learners' opportunities through lifelong learning. To this end, human resource development is regarded as a fundamental purpose of education. A strong work force requires that all sectors of the community can contribute to economic development.

The idea of social mobility underpins the role of education in providing individuals with "a range of private goods that they can exchange within the labour market for money, power and prestige" (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010: 78). Effective social mobility is contingent upon individuals developing the capacity to be self-managing, self-driven entrepreneurs. As an educational goal, this promotes the allocation of economic benefits and social status to select individuals. According to Rizvi and Lingard social mobility implies that "... social rewards should be based on both effort and intelligence. It maintains that the market rewards those who work harder and have inherently superior skills and talent" (2010: 78).

Notionally, social mobility requires a loosening of the distinction between the categories of public and private with regard to education and civil society. While education improves productivity and therefore contributes to the economic well-being and development of the society, it improves "the life chances of individuals", thus serving individual interests within a competitive market. This implies a 'collapse' of the 'public' into the 'private' as the market is extended into the public domain.

Having examined the value preferences underpinning the policy texts chosen for analysis, I now link this discussion with the notion of the imagined learner.

The Learner: active entrepreneur; passive citizen?

In view of the dominant discourses pertaining to the imagined learner that are *present* in the policy texts, as analysed above, I now turn my attention to those discourses that are absent, focussing specifically on the absence of *citizenship* discourses. Throughout the analysis the term 'citizen' has been shown to be synonymous with 'economic participant'. The synthesis of these terms presupposes a new conceptualisation of the term 'society': rather than delineating a collective civil space, society is equated with the *market* and thus regarded as an economic entity while *social responsibility* is equated with *economic agency*. Apple (1999) broadens this analogy: focussing on the ideological effects of neoliberalism, he regards democracy rather than being a *political* concept, as being transformed into an entirely *economic* concept.

In the literature review the notion of passive and active citizenship (Neocosmos: 2006) was introduced – a concept I revisit here. In the context of the above analysis there is an interesting link between increased performance and competitiveness on the one hand, and passive citizenship on the other. The focus for learners on individual achievement and performance shifts attention away from the collective as emphasis is placed on personal aspirations and the attainment of individual goals. The implication is that in being subjectivated through performativity and accountability discourses, the learner is primed and capacitated to optimise individualistic attributes. These values according to Wexler (1992) are internalised and translated in a post-school context into diminished capacities for society and the collective.

CONCLUSION

My intention in this chapter was to understand how the learner is imagined in two policy texts. What emerged from the analysis was an inconsistent articulation of the imagined learner. Evidence of discontinuities was particularly apparent in the discourses of human rights and human resource development. This conflict, I have suggested, marks the elision of social justice and the representation of education as a “public good in ‘an age of markets’” (Apple, 1999: 203; Keet 2005, cited in Spreen and Vally, 2006: 353). I have argued that the *space* between education and neoliberalism has collapsed, as the ‘public’ has merged into the ‘private’. The re-conceptualisation of the notions of ‘citizen’ and ‘society’ was presented as a central theme as ‘society’ has become equated with the ‘economy’ and ‘citizen’ with ‘economic participant’.

In rejecting apartheid the space was opened for a new, transformed dispensation. Human resource development was inserted into this space – a move which continues to be legitimated through the needs, evidently, of global marketisation on the one hand, and human rights on the other. The effects of human rights discourse have been to ‘humanise’ market neoliberalism by injecting moral good into the economic vision. And in this way a new, reformed vision for the country has been constructed, one that remains closely aligned to international neoliberal trends while at the same time *appearing* to be suited to the needs of a post apartheid context.

In the analysis the conflation of human resource development and human rights discourse offered a palatable economic solution to the problem of apartheid. However, the international trend in policy-making imposed on local policy makers a convergence in thinking about educational values. It is noted from the analysis that in the case of South Africa, policy-makers

have located themselves within a global space and that as such they have engaged with education policy predominantly in terms of outcomes and outputs. It is likely however, that recruiting international neoliberal policies has posed fundamental problems for development countries. In the South African case this has been made evident through inconsistencies and irregularities in education discourses with respect to how the learner is imagined. I have attempted to show that discursive contradictions culminate ultimately in the collapse of social welfarist terms into market discourses. Overriding the analysis, is the unspoken assertion that the predominant purpose of education is its promotion of economic efficiency and productivity which is served by the efficiency and productivity of the schooling system – and that this education purpose is both inevitable and desirable.

As evident from the analysis thus far, the goal of improving quality through efficiency and productivity highlights the purpose of education in developing young people who are able to contribute to the economic productivity of nations (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The *process* through which the learner is shaped into becoming an economic participant suggests that education itself has been redefined within an economic logic. Although, as Apple (2005: 13) points out, there will always be ‘counter-hegemonic tendencies’, it appears that “... our daily interactions – and even our dreams and desires – must ultimately be governed by market ‘realities’ and relations”.

CHAPTER SIX
GLEN RIDGE HIGH:
ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATION, INTERVIEW AND SCHOOL TEXTS

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I described how the imagined learner is depicted as an individual who is primed to become an active and productive economic participant. Underpinning the policy text analysis is the constitutive role of discourse, its function being to "... position, make productive, regulate, moralise and govern the citizen" (Doherty, 2008: 195). This aligns with Foucault's process of governmentality which becomes possible through "... the development, harnessing, incorporation and active employment of discourse" (2008: 195). It is with this in mind that I now shift the analysis to the schools by describing how particular policy discourses are deployed and made available within the context of the school.

In this and the next chapter I show how the learning subject is imagined and constructed in two secondary schools, and how learners position themselves within these constructs. Through the analysis of observation and interview texts, I describe how certain policy discourses are translated in the schools, and how additional discourses are recruited by the schools and by the learners themselves, in the construction of their subjectivities. In addition to discourses of performance, success and productivity, additional discourses emerged from the analysis which worked conjointly to generate a new set of themes. As I will show, discourses were often uneven and unpredictable, serving powerfully to describe how students assumed various discursive positions and how, in different ways they negotiated this positioning.

In keeping with my analytic framework as presented in Chapter Four, my observation and interview data was grouped according to key themes or messages which were communicated within the school via conduits or message carriers. Moments of translation and interpretation that were considered pertinent to the study were those instances in which messages about the imagined learner were articulated either verbally or nonverbally.

I relied on intertextuality once again to thread together texts from different sources in order to demonstrate both discursive consistencies and inconsistencies. Extracts from observation texts constructed from assemblies, for example, were linked with texts from meetings, school documents, websites, and advertisements. Interwoven into this discursive tapestry are extracts from interviews with teachers and students. This thematic, intertextual approach enabled greater depth and integration of data which, based on the theoretical components of this study, converged to generate a description of the imagined learner.

Overlaying all levels of analysis are the key conceptual elements linked to processes of subjectivation. *Discipline*, *surveillance* and *judgment* are the instruments through which power operates, both visibly and invisibly, and are therefore considered pivotal to the analysis. In this and the next chapter, I consider the complex set of practices through which disciplinary processes are regulated, through which power relations are maintained, and through which the subject is constituted.

The reader is referred to Appendix D for data coding details. All participants including the principal are referred to by their first name. In all cases these are pseudonyms.

(The content included for analysis in Chapters Six and Seven are based on the questions identified in Chapter Four, Table 1.)

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER

I focus in this chapter on how disciplinary procedures at Glen Ridge High operated as *regulatory mechanisms*. Once again, each of these disciplinary processes was derived from the analysis itself. Foucault's overarching theory of discipline as a pervasive force that codifies behaviour according to what is regarded as desirable, must be distinguished from a school's localised system of reward and punishment which is only one integrative element in the broader disciplinary apparatus that operates within any school context. Over and above reward and punishment, disciplinary procedures at Glen Ridge High included the regulatory and normalising practices of religion and tradition as well as practices of acknowledgement, an ethos of excellence, and a culture of school participation and involvement. These invisible elements are integral to the school's *disciplinary processes* in that they shape the individual's behaviour towards a desired end. As Foucault (1977) remarked:

... ultimately what one is trying to restore ... (is) the obedient subject, the individual subjected to habits, rules, orders, an authority that is exercised continually around him and upon him, and which he must allow to function automatically in him (1977: 128-129).

This chapter is organised thematically into five sections, and each of the themes was derived from the analysis. In the first section, I describe the school's *image and reputation*. Although I do not regard this as a disciplinary mechanism as such, as it was not an area over which the school could *directly* regulate conduct, I consider this an important starting point. A description of the image and reputation generated an understanding of discourses that operated *about* the school before engaging with discourses that operated *within* it. Furthermore, this broader perspective was useful in offering insight into the spoken messages within the public domain that *validated and reinforced* the school's discursive framework, while simultaneously exposing the more negative messages that worked subliminally to *undermine* it.

After setting the discursive context, the second section of the chapter focuses on *disciplinary processes of religion; tradition; the culture of excellence; the ethos of school involvement and systems of reward and punishment*. This section concerns ways in which disciplinary practices and processes operate as ritualised, normalising instruments. The assembly is presented as a key 'consensual ritual' (Bernstein, 1975: 55) and message carrier. In the third section, the analysis shifts to a discussion of discourses of *desire and aspiration*. The fourth section concentrates more specifically on *school-based discourses that represent the ideal learner* and examines ways in which *pupils positioned themselves against these constructs*. Finally, in the fifth section the discussion shifts to a description of *subalternity*, and describes the experience of pupils who were subordinated by existing power relations within the school.

Before beginning with the analysis I offer an explanation of the term 'subaltern' and highlight how this is applied in the study. Originally consigned to the peasantry and lower ranks of the military (Apple & Buras, 2006), the term 'subaltern' was used by Gramsci to refer to oppressed groups. In this study, a subaltern perspective invites an enquiry into the complex and contested ways in which the subject is constituted through subordinated relations of power. Because subjectivity is continually negotiated within a particular context, this approach takes into account "the place of history, language and culture in the construction of subjectivity as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge contextual" (Hall, cited in Procter, 2004: 122). Although the study was not

intentionally framed within the specific categories of race or class, the class context of both the school and the learners suffused the analysis, because both of the schools – and the learners within the schools – were positioned in relation to class and race. The term subalternity signals these intersections between race and class. Although race remains a reality in South Africa, as Soudien suggests, “[t]he events of 1994 effectively reconfigured this order by elevating the significance of social class. In the process, race and class were brought into a much more interdependent relationship” (2007: 51).

GLEN RIDGE HIGH

Cars line the surrounding streets as pupils are dropped off before the start of the day. Bicycles are locked in their designated places in the parking area. Sprawling green fields, old oak trees and a manicured garden greet the visitor to Glen Ridge High. The well-maintained exterior is matched by the school’s immaculate campus. The recently painted walls, wood-panelled doors and spacious reception area confirm that this is a place of learning imbued with tradition and excellence. Neat, well-mannered students step aside for their teachers, offering polite yet friendly greetings. Contemporary art works line the walls of the corridors and each classroom has been fitted with up to date teaching technology. It is 8.00 am and the school day is about to start. There is no school bell, yet learners and teachers move swiftly to their classes for the first period. A few late-comers report to the secretary’s office and are given ‘late arrival’ notes. The rest are in class.

School image and reputation

Glen Ridge High placed much value on maintaining its reputation of distinction. The school’s focus on image and reputation supports Kenway and Bullen’s (2001: 146) theory that school image is constructed according to a particular ‘sign value’ which is attributed not only to the school, but to the pupils who attend it. Fataar (2009: 5-6) maintains that ways in which schools go about promoting their popular images is critical in attracting the ‘right’ types of students.

Glen Ridge’s reputation was promoted through the school’s website, online information brochures, advertisements, meetings with parents, and newspaper articles. Students were constantly reminded of the high esteem in which the school was held. The principal frequently made references to recent articles about the school that had been published in the news and media. Key messages about Glen Ridge High that circulated *outside of the school*

echoed some of the dominant messages that operated *within it*. At the same time, undercurrents of negative messages in the public domain functioned at times to disrupt its exemplary image.

In most of the student interviews, discussions about the school's image generated positive comments from learners about the high academic standard and 'cleverness' of the pupils. Coupled with this were references to the students' high level of involvement, participation and busyness. At least four pupils referred to the school's elitism; despite it being a public school, these comments related to the high school fees, which, in their opinion resulted in the school attracting a particular type of learner. Five pupils commented that because they lived in poorer, working class areas, the school was generally not well known in their communities. According to these students people who *had* heard of Glen Ridge, spoke about the 'poshness', 'smartness', 'whiteness', 'wealth' and 'cleverness' of its pupils.

Half of the respondents (pupils and teachers) agreed that the school's image accurately reflected the school and at least four pupils felt proud to be associated with Glen Ridge. However, a few indicated that the general perceptions of the school were not always accurate. Kim comments on this:

'Coz I mean, what people see on the outside is not always what happens here actually. Or they see what happens in the newspapers, but they don't really know what's happening inside the school.

The distinction between "what people see on the outside" and "what's happening inside the school" alluded to the undercurrent of negative rumours about the school that permeated the broader community. One negative aspect of the school's image concerned the use of drugs by Glen Ridge pupils. In the quote below, Audrey (a teacher) highlights something of the paradox between the school's image of excellence on the one hand, and its association with drug abuse, on the other:

I think Glen Ridge has an excellent reputation ... we're regarded as a school with a very good reputation in academics, I think discipline as well, you know. ... I know there are all sorts of rumours that, I think we almost end up perpetuating ourselves ... they come from so many years ago but we kind of keep saying it and then denying it, things like we're the 'school pharmacy' ... things like that are untrue I think, you know. I don't think it's anymore than in any other school or less. Mmm, but ja, the myths that are perpetuated ... but in my particular group it's a good reputation, that's it.

At least four pupils alluded to Glen Ridge's reputation as the school 'pharmacy' or 'hospital', in other words that the school was perceived as a provider of drugs within the community. Kenway and Bullen (2001) comment on the difficulty schools have in managing the "informal information systems" that operate within the broader communities:

The students' impressions and information networks are formed everywhere – in the cracks and crevices of the social and sporting life of the city and in the stories that family members tell each other (2001: 144).

Regardless of the few negative rumours, pupils on the whole felt proud and happy to be associated with Glen Ridge. The investment of Glen Ridge in upholding its distinctive reputation served not only to attract the 'right' kind of learners, but constructed the school in a particular way in the eyes of the broader community. Those who attended Glen Ridge were positioned as academic, productive and successful.

DISCIPLINARY MECHANISMS

The disciplinary processes described in this section represent the 'expressive order' of the school and highlight the different ways in which the school configured itself to regulate behaviour. The school's internal mechanisms were ritualised in different ways, functioning symbolically to prepare the individual for a social order:

... to heighten respect for that order, to revivify that order within the individual and, in particular, to deepen acceptance of the procedures which are used to maintain continuity, order and boundary and which control ambivalence towards the social order" (Bernstein, 1975: 54).

I begin this section with a detailed description of school assemblies. Without doubt, in both schools the assembly was a pivotal 'event' for the transmission of key messages.

School assemblies

Bernstein (1975: 55) regards the school assembly as a type of 'consensual ritual' which functions to bind together all members of the school as a 'distinct collectivity'. This gives the school its specific identity, assisting in the "integration of the various goals of the school within a coherent set of shared values, so that the values of the school can become internalized and experienced as a unity". According to Bernstein the procedures used within a school to transmit the expressive and instrumental orders are of critical importance. This has a direct bearing on ways in which pupils relate to the school, and to society in general. Luke

(1995: 34) regards the school assembly as “a public text in which particular relations of power and authority are ritualized and normalizing narratives of school practice and policy are rehearsed”. The school assembly provides the forum for the delivery of the school narrative, “the material fabric of which school ‘ethos’ is woven and the very sites where official versions of ideal and successful students are represented” (1995: 34).

As a regular *event* in the life of the school, the Glen Ridge assembly embodied different elements of school *practice* and thus may be viewed as a central filter through which particular discourses circulated and were disseminated. As a disciplinary apparatus the assembly represented a form of practice that was regulated and ritualised – a mechanism through which the school’s values, culture and norms were routinely reinforced.

In this study the analysis of school assemblies includes both *regular* as well as *special* assemblies. In both schools *special* assemblies referred to the first assembly of the year (distinctive in each school for different reasons); assemblies held to honour certain students; and assemblies which carried a particular focus. *Regular* assemblies on the other hand referred to the routine, weekly assemblies. This distinction is important as observation of the regular assemblies offered important insights into routine practices and procedures that comprised the daily life of the school. *Special* assemblies, on the other hand, illuminated the more entrenched values reserved for special occasions. The details of both special and regular assemblies are addressed thematically and are described in the sections that follow. The analysis in this section focuses on the *purpose* of the assemblies; their *structure and routine*; *spatial arrangements* and the *sequence of events*. As will be shown, discourses that are frequently deployed within multicultural settings reflect a set of normalised constructs that are assigned to middle class practices (Dornbrack, 2008). In the case of Glen Ridge High the school assembly with its formalised structure, routine, spatial arrangements and organised sequence of events represented a disciplining of the learner at different levels. Through the medium of the assembly, values of self-discipline, restraint, respect towards authority, punctuality and obedience were activated and reinforced. However, attributes of the imagined Glen Ridge High learner were complex and nuanced. As will be described in later sections, alongside normative ideals of self-discipline and restraint was the expressed goal of producing students who were culturally engaged, critical, challenging and independent thinkers. The degree of traction between these two sets of ideals, and their consequences with respect to the imagined learner will be addressed in the sections that follow.

Purpose of assemblies

Assemblies functioned to bind together all members of the school into a distinct collectivity. They provided opportunities for general announcements to be made and for delivery of educational, moral or inspirational teachings. There usually were readings or brief talks, referred to in both schools as ‘devotions’ which included religious, philosophical or value-based teachings.

In the case of Glen Ridge High, the topics of the devotions varied according to who delivered them. In addition to the principal, deputy principal, ground-staff, and teachers, any student in the school was entitled and encouraged to present a devotion. At least half of the devotions observed were delivered by teachers and were based on Christian teachings or sentiments. The rest of the devotions were delivered by pupils and on the whole these were not religious. Occasionally presentations took the form of a skit or short play presented by a small group of pupils, the purpose of which was usually to promote the activities of one of the school’s numerous clubs or societies.

Structure and routine during assemblies

At Glen Ridge High, the assemblies were highly formalised, mostly following the same structure and routine. Assemblies took place in the school hall, on the first day of every term, as well as on every subsequent Monday and Friday. The length was strictly half an hour and each assembly followed a similar structure; prior to the start of the assembly, one of the deputy principals appeared on the stage to coordinate proceedings. After the teachers took their places on the stage, the principal and head-prefects followed. The whole school stood and remained standing while a hymn was sung and a prayer recited. Students were seated only when permission was given by the principal, who was the last to enter the hall. The language of communication during assemblies was English; however, each month at least one assembly was presented in Afrikaans, and another in a combination of Xhosa and English. The dual-medium of delivery was tightly regulated and formalised.

The formality in the structure and routine of the Glen Ridge assemblies signalled important values of punctuality, consistency, order and regularity, serving to model learner behaviour according to these norms. This is described further in the next section as the focus shifts to the spatial arrangements observed during the Glen Ridge assemblies.

Spatial arrangements during assemblies

Spatial arrangements at Glen Ridge exemplified what Bernstein (1975: 55) referred to as ‘differentiating rituals’. Unlike ‘consensual rituals’, which function to bind together all members of the school, ‘differentiating rituals’ delineate groups within the school. These types of rituals “... deepen local attachment behaviour to, and detachment behaviour from, specific groups; they also deepen respect behaviour to those in various positions of authority, and create order in time” (1975: 56).

During the Glen Ridge assemblies, the spatial arrangements were tightly regulated, demonstrating a clear demarcation of rank both on the stage and in the hall. According to Foucault (1977: 146), rank “defines the distribution of individuals in the educational order”. On the stage, the seating arrangements were delineated according to levels of authority: the principal, who wore a black academic gown, occupied a blue leather chair and was seated at the front of the stage. Behind him the deputy principals were seated, also on blue leather chairs. The heads of department sat behind the deputies with the head boy and girl at the end of the row, all of whom were seated on the same chairs. The rest of the teachers sat on red plastic chairs behind them.

The marking of rank was extended into the school hall, where seating arrangements were differentiated according to the pupils’ grades. Bernstein (1975: 56-57) suggests that ‘age relation rituals’ were concerned with authority relations, increasing distance and boundaries between ‘unequals’. With the exception of the prefects who sat on chairs at the sides of the hall to monitor pupils’ behaviour, the rest of the pupils sat on the floor. The separation of the prefects from the rest of the school functioned to impersonalise relations between different groups, demarcating the prefect body as a “separate system of social control” (1975: 57). Matriculants were given the privilege of being seated in the gallery upstairs on tiered steps, once again, suggesting special treatment on the basis of age status. While matrices were seated upstairs at the back of the hall, the Grade 8s occupied the space in the front of the hall. The valuing of rank at Glen Ridge was thus demonstrated by the “distribution of individuals” (Foucault, 1977: 146) according to both age and authority. As will be described later, this “made possible the supervision of each individual ... It made the educational space function like a learning machine, but also as a machine for supervising, hierarchizing, rewarding” (1977: 146).

The formality of the Glen Ridge assemblies is further illustrated by the ordered, tightly structured sequence of events during the assemblies, as discussed in the next sub-section.

Sequence of events during regular assemblies

Assemblies began with either the principal or one of the deputies formally greeting the pupils and teachers, and then introducing the hymn for the morning. The words of the hymn were projected onto the elevated white screen and although pupils were not obliged to sing they were urged to do so. On one occasion the singing of the hymn was terminated half way through by Clive (one of the deputy principals) due to 'faulty media', as the media committee responsible for visual aids during assemblies had evidently transcribed some of the words of the hymn inaccurately. The committee, comprising senior students, was sternly reprimanded for this oversight by the deputy principal who warned them not to repeat this mistake.

At all of the assemblies, after the singing of the hymn, permission was granted for pupils and teachers to be seated. The hymn was followed by the devotion which constituted the longest portion of the assembly. Thereafter, a prayer was recited which was usually linked to the devotion. Announcements were then made by different teachers and senior pupils. Finally, everyone stood up while the teachers, principal and head prefects left the stage.

By focusing on various elements of the Glen Ridge High assembly, I have demonstrated the extent to which this practice was formalised and ritualised. The regularity and formality of the assembly with its structure and routine, spatial arrangements and habitual sequencing represented a normalised and naturalised event in the daily life of the school. According to Gunzenhauser (2006: 249) normalisation is at its most powerful "when its exercise of power is veiled". Practices such as the singing of hymns and the delivery of the bi-weekly devotions, many of which reflected religious sentiments, represented ways in which religion was integrated into the school's 'expressive order'. While religious and moral values were articulated verbally in the assembly context, silent discourses about order and rank were *implicit* in the spatial arrangements. This demonstrates ways in which discourse is implicated in meaning-making in attempting to "inscribe certain practices with particular kinds of meanings and position actors as having particular roles and dispositions, thereby shaping the institutional climate within which people work and live" (Edwards, 2008: 21).

In the case of Glen Ridge High, the valorising of western norms and values generated an idealised version of the imagined learner. Through the ritualised and formalised practice of the school assembly, students were disciplined to conform to ideal constructs of desired behaviour, which as mentioned, included attributes of respect, restraint, punctuality, and self-discipline.

In the next section the analysis shifts more explicitly to religion – a theme that emerged both through the observation and interviews. What follows is a description of how religion operated as a disciplinary mechanism at the school.

Religion

As suggested, the ritualising of religious practice at Glen Ridge was evident, in particular through the regular singing of hymns; the reciting of prayers and the bi-weekly devotions delivered during the assemblies. Religious practice, as observed at Glen Ridge resonated with research conducted by Paul Dowling (2009) in a middle class school. Dowling makes the point that the forms of institutionalised Christianity function as an ‘affiliation strategy’ to the pupils’ ‘virtual community’ – the community outside of the school which is constituted as the students’ ‘origins and intended destinations’. Although, as he explains, affiliation to Christianity determines affiliation to this virtual community, he holds that active participation in Christianity is not necessary for this to be an effective identity-forming strategy. The point Dowling makes that is of relevance to this study is that through affiliation to a particular form of Christianity, the school affiliates to its referent virtual community – the community from which the learner originates and for which he/she is destined.

Christianity was not the focus of all devotions, and it was evident that the choice of prayers and hymns was often ‘universal’ in their religious application rather than overtly Christian. Although some of the messages conveyed a universally religious theme, the religious *orientation* suggested the valuing of theistic belief on the part of the school management and many of the teachers. Inherent in these messages were valorised constructs pertaining to middle class Christian values. In addition to teachings about respect, self discipline and restraint, virtues such as morality, decency, reason and conscience were consigned to the imagined learner, and transmitted through the disciplinary apparatus of religion.

While the majority of respondents did not feel that the school overtly expressed a single set of dominant religious values, at least three teachers and four pupils criticised the prevalence of

Christianity at Glen Ridge High. Liz, a teacher, maintained that Christianity played a noticeable role which she associated with what she perceived to be the school's conservatism and inflexibility. Raine, a pupil, similarly linked the "Christian overtone" with those in authority. Scarlet, a prefect, felt that Christianity was so prevalent at the school that the election of the current head boy and girl (at the time of conducting the research) was ultimately approved because of their "conservative, Christian views". According to Scarlet and Tyrone (a pupil), the dominance of Christianity was problematic for a number of pupils who regarded themselves as atheist. Tyrone's criticism of the devotions as "overtly Christian" was shared by three other pupils. While the 'devotion' was contentious for a number of pupils and teachers, Raymond (the principal) was of the opinion that the devotions provided a valuable forum for the expression of a range of individual viewpoints:

There are certain people in the community that feel we should not have devotions. But we believe that it's fitting, because it gives the opportunity for anybody to stand up ... on stage, and they're allowed to say whatever they like, as long as they don't offend somebody else.

If a pupil wished to deliver a devotion, the content had to be approved by the principal prior to the assembly. Both the *choice* and *content* of the devotions were therefore subject to censorship. The principal's power to sanction what could be said, functioned as an instrument of surveillance and judgment – a regulatory power, the effect of which was to discipline subjects, in order to produce "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1977: 138). The inclusion or exclusion of particular views and opinions is important in terms of *access* to particular discourses that were either permitted or denied. The role of religion was significant therefore in offering insight not only into particular types of discourses that the school made available – but to those that were discounted and excluded. In the next section I describe ways in which *tradition* operated as a disciplinary force in the constitution of the ideal learner.

Tradition

The valuing and execution of tradition at Glen Ridge aligns with Bernstein's (1975) view that institutional forms of traditional practice constitute consensual rituals which give the school continuity in time and place. These rituals, according to Bernstein "recreate the past in the present and project it into the future" (1975: 55), relating the school's core values to those occupied by dominant groups in the 'non-school society'.

In spite of Glen Ridge being a relatively young school, tradition was highly valued. As an integral element of the school's 'expressive order', tradition functioned as a regulatory measure to shape the Glen Ridge High learner as affiliated, cultured and invested in the life of the school. Through traditional practice, important messages were transmitted. One such message was that by being involved and invested in the school, not only would the individual benefit, but the school would continue to grow as an institution of excellence. The purpose of tradition was thus two-fold, serving to entrench normalised values of excellence for the individual learner, while simultaneously creating an exemplary school.

Tradition operated in ways that were both explicit and covert. I begin this section by describing *explicit* displays of tradition and thereafter move the analysis to more *implicit* expressions which included the *culture of excellence*; the *ethos of school involvement* and the practice of *acknowledgement of pupils*.

The 'Testament of Honour' was an annual practice that was celebrated in honour of the newly elected prefect body. Introduced in 1966, the Testament was handed over from the 'outgoing' prefect body to the newly elected prefects. During the first assembly of the year, the head boy and girl were invited by the principal to lead the ceremony. Holding the copper plaque, they recited the words of the oath in unison, pledging to uphold the honour of leadership:

I promise to do my best to live up to the high office of prefect: To put service before self ... to be fearless in the face of opposition or unpopularity, when I know my actions are upright and just, and by so doing to uphold the honour of Glen Ridge High.

Established leadership traditions (Soudien, 2007) such as the Testament of Honour served powerfully to instil in these elected leaders a sense of pride and affiliation. The auspiciousness of the Testament of Honour ceremony was demonstrated through its annual re-enactment, creating a causal link between past and present prefect bodies. Enscripted, declared and witnessed was the pledge to honour "service before self". The notion of duty was aggrandised through the suggestion of rank and order ("high office of prefect"). Through the normalisation of values, rules were entrenched and practices inscribed within their own tradition and discourses (Perryman, 2006). Recurring messages pertaining to authority were echoed in the Testament of Honour, underpinning which were attributions of uprightness, justice and loyalty to those bestowed with the honour of prefectship.

Tradition was also closely linked with excellence, as inscribed in the opening lines of the principal's message in the Glen Ridge High website: "Glen Ridge High has a proud tradition

of excellence ...”. The blending of excellence and tradition emerged as a dominant theme that was frequently articulated within and across different texts. The notion of excellence as a disciplining strategy is a critical aspect of the analysis, and will be illustrated in the following section.

The “cult of excellence” : winning and achievement

Values of excellence and achievement underpinned the school’s culture, inherent in which were implicit modes of power which served to shape and normalise desired behaviour. I begin this section with extracts from the principal’s opening address at the first assembly of the year. On this occasion Raymond referred to the final matriculation results from the previous year:

Once again we’ve hit the headlines. Once again we’re on top. Once again we have outstanding results. We’re more than confident that we’ll stay there...

Focusing on the theme of achievement, he continued his address:

It is difficult to motivate when we already achieve – it is difficult to improve on that. But we cannot rest on our laurels. We must find ways to stay ahead, to continue achieving. But it is more important to look at our personal challenges: Where are we going? What we are doing? What’s school about? It is not all about 90 percent for Maths and it’s not all about First Team Rugby...

Despite the principal’s assertion that school was *not all* about 90 percent for Maths and First Team Rugby, by ostensibly overriding these commonly held perceptions, he indirectly validated them. The subtle message underlying Raymond’s address was therefore that academic achievement and involvement in sport represented, to a large degree, what school *was* about. The sub-text of the principal’s opening address was reiterated in his devotion that immediately followed. This took the form of an extract from a book in the series, ‘Chicken Soup for the Soul’.¹ Introducing the extract, Raymond explained that the story involved a parent talking to a child about winning. Sport, he added was the metaphor used for life:

Winning is fun, but it’s not the point. *Wanting to win* is the point ... it’s not *winning* that counts, but *trying*. *Not giving up* is the point. *Never letting up* is the point. Never being satisfied ... never letting anyone down ...

¹ ‘Chicken Soup for the Soul’ is a ‘self-help’ series for young readers. Each book comprises a collection of short stories pertaining to a particular theme.

Raymond's choice of this particular story for the first devotion of the year was significant. Through the metaphor of sport, the father in the story was imparting a moral lesson to his son – that there was more to life than winning – hence the emphasis on the *desire* to win rather than the end result of winning ('wanting to win' ... 'trying' ... 'not giving up' ... 'never letting up'). By referring to this particular parable, however, Raymond was inadvertently attributing value not only to the notion of winning and competition, but to the school's strongly-held position regarding involvement in sport. Through the story therefore, the idea of winning was implicitly reinforced, echoing the theme of achievement and success mentioned in the principal's opening address. These ideas were then restated once again as elements of the above extract were absorbed into the morning prayer. The focus in the first assembly on winning, competition and achievement through three discursive media – speech, narrative, and prayer – reinforced the school's ethos of excellence. With respect to the imagined learner, this signified a strong message about expectations of ideal conduct, underpinning the success of the individual.

Success: personal challenges and goal-setting

The inadvertent focus (in the principal's above extract) on winning and achievement signalled the high value placed on success at Glen Ridge. References to personal challenges and the setting of goals were frequently made by pupils in discussions about success. I now focus on these ideas from an interview with Ayrton (a pupil) who demonstrates through his personal narrative, the extent to which he had constructed his subjectivity through goal-setting achievement and success:

Personally I like to set goals, and if I reach those goals then I've succeeded thus far. But I don't like to look too far ahead, I rather ... it would be better to take it in smaller steps and then you have ... you succeed more times and then if you fail once, you only consider it as one small ... failure ... not as failing the entire project ... or the entire aspiration or anything like that.

Ayrton's strategic approach to goal-setting provided a mechanism for success. His determination to set goals in order to succeed constituted a significant aspect of his character. Very soon after the start of the interview, Ayrton informed me of his national and international achievements: in addition to being the current national *Formula One* racing car champion in his age-group, he had occupied a position internationally in the top fifteen places in *Formula One* racing for four consecutive years. Ayrton's construction of himself was focused single-mindedly on achieving success as a racing car driver. He regarded the school

as having been extremely ‘helpful and understanding’ in his pursuit of success, despite his having missed a hundred days of school over the previous two years. This was significant as, although he may not have achieved highly in the academic sphere, Ayrton’s pursuit of sporting achievements nonetheless demonstrated an element of desired behaviour, earning him respect and support from the school.

The habit of goal-setting, as evidenced from the data, signals O’Flynn and Petersen’s (2007) study on schooling and neoliberal subjectification. These authors suggest that the setting of goals ensures that the ‘work on the self’ is focused and well managed rather than ‘haphazard or time wasting’ (2007: 469). Ayrton was a pupil who had constructed his subjectivity through goal-setting, achievement and success. In the process he had learnt to strategise. Self-awareness for Ayrton had enhanced his value adding capacity, enabling him to maximise productivity, achieve fulfilment and attain success.

Aligned to the ethos of excellence was the expectation that every Glen Ridge pupil should participate in school activities. Only those such as Ayrton, who pursued personal success outside of the school context, were exempt from involvement in sport and cultural activities. The commitment, as quoted earlier from the Testament of Honour, of ‘putting service before self’ defined an important feature of desired behaviour, pertaining not only to prefects but to *all* Glen Ridge High pupils. In the next section, the culture of school involvement is presented as a regulatory instrument instilling in every learner a sense of commitment, involvement and productivity.

School involvement

The focus on school participation and involvement emerged repeatedly during the interviews as an attribute of the ideal learner. All the respondents agreed that this was one of the most important qualities that defined the worth and success of the Glen Ridge pupil. One way in which this was encouraged was through the compulsory sports policy which meant that every pupil from Grade 8 to 11 (except those who had been exempted) was obliged to participate in a summer and winter sport. Over and above involvement in sports, most of the pupils belonged to a school club or society. Significantly, school involvement provided opportunities for students to find value in becoming productive. This supports O’Flynn and Petersen’s (2007) view that activities are measured not only in terms of value that is added to the self, but also in terms of being useful and valuable to the school. According to these authors,

“[b]eing ‘busy’ is constituted as an indicator of getting it right, of living the appropriate, desirable, rich life of developing your skills, of making it, of making something out of yourself” (2007: 469). Thompson (2010) reiterates this; in his research on the construction of the ‘good student’ he found that affiliation to the school was more valued than academic success.

Most of the pupils interviewed had participated in at least two activities at the school. Typically this included a sport as well as a club or society. Every pupil interviewed felt that their involvement had benefited them in some way, and most linked their involvement with perceptions of success. What follows is an account of school involvement from the perspective of two pupils, Chris and Scarlet.

Chris’ experience suggested that sport, music, play production, clubs, societies and leadership constituted the different ways in which pupils could be involved in the school. Activities took place at break-time, after school, in the evenings, on weekends and during the holidays – depicting the frequently used adage, that “Glen Ridge is a school that never sleeps”. Chris attributed his involvement at school to his personal achievement of success which he defined in terms of being able to “push himself to the limit”. Indeed, this was exhibited by his extraordinarily demanding co-curricular schedule which included being active in the music department, in various cultural programmes, in leadership positions, and in sporting activities. His keen participation at all levels made him a respected and popular pupil. Over and above being a prefect, a sports coach, a provincial hockey player, and a musician at school, Chris had to play the role of mediator at home. His subjecthood was constructed through having to assume a plethora of responsibilities and negotiate multiple positionings. Chris’ resolve to push himself to the limit, “without breaking down” may be better understood in the context of his experience the previous year, during which time he suffered a major psychological breakdown.

Chris’ account of his experience validates Walkerdine’s (2003) study on the neoliberal subject and upward mobility. In her view, the pressure of demands placed on young people results in their needing to be constantly ‘propped up’ by psychological practices. Chris was not the only Glen Ridge student who mentioned support received from psychologists. Walkerdine maintains that the burden of pressures experienced by the individual sets up:

... an almost inevitable failure that will be lived as a personal failing, hence the necessity for forms of counselling and therapy intended to prop up the fragile subject, to keep the illusion of a unitary subject intact (2003: 241).

Scarlet was the only pupil interviewed who challenged conventional ideas regarding school involvement. She questioned her need to be involved in as many activities as she was, some of which she felt were not her choice but the result of other people's influence. Despite having fulfilled the expectations she had set for herself with regard to her involvement at school, she expressed ambivalence about whether this was ultimately what she really wanted:

Over the years ... there's been certain things that I felt like I needed to do in order to be successful, like, so I'm a prefect now. It's something that I've always wanted to be ... I'm on a huge service co-ordinating committee and I have a lot of commitments ... and I ... wonder if it's what I really want and what I really believe in.

In the above extract Scarlet equates *success* with *school involvement*, however the next portion of her extract suggests a re-configuration of her understanding of both:

I think success is maybe doing what I truly believe in and, um, doing stuff which isn't a drag to me, something that I actually, I love to do and so ... Um, but yeah, I guess success for me is being happy in the things that I do.

Scarlet's aspirations to become a prefect represented her desire initially to fulfil her expectations of the ideal Glen Ridge High student. However in fulfilling these expectations she realised that this did not bring her the happiness or meaning that she had anticipated. Through what appeared to be a complex process of reflection, Scarlet found herself reformulating her pre-existing assumptions of the meaning of success. Rather than associating success with externalised achievement, her second extract suggests that success meant an internalised sense of wellbeing. From a Foucauldian perspective, Scarlet's process is significant in that it demonstrates her ability to critically engage in her subjectivation – to re-imagine herself. This she did by standing outside of the prevailing discursive formations in order to exercise the capacity to act upon herself. As an invested and committed leader, Scarlet was the only pupil in the study who resisted conventional assumptions that success, as defined by the school, would bring happiness. Instead, she recruited alternative values in her understanding of success: happiness, integrity, authenticity, and wellbeing.

Students such as Scarlet who immersed themselves in the life of the school frequently described their involvement as meaningful. Being active, dedicated and productive resulted in their feeling fulfilled and valued. Involvement for many included participating in community outreach programmes.

Community involvement

At Glen Ridge, the focus on community involvement signalled the complex interaction between the individual and the relational. Competing discourses of individualism and collectivism surfaced during both the interviews and observation of assemblies.

Relational discourses were frequently associated with community projects which were mostly organised by the various clubs and societies. In a 'devotion' delivered by the Xhosa club members, for example, particular relational values were enlisted. Based on the concept of Ubuntu,² respect, caring, connectedness and humanitarianism were emphasised by these pupils. Quoting from both Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela, the matric student giving the devotion spoke about the "essence of being human". This, she explained was "not about thinking of ourselves as individuals, but about being part of a broader community – about being connected to all of humanity".

Relational discourses were also recruited by Raymond during his interview when asked about the most important qualities he wished to develop in a Glen Ridge High pupil:

Things like caring for others, things like doing things for others, things like being prepared to get out into the community, and uhm, ... make a difference ...

Competing notions of individualism and the collective were alluded to by Liz, a teacher. In her interview she articulated the types of values she felt needed to be emphasised more at the school:

Not being individualistic ... So it should be kind of, really community orientated. So, people who are socially involved, politically involved, caring about a lot of stuff that's *not* to their benefit ... doing something for others, no hidden agendas ... no game playing, complete honesty ...

² The concept of 'Ubuntu' may be described as a humanist ethic, in which a person's humanity is measured according to his/her relationships with others. Based on traditional African philosophy, it emphasises interconnectedness and goodwill between all people.

Discourses pertaining to the individual and collective were neither unitary nor consistent. Contrary to Liz' reflections above, for most of the participants the idea of enhancing individual success was directly linked to being involved, productive and 'making a difference'. In most discussions, the need to be productive, busy and involved was closely associated with some perceived benefit to the individual. This suggested that through active involvement the individual would be predisposed to improved education and career opportunities – and would therefore be granted greater currency with which to enter the job market.

Thomas, the teacher in charge of Life Orientation and career guidance, linked the culture of school involvement with the ethos of success:

In terms of its values and ethos success is definitely very much up there – success primarily in the classroom – academic success, followed probably by cultural success – involvement in cultural activities which would involve a certain amount of charitable work as well, and thirdly, sporting success. Uhm ... so that would be a summary of my perception of the values of Glen Ridge.

In addition to academic and sporting success, involvement in the community was therefore also regarded as a 'success'. In spite of the 'charitable work' constituting *community outreach* and involvement, success here was attributed to the *individual student* who would benefit from the community work by being able to include this type of accomplishment in his/her Curriculum Vitae. Fulfilling a certain number of community service hours, moreover was a pre-requisite for admission into certain tertiary courses. The requirement therefore to participate in community-based projects was regarded as being *beneficial* to the individual, serving to enhance tertiary and career prospects.

To summarise thus far, I have described the *disciplinary and regulatory power* of elements of school culture such as religion, tradition, excellence and school involvement. Demonstrations of excellence, achievement and school involvement highlighted the school's discursive framework and were frequently associated with attributes of personal success. As mentioned, this type of discipline is not to be confused with systems of *reward and punishment* which may be seen as an integrative element in the school's overarching system of surveillance and judgment.

In the next section the analysis shifts away from broader regulatory processes as I focus more specifically on discipline as a micro-power with its rewards and sanctions. I describe first, systems of rewards and conditioning by examining the acknowledgement of success at Glen Ridge High. Significantly, the positive recognition of students represented ways in which disciplinary measures were not always repressive, restrictive or coercive, but rather, as Foucault insists, "... that they are linked to a whole series of positive and useful effects which it is their task to support ..." (1975: 24). Worthman (2008) reminds us that in order for disciplinary power to effectively work "through and onto people", it must counter the effects of contestation that may create resistance to its hegemony; "As such, disciplinary power must hold out the promise of gratification to enough people to perpetuate itself" (2008: 448). This is elaborated in the section that follows.

Reward and punishment

Systems of reward: acknowledgement of students

In addition to being acknowledged for excellence in academics, sport and culture, Glen Ridge pupils were recognised for exhibiting attributes such as leadership, dedication and effort. Recognition of pupils was demonstrated in different ways: in addition to reward ceremonies, pupils were acknowledged, for example, through assembly announcements, exhibitions of practical work, and mounted lists of names of pupils who had attained specific achievements. In this section I analyse these forms of acknowledgement to show how this practice operated as a disciplinary apparatus.

Framed lists of 'Honours Awards' and the names of head boy and girl students from 1957 to 2010 were mounted on either side of the walls in the hall as well as on the back wall of the gallery. This visual display represented the recognition over time of top achievers. Attributes of leadership were similarly regarded, as indicated by the acknowledgement of all class and grade representatives, during one assembly. Each newly elected representative was called onto the stage and given a badge to mark their position of leadership. On the same occasion all newly elected First Team sports captains were similarly awarded with special badges of honour.

Acknowledgement was also given to students who had demonstrated commitment and involvement in non-academic areas. During one assembly, a long list of students' names was read out by a teacher who instructed each student to stand after his/her name had been

announced. After the list was completed the teacher congratulated these students for completing a three-day First Aid course during the preceding school holidays, explaining that each of these students had been successful in completing the course. In this instance the notion of success was seen to represent commitment and dedication, rather than winning.

Apart from verbal acknowledgement of students during assemblies, many were recognised in other ways. Framed and mounted works of creative art lined the walls of the corridors in many sections of the school. The strong focus on art as a subject was suggested by its popular selection by pupils in Grade 10, at which point they made their final subject choice. In addition to an annual art exhibition of selected work by all students from Grade 8 to 12, each year the art work created by the matriculants was displayed as part of their final practical examination. These events were widely publicised and well attended.

Reflecting on the school's recognition of students, Scarlet felt that this was limited to those students who excelled:

If you're clever, you get rewarded and you are rewarded for all different things. But then there's a negative side to that, where, what about the people who just don't shine in those kind of situations? ... Like, with my brother, I would say that my marks maybe show the teachers that I'm clever, but I consider my brother ten times more intelligent and interesting, but his marks ... didn't reflect that and so he wasn't given half a chance. So, in a way, I do feel like people at Glen Ridge who are acknowledged ... they're only acknowledged because they are the ones who actually shine.

Scarlet's description of her and her brother's polarised school experiences represented her perception of what the school considered ideal versus non-ideal conduct. The question asked by Scarlet ("What about the people who just don't shine ...?") is a critical one with respect to the 'non-ideal' learning subject, and one that will be returned to later.

Having discussed *acknowledgement* as a system of *reward*, I now consider the practice of *punishment* as a mechanism that sought to normalise behaviour through both visible and invisible regulatory measures.

Systems of punishment

This section focuses on particular disciplinary elements conducted during school assemblies, and on systemic discipline more broadly. As will be shown, the enforcement of discipline reflected both visible and invisible forms of disciplinary practice. Dixon and Dornbrack describe (2010) hierarchical observation as comprising a form of disciplinary power, which is

operationalised through a top-down network of relations. This scholarship is supported by the tight supervision during the Glen Ridge High assemblies as demonstrated through entrenched systems of monitoring and surveillance.

Once again, the assembly is a useful point of reference in shedding light on the schools' general approach to discipline and normalising practices. However, disciplining strategies were not all rooted in externalised instruments of surveillance. Foucault (1977: 214) commented on the disciplinary power of the omnipotent panopticon in terms of making all within its gaze visible, "... as long as it could itself remain invisible". In this section the analysis focuses on disciplinary mechanisms that operated visibly and invisibly to monitor and regulate behaviour according to normalised constructs of the ideal learner.

Monitoring of behaviour during assemblies

The discipline code during assemblies was based on a collective understanding of the type of conduct that was permitted, and conversely of that which was prohibited. This pertained to uniform and hair regulations as well as to general behaviour – both areas of which were closely monitored.

'Formal wear' meant that blazers had to be worn during assemblies and that pupils were only allowed to remove them if permission was granted. 'Informal wear' meant that blazers were not compulsory (for example, during very hot periods); however, the matrics were expected to wear their blazers throughout all assemblies. At a number of assemblies observed, matric pupils who were not wearing blazers were instructed to stand at the side of the gallery for the duration of half the assembly while the rest of the school was seated.

Behaviour during assemblies was closely monitored by the prefects and teachers. Pupils were not allowed to speak or make a noise as they entered the hall and were expected to remain standing as the principal walked onto the stage. Anyone found to be speaking or misbehaving during the assembly was identified by name and the instruction "fall-out" was given. This meant that the offender would need to leave the body of students and stand at the side of the hall for the rest of the assembly. In addition to this public display of punishment, the student at fault was required to attend an afternoon detention session. Such instances of monitoring reflected externalised instruments of surveillance during the assemblies.

A more specific example of surveillance was observed on the occasion of the Xhosa Club's 'Ubuntu' devotion, mentioned earlier in this chapter. This devotion took the form of a short act which generated hearty, spontaneous applause from the student body. Visible demonstrations of appreciation and praise by pupils, however, contravened conventional norms which prohibited clapping after a devotion. The applause was immediately terminated by the principal, who with an upturned hand, admonished the pupils, reminding them that they were not to clap after a devotion. *Silent* forms of punishment such as the upturned hand supports Pongratz' (2008: 35) study of 'panoptic punishment'. Pongratz speaks about unspoken practices or gestures which powerfully sanction undesirable behaviour, suggesting that this form of punishment ultimately becomes preventive; it does not have to be exercised in other ways because it has already had an unconscious effect.

The absence of a school bell at Glen Ridge demonstrated a powerful way in which *invisible* forms of discipline were administered. Attributes of punctuality, time management and individual responsibility became internalised as pupils were conditioned to monitor their movements and actions without the constant reminder of the school bell. According to Pongratz, "[d]isciplinary procedures demonstrate their complete effectiveness only at the point where they no longer even need to be visible" (2008: 35-36).

In concluding this section, it is worthwhile to make the link between the *purpose* and the *effect* of the assembly. Earlier in this chapter I described the explicit *purpose* of the assembly as the formalised bringing together of the school community. As Soudien (2007) states, the ritual of the assembly is powerful in marking and celebrating a sense of belonging. Belonging, as a disciplinary mechanism is critical in the context of this study, as it was through acts of *obedience* that belonging was displayed. Rituals of belonging were expressed in a variety of ways, serving to transmit and internalise the values of the 'expressive order'. This then points to the *effect* of the assembly, that is the disciplining and conditioning of the individual into a particular type of subject. The need to demonstrate restraint, punctuality, order, belonging and self-discipline once again represents normative attributes of the imagined learner. Having referred to the assembly as a specific context for both visible and invisible disciplinary procedures, and having identified particular features of reward and punishment, I now broaden the analysis to include participants' *perceptions* of school discipline in general.

Participants' responses to disciplinary punishment

Directing the gaze toward respondents' perceptions opens the space for understanding ways in which students were subjectivated through systems of disciplinary punishment. As will be shown in this section, individualised mechanisms of punishment instilled in the Glen Ridge student reinforced attributes of punctuality, individual responsibility and accountability.

The majority of participants felt on one level that the school's approach to discipline was generally a balanced one, in which clear boundaries were put in place. Despite the opinion of most of the respondents that discipline was necessary to maintain standards, it emerged through the interviews that most pupils were conflicted in their views about discipline and punishment. Three references were made to the "pettiness" of the rules, while one pupil used the word "excessive" and another, "overbearing". At least four used the word "ridiculous" in describing the school's approach to discipline, particularly with regard to uniform. However all except two expressed the opinion that although they were not in favour of the discipline, it was a "necessary" practice. Ayrton for example, believed that the discipline at Glen Ridge helped to shape him. He felt this had contributed to enhancing personal attributes such as hard work, consideration and responsibility:

The discipline actually did set me straight, it got me working a little bit harder and being more considerate ... I mean, really [before] I got so many detentions I couldn't even count them and now I don't ever get detentions ... I don't think it was unnecessary the detentions they gave me. Back then when I was ignorant I did, but now I think that it was all ... with good intentions.

Ayrton was not alone in regarding disciplinary practices to have benefited him. Ishmael, Jake, Samantha and Tasneem all shared this view. These pupils, who described themselves as having been "naughty" to begin with, believed, in retrospect, that they had been positively shaped by the school's discipline. On the other hand, neither Zubeida nor Kim had ever been on the receiving end of disciplinary action and neither felt that they had been influenced in any way by disciplinary practices at the school.

On the whole, the teachers in the study felt that the school's approach to discipline was based on flexibility and individualism. Julian, the deputy principal in charge of discipline explained this approach:

We don't have "X" crime and "X" punishment. We always look at the individual, the history, the circumstances and the offence and then deal with the person that way. It frustrates my colleagues a lot ... because it would be easier if you had a list of punishments and a list of crimes (and) could easily match "A" and "B" and "X" and "Y" and whatever. But we look at each individual set of circumstances, always.

The focus on individualised mechanisms of discipline and punishment was illustrated with regard to late-coming. As suggested at the beginning of this chapter, if pupils arrived at school late, it was incumbent upon them to report to the office where details of their late arrival were recorded in a carbon-copied book. One copy would be kept in the office and filed with the pupil's records, and the second copy would be taken by the pupil to the specific teacher in whose class the pupil arrived late. If this offence was repeated three times the pupil was given detention. The absence of a school bell coupled with expectations of responsibility signified important ways in which *externalised* strategies of surveillance had become *internalised*; operating as habituated self-regulatory mechanisms. Teachers and students frequently spoke about the absence of the school bell in the context of pupils being prepared for university, and for life in general. According to Raymond, attention to the "little things" was critical in order to maintain control over the bigger things:

I think it is part of the ethos of Glen Ridge ... that you start with the little things and ... if the little things aren't in place then the bigger things don't happen. Just simple things like, greeting, like looking after your personal appearance, like following the little rules and regulations of school, being on time, having your homework done, pulling your socks up, having your tie done up, having your hair in an acceptable ... "Don't talk to me in that tone of voice" ... I mean those little standard, basic things need to be put in place ... there needs to be no confusion about that. When children come into this school they know, those are our ways, take it or leave it. ...

Raymond's extract is illuminating in depicting the ideal Glen Ridge High learner. The focus in this extract on manners, temperament, social etiquette, personal appearance and attitude, highlights an assortment of desired dispositional features that, if put in place, would equip individuals with the necessary cultural capital with which to embark on their futures. These values underpinned the construction of the Glen Ridge learner in terms of privilege, possibility and advantage.

Before proceeding with the third section of this chapter, I offer a brief summary of the analysis thus far. Having described first the image and reputation of the school as an attempt to establish a broad discursive framework, I then examined ways in which disciplinary practices and processes operated as normalising instruments in constructing a particular type

of learning subject. The culture of excellence and school involvement prepared learners for active affiliation and productivity, while systems of reward and punishment operated both overtly and covertly to regulate behaviour in accordance with desired traits of punctuality, personal responsibility and accountability. The power that circulated through disciplinary practices was not unidirectional or exercised simply as a prohibition but, as Foucault (1977) suggests, was invested in and through the individual.

Underpinning this matrix of surveillance and judgment, a repository of discourses were highlighted that delineated the school's 'expressive order'. At times pupils positioned themselves *alongside* dominant discourses, at times they positioned themselves *against* them, and at times pupils were conflicted in their self-positioning with regard to prevailing discourses.

In the next section, I describe more explicitly constructions of the ideal Glen Ridge High learning subject as perceived by teachers and, more significantly, by the pupils themselves. These qualities will now assume a focal point as they converge around key ideas based on students' perceptions. The importance of this perspective is that this provides insight into pupils' interpretations of dominant discourses. This sheds light on the degree of coherence between pupils' personal perceptions of the imagined learner and the school's projection of the imagined learner.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE IDEAL GLEN RIDGE HIGH LEARNER

I begin by describing key features of the ideal learner that emerged as recurring themes during the interviews. The discussion is organised in three themes: first, notions of *happiness, balance and well-roundedness* are considered. Thereafter I focus on *hard work*, and finally proceed to describe the attribute of *confidence*.

The happy, balanced, well-rounded pupil

In almost every interview, respondents commented on the happiness of most of the Glen Ridge High students, many reflecting that their time at Glen Ridge High had constituted the happiest and most joyful five years of their lives. Discussions with teachers about the happiness of pupils were more complex as the notion of happiness was frequently merged with success. The majority of teachers expressed the view that without happiness, success could not be accomplished. Whereas happiness for the pupils was synonymous with joy, for

the teachers, happiness was linked to measureable effects such as motivation, performance, achievement, involvement, and productivity. In other words, happiness was regarded as being contingent on particular externalised features that in turn would generate success. Competing discourses of happiness and success are expressed by Raymond:

As far as I'm concerned, success is in the personality and the wellbeing and happiness and the contentment and the enjoyment and enthusiasm of the individual. If we can produce individuals that come out of this school that ... obviously have good results ... that goes without saying - but I would like people to come out here saying "Yes! ... I've thoroughly enjoyed my time at Glen Ridge", "I've done this - I've done that - I've tried this - I've crossed that off my list - and I don't like it, I'm now gonna do this", "I'm looking forward to whatever I'm gonna do and I'm happy and I'm content, and life's good". To me then we've succeeded.

In this extract happiness is presented as a cycle: happiness leads to motivation, involvement and productivity, and this in turn results in success, which leads once again to happiness. Happiness and success for Raymond are therefore mutually contingent – the overall experiences of which is determined by externalised accomplishment. Julian endorsed the view that the most successful pupils at Glen Ridge were those who were “happy, thinking, and productive”.

The importance of happiness at Glen Ridge High was explicitly communicated to the new Grade 8 cohort at the beginning of that year. After the first assembly of the year, Raymond asked the Grade 8s to remain behind in the hall so that he could explain the logistics for the first day. As part of his welcome the principal spoke about what it meant to be a Glen Ridge High student:

You're here now, you're a Glen Ridge High student and you need to adjust to our ways. If not, *we're* not going to change ... The bottom line is that we want you to thoroughly *enjoy* your time at Glen Ridge High.

In Raymond's message to the Grade 8s, the idea of *enjoying* their time at Glen Ridge came with certain conditions, one of which was the expectation that they would need to adjust to the school's ways. The implication was that this would allow for an easy and happy transition. The principal's message was double-edged: while enjoyment of school was paramount (“the bottom line”), the school would not change its ways of operating to ensure this. In fact, if there was any adjustment to be made it would have to be on the part of the pupils. Implicit in Raymond's injunction was the message that new pupils needed to assimilate into the *existing* life of the school, even if this meant that they felt culturally alienated or excluded.

Expectations of learner compliance resonates with Bernstein's view that pupils' acceptance of the school's 'expressive order' may require (1975) a reorientation of the normal ways that they relate to families and communities. Such expectations of pupils however are not uncommon, as Ball (1994) remarks, for those schools that are in high demand and are working at full capacity. In line with market logic, these schools are in general terms, "...satisfying their consumers" (1994: 128) and therefore have less reason to change their current practice.

Coupled with happiness and enjoyment, 'all-roundedness' was a prized quality identified by all the teachers interviewed, and by Raymond below:

Our aim is to produce an all-round child, more than just academics, uhm ... that's why we have a compulsory sport policy, that's why we encourage so much participation in clubs and societies, that's why our music department is big, etc.

Similar sentiments were expressed by the majority of participants in reply to the interview question: "If there was an award for a Grade 12 student who most closely represented the values and ethos of this school, what type of person would win the award?" Responses to this question suggested that the projection of the Glen Ridge High learner as an *all-rounder* was an attribute that was highly valued. The focus here on balance and 'all-roundedness' is most significant as it references earlier discussions relating to school involvement and productivity. Coupled with these qualities was the emphasis on hard work, as described in the next part of this section.

Hard work

Amongst the spectrum of personal attributes enlisted by pupils to describe themselves, 'hard work' was the one that was immediately and most effortlessly identified. At least five pupils described themselves first and foremost as being hard-working – albeit that three of the five labelled themselves as "non-academic". The quality of being hard-working was one they were easily able to recognise and articulate, whereas a number of respondents had difficulty in identifying other attributes. The responses of Kim, Zubeida and Raine below, demonstrate their foregrounding of 'hard work':

Researcher: If your favourite teacher wrote a very honest reference letter for you at the time of leaving school, what are the kinds of things he or she would say about you?

Kim: Hopefully she's hard working, dedicated, things like that.

Similarly, Zubeida and Raine were most comfortable when nominating attributes of hard work in describing themselves in response to the same question:

Zubeida: [laughs] uhm ... probably that I'm hard working, and I do set out to do the tasks, I'm a neat worker.

Raine: Um, I think they'll probably say I'm very quiet. Um ... hard working ...

Ayrton was the only pupil who interrupted conventional responses to hard work, suggesting instead that the types of qualities his favourite teacher would appreciate in him were his passion and ability to do well in the things he enjoyed:

Well, uhm ... she knows I'm *not* very hard-working but uhm ... I'm naturally gifted and inclined to do well in things that I love. She knows I'm very passionate about what I do whatever it may be. I am very competitive, incredibly competitive. I can be a very arrogant at times and they tend to point that out to me. I'm argumentative and competitive and this can also be a bad thing and they do tell me this. But I mean it's not going to change. I like it the way it is ...

Ayrton's positioning of himself as "*not very hard-working*" is contrasted with the previous responses in which hard work was prioritised and valued. The ease with which Ayrton was able to construct himself as '*non-ideal*' in this regard is significant in terms of the analysis, and will be returned to later in the chapter.

Confidence

Confidence was noted as an enviable quality, particularly by those pupils who had acknowledged a *lack of confidence* in themselves. Significantly, however, a clear distinction was made by these and other pupils between being confident on the one hand, *without being too outspoken* on the other. While confidence was a quality to which pupils aspired and which they respected in others, it seemed that being "too outspoken" was *unenviable*. This is suggested in Kim's description of the ideal Glen Ridge pupil:

Kim: ... like a confident person, maybe not very outspoken but, you know, has the right things to say, at the right time ...

Researcher: Okay, and why not very outspoken?

Kim: Maybe not too much, I mean, some people tend ... maybe debate just more than what's needed, or they not giving other people the credit they deserve, or the chance to speak, so I mean ... not reserved, but they know when to speak and they know when not to ...

The balance between confidence and not being too outspoken signified an important point with respect to the ideal learner. While pupils were encouraged to question, challenge and express their opinions, implicit in this was the expectation that individual expression be measured, contained and non-confrontational. This is echoed by Liz:

... [the school is] uncomfortable with discord. It's something they don't like. They don't like confrontations, arguments ...

Students who were *too confident* were perceived by some as being too outspoken and too challenging of – and for – the system. The perceived antipathy towards those who were too outspoken will be re-visited in the next section.

Having probed the qualities of happiness, well-roundedness, hard-work and confidence in the depiction of the ideal Glen Ridge High pupil, the analysis now shifts more directly to pupils' subjectivation processes. In this regard, discursive narratives reflecting differentiated positionings shed light on how pupils were constituted by dominant discourses – and how they constituted themselves in relation to these discourses. This is significant in terms of the study's focus on processes of subjectivation within the discursive context of the school.

SUBJECTIVATION PROCESSES: POSITIONING OF PUPILS AGAINST DOMINANT DISCOURSES

I begin this section by drawing on extracts from Ayrton's interview in which I asked him to describe the type of pupil whom he imagined would win an award for most closely representing the values and ethos of Glen Ridge High. Ayrton's response is a useful starting point as he first identified a number of key features of the ideal learner and thereafter proceeded to analyse why he felt that he would *not* be considered for this award in terms of these parameters. Following the analysis of Ayrton's interview extracts, I describe how Jake and Ishmael positioned themselves against dominant discourses, and so illuminate differences in Jake and Ishmael's subjectivation processes, as compared with that of Ayrton's.

Ayrton

In describing the pupil most eligible for the award (mentioned above), Ayrton explains:

They would definitely look for responsibility, diligence, sportsmanship, ... public speaking. Also what the teachers at Glen Ridge love ... uhm ... how confident that student is, their demeanour, their mannerisms, their speech. They all play a role and the teachers are very insightful and they do know what they are looking for A very confident student, good at public speaking, good at sport, confident, I said that already.

Ayrton was clear in his depiction of the ideal student, but was uncertain as to whether he would have liked to have been that type of person:

I don't think that I would ... I would like to actually, I really would, but I am very confident, but I'm not responsible enough, I could be ... I really could ... but I'm very weird that I just choose *not* to. I'm definitely not diligent enough, I've been exempt from sport for the last few years for my racing, and I'm way too cheeky for my own good ... But I ... some parts of it I would like ... but I mean I've chosen not to be as diligent ... and so I wouldn't choose to be that student if he had to be diligent.

Ayrton's ambivalence in this extract reflects his desire in some ways to be "that sort of person", however he disqualified himself from eligibility on various grounds. First, he regarded himself as being "very confident". The conjunction '*but*' is worth noting. In the previous section *confidence* was regarded as a positive attribute; however, only if expressed in just the right amount. The tenuous balance between being confident – but not too outspoken – invokes Kim's earlier assertion about the type of person who should win the award: such a person, according to Kim should be "confident, but not very outspoken".

Ayrton's proclaimed lack of responsibility and lack of diligence were, he believed, additional negative factors (in being eligible for the award), as was his "cheekiness" and exemption from sport. Despite admitting that he liked "some parts" of being the type of person to win the award, he eliminated himself as a contender, if indeed diligence was a prerequisite. Although he found the idea of winning the award somewhat appealing, he remained resolute in his *non-compliance* with regard to "what the teachers are looking for" in spite of their apparent "insight" – and despite it being "very weird" that he "just choose[s] not to".

It is important to note, in Ayrton's case, that his personal accomplishments in the world of *Formula One* racing, discussed earlier, had placed him in an unusual position with respect to his individual subjectivation process. As an aspiring world champion, an alternate stock of discursive possibilities had been opened up to him. Ayrton was therefore able to draw on other discourses to resist interpolation. Because he could "... turn elsewhere to construct [his] personhood" (Kenway and Bullen, 2001: 149), he was not constrained by the school's discursive choices. In terms of his chosen career, he knew which attributes would benefit him and therefore did not need to invest fully in the school's discourses. Straddling the contexts of both Glen Ridge High and the motor racing world, he was able to select those discursive attributes that supported his desired subjecthood. While *academic diligence* for example was not a character trait required for the international motor racing subject, *confidence* and *competitiveness* were. Ayrton's exposure to another 'reality' offered him greater discursive choices in the construction of his personhood. His aspirations to embark on a career in motor racing resulted in an inconsistency between his *imagined self* and the *school's projection of the imagined learner*. However his hybrid subjectivities invariably left him with a sense of ambivalence at times, with respect to particular notions of desired behaviour.

Jake and Ishmael engaged differently to Ayrton in their respective subjectivation processes. In Jake and Ishmael's interview extracts that follow, I describe how for both these boys', constructions of themselves closely reflected the school's ideal constructs. In both cases therefore the imagined self was consistent with the school's version of the imagined learner.

Jake and Ishmael

Both boys reflected independently on their personal experiences of the transition from their respective primary schools to Glen Ridge High. They described their behaviour on entering high school as having been deviant and rebellious. However, both felt that they had been positively transformed during their high school years. According to Jake:

... when I started out here, I just had a completely different mindset about everything. I didn't understand how this whole school works and I felt like a bit of a outsider and like, I questioned myself, am I really, am I a Glen Ridge student? Am I supposed to be here at the school? Do I fit in?... I felt a bit cut off.

Jake suggested that his initial rebelliousness and alienation during Grade 8 began to shift once he started becoming more invested in the school. However, he had difficulty articulating the exact cause of his change:

I dunno where it all came from really, I can't tell you how ... how I got to get, like to be thinking this way. I think it's just maybe, like, the environment you're in and the way you mature as well that combines together that makes you have a mindset that I have right now and it's just really been, like, a change, like over these five years it's been, the change process for me ... and I feel like I'm at peace with everything right now ...

Jake attributed his personal transformation to “the environment”, which together with his process of development “combined together” to constitute him as a particular type of person. After describing himself as a “rebel” in Grade 8, in Grade 10 he had become “the only person that wears [his] blazer when it's 40 degrees outside!” Ishmael similarly believed that had he not attended Glen Ridge he would have “probably wound up a gangster”. His “naughty” and “improper” behaviour in the earlier grades was contrasted with his recently acquired attributes of cleverness, friendliness and respect. As Ishmael explains:

If I'd gone to another school, I would have been much more unruly and I'd have been, I'd have probably wound up a gangster, because in primary school I went to a very underprivileged primary school, so I wasn't really a very good person ... I was naughty and improper and the school [Glen Ridge] has helped me understand people better and I wouldn't have been as clever if I went to a different school and I wouldn't have been as friendly and respectful. So, the school has shaped me to be what I am.

From a Foucauldian perspective, these examples describe how individuals had been subjectivated by disciplinary practices and had been constituted through the set of discursive resources deployed at the school. For Jake and Ishmael especially, a shift *towards desired* learner behaviour meant social integration, acceptance and happiness. In their case, investment in – and identification with – attributes of ‘ideal’ subjecthood was contingent upon a move *away* from deviant behaviour and *towards* a location of self. In the case of Ayrton, on the other hand, there was less need to be singularly invested in the school's dominant discourses as he was in a position to assemble an alternate set of discourses, drawn from a different context, that were compatible with his individual aspirant subjectivity.

Having examined ways in which particular pupils reproduced or resisted dominant discursive constructs, I now describe notions of *difference* at Glen Ridge High. An understanding of difference is important firstly to assess the school's response to those who were perceived *not* to have complied with desired attributes. Secondly, this offers insight into ways in which pupils' experience of their schooling might have been affected on account of being perceived as different, or indeed through perceiving themselves as different. Responses to the notion of ‘difference’, and the extent to which difference was acceptable, were variable. In spite of the

school priding itself on the recognition of the individual, some respondents had difficulty defending this claim when it came to accepting difference. Emerging from the interviews was evidence of what may be seen as a scale of approval: ‘difference’ was acceptable – and encouraged – but only to a degree.

“It’s cool to be different ... to a degree”

At Glen Ridge, the term ‘difference’ referred to a broad spectrum of individuals including those who were regarded as ‘acceptable’ *in their difference* as well as those who were marginalised *because of their difference*.

Reflecting on the acceptance of difference, Liz stated that “kids love different opinions and different styles” and that “the more you get of that as a teenager, the better”. Marna (a teacher) asserted that “being different, you fit in much more than being like everyone else”, which reflected the commonly held adage that “it’s cool to be different”. However Gabriel (a pupil) dismissed this, asserting rather that from the perspective of the school, it was “cool to be different” – but only “to a degree”. He spoke about the notion of a “calculated difference” as something that was carefully orchestrated by some pupils because of perceptions of this being “good for their image”:

... for example, the way people think, dress, say, act – the way they change their behaviour. I think there’s a slight façade going on with most people ’coz normal is boring, and different is interesting.

Thomas (a teacher) commented on the diverse and “interesting” range of people at the school but acknowledged that it was not a place for everyone:

I think that at Glen Ridge there are places for quite a diverse range of people but I do think there are some who would not be comfortable. For some it would be too liberal, for others it would be too conservative, which is a very curious mix. The enormous accent on success academically also precludes a lot of people who just aren’t up there ... It is quite a tolerant community, far more tolerant than some other schools that I’ve worked at in that they will tolerate differences and eccentric people perhaps more so than some schools. I’ve been quite amazed at how the school has accommodated some very awkward people uhm ... so there is quite an interesting range there, but there are limits. It’s definitely not a place for everyone.

Implicit in Thomas' view regarding the acceptance of difference, was a *compromised* notion of difference: while "quite a diverse range of people" was accommodated, those who were positioned on the more extreme ends of the continuum would not, in his opinion, have fitted in. Moreover, in spite of Glen Ridge being perceived by Thomas as a more tolerant school than most, its "accent on success" also functioned to exclude some. Thomas' reference to success as being a possible exclusionary factor was echoed by a pupil, Tayla, who felt it was "pretty tough" not being strong academically and at times felt overlooked because of her evident lower academic achievement.

Zubeida and Kim felt that they had been disregarded by a few teachers on account of being quieter than most and not being top achievers. When I asked Kim whether there were any particular ways she would have liked her school experience to have been different, she responded:

Maybe just being more involved with me, because sometimes, the school tends to overlook certain people. It's all about those top achievers, those good sportsmen and women ... I feel as though maybe they don't see potential in you, you are no benefit to the school.

The personal narratives of those pupils who felt overlooked on account of 'under achievement' support Bernstein's (1975: 60) assertion that the school's need to "exploit intellectual ability" results in a sense of alienation and failure for those who are less able. Scarlet similarly reflected on her brother's experience of alienation at Glen Ridge:

The teachers hated him because, um, I mean, um, he had ADD and he, I think he did very little work, he was kind of rebellious, he got into trouble a lot and so, the teachers, the deputies, the principal, didn't like him and at this school ... when the teachers are against you, you can end up having the worst time ever...

Scarlet's views echo the earlier discussion regarding 'degrees' of difference. Her perception of her brother's experience, far from being 'cool' on account of being different, was that he was "hated" by the teachers *because of his difference*. The idea of "having the worst time ever" echoed Ishmael's view, that if someone was "not wanted" at the school, they would be targeted: "... If a person is naughty, they'll always gun on you, like even for the smallest thing".

As described earlier, Scarlet's experience at Glen Ridge was informed by her active involvement and participation. As an invested and engaged leader, her perception of her

schooling evidently differed dramatically from that of her brother. In her previous extract she described herself as being “almost the opposite to him”, yet ironically, as shown in the next extract, she too experienced alienation:

I mean, the biggest thing for me is that ... I went on a prefect’s camp at the beginning of this year and the thing that struck me was that we had these like campfire sessions ... and that the principal would ask us a question ... and there would be a right answer, and as soon as you veered away from that answer, he would totally shut you down as if it was not the right thing to say...

As suggested in Scarlet’s interviews, both she and her brother experienced degrees of marginalisation for different reasons. While (according to Scarlet) her brother was alienated for behavioural and dispositional reasons, Scarlet felt peripheralised as a result of expressing opinions that deviated from the norm. However, in the next extract, Scarlet counters her experience of disaffection with her feeling of social integration:

When it comes to students, which I feel is so important in school life because they’re your friends, they’re your social life, they’re everything for five years ... I love that about it and every new person that’s come here has said that they have never felt this kind of atmosphere. And I love that about it.

As illustrated, Scarlet acknowledged that her experience at Glen Ridge represented a complex mix of affiliation and alienation. In spite of feeling disavowed with respect to the school’s dominant belief systems she felt valued and validated by her peers. Scarlet’s discursive narrative throughout the analysis reflects her divergent subject position. The *pressure* she felt to be “popular, involved, dedicated” and happy (earlier) forced her to question her motivation in becoming as involved as she was. Unlike Jake and Ishmael who experienced a shift towards the location of self by *appropriating the school’s desired* attributes, for Scarlet the move towards desired behaviour meant a *compromise* of her internal values and beliefs – and a consequent *dislocation* from self. In this sense she expressed the personal desire to fulfil those values that she believed in, rather than those that were imposed on her.

The experiences of Scarlet, Jake, Ishmael, Ayrton and others support the notion that individuals occupy multiple positionings. Apple and Buras (2006) remind us that “... our identities and actions are multiple and complicated; we are positioned in different ways along various axes of power and within a nexus of shifting relations and contexts” (2006: 9). The ‘mixing’ and ‘mingling’ of subalternity was demonstrated in many of the interview extracts through the complex and tenuous interaction of affiliation and disinvestment, of inclusion and

exclusion. The analysis of difference at Glen Ridge High draws attention to ways in which power occurred in the processes of investment and alienation, and the ways in which certain discourses were valorised while others were silenced or disqualified (Luke, 1995).

In the analysis so far I have considered the complex ways in which subjectivation operated at Glen Ridge High. Having described ways in which pupils were constituted – and constituted themselves – through key discourses at Glen Ridge High, the focus of the analysis now shifts to consider ways in which students articulated their future goals and ideals. This is particularly relevant in terms of the relationship between the school’s dominant discourses and pupils’ expressed desires and aspirations, and relates to a dominant theme that emerged in the policy text analysis, that is, the relationship between schooling and the world of work.

POST-SCHOOL ASPIRATIONS

In this section I examine the goals and ideals that pupils at Glen Ridge High expressed during discussions about their future. This component of the analysis is critical as it forges a link between key discourses that operated within the school and those that were articulated in the policies (in Chapter Five) in their projection of the imagined learner. The point has been made at various times in this study that policy operates as an apparatus of governmentality, through which particular discourses are transmitted. As discussed earlier, discourse is an indispensable tool of governmentality through which subjects are constituted as productive, efficient and competitive, in preparation for active economic participation.

I begin by describing the most frequently articulated goal, namely that of *obtaining a university degree*. Thereafter I consider the desire by many to embark on a *gap year* and finally examine the aspirations expressed by most, for *independence, resourcefulness, comfort, and happiness*.

A university education

Aspirations to study at university reflected one of Glen Ridge High’s key objectives, as highlighted by Raymond:

What one needs to understand is that we’re an academic institution and our aim is to produce university material. Our aim is to produce 180 matriculants [per year] that are going to get a degree at university ...

The academic focus required that all pupils from Grades 10 to 12 take a science subject. Raymond explained the motivation for this:

It's compulsory for a child in Grade 10, 11, and 12 to take a science. That's the only real thing that we force with them because we believe that when you have a science in your curriculum you keep all doors open. And the idea is for our children to go through high school keeping as many doors open as possible. We believe that every single individual will get to university at some stage and we want them to be able to have as many choices as possible when they get there.

Important to note in Raymond's extract is the valuing of science as a subject. Although as previously indicated, it is not my intention in this study to address the impact of the school's 'instrumental order', it must be stated that this 'complex of behaviour' operated in close conjunction with the 'expressive order' in the emphasis placed on certain subjects. In the context of the imagined learner as university graduate, a science subject was compulsory in keeping "as many doors open as possible", and hence in enabling a greater spectrum of opportunities and choices.

The desire to attend university and obtain a degree was expressed by most of the pupils interviewed. As Ishmael suggests:

... to get into university, first ... and then to get a car is one of my goals and to get a girlfriend and very later on, get a job as a lawyer which I have passed in university, and start a family.

The majority of pupils interviewed intended to study at university; however, most were uncertain about what career path they wished to follow. The dilemma for these students was whether to begin a tertiary education immediately after leaving school, or whether to embark on a gap year instead. Although teachers were of the opinion that there was an increase in the numbers of pupils taking gap years, most of the students interviewed regarded the gap year as a fantasy rather than a reality.

The Gap Year: the notion of the global citizen

All the pupils interviewed had entertained the possibility of embarking on a gap year and most found the idea highly appealing. Several indicated that they had been planning a gap year prior to studying at university, however, on further probing, intimated that this was more a fantasy than a reality. For at least four of the respondents, their gap year dreams were countered by the reality of not being able to afford it. Instead they had resolved to begin

tertiary studies straight after school, and considered taking a gap year after the completion of their university degrees.

The link between the gap year and social class emerged as a reality in the interviews as it became evident that the privilege of actually *taking* a gap year (as opposed to the fantasy of *wanting* to do so) was confined to students from middle class families. As Cremin (2007) suggests, it is ultimately the choice, options and possibilities afforded to the middle classes that render the gap year a reality for a select few: “The class dimension to gap years, then, should not be understated, nor the point that the *appeal* of such breaks is likely to extend beyond those who can afford to take them” (my emphasis) (2007: 528).

While the gap year constituted a ‘dream’ for Zubeida, Samantha, Jake, and Ishmael, it was indeed a reality for others. Chris was one of three who had clearly considered his reasons for wanting to embark on a gap year and had already applied to certain companies to enable this. His reasons for wanting to do a gap-year were clear:

Basically to try and get away from the stresses of school and also to show my parents that I’m independent ... and also to a certain extent to break away from the tradition of my family ... most of my family and the people around my community ... basically just go straight from school to college and then to a job. I don’t feel that’s right for me and through finding myself and being able to express myself now I can choose to go on a gap year and to round myself as a person and not just fool around for a year.

For Chris, the gap year represented an important stage of self-development in that it offered him the opportunity of individuation. In Chris’ view this would mean being able to exercise his agency by breaking away from the “stresses of school” and the “tradition” and expectations of his family. In keeping with the idea that the gap year would not be an excuse to “just fool around for a year”, the majority of teachers in the study were adamant that the gap year should be spent constructively. While Brian indicated that he would advise a student to take a gap year if he/she was unsure of his/her future career, Audrey felt that taking a gap year was a mark of success. Martin similarly drew the connection between the gap year and vocational prospects:

I want them to recognise that a gap year is not a bad idea *anymore*. As long as it’s in a very constructive environment lying around on the beach ... that I don’t advocate whatsoever, but if you take some time to explore the world, meet people, find out more about yourself as a person, about what you enjoy doing, what you don’t enjoy doing, maybe, and do some work overseas. That gives you a better idea about who you

are, which will help you then make a better decision about what you would like to study and then maybe refine that vocation later on.

In the above extract, the temporal adjective “anymore” is noteworthy, suggesting that the gap year once was a “bad idea”. The implication is that nowadays the gap year is more likely to be a positive experience as long as it is constructed as an active, productive and enterprising year. Normative aspirations to be self-actualised (“that gives you a better idea about who you are”) predisposes the individual to making better career choices (“... which will help you then make a better decision about what you would like to study and then maybe refine that vocation later on”). Martin’s assertions draw attention to studies on the gap year undertaken by Cremin (2007), who argues that the gap year represents the importance of individual ‘activity’; and the idea that “... a person must never be seen to be without a project ...”. He refers to this as the ‘contingent element’ which serves to authenticate the gap year experience. Cremin postulates therefore that the notion of the ‘gap’ is an ‘enterprising’ one as it is a “means for improving employment and educational prospects” (2007: 527). It is, in this sense, a period in which the neoliberal subject is ‘trained’ and ‘vitalised’ for the ‘priorities of capital’.

In spite of the pressure for the gap year to be constructive and productive, like Chris, Scarlet’s fantasy of taking a gap year related to her desire to *take time off* from being busy and productive and instead to experience life the way she wanted to:

After school I want to take a gap year and I’m making a point that ... my parents want me to stooge, which is go and work in a school overseas. The point for my gap year is to do *what I want to do* and, as long as I get by and I meet interesting people, next year will be a success because it will be what *I want to do* ...

For Scarlet, success represented the exercising of her autonomy and she regarded the gap year as one possible way to achieve this.

Aspirations of independence, resourcefulness, comfort, and happiness

Most pupils strongly expressed the desire for independence which they linked to resourcefulness, functionality and a steady income. These accomplishments, they felt would invariably result in comfort and happiness, although there were differing interpretations of the notion of comfort. David distinguished between *happiness* with *comfortable living*. He asserted that he would far rather live comfortably and be happy than be extremely wealthy and *not* be happy:

It's *not* all about money. Yes it's about being happy, but I'm being honest, in today's world it *is* all about money. Money talks, um, but I would rather live comfortably, ok, there's very wealthy, right, and living comfortably meaning having a nice medium sized house, two cars, a dog and still be happy, than be very wealthy and not happy, and rely on tangible stuff to make you happy, but I'd far rather choose to be happy ...

Notwithstanding the conflicting sentiments in the above extract, ("It's *not* all about money ... in today's world it *is* all about money"), David articulated a consciousness around *wanting to be happy*. Discourses of money and happiness were framed as contradictory aspirations, the first representing more conventional views which stood in contrast with his own personal ideal. However he found comfort in reconciling these polarities by adopting a compromise, namely "living comfortably". This he equated with "having a nice medium sized house, two cars, a dog ...". David's report during the interview of his own "very wealthy parents" suggested that his personal vision of comfort was more than likely a diffused one, but none the less one he would be prepared to embrace if this brought him happiness.

Tyrone (a pupil) similarly distinguished between what he perceived as conventional aspirations, namely to "to have a nice fancy car, a big house and mowed lawns" and his own non-material desires. Although acknowledging that he might enjoy such physical comforts, Tyrone felt that education and "spiritual advancement" were more important ideals. Once again, conflicting discourses characterised the complex process of subjectivation in the articulation of individual aspirations. For both David and Tyrone, the comfort and appeal of materialism were set against the desire for happiness, education and spiritual advancement. Inherent in these ideals for David, Tyrone, and other Glen Ridge High pupils, was the capacity of young people to engage in choice-making as a result of privilege and opportunity.

As the analysis shifts to Ubuntu High, discourses of desire and aspiration will be shown to assume greater focus as future goals are regarded in the Ubuntu context as significant markers of success. Before moving on, I conclude this chapter by drawing out the main analytic insights that have emerged thus far.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter has been the constitutive character of discourse within the local site of Glen Ridge High, and ways in which policy based discourses were translated and interpreted within the school. I described how discourses defined, constructed and positioned

learning subjects (Luke, 1995) – and how subjects positioned themselves against dominant constructs.

The chapter was introduced with a description of the image and reputation of the school, and then moved on to examine the various regulatory mechanisms through which the ‘expressive order’ of the school was transmitted. Regulatory procedures, including religion, tradition, the culture of excellence, and school involvement, as well as systems of reward and punishment, worked together as a network of judgment and surveillance to regulate conduct according to “... an approved value system outside of the school” (Bernstein, 1975: 58). As evidenced in the text, the imagined Glen Ridge High subject may ultimately be regarded as an individual with a set of defined attributes. This individual could express his/her difference *within* the parameters of the school, the structure of which was framed as a particular kind of moral order.

As the chapter draws to a close, it is important to assess how discourses that prevailed at Glen Ridge High reflected those that assumed dominance in the selected policies as this addresses the link between the imagined learner in the policies and ways in which this imaginary was translated and interpreted in schools. The point must be made again that policy is only one discursive vehicle through which discourses are transfused into the school. However, as a mechanism of governmentality, policy represents a crucial way in which young people are disciplined as particular types of subjects. How then do dominant discourses that permeated the Glen Ridge High landscape align with those that predominated the policy terrain with regard to the imagined learner?

As described in Chapter Five, within the policy context the assemblage of discourses was neither consistent nor simple. Foregrounded in the policies, however, was the focus on the development of human resources through improved efficiency, performance, success and accountability. Underpinning the policies’ purpose of education therefore was the need for schools to produce young people who are individualistic, self-managing, competitive, productive and successful in order to engage actively in the economy.

With regard to the *translation* of policy discourses at Glen Ridge High, perceptions of the ideal learner were diverse and at times contradictory. However, inherent in this notion was an individual who was *engaged* through being clever, happy, productive, self-managing, involved, independent, and hard-working. Added to this, the ideal learner was expected to be confident, without being too outspoken; critical without being too challenging. Self-

discipline, individual responsibility, and restraint were therefore crucial qualities in maintaining a balanced and respectful disposition. Discourses of involvement operated at different levels – from being engaged in school activities to participating in community outreach programmes to embarking on a constructive gap year. Underlying these normative ideals was the expectation that the Glen Ridge learner needed to be productive, self-motivated and busy and the assumption that ‘appropriate’ behaviour was closely linked with being productive (Scheurich, 1994: 307). Rather than activities being valued in and of themselves, through active involvement the learning subject would be granted greater currency with which to enter the job market. The ideal learner at Glen Ridge aligns with Thompson’s (2010) study referred to earlier, in which he found that the ‘good student’ in the three schools in which he conducted his research, was one who was disciplined, individualistic, hard working, well behaved, respectful of authority, moralistic, organised, and involved in the school community.

In keeping with my analytic framework, my intention has been to describe not only how particular policy discourses that infused the school were translated by the school, but to demonstrate how these discursive constructs were *interpreted* by pupils themselves. This signifies the complex ways in which learners engaged in processes of subjectivation. All the respondents were able to identify their school’s vision of the ideal Glen Ridge student and were attuned to what was expected of them in order to fulfil this vision, in spite of some pupils consciously positioning themselves outside of these constructs. As suggested, normative ideals converged around levels of engagement – inherent in which were attributes of happiness, involvement, productivity and success. The successful student was the happy, productive and involved student.

Qualities of the ideal *learning subject* signalled those of the ideal *social subject* as direct links could be made between perceptions of success *during* school and aspirations of success *after* school. Discourses of *post-school success* included the desire to obtain a degree, embark on a gap year, and to achieve independence, resourcefulness, productivity, comfort, and happiness. Although pupils and teachers positioned themselves differently with respect to the general notion of success, for most of them success was measured in individualistic terms with the self “... situated as product to be continually worked on, developed, and enhanced” (O’Flynn and Petersen, 2007: 468). However, reflected in most students’ narratives was a degree of tension between individualism and collectivism. This was implied through what students perceived to be conflicting drivers: on the one hand, the desire to engage in community work

and to situate the collective above the individual, and on the other, the expressed need to situate the self above the collective.

In most cases respondents were aware of their advantaged position as a result of having attended Glen Ridge High, and were grateful for the ways in which the school had shaped them. Those who were more critical of the school, were generally those who were engaged in a more active process of internal reflection. At times this required that students align themselves with 'non' ideal perceptions in order to remain true to their personal belief systems. Some were able to stand outside of the school's conventional constructs in order to engage in their own subjectivation processes by drawing on alternative discursive resources. These pupils positioned themselves *outside of dominant constructs*, constituting themselves instead as complex and hybrid subjectivities. However, their capacity to resist prevailing discourses, and to construct more complex subjectivities was limited to very few, and was contingent upon exposure to a wider, more expansive repertoire of resources. In Scarlet's case, experiences of subjectivation *outside* of the norms of the school resulted in a sense of alienation *within* the school. Mostly, students defined themselves *within* the structure of the school, resulting instead in experiences of affiliation.

In the chapter that follows, the analysis shifts to Ubuntu High. As with Glen Ridge, Ubuntu is presented as a local site through which discourse operates as an instrument of governmentality. Once again I will describe ways in which discourses were translated and interpreted within the discursive framework of the school, and will explore the constitutive effects of dominant discourses for the learning subject.

CHAPTER SEVEN

UBUNTU HIGH:

ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATION, INTERVIEW AND SCHOOL TEXTS

INTRODUCTION

I now examine the subject of the ideal learner at Ubuntu High School. The analysis that follows describes how key policy discourses were translated and interpreted within the school's discursive framework, and how the Ubuntu learner was constituted.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER

The chapter follows a similar sequence as presented in Chapter Six. Here again, the themes that form the focus of the chapter emerged from the analysis. To begin, I describe the image and location of the school. This framed ways in which Ubuntu students were viewed by both themselves and community members. Linked to image and reputation is the *location* of the school, which comprises the second section. Within the context of Ubuntu, location is particularly significant in that, unlike at Glen Ridge, the majority of Ubuntu learners did not live in the immediate area in which the school was located. The implications of this with regard to Ubuntu pupils' desires and aspirations are addressed in this section, particularly with regard to discourses of mimesis. The desire of Ubuntu learners to emulate the Glen Ridge learner sheds light on the visibility of Glen Ridge to the Ubuntu students, which contrasts with the invisibility of Ubuntu learners to those at Glen Ridge.

The third section focuses on disciplinary processes. The section is introduced with a discussion of the school assembly, which again is presented as a central forum for the transmission of the school's 'expressive order'. Following the analysis of the assembly, I focus more directly on the school's values – an important discussion in the light of the imagined learner. Religion does not comprise its own section, as it did in the case of the Glen Ridge analysis, as it did not emerge as strongly as a point of focus; instead, it is interwoven into the section on values.

The absence in this chapter of three sub-sections that were presented in Chapter Six: *tradition*; *the culture of excellence* and the *ethos of school involvement* is noteworthy: in drawing out the *absences between the schools*, attention is paid to what is *present within them*. These, and other differences between the two schools will be examined in the final chapter. Returning to the overview, the analysis shifts to systems of reward and punishment. As with Glen Ridge High, this constituted an important set of visible and invisible disciplinary practices in the construction of the imagined Ubuntu learner. Through the various disciplinary procedures that will be described in this chapter, a particular version of the ideal learner emerges. This then comprises the fifth section which addresses the school's ideal construct of the learner as well as the learners' *perceptions* of the ideal learner. Thereafter, I take note of the points of coalescence between the two versions described, and examine ways in which pupils positioned themselves against these constructs. The final section addresses notions of the 'non-ideal' learning subject and includes issues of subalternity by describing the experience of those who were positioned, or positioned themselves, outside of conventional constructs.

UBUNTU HIGH

Amidst the early morning noises of car hooters and mini-bus taxis, a wailing siren marks the start of the day. It is 8.00 am. Large crowds of pupils scramble through the large metal school gates shouting and laughing cheerfully. A small well-maintained garden marks the entrance to the reception area. The sun-lit, recently renovated foyer contrasts with the dilapidated school interior and pre-fabricated classrooms. Jostling students elbow their way through the narrow corridors which are lined with bare, peeling walls. They remove their earphones, unpack their books and wait for the day to begin. Outside the building the metal gates are closed and bolted. A growing throng of over 100 learners stand outside the gates. They will bear the consequences for their late arrival.

School image and reputation

Unlike Glen Ridge High, which was proactive in promoting its image in the broader community, Ubuntu High had no website or information sites through which to market the school. According to Matthew, the principal, local community newspapers published articles about Ubuntu from time to time. Although this was a free service, it was not one which was intentionally sought by the school as, according to Matthew, promotional literature was not as effective as "word of mouth". The "oral culture" that prevailed in the broader community ensured that news spread rapidly, especially when this concerned issues such as school safety,

effective discipline or academic results. This signals the importance of community perceptions regarding school performance.

Public perceptions concerning the quality of education at Ubuntu were matched with strongly-held opinions regarding the neatness of the uniform. Comments about education quality reflected notions of the Ubuntu students as hard working while perceptions of the neatness of the uniform reinforced the ideas of respect and modesty. All of the respondents held these dominant perceptions and at no point did any of the pupils challenge them. Instead, pupils were proud that the school was regarded positively by community members, and confirmed public opinions about the school's uniqueness.

In spite of the absence of formal promotional material, the school was described by the principal, the four teachers interviewed, and at least half of the student respondents as being well known for its quality of education. The majority of pupils in the study compared it favourably with other black schools in the areas in which they lived. This view is expressed by Twasa below:

Well, I think, unlike other schools – other black schools specifically – my school strives for perfection and they produce stars ...

Discourses of “quality education” were informed by the perceived “high pass rate” (as suggested by six respondents), the “high quality of teaching” (mentioned by seven respondents), and the desire to obtain “good results” (mentioned by two). For the majority of participants, the reputed high performance coupled with the proximity of the school to tertiary institutions gave the school a perceived advantage over other schools in their communities.

References to the school's uniqueness were attributed not only to the quality of learning, but as suggested earlier, to the neatness of the school uniform. On the whole, the more conservative dress-code was evidently perceived by the community to be preferable to the shorter skirts worn by girls from other township schools. Reflections by students on the neatness of the uniform signified idealised notions of modesty and self-respect on the part of the learners.

In the next section, the idea of the specialness of the Ubuntu student is examined in greater detail, with respect especially to the school's location.

SCHOOL LOCATION

A critical element in the constitution of the Ubuntu student was the fact that the majority of learners travelled from remote areas, using public transport to attend the school. Whereas Glen Ridge was located in a middle class area and attracted a large percentage of students who lived nearby, at Ubuntu, the physical and psychological effect of moving out of the townships into a mixed residential,¹ inner-city location was critical in terms of how students regarded themselves. This was commented on by Matthew:

Um, the fact that the kids are out of the township, I think has a psychological impact on them because they, some of them joke amongst themselves, “we are, we’re going to a Model C school”. They know that it’s far from that. But, you know, they, they take pride in, in moving out of the township ...

The impact of the daily movement from poor, challenged communities into an area populated with businesses, schools, tertiary institutions, and student residential establishments was significant in terms of students’ subjectivation processes. Through the regular act of moving out of their townships and closer to the city centre, they were able to engage in reimagining themselves as aspirant, upwardly mobile young people. The accessing of Ubuntu for most of its students was based on the assumption that the school would enable them to cultivate “the necessary aspirant dispositions that will allow entry into formal middle class employment and lifestyles” (Fataar, 2009: 3). The physical location of the school positioned Ubuntu inside the margins of a middle class ‘virtual community’, which as Dowling (2009) explains, represented the students’ ‘aspired destination’ as opposed to students’ ‘origins and intended destinations’ as in the case of Glen Ridge.

Significantly, the school’s location exposed its students to opportunities that would otherwise not have been available to them while simultaneously removing them, for a significant portion of their schooling life, from the daily challenges of township life. The physical location of the school, together with its perceived quality of education, resulted in frequent comparisons being made by teachers and students between Ubuntu and top achieving schools in the suburbs. Such comparisons, which functioned to set Ubuntu apart from, and ‘above’ township schools, were integrated into the school’s vernacular, serving to position the Ubuntu student as special and different. This was demonstrated, for example, by a teacher during a ceremony in which the top matriculants from the previous year were acknowledged:

¹ This refers to an area which is both residential and business. In the case of Ubuntu High the location comprised a mix of classes and cultures.

Whatever happens in private schools, it does happen here. We are a township school in (the suburbs). We are producing quality at its best ...

The claim that Ubuntu was comparable with private schools validates McLeod's (2000: 507) notion that "mimicry is mistaken for the 'real thing'". According to Kenway and Bullen (2001: 147) the process of emulation involves a double movement: "an imitation of those richer as well as differentiation from those poorer or less refined". These authors maintain that discourses of desire become part of the school's lingua franca as the school models itself on those schools perceived as superior. Specific references made by teachers and students to Glen Ridge High signified a strong desire to emulate Glen Ridge. Mimetic discourses were expressed by Thandi when asked what type of pupil she would want to develop if she were principal of Ubuntu:

I would like to develop a student like ... a brilliant student ... like Glen Ridge High School.

Similar sentiments were echoed by Sindi, whose fantasy about producing a Glen Ridge High student (if she were principal) was based on her perception that at Glen Ridge there were no more than twenty students in a class and that they were all "'A' students".

Thandi and Sindi's constructions of the ideal Ubuntu learner as being comparable with the Glen Ridge High student indicates the extent to which discourses of emulation filtered through to the students, serving at a discursive level to configure their selfhood in accordance with idealised notions associated with 'better schools'. Significantly, there is a shift in tone in the filtering down of mimicry and emulation discourses. The assertive attitude expressed by the teacher earlier when comparing Ubuntu with private schools ("Whatever happens in private schools ..."), contrasted with the sentiments of Thandi and Sindi both of whom conveyed *desire* and *longing*, rather than conviction and presumption, in their fantasy of emulation. The notion of *mimicry being mistaken for the real thing* was less evident for the Ubuntu students, therefore, whose desires to emulate Glen Ridge were premised perhaps on a clear understanding of the very real differences that existed between two schools.

The most noticeable *difference* between Ubuntu and Glen Ridge, as suggested in the interviews, was based on perceptions of Glen Ridge as serving the privileged classes (Kenway

and Bullen, 2001). I include below two such references. The first was made by a teacher, and the second by a pupil, when discussing the quality of education at Ubuntu:

Vuyo: As much as we are a disadvantaged school ... we, as teachers, we are not disadvantaged. We do have the abilities to equip our learners. So that's what we, they, maybe they see themselves with, they compare themselves with Glen Ridge, because of the high standard. So, that's what we want, we instil in them as well that they should always aim ... high.

In the second extract, Sindi alludes to the 'influence' of 'white schools' on Ubuntu:

... 'Cause here, there are some, there are white schools, white people's schools. So, we get that influence of white people. Like, if they can do this, so we also can do this ... like, if there's no gangsterism in their schools, we also cannot have them in our school.

Perceptions by pupils and teachers of Ubuntu being comparable with Glen Ridge brings to light Glen Ridge's visibility to Ubuntu in the fantasies of emulation – and the contrasting *invisibility* of Ubuntu within the Glen Ridge landscape.

In the view of Kwezi (a pupil), being in close proximity to the tertiary institutions made Ubuntu “a school that knows what it wants”. Although poorly resourced, the students and teachers commented on the wealth of opportunities as a result of its closeness to various academic institutions. This was explained by Kwanda (a teacher):

... in our school you'd have about 48 learners per class, but we ... have tried to actually raise beyond that, and try to make sure that we create the best sort of learning environment for our learners and, our learners, they actually appreciate that, so wherever they go they are not ashamed to say we come from Ubuntu, even though one can see that, that, sort of the external picture of the school as being, you know, not really conducive, but what is going on inside the school is really amazing ... You know ... it would be rare to find a school in, in such situations trying to strive beyond all our circumstances and doing its best for learners.

Kwanda's account of “what is going on inside the school” as being “rare” for a school in “such situations” contributed to the students' positioning of themselves as 'different'. Elias (a pupil) described the way he felt he was viewed by others:

... I'm not like other kids from other schools ... the way I talk to people, the way I treat people is different ... from other children that are from other schools ...

Perceptions of difference on account of the school's location were closely linked with perceptions of superiority, as suggested by Tina (a pupil):

Tina: They [students in the community] think we're superior ... because I'm studying in here whereas it's a Xhosa school for Xhosa children studying in the suburbs whereas they are also studying in a Xhosa school, but in local, local-wise, in the location. So now, when I'm studying here, they think that we ... I act like I'm superior more than them whereas I'm studying the same things.

Researcher: And do you think that there is any truth in what they say that the students from Ubuntu think they're superior?

Tina: Yes, of course ... There are many, many opportunities and they push us to the limit ... For example, in our school, the main focus is for us to go to UHL² 'cause they think that is the greatest university available for us as ... students in South Africa, right?

Dominant discourses of being special, different and superior are once again shown to be linked to the location of the school. In fact, in the opinion of Lizo (a teacher), the school was no different to other township schools, but what set it apart was its location. This, in his opinion was what instilled in Ubuntu students a sense of pride – and uniqueness:

Fortunately for us, we have, er, an unfair advantage – if I may say – of the position of our school ... as, the school as it is itself is, it's not different from the schools in the township, but it's just that where we are ... we give them that sense of pride, they are proud to say that we are studying at Ubuntu. You can tell from how they dress, they wear their uniform, you can see that there is a difference between them and a learner in the township schools, as much as the set up of the school is more or less the same as the township schools.

The subjectivation of the Ubuntu learner as 'proud' and 'different' on account of the school's location is linked with attributes of being hard working and aspirant. Discourses of desire and aspiration, which will be shown to embody a key element of the Ubuntu High learner, are returned to in a later section. At this point the analysis shifts to a description of the assembly as the central message carrier.

² UHL is an abbreviation for The University of Higher Learning. This is a pseudonym.

DISCIPLINARY PROCESSES

School assemblies

Once again, I begin this section with a detailed description of the school assembly as providing a particularly significant forum for the transmission of key values and messages. As will be illustrated, a fundamental difference between the assemblies at both schools was that while at Glen Ridge the school assembly was constituted principally as a *school practice*, at Ubuntu the assembly was constituted as a ‘township community practice’ (Dowling, 2009).

A further difference was that at Glen Ridge there was a spectrum of opportunities for the delivery of the school’s ‘expressive order’ (assemblies, award ceremonies, meetings with parents, the school website, on-line information brochures, newsletters and art exhibitions), however, the principal and teachers at Ubuntu relied almost exclusively on the assembly as the key ‘message carrier’. As a disciplinary apparatus, the assembly once again represented a form of practice that was ritualised – a mechanism through which the school’s norms and values were routinely reinforced. Despite the Ubuntu assemblies being less formalised and less structured than the Glen Ridge assemblies, they operated as a pivotal disciplinary instrument. Through this conduit, values of self-discipline, hard work, and respect towards authority were actively imparted. In the previous chapter the *purpose* of the assemblies was discussed, and this would be similar in the both schools. Here, I focus on the structure and routine of the assemblies as well as the spatial arrangements and sequence of events. The section ends with a description of the devotions which constitutes its own sub-section.

Structure and routine during assemblies

As a township community practice, the Ubuntu assembly was not characterised by the strict formality of the Glen Ridge assembly. Punctuality was not as rigidly enforced for example, due to the daily problem of late arrivals. Although assemblies were meant to begin at 8.00 am, they usually started at 8.10 am or later. The duration of the assemblies was generally forty-five minutes but on occasion they were extended to an hour. As with Glen Ridge High, the basic structure of each assembly was consistent and predictable. Unlike at Glen Ridge, where the assemblies were conducted bi-weekly, assemblies at Ubuntu took place on the first day of every term and thereafter at the end of every seven-day cycle. Despite the predictability of the *structure* of assemblies, there was at times confusion as to whether or not an assembly would take place on the particular day scheduled. Assemblies were conducted in English and Xhosa,

the slippage between languages being spontaneous and informal. Due to the absence of a school hall, assemblies took place on a gravel ‘playground’ area adjacent to the school field. Commenting on the importance of the assembly in binding the school community, Kwanda described the challenges:

If it’s raining, we cannot have assembly ... and that’s something we’d actually like to have, because, you know, assembly is very powerful at the school, because it’s where learners at the school get sort of, communication, it’s where we’ve tried to steer the learners as a unit towards the same direction and all that ...

The lack of grass together with frequently strong winds resulted in dust being blown onto the pupils and teachers during the assemblies. In the winter months they were exposed to low temperatures and unpleasant weather conditions, at times resulting in the assembly having to be cancelled altogether.

Spatial arrangements during assemblies

The spatial arrangements at Ubuntu High were not formally delineated and neither were they defined by rank. The absence of a school hall and the lack therefore of a stage, podium, and chairs resulted in a spontaneous arrangement in terms of where teachers positioned themselves. The principal himself stood in amongst the teachers before and after addressing the school. On ‘assembly days’, students arrived in the ‘quad’, making their way to their designated lines. Sometimes, the principal alone coordinated pre-assembly proceedings as teachers ambled in after the students had already occupied their places. On occasions teachers arrived up to fifteen minutes after the assembly had begun. At one assembly as some of the teachers wandered in late Matthew turned to me and said, “This is the problem with South African education. It’s not the kids – it’s the teachers”.

Both students and teachers remained standing throughout the assembly. Those staff members who addressed the school or made individual announcements stepped up onto the cement slab alongside the pre-fabricated classrooms and used the microphone to do so. As with Glen Ridge High, students at Ubuntu stood in lines according to their classes and grades, beginning with the Grade 8s and ending with the Grade 12s. Loud choral singing and swaying bodies marked the Ubuntu assembly as students were led by a teacher who sang into a microphone while another played music from a keyboard. The music was amplified through large speakers positioned on either side of the keyboard. The formal proceedings were introduced and

interspersed with loud singing of rhythmic hymns. Students swayed and moved their arms as they sang in unison. As the songs ended, they clapped and cheered loudly.

Sequence of events during regular assemblies

As suggested earlier, the assembly represented an important way in which the school constituted itself within township community practices (Dowling, 2009). All members of the school community willingly participated in the communal singing. The greeting of the students was mostly conducted by one of the teachers who, amidst singing and dancing would welcome the student body, usually by shouting informal greetings into the microphone. As mentioned, the principal did not occupy a prominent role during the proceedings, but remained standing on the side, coming forward only to address the school for the devotion or if the devotion was delivered by another staff member, to make general announcements.

Devotions at Ubuntu High were delivered either by the principal, a teacher or an invited guest. These mostly took the form of moral lessons which Matthew communicated interactively to the students through visual representations. Each devotion was used as an opportunity to remind the students of one of the school's values which usually related in some way to respect. While the principal presented the majority of devotions in the assemblies observed, he encouraged the teachers to give devotions; however, according to Matthew, they were reluctant to do so.

Prior to the formal proceedings, the responsive singing of the hymns and accompanied dancing continued for about fifteen minutes. Intermittently the teacher leading the singing would urge the students to sing louder by shouting "Come on guys ... Sing!" On one occasion one of the teachers performed a song he had recently composed, appealing to the students to sing along with him. Half way through the rendition, after realising that his vocal notes did not synchronise with those played (by a fellow teacher) on the keyboard, he abruptly terminated the singing, humorously protesting that the problem was with the "Dee-Jay" (disc-jockey): "Next time", he lamented playfully, "I will find myself a more useful keyboard player!" The unexpected and premature ending of the performance elicited much laughter from both teachers and students, diffusing any possible trace of embarrassment.

The example of the teacher's spontaneous performance of his unrehearsed song conveys something of the informal atmosphere of the Ubuntu High assemblies. The humour, ease and spontaneity presented a stark contrast with the formality and assiduousness of the Glen Ridge

assembly. Although the Ubuntu assembly lacked rigour and ceremony, its structure and routine, spatial arrangements and habitual sequencing nevertheless represented a ritualised event in the daily life of the school. Furthermore, the lack of formality and absence of hierarchical organisation that characterised the Glen Ridge assembly suggested that this forum was not used to regulate and discipline conduct in the same way as at Glen Ridge High. The only time a stricter, more formal protocol was observed at the Ubuntu assembly was during the devotion and the reciting of the prayer. The singing that took place was not formalised, but functioned instead to animate and galvanise the community. In this sense, religion may be regarded as a ‘resource’ (Dowling, 2009) in the Ubuntu assemblies.

Most noticeably, the Ubuntu assembly served to unite its community by replicating broader community practice through *song and prayer* and through the *transmission of key messages and values*. Both these elements signal important insights with respect to the imagined Ubuntu learner: first, the positioning of the student as an integral member of the Ubuntu community highlights the importance of the collective over the individual; second, within the community context of the school, the ideal learner was imagined within a specific set of values. A more detailed description of these values is addressed in the next section.

VALUES AT UBUNTU

Respect, hard work, honesty, punctuality, responsibility, commitment, communication, and integrity were the dominant values which were listed and mounted on the walls of the school’s reception area. Kwanda explained that the school’s values “came to life” through a consultative process that had taken place four years before. He described the values of the school therefore as being “the property of everyone”:

They don’t only belong to, sort of, to, to a small group of people. So, it is, it is our task as educators to make sure that we uphold those values. So, um, maybe sometimes intentionally or even unintentionally you find that those values they become part of your teaching because they sort of, er, are intrinsically built in each and every individual in the school.

Kwanda’s comments foreground the collaborative process in generating ownership of the values because they had been established by the group. Although the predilection of the collective over the individual is evident in this extract, the relationship between individualism and collectivism was a complex and inconsistent one. As will be described in later sections, this relationship emerged as a dominant theme in the Ubuntu analysis.

Kwanda's observation (above) suggests that subjectivation processes were not confined to students only, but teachers too had become subjectivated through internalising the school's values. The commitment to – and ownership of – Ubuntu's values was reiterated by Dreyton (a teacher) who explained that when the values were formulated, a conscious decision was made to use the devotions at every assembly to communicate the different values to the students. He added that the teachers had agreed that the imparting of values was so critical to their work that in addition to assemblies, every other possible opportunity should be used to inculcate the school's values.

From the perspective of Tina (a pupil), the emphasis on the teaching of values was one of the elements that made Ubuntu different to other schools:

Here, it's not like at other schools. They teach you the values. They show you every day how the values work ... They *show*, you should do this and that and that according to the rules and how they impact your life in a positive way.

Tina's repetition of the verb 'show' suggests that in addition to values being *taught*, they were, in her opinion, *demonstrated* on a daily basis. Tina substantiated her claim by explaining that through the teachers' emphasis on honesty and punctuality, she regarded herself as having become a more honest and punctual person.

Matthew strongly reiterated the importance of the teaching of values, explaining that the values of respect and hard work were crucial as a basis for discipline:

Respect and hard work, for me, go together. If you have respect in place, your discipline is better ... then you are in a better position to have kids respecting hard work and the value of hard work, and the smooth running of the school also depends on good discipline, which is again, respect ...

According to Matthew, underpinning all values was respect. With this in place, he believed that discipline and hard work were easier to attain. Against this discursive backdrop, I now examine in detail two sets of values that were most frequently expressed. First, I focus on *self-respect* which was communicated predominantly through relational and religious discourses. Following this, I describe notions of *hard work and success*.

Teaching self-respect through relational and religious discourses

In the previous chapter, religion was introduced as a disciplinary mechanism. While in some respects religion was diffused in the context of Glen Ridge High on account of the heterogeneous nature of the school community, in the case of Ubuntu it pervaded the school far more overtly through the regular hymns, prayers and devotions. As an instrument of discipline, religion was frequently interwoven with discourses of respect. I illustrate this by describing one particular devotion that was delivered during the second assembly of the year by a Presbyterian minister from a neighbouring church:

I want to talk to you about how you see yourself, because how you see yourself can affect how you live your lives and this can affect your future.

Displaying a twenty rand note, the minister asked the pupils whether they would like to be given the money. In response to a resounding cheer, he crumpled the note in his hand and, exhibiting it to the school, repeated the question. Again, loud shouts of excitement reverberated as the minister then stamped the crumpled note into the ground, repeating the question once more. With each repetition of the question the accompanying music on the keyboard increased in tempo and volume. Excitement mounted until, amidst joyous cheering and applause, the minister thrust the money into one of the pupil's outstretched hands. After creating a semblance of order, the minister calmly explained the metaphor of the twenty rand note:

What do we learn from the lesson this morning? You see I crumpled the note up and put it in the dirt but you still wanted it because it didn't lose its value. This applies to your lives. You may feel dropped, crumpled, buried in the ground but God still loves you ... The lord says to each one of us, you will never lose your value my child ... This morning I say to you, Ubuntu, what is your choice? Will you allow the world to squeeze you into a mould or will you live in the image God has chosen for you?

Competing messages of self-value and monetary value were suggested in the minister's devotion. Implicit in his devotion was the passivity of the students who, on the one hand, were subjectified by "the world" which would "squeeze you into a mould" and, on the other, by "the image God has chosen for you". The 'choice' presented by the minister, between these two options, evidently precluded the possibility of activation of agency by the students. Instead, the students were rendered subject *either* to the pre-existing 'image' the world had

created *or* to the image chosen by God. Subjectivity was confined to these two discursive options with no suggestion of possible alternates. The *substance* of the minister's address concerned the message of self-value which he communicated through the metaphor of the twenty-rand note – and the *tone*, evangelical and reverential. Following the minister's devotion, Matthew reiterated the sentiment of self-value:

I have been telling you that you are special and you are beautiful. This is also what the minister said...

The strong emphasis on self-value permeated all levels of the school. In the following interview extract, Matthew refers to the pastoral role played by the principal, teachers and others:

... we take our role as, as parents at the school, seriously. You might feel, you might see a colleague who's not really strong when it comes to maybe contact knowledge, but that colleague is a good, er, as they say, *locus parentis*, you know, that, that colleague knows how to handle a child and, and knows where the child is coming from ...

Tina commented on the extent to which she appreciated some of the teachers teaching her "as if she were their child". It was therefore not only Matthew who demonstrated caring and relational attributes – teachers also entered into a 'guardian-ward' (Dowling, 2009) relationship with the students. Vuyo, a teacher, spoke about the need to "take care" of the "children":

... we need to take care of them. We are here for them. So, as long as we are, we really appreciate their presence at school. So that is why you always want to give them the best. You know that they cannot go to Glen Ridge, so we have to ... make Ubuntu Glen Ridge ... if that's what they want.

Vuyo was not the only Ubuntu respondent who identified Glen Ridge High as a symbol of aspiration and mimesis. As discussed earlier, others also referred to Glen Ridge as representing the ideal school. The important point here is the discursive synthesis between relational discourses, self-value and aspirations in the representation of the imagined learner. Closely linked with these projections of the ideal learner, was the strong emphasis on hard work and success, as described below.

Hard work and success

The extent to which hard work and success had become internalised discourses for many of the students was evident in the interviews. Messages of hard work and success were also articulated in the newspaper articles that were mounted on the walls of the school foyer. One article was entitled “Celebrating success after all the hard work”, while a second title stated, “Hard work earns Matric boy hard cash”. The second article described how one boy from Ubuntu High received a cheque of R1,500.00 from the WCED for five distinctions for his 2009 final matriculation examination results. Cash incentives for the top 2010 achiever was a recently introduced practice at Ubuntu as some of the teachers pledged to contribute towards a monetary award for the top student who achieved three or more distinctions. To this end R2,800.000 had been raised and given to the top achiever at a special assembly.

Messages relating to hard work and success were frequently emphasised during the school assemblies. As Matthew suggested, hard work meant being ‘present’, ‘prepared’ and ‘punctual’. These habits, if achieved, would generate success:

You must be present, prepared, punctual in order to be successful. Time is marks, and marks is money...

The notion of education as a key to success is echoed by Lizo (a teacher):

I was talking with my Grade 12s. There was something that I gave them, as homework, but they, they did not do it and I, I was a bit upset. I told them that ... the way out of poverty is true education and it starts from taking responsibility of the small stuff. This homework, you may think it’s not going to ... impact your future, but you don’t know that it is making, preparing you for something much better.

The idea of education preparing learners for “something much better” signifies the direct link between education and the future. This link is critical in terms of the imagined learner, and will be returned to in the sections that follow. In this section I have drawn together dominant discourses that functioned interactively to construct the ideal learning subject through the school’s chosen values. Self-respect and self-value were linked to discourses of hard work and discipline which were closely associated with future success. In keeping with the theme of hard work and success, practices of acknowledgement of students who had excelled were routinely celebrated. As with Glen Ridge High, this constituted an important disciplinary mechanism – a critical way in which the learner was *positively conditioned* to be hard-

working and successful. In the subsequent section this is examined in detail as the analysis shifts to a description of reward and punishment.

REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

Systems of reward: acknowledgement of students

At various times in the analysis I have emphasised the point that subjectivation is not only achieved through disciplinary practices that are coercive, repressive, or punitive. Disciplinary techniques also hold promises of gratification and reward. Focusing on the school's recognition of students, I demonstrate this by describing the acknowledgement of *all successful students from Grade 8 to 11*. Thereafter I illustrate the school's recognition of top achieving *matriculants* from the previous year.

The notion of the ideal Ubuntu learner achieving success through hard-work and discipline pervaded both award ceremonies. Additional attributes of excellence, dedication, drive, ambition and discipline were infused into the proceedings. Over and above students being acknowledged for academic achievement, the school also recognised those who had competed successfully in inter-schools' athletics championships as well as students who had demonstrated leadership attributes. Half-way through the first term, students who had been voted onto the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) were congratulated and acknowledged as the school's 'leaders'. The most highly valued form of recognition at the school, however, remained that of academic achievement. As will be illustrated, the school's acknowledgement of excellence was a key regulatory resource in the production of the ideal learner.

The recognition of students at Ubuntu took place at the first or second assembly of each term. These special assemblies would take the form of award ceremonies in which the top *three achievers in each grade*, from the *previous term* would be acknowledged. The first of these ceremonies at the beginning of each year, was particularly significant as the top Grade 8 to 11 achievers from the *preceding year* were acknowledged. In the subsequent assembly, a second award ceremony took place, this time honouring the top achieving *matriculants* from the *previous year*. These post-matric students were honoured in front of their parents and the whole school community. Both these events highlighted ways in which discourses of hard work, achievement and success were amassed and transmitted – and, as will be described,

offered important opportunities for the ideal Ubuntu learner to be identified and presented to the school community.

(i) Ceremony honouring the top achievers in each grade

Singing, dancing and celebration marked this ceremony of honour. Introducing the occasion, Xolani (the teacher coordinating the event) bellowed a greeting into the microphone, promising fun and festivity:

We are going to have fun, we are going to dance and we are going to celebrate ...

Congratulating those students who were about to receive awards, he encouraged ‘non-achievers’ to make an effort to do so the following term:

Today we are celebrating hard work. If you did not succeed you have the whole year to try again ... The formula is quite simple: it equals hard work plus a little bit of intelligence plus a lot of discipline. If you combine those things in a test-tube you will get the results ...

Prior to the announcements of the names of the ‘winners’, suspense was heightened through a stream of rhetorical questions:

... Who are the top achievers? Do you know who are the top-dogs? Do you know who’s the master-mind? ...

After each question, Xolani paused for effect. As he read the names of the ‘top achievers’ the music became faster and louder until it reached a crescendo as the ‘winner’ in each grade was announced. The atmospheric music was accompanied with clapping, singing, shouting and cheering. As students came forward to receive their ‘awards’, they grouped together displaying their certificates to the school. Photographs were taken by some of the teachers while others rushed forward to embrace the ‘award winners’. The ceremony was finally brought to an end by Xolani who once again congratulated the ‘winners’:

Congratulations to all the winners. It shows that hard work pays at the end.

Before describing the ceremony in which the top achieving *matriculants* were honoured, it is important to stress the degree of celebration and vibrancy that characterised these events. The contrast between this occasion and the ceremony acknowledging the top achievers at Glen Ridge is striking. Most noticeably, the Ubuntu award assembly was marked by the

spontaneous and joyous celebration of the whole community. Competing discourses of the individual and the collective are once again noted as an important theme, and as such are described further in the next section.

(ii) Ceremony honouring the top achieving matriculants

The second award ceremony at Ubuntu was in honour of matriculants from the previous year who had achieved exemptions.³ Again, hard work, discipline, dedication and direction were presented as the key signifiers of success. The ceremony was once again officiated by Xolani who welcomed past and present matriculants:

Today we are here to honour excellence again. So it's "*Excellence Episode Volume Two of 2010 ...*".

The "matric class of 2010" was called to the front amidst loud cheering, clapping and whistling. Of the 41 'top achievers' who had been invited to attend this special ceremony, only seven had arrived. The rest, as Xolani explained were busy with their tertiary studies and were therefore unable to attend:

We invited 41 learners who managed to get 'better love' but unfortunately they couldn't come because some of their classes have started at the universities. Some of them are at UHL; some are at (other universities) ...

As the students came forward Xolani continued:

I hope this is going to encourage you and motivate you. We are awarding excellence, hard work, dedication, drive, ambition, integrity and discipline. When I look at them standing here I see discipline. When I look at them standing here I see honesty. When I look at them standing here I see champions. I see they don't belong on the ground. The ground is not for them ...

As before, the announcement of the 'top achievers' was accompanied with loud music, clapping and cheering. Before reading the actual results, Xolani paused for effect, exclaiming reverentially, "Oh my God!", "Lord have mercy!" The religious expletives infused a spirit of ecstasy, drama and suspense until at last the names of those who had achieved distinctions were announced to a resounding cheer.

³ A matriculation exemption qualifies a learner to apply to study at a South African university.

The central theme underpinning Xolani's address at this ceremony was the need to have a clear *vision* – to “know where you are going” – and the outcome was admission to university:

After five years they got to the promised land. They got to UHL – the best university in Africa – the best university in South Africa. They knew where they were going. They had a reason to be here. That reason has delivered them to the mountain of UHL.

I wish to draw attention in the above extracts to both their *message* and *tone*. Implicit in the *message* is the understanding that admission to university was regarded as an end in itself – while hard work at Ubuntu was the means to the end. In other words, entrance into university was viewed as a reward for the hard work (Kehily & Pattman, 2006). Aspirations of success were linked to admission to a tertiary institution. Reference was made earlier in the chapter to the ‘virtual community’ (Dowling, 2009) as symbolising the students’ aspired destination. Here, references to UHL functions as an ‘affiliation strategy’ (2009): entry into the virtual community becomes possible through admission to one of the most reputable institutions of higher learning. While the underlying message was that hard work would result in admission to university, the *tone* was attained through repetition and religious metaphor. The singling out of UHL as the “promised land” attributed to it a sense of perceived iconic status as the university represented the link between the pupils’ current realities and their aspired destinations. The reverence expressed towards this university was extended to the *individual student* who had obtained admission to study there, the implication being that these young people had bypassed their ‘intended destinations’ and had entered the margins of their ‘aspired destinations’.

Coupled with the theme of desire and aspiration, is the interplay once again between individualism and collectivism. The acknowledgement of students was confined to the top achieving individuals only. As a result, only a handful of students experienced the gratification of recognition in these ceremonies. Out of 200 students in each grade, only three were awarded with certificates for academic excellence, yet the occasions generated a groundswell of excitement and anticipation from the entire student body. With each announcement of success, the individual's achievement ignited the shared victory of the community. The visceral experience of joy and celebration during the Ubuntu award ceremonies reflected the words of an African proverb mounted on the staffroom door:

When the sun rises,
It rises for everyone.

The positive impact of the recognition of top-achieving students on the school community was confirmed in the interviews. Most of the students expressed the view that these occasions of acknowledgement constituted one of the highlights of their schooling. All the pupils felt that such recognition resulted in Ubuntu's uniqueness, and encouraged learners to work harder.

The types of disciplinary mechanisms described thus far have provided an understanding of some of the ways in which Ubuntu pupils were regulated and conditioned. The disciplining of students through the assemblies, the school's values and the recognition of high achievers demonstrated ways in which discipline operated as a technique of power in the construction of the ideal learner. In the previous chapter the point was made that discipline does not need to be oppressive, overt or visible for it to be effective. Conversely, it operates most powerfully when its instruments are *invisible or hidden*. As Foucault (1977) said: "... in order to be exercised, this power had to be given the instrument of permanent, exhaustive, omnipresent surveillance, capable of making all visible, as long as it could itself remain invisible" (1977: 214).

In the next section the analysis shifts to more *visible forms of disciplining* at Ubuntu High.

Systems of punishment

This section begins by describing how discipline was managed during the assemblies. In the Ubuntu context, this brings into alignment practices of disciplining and the foregrounding of values of the collective over the individual. The analysis then widens to describe responses by pupils to school discipline and punishment in general. Corporal punishment was frequently spoken about by the student respondents. These practices, although prohibited by law, shed light on visible displays of control, through which attempts were made to transform and improve subjects (Foucault, 1977). Referring to disciplinary procedures in general, Foucault stipulates that "[t]hese methods, which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body ... assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility ..." (1977: 137). The 'docility-utility' interplay is important in the analysis and will be returned to later. What emerges in this section is the construction of the imagined learner as respectful, restrained, obedient, temperate and modest.

Monitoring of behaviour during assemblies

Discipline during assemblies was not tightly regulated. The loud music, communal dancing, and choral singing created a festive atmosphere which was not conducive to the monitoring of individual behaviour. However, important to note is that the type of atmosphere that pervaded the Ubuntu assembly in itself constituted a form of disciplining. The particular types of subjectivities that the school wished to produce were those who, in addition to demonstrating other qualities, were integral community members. Allegiance to the community represented an important element of the imagined Ubuntu learner. As Foucault (1977) stated in speaking about discipline, "... it is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather than the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies" (1977: 217).

During the assemblies observed, if pupils were caught misbehaving or being disruptive they were reprimanded as a whole, without being singled out individually. This was demonstrated on one occasion, when in the middle of an assembly, the teacher who was addressing the school interrupted his address to discipline the entire student body. This he did by admonishing them to be quiet, rather than reprimanding the culprits by name, as was frequently observed during the Glen Ridge assemblies. On another occasion a different teacher stopped his devotion to silence a few talkative students:

I know every single one of you. Please do not disturb me because if you do I will call you out and bring you to book.

The casting of the panoptic gaze over the *group* rather than on the *individual* demonstrated a powerful way in which the external eye of surveillance pervaded the Ubuntu assemblies. The actual naming of individual students and "bringing them to book" was presented as a serious warning, which, in the assemblies observed, remained a threat only. This element of the analysis aligns with Dowling's (2009) observations in his study on pedagogy and community. In the school in which he conducted his research, Dowling described the teacher's obligation being primarily to the community rather than to the individual (2009) and as such found that teachers rarely addressed learners by name.

In most instances, discipline at Ubuntu took the form of an appeal from the principal to the student body as a whole to uphold a particular moral or school value. I draw on Dowling (2009) again who suggests that the nature of the teacher's responsibility (apart from the

transmission of the curriculum) was that of ‘moral regulation’. This is demonstrated by Matthew who, at one assembly focused in his devotion on the issue of emotional discipline:

This morning I’d like to talk about discipline. I want to focus on discipline and emotions. When the two don’t go well together it’s called ‘temper’ - ‘bad temper’ ...

Referring to Proverbs in the Bible, Matthew cited a verse in which he stressed the importance of being “slow to anger”. Illustrating this point, he then drew on a parable. Matthew’s use of the combined discursive sources of prayer, narrative and biblical readings was a frequently used practice in communicating a particular value or moral to the students. The relationship between discipline and respect was a close one and although the role played by Matthew was essentially pastoral and non-disciplinarian, he frequently recruited discourses of respect when addressing discipline issues. In the next section the analysis shifts to the students’ responses with regard to general discipline and punishment.

Participants’ responses to disciplinary punishment

Discussions during the interviews revealed two main sets of discipline-related issues: *regulations pertaining to uniform and hair*, and *corporal punishment*. In this section these responses are examined, and subjectivation processes are described with regard to ways in which students positioned themselves in compliance with, or against, these disciplinary practices. What emerged from these discussions was the notion of the imagined learner as respectful, obedient, docile and compliant.

(i) Uniform and hair

In addition to subscribing to the values of hard work, discipline and self-respect, qualities of modesty (as mentioned earlier) and conformity were attributed to the ideal Ubuntu student. These attributes were reflected in the school’s regulations, particularly with respect to the girls’ uniform and hair.

The section begins with Tina’s narrative, in which she admitted that the Ubuntu regulations regarding hair and uniform were initially difficult to get used to. In this extract, she highlights the differences between Ubuntu’s stricter uniform regulations and those of other schools in her community:

When I first saw it, I was like, oh my God, am I going to wear *that* to school, ’cause I’ll look like a old woman and stuff like that. But once you get used to it, it kind of

gets into your system and you get along with it. But locally-wise, they wear shorts, they do their heads, they braid, they do all kinds of things that we don't do. We don't braid, we don't put implants in our hair, we don't dye our hair, we either cut it or relax it or push it backwards, you know ... not braids.

Despite being averse at first to the more conservative regulations, Tina admitted to having grown accustomed to them. Her resignation that “it kind of gets into your system and you get along with it” alludes to her acceptance of the conformity of the uniform. Tina's process of compliance supports Foucault's assertion that the ‘constraint of conformity’ (1977) must be achieved in order for the subject to be disciplined. When asked why braids were not allowed, Tina explained that her teacher believed that when the girls styled their hair they “acted weird”. Through the prohibition of braids, therefore, the Ubuntu girl subject was disciplined and subordinated. Tina was one of three girls to speak about not being allowed braids but was the only one who articulated a conflict between this regulation and the expression of her personal identity:

I would *like* to do my hair. I would *like* to do everything that I want to do with my hair. Because it's *my* body, it's the way that I represent myself. I don't like to be told what to do and what not to do ...

Elaborating further, Tina spoke about a student who had matriculated at Ubuntu the previous year and was currently studying at a nearby tertiary institution. Tina explained that she was surprised to see that the past-student had chosen *not* to braid her hair even though she was no longer a pupil at the school. Tina's account of the conversation between the two girls follows:

... and I'm asking her, “why don't you do something with your hair?” She says “No, I studied for five years not doing it, but now when I'm doing it I don't feel comfortable in my own body ... 'cause it's the way ... the teachers ... the way that they enforce it to my own mind, so I can't do it anymore ...”. I said, “but you're out, now you're out of that whole institution, you should do whatever you want”. She said “No ... the rules that they ground in me are still with me, even though I go outside”.

Tina's description of her own desire to express her identity was offset by the past-pupil who had elected not to braid her hair. This is important in the context of the analysis as it speaks of the process of subjectivation through disciplinary practices from the perspective of two different students, one who was *complicit* in her subjectivation, and the other who was *resistant*. Moreover, the past-pupil's decision *not* to braid her hair after leaving school is suggestive of a *continued* process of self-constitution that was consciously perpetuated to

preserve a particular subjecthood. Tina's narrative aligns with Foucault's notion of the norm, which appears through the disciplines and imposes homogeneity. According to Foucault (1977: 184), "... the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences".

Having discussed disciplining through instruments of uniformity, I now reference students' responses to systemic discipline in general. As will be described, a dominant feature of punishment at Ubuntu was *corporal punishment*. In the following section, I include responses from pupils to this form of punishment.

(ii) *Corporal punishment*

The purpose and effects of corporal punishment at Ubuntu High converged around discourses of success: the rationale for corporal punishment was to improve behaviour and increase performance – and the projected outcome, the construction of a disciplined, obedient and compliant student.

Within a post-1994 context, the issue of corporal punishment in schools is particularly problematic and deeply complex. Despite the political transformation heralded in 1994, the consequences of hundreds of years of colonialism followed by decades of institutionalised racism have resulted in the perpetuation of complex, fractured identities. The entrenchment of unequal relations of power through the enforcement of physical punishment reinforces age-old patterns of subjugation.

Despite it being prohibited by law, and despite efforts made by Matthew to stop it, corporal punishment for both boys and girls remained the punishment of choice for a number of teachers at Ubuntu. As will be described, practices involving physical assertions of authority became normalised as they were exercised *around, upon, and within* the individual. Significantly, the compliance resulting (in general) from being "beaten" was equated by both teachers and learners with improved discipline and respect. In the opinion of most of the respondents, this would impact positively on students' academic performance.

Learners perceptions regarding the *purpose* of corporal punishment were based on the idea that teachers were doing "their best" in trying to make students "more disciplined" (Sandiswa, student). In the opinion of Sakhiwo (a student), in order to have respect they needed to be taught when they were young. With regard to the *effects* of corporal punishment, all except one pupil agreed that the outcome was positive. While Elias (a student) felt that

students were now “taking things seriously” and passing their exams, Amanda (a student) maintained that “smacking [put] you in the right direction”, motivating students to work harder. These incentives were coupled with the opinion expressed by Zoe (a student), that because of the physical pain of corporal punishment, it was considered an effective deterrent. Kwezi (a student), similarly, condoned efforts by the school to discipline learners:

... it works for me, because there are no other ways that I can see, that can make students be what the school wants them to be. So, the, the disciplinary actions that take place are perfect.

Despite persistent efforts to mould the students, as suggested by Kwezi, the biggest problem expressed by the majority of respondents remained that of late-coming. This was managed in two ways – the entrance gates were locked, thus preventing the latecomers from entering the school premises, and, in many instances, corporal punishment was enforced. In the past, detention had evidently been used as punishment for late-coming and other misdemeanours; however, it had been discontinued as it was found to have been ineffective. Elias (a student) explains the rationale for the shift from detention to corporal punishment:

My class teacher in Grade 10 was very smart. He used to send us for detention ... threatening us about calling our parents, but kids in my class never cared about that. So, now, my class teacher is beating us. (We) are taking things seriously (now) ... passing, you know.

Although Elias admitted to “not liking it”, he felt that it was “the only language ... the children (understood)” and that it had helped them become more disciplined. Altidore explained the benefits, which, in his opinion were linked with future economic success:

... it’s teaching me that you must do your work and complete your work ... because when you go to the working field, nobody’s going to tell you that, “Altidore, your work is not, um, complete”, so you must complete your work. You’re going to be on your own.

Sakhiwo agreed that corporal punishment was an indication of the school “doing [its] best”, and added that this was necessary punishment for a “black child”:

Yeah, they, they’re doing their best. They’re beating us when we are late, and they, I, I see that as, that’s a good thing, because we, um, we as black child, they always tell us that, um, in order for you to ... have respect, we must like, we must teach you when you’re young, like and here, they, they beat us, which is a good thing ...

Sakhiwo's defence of corporal punishment on account of being black signalled his subjectivation to subordinating disciplinary practices. Processes of subalternity highlighted pupils' inability to express their agency resulting in shared perceptions that the black child must be beaten in order to learn respect. Elias was not alone in defending corporal punishment. Amanda also supported its use:

Because I think, I think smacking puts you in the right direction. Um, you get motivated, especially when you write a test, you get motivated that I'm gonna work, work, even harder, 'cause I don't wanna get smacked, so that pushes you to be like, um, more hard working.

Sandiswa was one of three students who were less positive about the effects of being 'beaten'. She was of the opinion that corporal punishment would never end because of its effects in making students more disciplined:

I think they are trying to like, make us more disciplined. But, to some of us, it's not, it doesn't feel right, because, maybe some of us are not used to being punished in that way at home ... I don't think corporal punishment will ever really end at school. Because they, the kids are mostly obedient when it's reinforced ...

Sandiswa's reference to obedience signifies the Foucauldian notion of docility referred to earlier in this chapter and in the literature review. Through being disciplined, the body becomes more obedient and concomitantly, more "useful". The association of docility and utility is contingent on diminished power. In this sense, according to Foucault (1977):

Discipline ... dissociates power from the body; on the one hand it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection (1977: 138)

It is interesting, by way of comparison, to note the disciplinary mechanisms employed at Glen Ridge to address the problem of late-coming. The absence of a school bell coupled with the rule that students who arrived late must report to the office, functioned as *invisible* disciplinary practices that involved no direct interaction. The external eye of surveillance was thus *internalised* as conduct was regulated according to the principles of individual responsibility, punctuality, self regulation, and accountability.

Returning to Ubuntu, Tina was the only pupil interviewed who was resolute about the futility and injustice of corporal punishment:

At the back of your mind you say, they will beat me at 8 o'clock, by 9 o'clock that pain will be gone, so what the hell, maybe I should be late ... No, it's not good for us to be beaten up. I don't want to be beaten up. When I'm late, I'm late for a good reason ... they don't ask me why I'm late, they just come around and beat me up. So it's not a good punishment. They should do something else, like, if you're late, you should, I don't know, clean the school or something.

Tina's resolve that corporal punishment was wrong, positioned her as the only student to interrupt conventional discourses relating to its benefits. While others felt it was a deterrent because of the physical pain, in her view, corporal punishment by its very nature was *ineffective*: because the physical pain was short-lived, the transgression would invariably be repeated. Corporal punishment therefore had the opposite effect for Tina: instead of rendering her obedient, it provoked resistance.

The discipline has made me resilient. I'm not a resilient person. I'm a quiet and shy person, but when somebody's keep on beating me up, the same with, like, not asking you why you're late and stuff like that. That makes me want to speak my voice and, and, and speak out.

Tina's response offers important insights regarding processes of power and subjectivation. She described herself as being "quiet and shy" yet had become "resilient" and wanted to "speak out". This invokes the Foucauldian notion of power which is not unidirectional, but involves freedom and interaction, positioning subjects in particular ways in relation to its manifestation. In becoming *subjectivated*, Tina became *empowered* – attempts to render her compliant resulted in her resistance. Yet paradoxically Tina regarded her general behaviour at Ubuntu to have *improved* on account of the effective teaching of values:

I'm punctual toward things. I understand things. I discipline myself towards situations. I don't react (fast).

While Tina's resistance to dominant discourses about corporal punishment suggests empowerment, her subjectivation as described above, demonstrates the effective operation of disciplinary practices at Ubuntu High. This aligns with Foucault's notion of power as circulating at multi-levels rather than being unidirectional. As Foucault (1977) suggests, "power is not exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those who 'do not have it'; it invests them; is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure upon them, just as they themselves, as in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them" (1977: 27). Tina's improved behaviour (above) confirms her subjectivation to disciplinary mechanisms,

yet simultaneously her power to disrupt dominant discourses demonstrates her capacity to exercise her freedom as a subject by working within discursive formations.

As evident in this section, Ubuntu students on the whole regarded corporal punishment as a most effective disciplinary measure in spite of implications of physical pain and degradation. Responses to corporal punishment drew attention to the effects of particular positionings and the place of schooling in reproducing subject positions. Kwanda, a teacher, shed light on the issue of discipline more broadly, within what he referred to as “a culture of submission”:

We serve children from the working class and the way in which children, um, from the working class grow up, sort of, sort of dispositions them in one way to be ... less vocal ... If a parent gives an instruction, it is the nature of working class people to follow that instruction as it is coming from an adult and there are certain stereotypes that are sort of, bound to working class um, children, in the sense that ... a parent is not only the adult that we live with at home. The person in the street is also serving as your parent. So, they, they grow up with that submissive mentality at home and then they come to the school with that. I don't find that sort of mentality breaking that much. As a result, you, you find that most people that come to our school, they, they will say that our learners are, are very disciplined. And, I think part of that reason is because they do not come from an environment whereby they can question authority ...

In the light of Kwanda's views, many of the responses presented in this section, may be understood to reflect subalternated subject positionings. Such responses, according to Kwanda resulted from entrenched class and race-based relations of power. Unequal power relations were reinforced by students' perceptions that better discipline would result in improved performance. The extent to which students aspired to normative attributes of discipline and respect was demonstrated by their willingness to rationalise and defend humiliating forms of punishment. Discipline and respect, they had been taught, were necessary for hard work, and this in turn translated into success.

In concluding this section, I refer once more to the notion of the ‘obedient subject’ which I regard as pivotal to Foucault's work on subjectivation. Foucault (1977: 128) speaks about the “apparatus of corrective penalty” which acts through the body and the soul. Disciplinary instruments comprise “... forms of coercion, schemata of constraint, applied and repeated”. Ultimately, as suggested, what one is trying to restore in these corrective techniques is the ‘obedient subject’. While disciplinary measures at Glen Ridge operated through “compulsory movements, regular activities ... work in common, silence, application, respect, good habits”

(1977: 128), at Ubuntu, corporal punishment served as an illicit technique of power and coercion, the objective being to render subjects compliant and respectful.

Ultimately in both schools, the obedient subject was the individual who was “... subjected to habits, rules, orders, an authority that is exercised continually around him and upon him, and which he must allow to function automatically in him” (Foucault, 1977: 129). Linked to docility is utility. This synthesis is important as it suggests that in contexts in which violence and subordination have become normalised, it is particularly difficult for young people to express their agency – and speak out against harmful disciplinary practices. The lack of agency with regard to corporal punishment at Ubuntu and other working class schools located in the townships contrasts with the types of responses that would result from such practices in middle class schools. In rare cases in which corporal punishment has been reported in middle class schools, students and parents have exercised their right to appeal against such practices to the School Governing Body and/or the Department of Education.

Responses to corporal punishment at Ubuntu indicate that students are even less inclined to resist such practices if corporal punishment is perceived as generating success or benefit to the individual. At Ubuntu, support by students of corporal punishment was based on perceptions that this form of punishment would lead to improved discipline and performance and that this would ultimately result in success. In terms of the docility-utility link, this reinforced the notion at Ubuntu of the imagined self as one who was primed to take his/her place as a hard-working and disciplined economic participant.

In the light of the analysis thus far, we have seen, through the various types of disciplinary practices, the emergence of a particular type of imagined learner. Qualities such as specialness, respect, obedience, compliance, neatness, modesty, conformity, discipline, and hard work, have emerged as key attributes of the ideal Ubuntu student. Added to this was the construction of the Ubuntu pupil as a successful, aspirant community member who had a clear vision for the future. Discourses of mimicry and emulation functioned to position the Ubuntu learner as upwardly mobile, as demonstrated through mimetic comparisons with Glen Ridge High.

In the next section, the analysis shifts to a description of *learners' perceptions of the ideal Ubuntu student*. As with the Glen Ridge analysis, by focusing on the students' perspective, this sheds light on the ways in which dominant discourses were interpreted by pupils – and

the degree of coalescence between students' interpretations of ideal notions and those articulated through the school's disciplinary practices.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE IDEAL UBUNTU HIGH LEARNER

This section begins, as it did in Chapter Six, with a description of key features of the ideal learner that emerged most frequently in the interviews. These dominant discourses are clustered into three broad groups. First, I examine pupils' notions of *discipline, responsibility, hard work and respect*. Following this, I describe ideal constructs which are linked to *asking questions, confidence, individualism and collectivism*. Included in this section is an analysis of student agency, underscoring the interaction between discourses of individualism and collectivism. The third group of discourses describes the *aspirant* student with regard to *aspirations of serving family and community* as well as to *desires and aspirations in general*. After considering the representation of the ideal learner according to these three groupings, I examine the relationship between *notions of the imagined learner as constructed through the school's disciplinary mechanisms* and *versions of the ideal learner as constructed by the students*. I then explore the complex ways in which students positioned themselves alongside or against ideal constructs. What follows thereafter is a description of discourses pertaining to the *non-ideal* subject.

I introduce this section by presenting Matthew's perceptions of the ideal Ubuntu learner. This provides a useful backdrop to the section:

The [ideal] student would have performed academically in line with his or her competence, I think. Er, that student would be helpful and respectful. That student would have a record of school attendance, impeccable school attendance. Um, involvement in, ideally in, extra-mural activities ... Um, that student must have set an example and must have shown leadership ... and that child would know where he or she is heading and would, I would want to invite that person back to assembly, to speak to the learners, um, because that would be somebody from amongst ourselves, on the road to success, to a bright future. Not somebody who is going to turn up in 'bling', you know, because I don't think that those are values that we really have to espouse.

It is interesting to note in this extract that the notion of *performance according to one's ability* is compared with the emphasis, in the case of Glen Ridge High, on *academic excellence*. Secondly, the issue of involvement is not a compulsory requirement, as it is at Glen Ridge, but is presented more as an 'ideal'. Lastly, the person Matthew depicts as the ideal learner is

one he would want to invite back to the school as an inspiration to the learners. The reference to such a person *not turning up in “bling”* signifies the school’s predilection once again for modesty and conformity over flamboyance or individualised forms of expression. Most of these themes introduced in Matthew’s extract are drawn on by pupils in different ways, forming the substance of the section that follows.

Discipline, responsibility, hard-working and respect

Ten pupils identified responsibility, hard work, determination, discipline, and respect as optimal attributes. As suggested earlier, the notion of discipline was regarded by most of the teachers as central to each of the school values. To this, four pupils added the importance of having a clear vision. The emphasis on vision and goals, discussed earlier, is referred to below by Mbu (a student):

... Perfect student, like responsible student, hard working students, respective [respectful] students, know what they want. Students. I mean, students who are here for a purpose.

Mbu and Amanda prioritised goals and vision over academic achievement. Both students acknowledged that although they may not have been high achievers themselves, they *knew where they were going*. Respect, hard work, achievement and willingness to learn were enlisted as key values by Vuyo, Thandi, and Sandiswa. In Sandiswa’s words:

I would want a student that is hardworking, achieving. If it’s hard for him or her to achieve, the kind of student that is willing to learn, willing to improve, always improving until getting better marks so that the school can have a sustainable foundation of students ... Um, students that have respect ... well mannered, and of course that will work hard. That’s all.

In this extract Sandiswa distinguishes between the *ability to achieve* on the one hand, and the *willingness to learn* on the other, whereas previously Mbu and Amanda differentiated between *academic achievement* and *having a clear vision*. In both cases alternate discourses were enlisted *over* academic achievement. Similarly, Sindi (another student) described herself as ‘bad’ because her marks were inconsistent, however, in spite of her erratic performance, she acknowledged that she was, at least, hard-working. As mentioned by Matthew earlier, the ability to perform according to the students’ full potential was prioritised over academic excellence. For Altidore, the perfect student was one who combined external and internal attributes:

If you want to be the perfect student, it's easy. You must wear full uniform, but don't use your uniform with nothing inside. You must wear your full uniform, knowing that ... you're a hard worker, um, and also get your straight As and then, for me, you're the perfect student in front of the principal.

Later in the interview Altidore revised his version of the ideal student, this time identifying hard work as the most important attribute:

A hard working student, no matter whether he or she is wearing full uniform or not, but if the student works hard, now that's the perfect student for me.

In addition to being hard-working, a number of pupils felt that asking questions was an indicator of confidence and an attribute of the ideal learner.

Asking questions, confidence, individualism and collectivism

Individual attributes such as the ability to think for oneself and ask questions was expressed by at least three pupils. This required having enough confidence to ask questions, and was regarded as an ideal quality. Significantly, in the case of Glen Ridge, none of the respondents actually identified this as an ideal trait, the implication being that confidence was not perceived to be lacking in the Glen Ridge student – the challenge instead was to refrain from being too outspoken. In the context of Ubuntu on the other hand, the enviable quality was having enough confidence to ask questions. In the words of Mbali:

Basically ... someone who asks questions and who is not afraid ...even if the question makes them [sound] stupid or anything ...

Thandi regarded herself as someone who was able to “think for herself” and was not afraid to ask questions. In her opinion these qualities were so important that if she were principal she would want to develop these qualities in her pupils. Lizo (a teacher) reiterated the need for pupils to ask questions and was the only teacher to recruit discourses of individualism during the interview. He described the ideal Ubuntu learner as follows:

They ask questions, they seek for help if you have your Saturday classes, extra classes, they are there, they are present, they are attending them ... But who are individuals, who can express who they are ... They are not shy, but they can verbalise how they are feeling at that present moment and they feel free and the, the environment around them allows them to do so.

Confidence, according to Lizo, was therefore essential for the attainment of individual benefits such as those derived from asking questions and seeking help. Simultaneously, confidence was needed for the expression of emotions. To this, Elias characterised a confident student as one who was “serious about what he or she wants in life” and one who was willing to help others. This again alluded to the desire to have a clear vision, as expressed earlier. As Elias says:

I would like [to be] ... a confident student; a student ... who is like ... serious about what he or she wants in life; a student who is willing to help other people ...

Alongside expressed notions of *individualism*, ideals of the *group* were framed as attributes of the imagined learner. This was articulated by Matthew:

... good behaviour, citizenship, um, patriotism, sense of community, of service. Those values, we try to instil as well. But the core thing is the child comes in, attends all lessons, every day and performs well, according to his or her ability.

Within the structures of the school, transparency, representivity and agency were highly valued. According to Matthew this typified a “bottom up” style of management:

We have a very transparent set up at this school in the way we interact ... the culture of the school is such that you are quickly isolated if people suspect you of trying to act alone ... all the level of management must always be in the know. Otherwise people will tell you, that is *your* issue because we were never part of that, you know. So that is the bottom up sort of management style that people want to see in the school ...

All the students interviewed confirmed the principal’s sentiments that if they were to voice a concern they would be listened to and the issue raised would be acted upon. Mbali, the chairperson of the Representative Council of Learners explained that there were strong structures in place which enabled students to voice their concerns. Unlike the experience of Scarlet in the previous chapter, there had not been an occasion where Mbali (or in her opinion, anyone else) felt that she had been dismissed or misunderstood by the principal.

Practices of collectivism such as those described above suggested that the traction between discourses of individualism and the group manifested in many ways. Together, these competing values operated to configure the Ubuntu learner as individualistic and competitive on the one hand, and community-oriented on the other. Conflicting interests of the individual versus the group were made more complex within a context in which learners from poor,

disadvantaged schools needed to compete with those who had benefited from a privileged, middle class education. Matthew put this in perspective:

They are poor. And, and they don't realise how much money is needed to study ... the only thing that you can put on the table is marks. That is the only thing. And those marks will buy you money and that money will buy you education, tertiary education ... You are in competition with middle class, upper middle class African kids at rich schools ...

The complexity of the interplay between individualism and collectivism continues in the next sub-section as the analysis focuses on *aspiration* as an idealised construct.

The aspirant student

Discourses of desire and aspiration emerged strongly in the interviews and converged around three sets of ideas. First, I examine the notion of *being 'good'* with respect to offering support to *family and community*. Aspirations are thus viewed here by the individual within the broader context of the collective. Second, I examine discourses of desire and aspirations as *individual interests* such as the desire to study at university, to complete a degree, and to acquire material goods. Third, the notion of desire is linked with the need to have a *vision* – once again this mostly prioritises individual interests over the group. These three groupings overlap in content and are therefore not divided into separate sections.

To begin, the desire to help families and communities was linked to 'being good'. Sindi enlisted the notion of the 'good student', equating this with the 'normal child' and the 'real student':

Someone who's going to be, represent, a normal child, like a good child, a real student.

Sandiswa spoke about making her "dreams come true" in order to "have a better future and provide a better future for [her] family". Similarly, five students expressed their desire to achieve success in order to help and inspire others. Amanda represents this view:

The most important thing in life, is, um, being successful. I wanna be successful. I wanna be somebody. I wanna have my things, I wanna be independent, yeah, I want all those things ... Um, I'm also thinking about if I get successful and like, be known, I wanna help others ... I'm going to help my community, my community where I come from, um, yeah ... I'm gonna teach someone. I'm gonna donate money for people, yeah.

Normative constructs of ‘being good’ as being synonymous with providing material support to the family and community were reiterated by Michael who expressed the desire to study engineering and thereby to become a “better person”:

So like, after I’ve passed like matric, I’ve done a tertiary institution, like I want to be a better person. That’s why I thought engineering, okay, it’s a serious place for me to be.

When asked to explain what he meant by wanting to be a “better person”, Michael said that he would help “those who could not help themselves”. ‘Being good’ or ‘better’ defined students’ conceptions of success which related to providing support to their families, and service to their communities. Throughout the interviews, students made the connection between education and the achievement of future dreams and goals, recognising their school as a morally empowering key to future success. For a number of respondents, the *immediate* link between school and the enactment of internal values on the one hand, paralleled the *projected* link between obtaining a job and helping others. For many, individual success was thus bound in some way to the collective – the notion of self-improvement being linked to improvement of the community.

The concept of the ‘good child’ supports Swartz’ (2010) notion of ‘moral capital’ in which she describes the extent to which young people construct themselves as ‘good’, as a generator of economic capital. As described in the above extracts, discourses of responsibility frequently extended to the family and community. The conflation of material desires with moral aspirations represents “a dialectical notion of morality as capital”, in which “morality generates capital and capital generates morality” (2010: 317). Being good therefore equips young people with the opportunity to “embark on the cycle of ‘be a good person, complete school, get a job, be a good person’”.

Not all students linked their personal aspirations to the support of families and communities. Discourses of desire and aspiration for some represented projections of individual accomplishment and success. Three spoke about the desire to have “happier” and “easier” lives. These sentiments ranged from having a “comfortable” life to having a “good” life: from the desire to move out of a small shack in which basic amenities had to be shared with others (Sandiswa) – to the desire to drive a particular type of car. As Thandi said:

I want to drive an Audi R8 and have a house in the suburbs ... And do good work ... I also imagine myself when I’m going to my office, like carrying my laptop and grabbing my suits?

Over and above the desire for material acquisitions, the proximity of Ubuntu High to tertiary institutions functioned as a daily enticement, heightening aspirations to leave school and attend university. According to Lizo (a teacher):

Some of them ... think they are near to UHL when they are here, they can see where they want to see themselves in the next three or four years.

Frequent references were made to a university education being the ultimate goal and to the need to overcome obstacles in order to achieve that goal. This was observed during Xolani's address to the pupils described earlier, in which the previous year's top-achieving matriculants were honoured:

When you go the promised land there are always obstacles. Some of you want to go and study at [university] but you are not that clever. There are many ways of killing a cat! [Sic] If you are not clever and you want to get to the promised land, there are other ways you can get there. You can get there by hard work. You can get there by punctuality and you can get there by discipline ... You need to ask, "because I am not intelligent enough, does that mean I am going to work at [a supermarket] for the rest of my life?" If you want to be an academic and study at university – yes you need to be a little bit intelligent, but you also need to have hard work, drive and desire to succeed. If you have desire it will stimulate the drive to succeed ...

The existence of inevitable obstacles, suggested above, when embarking on tertiary education contrasted with the seemingly smooth transition from school to university for the average Glen Ridge High learner. In this extract Xolani (teacher) identified four strategies to overcome likely difficulties: hard work, punctuality, discipline, and the desire to succeed. Discourses of desire and aspiration were reiterated in the prayer that followed this address:

Can you please give them drive. Give them desire. Can you please not remove the obstacles because those obstacles will make them stronger. But can you give them courage to face the obstacles...

In this prayer, a plea was made for learners to be given drive and desire over all else. The sanctification of desire and aspiration through the discursive medium of prayer invoked the metaphor of the "promised land" quoted in the previous extract. Coupled with the evangelical tone, this metaphor infused biblical authority into these assertions. In the following extract, discourses of desire were closely linked with expectations that students should "know what they want". This vision, as Xolani suggested, was something they needed to have internalised or, at the very least have aspired towards:

When people come here at the beginning of the year, we tell them the school is full. But is the school full of people *who know what they want* or is the school full of fools? A fool is someone who doesn't know what he wants ...

The caricature of the fool as someone “who doesn't know what he wants” implies that those who *do* know what they want are clever. The implicit link is thus made between knowing what you want, intelligence, desire, aspiration and success. The injunction to “know what you want” not only informed a vision for the *future*, but determined one's conduct and disposition in the *present*. The analysis supports Kenway and Hickey-Moody's (2011) notion of educational aspiration as a dispositional, attitudinal or psychological state. In the following extract Elias (student) suggests a link between “knowing what people wanted” and the capacity to manage one's behaviour. When asked about a particular incident in which some of the matric boys were accused of robbing Grade 8 pupils in the toilets, Elias attributed this to the perpetrators *not knowing what they wanted*:

I think it's those matriculants that are doing that [because they] don't know what they want in life you know. Because, if you know what you want in life, you wouldn't hurt the little ones. You should be setting a good example. You shouldn't do bad things.

Following this, I asked Elias if he knew what he wanted in life. His response follows:

Yes I know ... I want to be an accountant so that I can get everything I want any time I want it, you know? Like, I want, I want to be like other people ... have cars, owning like these big houses ... so that I can like, be like other kids, those kids that have got what they wanted in life, like ...

Discourses of desire and aspirations coupled with expectations of success created a complex mix of promises of opportunities on the one hand, and constraints on the other. This signals Fataar's (2009: 10) scholarship in which he refers to the university as a symbol of ‘truncated desire’: although it may be geographically accessible, a university education is out of reach both educationally and financially for many. In the case of Ubuntu High, only 36 percent of the matriculants who passed their final matriculation examination the previous year achieved exemptions, thereby qualifying them to apply for admission to a university. In spite of this reality, students interviewed for the study were convinced that hard work would place them in the top 36 percent, thereby fulfilling the notion of the ideal Ubuntu student as being hard-working, aspirant and disciplined.

As at Glen Ridge, discourses of desire and aspiration proliferated as normalised ideals and were pivotal in fashioning the learning subject as driven, aspirant and potentially successful. Yet the complexity of these discourses becomes evident within contexts of social and economic difference. As described, for a number of students at Ubuntu, discourses of desire and aspiration branched inseparably into the twin areas of self-enhancement on the one hand, and family/community support on the other. The strong accent on desire and aspiration through disciplinary mechanisms at Ubuntu sheds light on the huge discrepancies of opportunities for the Ubuntu students, and the challenges they needed to face in order to compete with students from other schools for admission into tertiary institutions.

In bringing this section to a close, I draw together the various components of the ideal learning subject, as constructed by the school itself and by the student respondents. First, the dominant discourses that emerged through the school's disciplinary mechanisms framed the ideal Ubuntu learner as special and different to those pupils who attended township schools. Second, linked to this was the construction of the Ubuntu student as respectful, obedient, responsible, compliant, neat, and modest. Attributes of hard work, competition, discipline, and aspirations positioned the Ubuntu learner as successful and upwardly mobile. From the students' perspective, a range of discourses emerged during the interviews: being disciplined, responsible, hard-working, and respectful, accompanied by qualities of individualism, confidence, and the ability to ask questions.

Having considered idealised notions of the imagined learner from the perspectives of both the school and the pupils themselves, two interesting insights emerged. First, unlike the Glen Ridge scenario in which a number of students constructed their own versions of the ideal student *against* those constructed by the school, not one of the Ubuntu students constructed a version of the ideal learner that differed or deviated from the school's projected construct. 'School involvement' was the only attribute identified by Matthew that was *not* articulated by any of the students in their definitions of the ideal student.

Second, whereas only a few of the Glen Ridge students saw themselves as *fulfilling* the school's ideal constructs, all except one of the Ubuntu students regarded themselves as fulfilling most of the criteria they had identified (and that had been identified by the school) in their description of the ideal student.

What both these insights suggest is that the values and messages at Ubuntu High generated a framework of discourses which was, on the whole supported by the Ubuntu students. Less

resistance to conventional discourses was evident on account of students having had less exposure to alternative discourses outside of the matrix of the school. Not one of the Ubuntu students recruited divergent discourses in their constructions of subjecthood. With the exception of Tina who resisted dominant discourses relating to corporal punishment, none of the students disrupted the school's discursive formations. Processes of subjectivation were thus delineated by the particular discourses assembled and deployed through the school's regulatory mechanisms. It is with this in mind that the analysis now shifts to conceptions of the *non-ideal* learning subject at Ubuntu High. This is examined in relation to the subaltern.

'NON'-IDEAL LEARNING SUBJECT AND THE SUBALTERN

The two most pertinent 'problems' that reflected undesirable conduct were *late-coming* and *pregnancy*. The issue of late-coming was discussed earlier in the context of disciplinary punishment and therefore is addressed only briefly in this section. The problem of teenage pregnancy is examined in more detail.

Late-coming

Many of the respondents described late-coming as the biggest challenge at the school. The complexity of this problem becomes apparent when viewed within its broader context. On a number of occasions Matthew spoke about his insistence on punctuality and the reality that every hour lost represented a qualitative loss of learning time that could never be recovered. His assertion, "time is marks and marks is money" quoted earlier, conveyed something of his concern about Ubuntu students being inherently disadvantaged. In his opinion, each lesson lost had a negative impact on performance, which would invariably affect examination results, ultimately jeopardising bursary opportunities for further study. As referenced earlier:

The only thing you can put on the table is marks. That is the only thing. And those marks will buy you money and that money will buy you education ...

The perceived link between punctuality and ideal conduct was expressed by Lizo (a teacher who had been a pupil at the school). Lizo explained that as a learner attending Ubuntu High, he could never be labelled a 'model Ubuntu pupil' because he frequently arrived late:

... I know my weakness was late-coming. I was one of the culprits.

However, because he “loved his books” and “was on top of his work”, he was able to identify *elements* of himself as exemplary. Lizo’s experience is illuminating because it validated the relationship between late-coming and non-ideal behaviour. In spite of his academic achievement, his late-coming prevented him from attaining the desired status of ‘model Ubuntu pupil’.

As with late-coming, the problem of teenage pregnancy was one that the school found difficult to manage. What follows is a description of how pregnancy was viewed at Ubuntu and the extent to which pregnant girls were positioned as demonstrating *non-ideal* conduct.

Teenage pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy represented a profound way in which race, gender and class intersected within the subject of the pregnant girl. In the case of Ubuntu High, pregnancy can be regarded as a subalternated positioning in that it implies differentiation of power relations, both in terms of entrenched gender stereotypes and in terms of prevailing attitudes towards the pregnant girl student.

According to Matthew, there were about five to ten pregnancies each year (as compared with the two pregnancies over the period of six years during which Raymond had been principal of Glen Ridge High). One way in which the problem of teenage pregnancy was addressed at Ubuntu was through talks given to the students during assemblies. At one of the assemblies observed, Matthew appealed to the students to avoid sexual activity:

Please do not fall pregnant this year. Every year we have a problem. Are you economically active? You are not economically active so you cannot afford to be sexually active. So please leave things with adults which deserve to be left with adults.

The response to Raymond’s plea on this occasion was a loud and spontaneous applause from the students and teachers. However, in spite of frequent warnings to pupils about the risk of intimate relationships – and evident support for this sentiment by the students – pregnancy amongst high school girls continued to be a serious problem. Divergent opinions emerged during the interviews regarding the school’s management of pregnancy, albeit that procedures were circumscribed largely by national policies. While teachers and students agreed that the school was deeply accommodating and accepting of students who were regarded as ‘different’, the school’s attitude towards pregnant girls elicited a range of conflicting

responses. On the one hand, as Kwanda explained, there was greater acceptance of teenage pregnancy than in the past:

... more and more learners are getting pregnant, so it's no longer something to be ashamed of ... to be viewed ... as a horror ...

However, in Lizo's opinion, the teachers were not accepting of pregnant learners:

It is a personal decision that you take ... 'Cause we have information, they are bombarded with information, you know that (even) if you don't get pregnant, you can get HIV and they, they live with people around them who are HIV positive ... We think that should be a shock enough for them to say 'no, let me wait' or, 'if I have to do it, let me use a condom', but some of them who do understand that, they are pressured into doing so. I don't know if it's ... to be accepted, to be loved more ...

The conflicting views surrounding pregnancy suggested the very real challenges it posed. My interest was to explore perceptions of pregnancy with respect to constructions of learner subjectivity. It was with this in mind that I present and describe extracts that reflect students' and teachers' responses.

Opinions ranged from assertions that there was no discrimination towards pregnant girls, as expressed by Zoe, to the view, shared by Sandiswa, that pregnancy was the only way in which those 'who were regarded as different' were *not* accepted. According to Tina, "pregnant students in this school [were] attacked in many ways and in many manners". Elaborating, Twasa explained that at times pregnant girls were called "funny names" and that they were laughed at. Similarly, Tina described responses of her classmates to one of the girls who was pregnant:

The students in our classroom were making fun of her, saying, she's making us sleepy, we can't concentrate and stuff like that ... But then the teachers came in and started teasing, saying how can er, she get pregnant ... and stuff like, so that when a child is pregnant in our school, it's a big issue. Especially, they gossip about you in the office, which is not cool.

While Dreyton (a teacher) described the students as accepting of each other, he felt that the teachers' attitude to pregnant girls was "uncompromising":

... Oh, oh, oh, the teachers, oh, yes, they say all kinds of things to the person and they are negative things, ja. I suppose because the teachers want to discourage the practice ...

Most of the respondents commented on the separation of pregnant girls for the purpose of writing exams. Lizo explains this:

The school does not actually allow them to write exams in the same room as the other kids as maybe they might be due and it, those might cause sort of distractions with the other learners. So all pregnant girls they get organised their own venues where they can write exams during exam times. But, in class situations, they stay with other kids and all that.

The separating of pregnant girls from the rest of the class for the purpose of writing examinations demonstrated externalised monitoring and judgment through strategies of surveillance. Space, for Foucault is fundamental to the disciplining of bodies. A technique used to achieve this is *enclosure* (1977: 141), which is referred to by Foucault as "... the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself". The aim of confining an area, as Dixon (2011) explains, is to reduce inconveniences and disturbances. The practice of extricating the pregnant girl and allocating her a separate space, thus functioned at Ubuntu High as a disciplinary mechanism of judgment and surveillance. Through the technique of 'enclosure', judgment was cast on the pregnant girl, while simultaneously serving to discipline other girls *against* falling pregnant whilst at school.

Finally, perceptions of both late-coming and pregnancy as representing *non-ideal* conduct is illuminated by the school's strong emphasis, conversely, on attributes of *punctuality* and *modesty* – qualities that emerged throughout the chapter as representing *ideal* conduct. Significantly these opposing sets of characteristics functioned to position subjects at polarised ends of the spectrum in the school's definition of ideal versus non-ideal subjecthood.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter has been the constitutive nature of discourse within the local site of Ubuntu High school. As with the Glen Ridge analysis, all the students interviewed were easily able to identify their school's construction of the ideal student. Instead of dominant discourses converging around levels of engagement as in the case of Glen Ridge, at Ubuntu, the ideal learning subject was characterised in terms of hard work, respect, discipline, modesty, conformity, restraint, vision, aspirations and collectivism. In all cases Ubuntu students positioned themselves alongside these constructs, indicating that these were attributes they had already fulfilled, or at the very least, were aspiring towards. Desires and aspirations were conflated with post-school success, the focus being primarily to obtain a tertiary education in order to improve

their lives. For a number of students, discourses of desire and aspiration were interwoven with discourses of service and support to family and community.

The *discursive continuities* between the school's construction of the ideal learner and that of the pupils suggest *compliance* rather than *resistance* to normative discourses. The imagined self was thus closely aligned to the school's projection of the imagined learner. Ubuntu pupils on the whole, were not exposed to alternative discourses outside of the context of the school and indeed were exposed to a relatively narrow set of discourses within the school. However, despite the limited range of discourses, significantly, the imagined Ubuntu learning subject, as projected by the school, was vastly different to the types of subject positionings that marked the lives of their families and community members. Discourses of hard work, discipline and success exposed the Ubuntu learner instead to an opportunity to re-imagine themselves – outside of a self entrapped by township life – toward a self configured by promises of aspirations and success.

Underpinning this study is the extent to which the school's notions of the imagined learner reflected the purposes of education as set out in the policies. It was established in Chapter Five that the primary purpose of education was the preparation of individuals for the labour market. Whereas the Glen Ridge student was orientated to enter the work force as involved, productive and self-fulfilled, the Ubuntu student was primed to fulfil the demands of the economy through hard work, discipline, docility and respect. This suggests that the Ubuntu learner was prepared for future economic participation as responsive, rather than directive; reproductive, rather than productive; and non-critical, rather than critical. However, for many, entry into the labour market in and of itself represented a fantasy only.

In both schools, although the ultimate product was that of economic participant, the economic positions they were prepared for were different. To this end both schools equipped their students with the necessary currency to take up their respective future positions.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER

In this concluding chapter the research questions are addressed and answered. How the learner is imagined in national education policy texts is related to the different ways in which these discourses were translated and interpreted in the school. This in turn is related to how learning subjects positioned themselves against constructions of the ‘ideal learner’ and the extent to which they were able to draw on other discourses to resist interpolation.

Overlaying these levels of analysis, I discuss three dominant themes that emerged from the *school based analysis* and that may be linked to the policy analysis: *Race and class*; *Mimesis and Emulation*; and *Individualism versus Collectivism*. These themes draw together a description of the ideal learner in the two schools and highlight the different ways in which the schools configured themselves to produce this type of learner. Attention is then drawn comparatively to the constitutive nature of discourse, and to the capacity of learners to draw on other discourses to resist interpolation. Finally, I highlight the link between the schools’ dominant discourses and those that were foregrounded in the policies.

The four themes that emerged from the policy analysis were *performativity*; *productivity and marketability*; *the scaling up of local to global and scaling down as power is devolved to the schools*; *human rights discourses versus human resource development* and *the conflation of public and private*. These themes were based on key terms that recurred in the policies, namely *quality*; *performance*; *productivity* and *success*. The relationship between the key terms; the four themes from the *policy analysis* and the three overarching themes derived from the *school analysis* draw attention to the different ways in which the dominant discourses in the policies were translated in the two schools. As will be shown in this chapter, differences in *how* discourses were translated were directly linked to ascriptions to race and class; mimesis and aspirations and individualism and collectivism.

I introduce the chapter by briefly highlighting how discourse was employed in the study to describe ways in which the learner was imagined in the policies and schools.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY: DISCOURSE AND POWER

In this study discourse was viewed both in terms of its instrumentation and effect (Ball, 2004). Beginning with the analysis of two national policy texts, a set of ‘policy ensembles’ was highlighted as representing a particular set of ideological assertions. Policy was presented as a tool of governmentality – a mechanism through which the imagined learner was shaped and constituted.

Through the analysis of observation and interview texts, the school was presented as a local site of governmentality through which particular discourses were made available. In both schools, discourse functioned to reproduce and maintain power relations, the effect of which was to shape the learner into becoming a particular type of subject. As Ball (2004) reminds us:

We do not speak a discourse, it speaks us. We are the subjectivities, the voice, the knowledge, the power relations that a discourse constructs and allows. We do not ‘know’ what we say, we ‘are’ what we say and do. In these terms we are spoken by policies, we take up the positions constructed for us within policies (2004: 22).

The two schools, alongside other “discourse propagating sites” (O’Flynn and Petersen, 2007: 462) were presented as central agents in making available and desirable certain discursive resources. The point was made that the school is one of many discursive mechanisms to which young people are exposed and through which they are subjectivated. While discourses generated subject positions, we saw that subjects were engaged in their own constitution, “... acquiescing with or contesting the roles to which they (were) assigned” (Mills, 1997: 41). Social subjectivities are therefore never unitary or singular and, as described in the analysis, unfolded in “... uneven, contested, and unpredictable social configurations” (Luke, 1995: 14). As Luke reminds us:

In negotiating everyday life, we tend to assume various positions in discourse. Together, these available positions and discourses offer possibilities for difference, for multiple and hybrid subjectivities that human subjects actively make and remake through their textual constructions, interpretations, and practices (1995: 14).

In Chapter Five an analysis of two policy texts was presented, while Chapters Six and Seven focussed on ways in which communities participated in discourse, both resisting and becoming complicit in their propagation. The analysis of interview extracts therefore described a precarious and uneven interaction of compliance and resistance as students reflected on their own subjectivities within the broader context of the school, at times drawing on other discursive resources to resist interpolation. As Epstein (1993) suggests, the development of subjective identities is a deeply complex, multi-faceted and contradictory process.

HOW IS THE LEARNER IMAGINED IN NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICIES?

In the two policies selected for analysis, themes of quality, performance, success and productivity provided a broad discursive framing within which ideas of the imagined learner could be located. Underpinning these themes was the assumption that efficiency is equated with productivity, and that efficiency and productivity are fundamental elements required to benefit the learner through the development of marketable skills.

In the policy analysis, emphasis was placed on the term 'citizen' which was equated with 'economic participant'. Similarly, attention was drawn to the collapse of the terms 'society' and 'economy'. Linked to this was the emphasis in the policies on human resource development and the need to develop young people to take their place in the economy. While education was assumed to improve productivity and therefore to contribute to the *economic* well-being and development of the society, it was regarded also as improving "the life chances of individuals", thus serving individual interests within a competitive labour market. The encroachment of the market into the public domain implied a 'collapse' of the 'public' into the 'private', the implications being that notions of social democracy and social justice have become subsumed in a new vision of the market; and that human resource development has become the means through which to ensure economic and social transformation.

Based on the analysis it was evident that both the policies exemplified Christie's (1996: 414) assertion that policy texts may be seen as exercises of power "... aimed at preserving or bringing about desired arrangements". Within the South African context, the 'problem' of the *political injustices* of the past was set against the 'solution' of *economic progress*.

After highlighting how the learner was imagined in terms of his/her future participation in the economy, I then addressed the translation and interpretation of these policy discourses in the schools. In the next section I compare ways in which dominant policy discourses shifted in the process of translation within the school context. In so doing I draw together the main points to show how disciplinary mechanisms operated to support the school's discursive framework.

HOW ARE IDEAS OF THE IMAGINED LEARNER TRANSLATED AND INTERPRETED IN THE SCHOOL?

Key ways in which both schools configured themselves to produce the ideal learner are highlighted in this section. In focusing on what was foregrounded in one school, attention is paid to that which was backgrounded in the other. Similarly a description of what was present in one school illuminates what was absent in the other.

Disciplinary mechanisms in the construction of the ideal learner

In both schools the assembly was presented as the central conduit for the transmission of the school's 'expressive order'. Ideas about the imagined learner were communicated not only through the *substance* of the assemblies, but through their particular *form*: at Glen Ridge a formal, controlled and ceremonial tone contrasted with the more informal, spirited and celebratory atmosphere of the Ubuntu assemblies. Furthermore, an assiduous arrangement of rank at the Glen Ridge assemblies represented surveillance processes through hierarchical organisation. The apparatus of panoptic punishment that operated through the Glen Ridge assembly pervaded the school systemically as emphasis was placed on individualised forms of punishment, in contrast with the arbitrary, generalised forms of punishment at Ubuntu.

In both schools the assembly was used as a key disciplinary practice to regulate behaviour in accordance with attributes of belonging, discipline, respect, obedience and punctuality. However, at Glen Ridge the accent on formalised spatial arrangements predisposed the learner to an internalised familiarity with a hierarchical social structure, and an unspoken recognition of his/her position therein. At Ubuntu, on the other hand, a more flexible, spontaneous and informal atmosphere represented less hierarchical organisation of the individual and a focus instead on the cohesion of the collective.

In each school, the *form* of the assemblies was characterised by a particular tone. The form and tone of the assemblies mirrored their *substance*, or key messages and values which were conveyed particularly during the devotions. In both schools, alongside the Christian-based values, additional values were recruited: in the case of Glen Ridge these included excellence, involvement, loyalty, pride, uprightness, critical thinking and individualism while at Ubuntu values cohered around hard work, discipline, respect, specialness and community. In both schools the accent on *belonging* reflected the importance of community involvement and cohesion although this was articulated in different ways. At Glen Ridge, the notion of belonging meant affiliation, involvement, investment and participation with the expressed intention that through being productive and involved each student would develop his/her individual potential. Coupled with a strong focus on achievement and success this was intended to equip the individual with the necessary skills for active social and economic participation. The notion of belonging at Ubuntu was premised almost entirely on the idea of the school as a collective, and of each learner being an integral member thereof. Relational values constituted the Ubuntu learner as belonging to a social family to the extent that the role of teachers as in ‘locus parentis’ was at times prioritised over the pedagogic. Cohesion of the Ubuntu collective was contingent upon the individual upholding the school’s values, of which respect and discipline were considered the most important. With these values in place it was believed that students would be inclined to work harder, which would ultimately equip them with the necessary attributes for economic participation.

In both schools religion played a significant role in the transmission of key values: while this was somewhat diffused at Glen Ridge, it was overtly expressed at Ubuntu. The cultural and religious diversity at Glen Ridge resulted in an editing back of religious discourse. At Ubuntu on the other hand, religious homogeneity predisposed the principal and teachers to an explicit foregrounding of Christianity both in form and substance. The affective tone that marked the Ubuntu assemblies and award ceremonies were examples of ways in which Christianity was infused into these events, galvanising the community through prayer and dance. In both schools, Western religious-based norms pertaining to morality, decency, virtue, reason and conscience were consigned to the imagined learner.

Having highlighted key ways in which both schools configured themselves to produce the ideal learner through their respective disciplinary mechanisms, I now focus more specifically on the three themes that emerged from the above discussion, and from the analysis more

broadly: *Race and class*; *Mimesis and Emulation*; and *Individualism versus Collectivism*. Although these themes derived from the school analysis, they do not pertain exclusively to the school context, and, as will be illustrated, relate also to the policy text analysis.

RACE AND CLASS

Bernstein (1975) reminds us that socialisation into the school affects socialisation into society and that the differentiated ranking of groups according to prestige relates to economic function.

In both policies, the inclusion of *human rights discourses* within a *human resource development* framework was described as marking the elision of social justice. In the White Paper the inequalities of the past were set against the notion of *economic equality* in the future. Although the WSE policy (2001: 8) pledged to correct past social and economic inequalities, what was evident in the school analysis was the continued existence of *unequal* economic relations, and moreover that the “racial inequalities of the apartheid system have been overlaid by the class relations of the market” (Christie, 2010: 8). As Christie points out “... the right to education does not mean the same education for all; it means the right to the education one can afford to pay for” (2010: 9). The repeated emphasis in both policy texts on *education quality for all* functioned therefore to conceal the disparity in opportunities; the marked differentiation in education quality and the unequal access to the labour market.

In both schools disciplinary mechanisms operated to sustain relations and practices of power prevalent in the broader society. Through the privileging of dominant ‘common sense’ discourses – and consequent positionalities – the school represented a particular terrain within which young people could move (Thompson, 2010). By focusing on the school as a micro practice of power, a greater understanding was reached of how the terrain constructed by the school produced and constrained what students could be and how they could think about their lives and desires (Thompson, 2010; Youdell, 2004). I draw on Bernstein (1971) to orientate the discussion of class, which forms a backdrop to later sections. My purpose in referencing Bernstein is to describe how disciplinary procedures in both schools, and subsequent processes of subjectivation were characterised by class differences.

I begin once again by referring to the disciplinary mechanism of the assemblies, my intention being to illustrate how this regulatory process played a central role in setting the school up as

a micro practice of power. In the case of Glen Ridge, the highly organised, formal structure of the assemblies may be seen to mirror the environment of the middle class child which, according to Bernstein (1971: 29) “... is finely and extensively controlled; the space, time, and social relationships are explicitly regulated within and outside the family group”. Bernstein’s scholarship on the organisation and regulation of space and time invokes Foucault’s work on the disciplining techniques of the individual through ‘the art of distributions’ (1977: 141):

In organizing ‘cells’, ‘places’ and ‘ranks’, the disciplines create complex spaces that are at once architectural, functional and hierarchical. It is spaces that provide fixed positions and permit circulation; they carve out individual segments and establish operational links; they mark places and indicate values; they guarantee the obedience of individuals, but also a better economy of time and gesture.

While Foucault applied his theories of discipline to processes and relations of power in general, rather than to the middle classes specifically, it is interesting to note a resonance of his work with that of Bernstein’s with respect to the management of space and time. The “purposeful and explicit organisation of the environment” (Bernstein, 1971: 29) at Glen Ridge contrasted with the less formal organisation of the Ubuntu environment. This aligns with Bernstein’s scholarship on the working class family structure which is less formally organised (1971) than that of the middle class family. Bernstein stresses the point that while within a working class family structure, the authority is explicit, its values do not give rise to the spatially and temporally ordered universe of the middle class child.

Underpinning Foucault’s theory of discipline and disciplinary mechanisms is the regulation and conditioning of the individual according to the prevailing constructs within a particular context. As highlighted in the analysis, localised systems of reward and punishment constituted one integrative element in the schools’ broader disciplinary apparatus, functioning once again to replicate class distinctions between schools. While at Glen Ridge, punishment procedures were deliberately addressed and meticulously applied in accordance with the specific transgression of the individual, this was not observed to be the case at Ubuntu. Bernstein maintains that within a working class context, the “exercise of authority will not be related to a stable system of rewards and punishments but may often appear arbitrary” (1971: 32). Tina’s experience of corporal punishment is drawn on here to support this:

... they don't ask me why I'm late, they just come around and beat me up.

Although the enforcement of corporal punishment at Ubuntu was arbitrary and unpredictable, most pupils regarded this as an appropriate form of punishment for a “black child”. Learners’ support of corporal punishment signalled their lack of agency resulting from the entrenchment of unequal relations of power and traditional patterns of subordination. This was not the only way in which subalternity played out at Ubuntu. Subalternated subject positionings emerged during discussions with students about their future. As will be illustrated in the next section, Ubuntu students positioned themselves differently from Glen Ridge students with regard to their desires and aspirations. Remaining within the thematic framework of race and class, the discussion shifts to students’ projections of their future.

Success: desire and aspiration

The focus on race and class offers insight into the effects of valorised notions of aspiration and upward mobility for working class and middle class youth. In both schools, messages of success delivered through the multi-levelled network of conduits strongly reiterated discourses of quality, performance, productivity and success in the policies. These messages however, were translated and interpreted differently in the schools, in ways that reflected the schools’ discursive frameworks.

What was evident in the analysis was that the success-related messages which were deployed through the various channels operated in both schools as techniques of self-regulation and management. Although differently translated, the significance of this is the extent to which success in both schools was attributed to the ideal learner and the ways in which learners positioned themselves in relation to normative constructs. This supports Walkerdine’s (2003: 241) view that the subject thus allows him/herself to be refashioned as a “successful subject”, or “the subject of neo-liberal choice”.

At Glen Ridge High, a university degree was regarded as a taken-for-granted, inevitable step to future success. As evidenced from the interviews, success for most of the Glen Ridge pupils meant independence, resourcefulness, individual comfort and fulfilment. These students clearly differentiated between material wealth on the one hand, and values of happiness, fulfilment, functionality, spirituality and meaning on the other, with the majority opting for the latter over the former.

For most Ubuntu High students, school was regarded as the link between their current circumstances and future success. Rather than being taken for granted, access to university was regarded as an achievement in and of itself. As a springboard to university, school was envisaged as an opportunity for upward mobility. The fantasy of leaving behind adversity and the promise of middle class aspirations elicited at the very least the *anticipation* of success, which for many was enough to induce optimism and hope about their future. The desire for a university qualification was thus inextricably linked to expectations of success which, Ubuntu students believed, would enable them to be of future support to families and communities. On the whole these young people were clear about their career choices and did not express conflict or uncertainty with regard to their desired vocation. Neither did they express trepidation or doubt as to their ability to reach their goals. Yet there was little indication of a clear strategising of goals. What emerged instead was an unfounded faith in their future as long term goals frequently morphed into dreams and fantasies. This is illustrated by Elias:

I want to be an accountant so that I can get everything I want any time I want it, you know? Like, I want, I want to be like other people ... have cars; owning like these big houses ... so that I can like, be like other kids, those kids that have got what they wanted in life ...

The data accords with Bernstein's view that within the working classes, the "... specific character of long-term goals tend to be replaced by more general notions of the future" (Bernstein, 1971: 32). Glen Ridge students on the other hand, were able to engage more realistically about their future success by *strategising* the types of long-term goals they would need in order to achieve their success. Hence they could project themselves into the future realistically, with clarity and ease. Ubuntu students expressed *shorter-term goals* with greater resolve resulting in more decisiveness about their chosen course of study after leaving school. While Glen Ridge students could articulate their vision and goals in the *longer term*, at least half were uncertain about the exact nature of study in the *present*. This was expressed mostly in the language of choice and possibilities with regard to post-matric plans. A number hoped to reach clarity during their gap year. Despite ambivalence about future study, for most Glen Ridge pupils, achievement and success were clearly defined in terms of personal challenges, explicit goals and individual accomplishment. Clear strategies had been put in place to minimise failure and ensure success.

Much of the discussion in this section has focused on race and class differentiation *between* the two schools. Important to note also is the existence of differences *within* the school context. Whilst this was not observed to be the case at Ubuntu on account of the more homogenous student body, at Glen Ridge race/class differences were evident at times. During discussions about the school's image, pupils who lived in neighbouring middle class areas were far more vocal because of the school being well known in these areas. Those who lived in working class areas on the other hand had far less to say about the school's image, as Glen Ridge was not well known in their communities. The few comments that were made alluded to the school's elitism. Race/class differences also emerged in discussions about the gap year: while pupils who belonged to the middle class were able to engage realistically in gap year plans, those from the working classes related to the gap year as a dream and fantasy only. Thirdly, and most significantly, race/class differences were evident in the ways in which Glen Ridge pupils engaged in processes of subjectivation. Those who resisted the school's normative constructs of the ideal learner and were able to critically engage in re-imagining themselves were those middle class pupils who had been exposed to alternative discourses. In all three examples the direct relationship between race and class was evident: the middle class pupils to whom I refer were white while the working class learners were coloured. Important to state is that the race/class binaries alluded to here belie the reality of many coloured middle class learners at Glen Ridge. However the insights discussed here are those that emerged from the interview data, and are interesting to note within the context of the study.

In this section I have attempted to draw a connection between race and class and the schools' disciplinary mechanisms. This signalled the different ways in which the schools, and indeed the learners, engaged with notions of success. I alluded to the constitutive effects of this in terms of shaping and constraining learning subjects with respect to their projections of the future. As suggested, subalternity played out in different ways: students' responses to corporal punishment for example positioned them as subordinate within the school's system of power relations. Similarly, during discussions about their future, Ubuntu students positioned themselves as having fewer choices and possibilities than Glen Ridge pupils. At Ubuntu, discourses of aspiration on the whole pertained to the desire for upward mobility in order that support may be given to families and communities. Individual aspirations of fulfilment, meaning and stability were mostly confined to Glen Ridge students whose future dreams were laced with choice, privilege and possibility. The difference between the aspirations as experienced by the Ubuntu and Glen Ridge learners aligns with Dowling's

(2009: 177) notion of the ‘virtual community’: in the case of Ubuntu this constituted the learners’ ‘*aspired destination*’, whereas at Glen Ridge, this represented the learners’ ‘*origins and intended destination*’.

At Ubuntu, students’ subalternated positionings also became evident in their desire to *emulate* Glen Ridge students. In the following section the theme of *race and class* converges with that of *mimesis and emulation* as I consider ways in which discourses of mimicry were enlisted in both schools. These discourses did not only infuse the narratives of the learners, but pervaded the entire discursive framework of both schools, filtering through from the principals and teachers to the students.

MIMESIS AND EMULATION

In both policy texts, frequent references were made to the re-scaling from local to global. The positioning of the South African education system alongside international systems served to legitimise particular policy processes, as suggested in the following extract: “... integrated approaches toward education and training are now a major international trend in curriculum development...” (White Paper, 1995: 9). In proposing the integration of education and training, the policy located itself within the global domain. The effect of the alignment of local policies with their international counterparts was to establish credibility as South African policies emulated global policy trends.

Within the context of both Ubuntu and Glen Ridge, discourses of mimicry and emulation were appropriated in different ways. At Glen Ridge, the school mimicked the university in the preparation of its students for tertiary education – and for life in general. The absence of a school bell for example, required that students were conditioned for self-monitoring and individual responsibility. Over and above being primed for effective integration into tertiary institutions, the Glen Ridge learner was prepared for productive global citizenship. The commonly expressed desire to embark on a gap year positioned students with global options and possibilities, even though this was financially unrealistic for some.

However, the school’s engagement with quality and achievement meant that admission to university *was* a reality for the majority of Glen Ridge learners, as Raymond highlights:

... the idea is for our children to go through high school keeping as many doors open as possible. Because we believe that every single individual will get to university at some stage and we want them to be able to have as many choices as possible when they get there.

While Glen Ridge modelled itself on the university – and indeed on the world – Ubuntu modelled itself on Glen Ridge. References to, and comparisons with Glen Ridge were regularly made by Ubuntu teachers and learners. In reality however, each year between 99% and 100% of Glen Ridge matriculants achieved exemptions to study at university, as compared with the 40% of Ubuntu students (on average) who achieved exemptions each year. The large discrepancy in the academic performance of matriculants suggested that the notion of *hard work* at Ubuntu supplanted that of *education quality*. This sheds light on the distinction between *internal capacity* as demonstrated at Glen Ridge, and *externalised form*, as illustrated at Ubuntu. At Ubuntu High, teachers and students had internalised the notion that *hard work* could invoke cultural capital and that with *sufficient* hard work, they could match the ‘form’ of Glen Ridge.

The distinction between *form* and *substance* offers insight into the various disciplinary instruments that operated to construct the ‘ideal’ learner. The *presence of form* at Ubuntu, such as enforcing punctuality and attendance, shed light on the *absence of substance* such as equipping students with the skills and capacity to achieve matric exemptions in order to access university. Therefore while Ubuntu mimicked the form of what *appeared* to be a good school, there were noticeable absences in terms of substantive engagement with critical issues. Ironically while mimesis linked Ubuntu to Glen Ridge and Glen Ridge to the world, Ubuntu itself was positioned as an object of mimicry: Ubuntu’s image of ‘specialness’ in the broader community suggested that for many township youth, their aspiration was to attend Ubuntu.

In this section, I have suggested that discourses of mimicry and emulation pervaded both the Ubuntu and Glen Ridge discursive landscapes. The drive towards upward mobility and the pursuit of success required that techniques of self-regulation were activated through comparisons with those who were perceived as superior. Mimesis and emulation pervaded both schools, filtering down from teachers to students. In addition to mimicry and emulation operating *between* schools, these discourses operated *within* them, as individuals were disciplined to compete with, and emulate each other through institutionalised systems of

award. The focus on individual achievement in both schools functioned to heighten emulation as students within the same schools were incentivised to work harder so that they too could achieve recognition and success. Such practices which reinforced *individualism* pervaded the terrain of both schools, operating in opposition with discourses of the *collective*.

In the next section the discussion focuses on *individualism and collectivism* – a theme which traversed much of the analysis and which was articulated in both schools as competing discourses.

INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS THE COLLECTIVE

In the policy analysis section, the focus on individual achievement and performance shifted attention away from the collective towards personal aspirations and individual goals. Through performativity and accountability discourses, the learner was imagined in the policies as needing to be primed and capacitated to optimise individualistic attributes for the purpose of economic participation. According to Wexler (1992), within a post-school context this was translated into diminished capacities for society and the collective.

The effects of the disciplinary mechanisms at Glen Ridge and Ubuntu that pertained to practices of individualism and collectivism resonates with Bernstein's (1971) scholarship on the sociological determinants of perceptions. I draw once again on elements of Bernstein's study in support of the constitutive effects of disciplinary mechanisms.

According to Bernstein (1971: 27) one of the aims of the middle class family is "to produce a child oriented to certain values but individually differentiated within them". As such the environment in which the child is born into, is one in which the child is seen and responded to as an individual. Processes of individuation inhere in the development of the child as consciousness of the self as separate and different mark the growing child's experience. Once again, similarities are noted with regard to Foucault's work on the disciplines, in which he equates power and privilege with individualisation (1977: 192): "The more one possesses power or privilege, the more one is marked as an individual, by rituals, written accounts or visual reproductions".

The emphasis at Glen Ridge on the growth and development of the individual was evident across a spectrum of disciplinary procedures. This was particularly evident, as discussed earlier, in the disciplinary ritual of the school assembly. With regard to punishment,

individualised practices were based on structured institutionalised arrangements and scrupulous processes of deliberation. Punishment involved no direct interaction and was carefully chosen according to the individual transgression. Yet Glen Ridge students were easily able to object to specific cases of punishment if regarded as punitive or unjust. This underscored the degree to which Glen Ridge learners exercised their agency when it came to matters that affected the individual. The foregrounding of the individual was therefore evident at all levels of interaction at Glen Ridge. Across the spectrum of disciplinary technologies was the emphasis on the idea that through the opportunities offered at the school, the individual would reach his/her potential. Every aspect of the school's disciplinary apparatus was set up to produce a confident, happy, independent, fulfilled, high achieving, productive and successful individual.

At Ubuntu on the other hand, disciplinary procedures were configured around the collective, as was evident in the assemblies. Furthermore, the enforcement of punishment was mostly arbitrary and generalised. While the disciplinary procedures at Glen Ridge reflect an 'ascending individualization' (Foucault, 1977: 193), those at Ubuntu may be regarded as 'descending', as, according to Foucault, "... power becomes more anonymous and more functional". In this sense it is exercised "... by comparative measures that have the 'norm' as reference ...". Despite learners being repeatedly subjected to forms of punishment that were generically and randomly imposed, and despite structures being put in place to support representivity, students were observed on the whole not to have voiced their opinions when it came to matters of *individual* concern. Expression of agency was activated instead in situations in which the wellbeing of the *group* was threatened. Matthew illustrated this when explaining the importance of transparency, by distinguishing between individual issues and issues pertaining to the community:

... we have a very transparent set up at this school in the way we interact ... the culture of the school is such that you are quickly isolated if people suspect you of trying to act alone ...

Transparency of the system implied that institutional structures accommodated collective, rather than individual action. In fact, as Matthew suggests, those suspected of acting alone were "quickly isolated". Important to note is that in both schools discourses of individualism competed with those of collectivism, yet it was only in the context of Ubuntu that practices of collectivism were institutionally structured and implemented. This was especially noticeable with regard to student agency and representivity. The presence of a culture of collectivism at

Ubuntu shed light on its absence at Glen Ridge. Liz, a teacher, alluded to this when discussing issues regarding student representivity and transparency:

People may think things are transparent, but it's not that transparent ... they would like to say it's a very transparent, very representative school and they see it as that, whereas I don't see it as that ... if you do challenge ... it's so threatening that I mean, you can't even have a debate about it. It's too sensitive ...

In spite of differences in structures and processes, what emerged in the analysis was a strong emphasis in both schools on the individual. This supports Youdell's (2004) view regarding the prevalence of individualism within education:

The education market place is necessarily underpinned by an individualism that is now so deeply embedded in popular discourse that its broad acceptance might lead one to conceive of a hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) of individualism ... (2004: 410).

However, in the case of Ubuntu what emerged from the analysis was that the culture was both individualising and collectivising in particular ways.

In both schools, the extent to which the individual was fashioned through the schools' disciplinary mechanisms to a greater or lesser degree attests to the schools' – and the policies' - production of a particular type of learning subject. The link between the imagined individual learner, the 'disciplines' and power is illustrated by Foucault (1977: 194):

The individual is no doubt the fictitious atom of an 'ideological' representation of society; but he is also a reality fabricated by this specific technology of power that I have called 'discipline'. We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms ... In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production.

Having discussed the three broad themes that emerged from the school analysis, and relating these themes to the policy analysis, the focus now shifts to the ways in which learners in both schools positioned themselves against ideal learner constructs – and were able to enlist alternative discourses in the re-imagining of themselves.

THE LEARNER: RE-IMAGINING THE SELF

In each school the particular context determined the types of discourses that the school made available and desirable. Through the various disciplinary mechanisms, these discourses were transfused into the school's discursive terrain. In addition to exposure by the learner to the school's dominant discourses, it was evident that some pupils had access to alternative discourses which they recruited from outside of the local site of the school. The more diverse the range of available discourses, the broader was the discursive repertoire through which students were able to re-imagine themselves. Luke (1999: 27) attests to this by asserting that "[y]oung people construct complex social subjectivities from '... available discourses, relations, and practices'" (1999: 27).

Generally, as observed, it was the Glen Ridge students who were exposed to a more diverse spectrum of discourses both within and outside of the school context. Most of these pupils could resist normalising discourses and position themselves outside of commonly accepted notions of desired learner behaviour. This they did by actively engaging in a *reconfiguration* of their subjectivities. Students who were able to resist interpolation were generally those who had amassed different types of meta-narratives when speaking about themselves, and furthermore, who had greater capacity for critical engagement. Most of the Glen Ridge pupils interviewed engaged with their subjectivities within a range of "variations and subvariations" (1995: 15) as they attempted to make sense of the value and meaning of dominant discourses within the school. Rather than passively receiving these discourses, they engaged strategically and actively in negotiating and producing their subjectivities (Grosz, 1994 in O'Flynn and Petersen, 2007).

During the Ubuntu interviews it was apparent that students on the whole did not recruit alternative discourses as productively as was the case at Glen Ridge. Subjectivation was therefore delineated more overtly according to the school's version of the ideal learner. Normative constructs of hard work, discipline, respect and success remained intact as students were invested in constructing their subjectivities according to these ideals. Rather than challenge or problematise normative constructs, these ideals offered possibilities for movement *away* from working class 'township subjectivities' and *towards* middle class aspirant subjectivities with the concomitant promises of success. Although some pupils objected to certain school practices, on the whole they did not resist the school's construct of the ideal learner, but instead made every effort to fulfil ideal learner constructs. School

practices, even those considered unjust, were therefore generally accepted as they were regarded as beneficial in the fulfilment of idealised subjectivities. In this context conformity brought promise and fantasy.

At both Glen Ridge and Ubuntu, the school's dominant discourses filtered through at all levels, coalescing to inform and constrain how students could act and who they could be (Youdell, 2004). The critical difference was that at Ubuntu the link between the school's imagining of the learner and how the learner imagined him/herself was *continuous*. Unlike at Glen Ridge, Ubuntu learners did not interrupt this trajectory, but aspired to fulfil idealised notions of subjectivity constructed by, and within the school.

Values of achievement, competition and success operated in both schools as self-regulatory techniques, as young people modelled themselves on goals and planning in the case of Glen Ridge – and hopes and fantasies in the case of Ubuntu. Mechanisms were thus set up at both schools to discipline and prepare learners to take up their respective positions in the economy. Ultimately, the discursive orientation in both schools to economic participation – albeit in very different forms – signals the link to the policies selected for analysis in this study.

DISCURSIVE ORIENTATION TO ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

The importance of this discussion is that it draws together the different elements of the study, linking the imagined learner in the policy with ideal learner constructs in the schools. In this section I highlight the different ways in which learners at Ubuntu and Glen Ridge were prepared for economic participation. This is linked to the notion of the ideal learner in the policies as an individual who will take his/her place in the labour market.

At Glen Ridge the ideal student was one who excelled as an achiever and who was balanced, involved, confident, productive, aspirant, challenging and independent. The capacity for academic achievement exposed Glen Ridge students to enormous advantages and future opportunities. This involved, first and foremost, admission to university. Secondly – and more broadly – through developing individual cognition, students were capacitated to map their places locally and globally. Attributes of involvement, critical engagement, productivity and achievement oriented these students for future economic participation as proactive, creative, critical and engaged young people. Bernstein (1975: 49) suggests that the expressive

order of the school is often a "... formalization, crystallization, even idealization, of an image of conduct, character and manner reflected by some, but not all, groups in the wider society". The point made by Bernstein that is relevant here is that it is the "nature of the pupil's involvement in the expressive order of the school and the particular *form* of the school's expressive order that affects his perception and behaviour when he leaves" (1975: 49).

An important link between the Glen Ridge analysis and the policy analysis was the foregrounding of values of *success* and *productivity* as reflected in high performance. 'Appropriate' student behaviour accorded with the 'appropriate' management of schools (Scheurich, 1994: 307), as circumscribed in the policies. As Scheurich points out 'appropriate' behaviour is behaviour that is "... obedient to or congruent with current conceptions of productive citizenry". Productivity, according to Scheurich "is a code for congruence within the larger social order" (1994: 315) and is central to the neoliberal project of achievement and success (Walkerdine, 2003). Hence, as O'Flynn and Petersen (2007: 461) suggest, "the subject who masters the neoliberal repertoires of self, will most probably be recognised as more competent, marketable and desirable in a society where neoliberal discourses are dominant ...". Notions of productivity and success underscore the link between the imagined Glen Ridge learner and the imagined learner in the policies. The capacity of Glen Ridge students to engage critically with their environment – and the discourses that pervaded that environment – enabled them to question and challenge particular constructs. Through critical engagement, a quality reinforced at the school, students were more able to interrupt the multiple links in how they had been imagined, and could question and challenge this construction.

The different ways in which learners were constituted at school orientated them differently to the economy. Differences in *orientation* invariably meant different ways of *engaging* in the labour market – while Glen Ridge students were positioned as active, productive, fulfilled, directive, critical and individualistic, Ubuntu students were primed for economic participation as responsive rather than directive; reproductive rather than productive and non-critical rather than critical. This highlighted the emphasis at Ubuntu on hard work, discipline and respect, and the repetition of form rather than an engagement with substance.

While Glen Ridge students would be exposed to advantages and opportunities within the work force as a result of access to tertiary education, for many Ubuntu students, entry into the labour market represented a fantasy only.

CONCLUSION

Dominant discourses within the school reflected those in the policies, as both policy and the school were configured according to a market order. However there was no evidence to suggest direct movement from one discursive location to another. Because policy operates as a technology of governmentality it is a powerful apparatus in the configuration of the school, however policy alone does not determine the school's discursive framework. Whilst there may be a filtering through of dominant discourses from policy, the school's discursive framework is strongly related to its particular social, historical and economic context – and to the types of learners it draws into that context.

Underpinning the policy text analysis was the assertion that the predominant purpose of education was its promotion of economic efficiency, quality and productivity which is served by the efficiency, quality and productivity of the schooling system. The imagined learner was one who would take his/her place within that economic order. Key policy messages about the imagined learner as a potential source of productivity shifted in the process of translation and interpretation in the schools.

As the analysis moved from policy to the schools, what became evident was the prevalence of discourses within the school context pertaining largely to the development of young people for the world of work. However this was differently *translated* in both schools. In the case of Glen Ridge the ideal learner was imagined in complex, multifaceted ways whereas at Ubuntu the imagined learner was projected as one who would join the work force after completing his/her tertiary studies. In both contexts competing and contradictory discourses infused the construction of the imagined learner.

Messages reflecting ideal learner constructs were also *interpreted* differently by students. Mostly, at Ubuntu, prevailing imaginaries were reproduced while at Glen Ridge, dominant constructs were at times interrupted as students engaged in more complex processes of reconfiguring their subjectivities.

Despite the school existing as one of many discursive influences in the subjectivation of the learner, I hold that it remains a critical vehicle of discursive possibilities. This is especially the case in South Africa – and especially at underprivileged schools – where for the majority of young people, the school is the only opportunity for exposure to alternate discourses.

To understand the ways in which the learner has been imagined in neoliberal times is to acknowledge the constitutive effects of discourses, not by definitively rejecting them, as Foucault (1972) points out, but by disturbing the tranquillity with which they are accepted. Failure to understand neoliberal discourse at this level of subjectivation makes it more difficult to resist (O'Flynn & Petersen, 2007).

Finally, what this study suggests is that it is the task of the subject to understand the ways in which it has been imagined, and to subvert and disrupt dominant discourses that operate to regulate conduct in accordance with that imaginary. Both at the macro level of education policy, and at the individual level of school practice, the project of the self is to work within the discursive formations, to find their ruptures and expose their limitations. As Christie (2005: 240) suggests, this requires working within and against these formations:

... to find their points of fracture, their cracks and fragilities, as opportunities for engaging with resistance, as points of departure for alternative action, as places for reworking matrices and strategies of power.

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APPENDIX A: LEARNER CONSENT AND INFORMATION FORM

Dear Grade 12 Pupils and Parents/Guardians

My name is Patti Silbert and I will be doing some research at your school during 2011. The research is a significant component of my doctoral thesis, which I am undertaking at UCT.

My research study focuses on how the 'ideal learner' is imagined in national education policies and how these policy discourses are translated in the school context. My reason for wanting to interview Grade 12 pupils is so that I may construct an understanding of their perceptions of various aspects of their school experiences. This will offer an important perspective of the impact of certain discourses within the school and how pupils position themselves against these discourses.

The research component of the study involves conducting 'once-off' interviews with some of the Grade 12 pupils during the first and second terms. Interviews will be an hour in length and will take place after school, at the pupils' convenience. The interviews will be tape-recorded, and, once transcribed, will be given to the respondents to read in order to establish that the transcription accurately represents their responses. In keeping with ethics procedures of UCT, the names of the students as well as that of the school will be kept anonymous.

In order to conduct the interviews, I need permission from learners and their parents or guardians. Parents/guardians are entitled to withdraw permission at any time prior to your son or daughter's interview. If you agree to your son/daughter being interviewed, please would you AND your son/daughter complete the form below and return it to the secretary's office by the 2 March.

I, parent/guardian of (pupil's name) of
(name of the school) give permission for my son/daughter to be interviewed by Patti Silbert during the first three terms of 2011.

I have read this letter and understand the nature of the research as explained above.

I agree that:

- **As a Grade 12 learner**, I freely allow myself to be interviewed by Patti.
- **As a parent/guardian**, I allow my child to be interviewed for the purpose of the research.
- I understand that the findings will be used for research purposes and may be reported in journals and that the anonymity of the school and pupils will be preserved.
- I am free to withdraw my consent at any time.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: **Date:**

Signature of Pupil: **Date:**

Pupil's telephone number: **Email address**

Preferable interview days and times (1st term):

With thanks

Patti Silbert (Tel. 021 6892044 or 083 7892044)

APPENDIX B: PRINCIPAL AND TEACHER CONSENT AND INFORMATION LETTER

Dear Principal and Teachers

My name is Patti Silbert and I have been given permission by WCED to conduct some research at your school during 2011. The research is a significant component of my doctoral thesis, which I am undertaking at UCT.

My research study focuses on how the 'ideal learner' is imagined in national education policies and how these policy discourses are translated in the school context.

The research component of the study involves conducting 'once-off' interviews with some of the Grade 12 pupils as well as with some of the educators, deputy principals and the principal. Interviews will be an hour in length and will take place at the participants' convenience. The interviews will be tape recorded, and, once transcribed, will be given to the respondents to read in order to establish that the transcription accurately represents participants' responses. In keeping with the ethics procedures of UCT, the names of the participants as well as that of the school will be kept anonymous. In order to conduct the interviews with the pupils, I have requested written permission from the pupils and their parents. In addition to conducting learner interviews, I wish to conduct interviews with the principal as well as with some of the Matric teachers so that I may construct an understanding of different perceptions of various aspects of the school. This will offer important perspectives of the ways in which policy discourses impact on the school, and the extent to which these discourses are accommodated or resisted within the school.

The research also involves the analysis of selected school texts as well as observation of school events and functions such as assemblies, valedictory services, prize-giving and induction meetings for new parents.

I am happy to make myself available to answer any questions or discuss any aspect of my research project with you.

If you are willing to be interviewed, kindly complete the form below and return it to the secretary's office by 2 March.

I principal/teacher at (name of the school) have read this letter and understand the nature of the research as explained above.

Convenient times for interviews are (time and day of the week):

Email address or telephone number

I acknowledge that:

- I understand that the findings will be used for research purposes and may be reported in journals and that the anonymity of the school and participants will be preserved.
- I am free to withdraw my consent at any time.

Signature: **Date:**

With thanks

Patti Silbert (Tel. 021 6892044/ 083 7892044)

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

(i) Pupils:

1. Why did you choose this school?
2.
 - a. What is the school's image in the community in which you live?
 - b. What is the typical type of response you get from people when you tell them you go to this school?
3. What does the word 'success' mean to you with regard to:
 - a. your experience at school – have you had successes in the last few years? What are they?
 - b. experiences post-school?
4. What future vision do you have for yourself and where do you see yourself in ten years' time?
 - a. What has inspired or influenced this vision?
 - b. Does this involve further study? If so, where would you envisage doing so? How do you feel about going there?
 - c. Does this involve a gap year?
5. If your favourite teacher wrote a very honest reference letter for you, what do you think would be said?
6. What are your main interests? and to what extent have these been encouraged in the school?
7. If you were the principal of your school:
 - a. What would you do differently to address pupils' needs or help them develop a sense of self?
 - b. What would you do the same?
 - c. What type of pupil would you want to develop?
 - d. Do you think you're that type of person?
8. If there was an award for a grade twelve pupil who most closely represented the values and ethos of this school (as it exists), what type of person do you think would win the award?
 - a. Would you like to be that kind of person?

9. Thinking back on your high school years, can you think of a time you remember feeling deeply valued or acknowledged in terms of:
 - a. Your beliefs and values?
 - b. Your abilities?
10. Is there a time in your high school years that you remember feeling undermined or devalued in terms of (a) and (b) above?
11. a. Have you been involved in any way at your school? If so, how? If not, for what reasons?
 - b. What have you learnt from your involvement?
12. Generally speaking how would you say your school has shaped you in becoming the person you are?
 - a. How else would you have liked the school to have shaped you?
13. In what way, if any has discipline at the school helped shape you or influence you in becoming who you are?
14. What would you say is unique about this school?

(ii) Principals and teachers

1. What does your school stand for in terms of its values and ethos?
2. a. What is the school's image in your community?
 - b. What would be someone's general response when you tell them you teach at this school?
3. a. What are your criteria for selection of Grade 8 learners?
 - b. When interviewing Grade 8's what additional qualities are looked for?
4. If there was an award for a Grade 12 student who most closely represented the values and ethos of this school, what would the criteria be?
5. What personal advice would you give to students regarding career choice?
6. What does the notion of success mean to you with regard to:
 - a. The students' school experience?
 - b. Their post-matric experience?
7. a. Where on the whole do students go when they leave school?
 - b. How does your school help prepare them for this future?
 - c. About how many of the pupils opt for a gap year?

8. What role does discipline play in shaping the individual – as it is carried out at your school?
9. What would you say makes this school unique?
10. Is there a place for everyone here?

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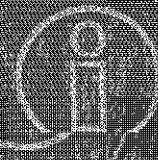
APPENDIX D: CODING OF DATA: PSEUDONYMS

RESPONDENTS		POSITION	SUBJECTS
GLEN RIDGE	UBUNTU		
Raymond Julian Clive Brian Graham Thomas Audrey Marna Liz Martin		Principal Deputy Principal Deputy Principal Head of Department Teacher School counsellor Head of Department Teacher Teacher Head of Grade 12	Maths History Physics Art History Life Orientation Geography Music Physics Life Orientation
	Matthew Vuyo Lizo Themba Dreyton	Principal Head of Department Teacher Teacher Teacher	English Xhosa Mathematics Literacy Mathematics Accountancy
STUDENTS			
GLEN RIDGE		UBUNTU	
Ayrton Kim Zubeida Chris Emma Allie Tayla Jake Scarlet Samantha Tasneem David Tyrone Gabriel Raine		Thandi Elias Altidore Amanda Sakhiwo Mbulelo Zoe Sindi Sandiswa Mbali Tina Twasa Kwezi Michael Unathi	

ADDENDUM A

Extract from the White Paper on Education and Training (DoE: 1995)

University of Cape Town



[[Home](#)] [[Documents](#)] [[White Papers](#)]

White Paper on Education and Training

Notice 196 of 1995

Department of Education

Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

Cape Town, 15 March 1995

WPI/1995

The White Paper on Education and Training hereunder is hereby published by the Department of Education.

Documents

- > Documents for public comment
- > Constitution
- > Acts
- > Bills
- > Notices
- > White Papers
- > Green Papers
- > Tenders
- > Statistical documents
- > Parliamentary documents
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- 2 [Why Education and Training?](#)

Part 2: The Reconstruction and Development of The Education and Training Programme

- 3 [Transforming the legacy of the past](#)
- 4 [Values and principles of education and training policy](#)
- 5 [Developmental initiatives](#)

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Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa

First Steps to Develop a New System

Department of Education
Pretoria
February 1995

Message From the Minister Of Education, Professor S M E Bengu

Education and training are central activities of our society. They are of vital interest to every family and to the health and prosperity of our national economy. The government's policy for education and training is therefore a matter of national importance second to none.

South Africa has never had a truly national system of education and training, and it does not have one yet. This policy document describes the process of transformation in education and training which will bring into being a system serving all our people, our new democracy, and our Reconstruction and Development Programme.

Our message is that education and training must change. It cannot be business as usual in our schools, colleges, technikons and universities. The national project of reconstruction and development compels everyone in education and training to accept the challenge of creating a system which cultivates and

liberates the talents of all our people without exception.

My Ministry is acutely aware of the heavy responsibility it bears for managing the transformation and redirection of the system of education and training within the terms of the Constitution and under severe budgetary pressure. The national and provincial Ministers have worked together increasingly closely in the Council of Education Ministers. The provincial Ministers have been carrying an exceptional load since the beginning of 1995. They and their new departments need the people's understanding and support. For its part, the national Ministry will do all it can to assist.

The actual provision of education and training under the national and provincial Ministries of Education occurs primarily in the schools, colleges, technikons, and universities. These bear the direct responsibility for managing the teaching and learning process. This includes finding practical, educationally acceptable solutions for changes which are occurring as a result of the new Constitution and the policies of the new national and provincial governments. Their environment is one of considerable uncertainty, especially while the process of review and transformation of governance structures is still under way at all levels of the system.

Having myself been an educational manager at school, college and university levels, I wish to express a special word of understanding for all those who carry management responsibilities in the education and training system during this time of transition.

I wish also to thank and commend all other roleplayers and stakeholders in the system: teachers and other educators, students, parents, religious and other community leaders, education and training NGOs, and officials in the new education departments who are charged with spearheading change. Their collective energy, expertise and commitment are formidable resources for unifying and building our new system. Our watchword should be: Let us put the learners first. If we do, I have no doubt that the students of this country will respond magnificently.

This white paper was published in draft form for consultation. Media coverage was extensive, and the response from the South African public was heart-warming. Citizens, organisations and institutions took the trouble, under a tight deadline, to make their views known, and I thank them all. They have helped us to produce a better document. What is more, they have time and again expressed their wish to help find principled and practical solutions to our country's educational needs. With this spirit, we cannot fail.

The public hearings conducted by the joint National Assembly and Senate Select Committee on Education demonstrated the keen interest taken by my parliamentary colleagues in the white paper process. I thank them for their continued interest and advice, and all the organisations which made submissions to the committees' hearings.

I believe that the discussion of the draft document has marked the beginning of a national consensus on the way forward. That is what the country needs: a principled national accord on education and training which will provide a secure platform for change and development, for widening access and raising quality.

It is essential for us to build a system of education and training with which all our people can identify because it serves their needs and interests. Such a system must be founded on equity and non-discrimination, it must respect diversity, it must honour learning and strive for excellence, it must be owned and cared for by the communities and stakeholders it serves, and it must use all the resources available to it in the most effective manner possible.

This document is the first policy document on education and training by South Africa's first democratically elected government. As the title makes clear, it represents only our first steps on a long road. My hope is that it blazes the trail of opportunity and self-fulfilment for all our citizens.

Professor S M E Bengu, MP
Minister of Education

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Message From The Deputy Minister of Education, Mr R Schoeman

I believe that the approval of an education white paper by the Government of National Unity is an essential prerequisite for the creation of an education system which is acceptable to the majority of South Africans.

The ideal, namely "excellence in education for all" and the cultivation and liberation of the talents of every young South African, is still a long way off, but we are on our way!

The road we have to travel is an uphill and rocky one - a difficult one - but the fact of the matter is that we are, as a result of a Government of National Unity and an inclusive approach in the Ministry of Education, closer than ever before to reaching a truly national consensus on the way forward in respect of education. This will dramatically increase our chances of reaching the destination of relevant, affordable, non-discriminatory, quality education for all.

As a member of the Government of National Unity I very much look forward to working hard and with enthusiasm towards this goal, within the framework of the white paper on education and training.

I sincerely hope that all South Africans will now put that which was negative in the past behind them (also in respect of education), and will use the opportunities presented by this white paper to the full, in their own interests and in the interests of

South Africa. It is a wonderful chance for a fresh start in education - let's use it to the best advantage of our country.

Renier Schoeman, MP
Deputy Minister of Education

Abbreviations Used in the Text

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AUT	University and Technikon Advisory Council
CBO	community-based organisation
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
CHED	(former) Committee of Heads of Education Departments
COTEP	Committee for Teacher Education Policy
CS	college/school
DET	(former) Department of Education and Training
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESS	Education Support Services
FEC	Further Education Certificate
FFC	Financial and Fiscal Commission
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEC	General Education Certificate
HEDCOM	Heads of Education Departments Committee
HOA	(former) House of Assembly
HOD	(former) House of Delegates
HOR	(former) House of Representatives
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICHED	(former) Interim Heads of Education Departments Committee
INSET	in-service education for teachers
LSEN	learners with special education needs

NCTE	National Council for Teacher Education
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NETF	National Education and Training Forum
NICD	National Institute for Curriculum Development
NICE	National Investigation into Community Education
NOLA	National Open Learning Agency
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SGT	(former) self-governing territories
TBVC	(former) Transkei, Boputhatswana, Venda, Ciskei states
VAT	value-added tax
UN	United Nations
Unesco	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
Unicef	United Nations Children's Fund

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A Note On Terminology: "Ministry" and "Department"

This document follows government practice in distinguishing between the Ministry of Education and the Department of Education.

The Ministry of Education comprises the Minister of Education, the Deputy Minister of Education, advisors and administrative staff.

In terms of the Constitution, a Minister is accountable personally to the President and Cabinet for the administration of his or her portfolio, and is required to administer the portfolio in accordance with the policy determined by Cabinet.

The Cabinet is required by the Constitution to "function in a manner which gives consideration to the consensus-seeking spirit underlying the concept of a government of national unity as well as the need for effective government". Thus Ministers are obliged

to seek Cabinet approval for their policy proposals, such as this document, and to ensure that approved policy is effectively executed.

The Department of Education is part of the organisational structure of the public service, which is constitutionally required to "loyally execute the policies of the government of the day in the performance of its administrative functions".

The Department of Education is headed by the Director-General, who is responsible for the efficient management and administration of the department, and is accountable to Parliament for the funds voted to the department in the budget.

The Director-General is accountable to the Minister for the execution of policy, and in practice also makes available the professional resources of the department for the development of policy as directed by the Minister.

Part 1 - Introduction

Chapter One

The Purpose and Scope of This Document

A national Ministry of Education white paper

1. This document is a "white paper" which describes the first steps in policy formation by the Ministry of Education in the Government of National Unity. It
 - o locates education and training within the national Reconstruction and Development Programme, and outlines the new priorities, values and principles for the education and training system
 - o previews important developmental initiatives on which the Ministry of Education is engaged
 - o discusses the implications of the new Constitution for the education system, especially in respect to Fundamental Rights
 - o discusses the division of functions between national and provincial governments in the field of education and training
 - o provides information about how the national and provincial departments of education are being established
 - o analyses the budget process in education, and the necessity for a strategic approach to education funding in relation to the national priority for human resource development
 - o discusses in detail two significant policy initiatives for the school system: the organisation, governance and funding of schools, and the approach to the provision of free and compulsory general education.
2. This document is published by the national Ministry of

Education with the approval of Cabinet. In preparing it, the Ministry has enjoyed substantial cooperation from the provincial Ministries of Education, and appreciates their comments and suggestions.

3. Provincial Ministers of Education have indicated that they intend to publish provincial white papers on education. Provincial white papers will perform a vital service by sharpening the focus of debates on education policy within each province. Collectively they will make an increasingly significant contribution to the development of policy for the national system as a whole.

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Policy development and strategic plans in transition

4. The development of policy has been going on in the midst of the complete reorganisation of the national education system, the dismantling of the old education bureaucracy through the establishment of new national and provincial education departments, and the acceptance of legislative competence and executive authority by provincial governments. The whole system's capacity for policy development will increase rapidly as the new national and provincial education departments take shape, and a new structure of statutory consultative bodies and development agencies is brought into existence. New policy directions will be clarified by the major investigations and reviews which have either been launched by the Ministry or are in preparation, in areas which are crucial to the reconstruction and development of the education and training system.
5. Policy is important, but execution is more important. This document is not a plan, but target dates have been indicated for important development processes which are underway. The determination and costing of medium and long-term priorities is a major task for 1995, and will be reviewed and updated annually thereafter. The new provincial Departments of Education will be partners of the national department in this exercise, because they are responsible for developing the new provincially-based information system for all education except technikons and universities. A reliable information base is a crucial requirement for a trustworthy planning process, so the current state of transition is far from satisfactory, but even provisional planning work must proceed.
6. The reorganisation of the national budget system and its link to the RDP Fund affect the capacity of all departments to undertake financial planning, which is the basis of all responsible development. The proposed shift to zero-based budgeting and multi-year projections will provide the technical basis for the clarification of development strategy and the setting of priorities and implementation targets. However, the responsibility for planning, budgeting and executing provincial education development, except for the university and technikon sectors, rests with provincial governments. The national department will be working very closely with its provincial counterparts, in order to establish the planning and budgeting framework within

which the education priorities of the Government of National Unity can be addressed.

7. The development of policy is a learning process. The Ministry of Education's policies will evolve, and they will be open to correction, not through trial and error, but on the basis of a variety of academic, professional and consultative sources of critique and advice. The national Ministry of Education will seek the cooperation of the provincial Ministries of Education, and the technikons and universities, in establishing well defined performance criteria, so that systematic internal and independent monitoring and evaluation can take place. Particular attention will be paid to the performance of the education and training system in the improvement of quality, equity, productivity (effectiveness) and efficiency.

The public response to the draft white paper

8. The vision, principles, broad lines of policy, and many specific initiatives which were proposed in the draft version of this document have been generally endorsed by most individuals, bodies and institutions from whom written submissions were received. This revised document is therefore recognisably similar to the earlier version.
9. It is also different, however, because the Ministry of Education has tried to do justice to the spirit if not the letter of the massive public response to the draft. More than six hundred submissions were received. Respondents made suggestions for improvement on almost every part of the document. Inevitably, since respondents represented the entire spectrum of political and educational opinion, they have not always conveyed the same message. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education has paid careful attention to what all respondents have said. Their advice has informed the Ministry's understanding, even if it has not always been accepted.
10. A large number of specific comments dealt with matters of detailed implementation which this document does not cover. Suggestions of this type have been reserved for consideration by the responsible implementing authorities, and many will be referred to the respective commissions or committees which will be investigating major areas of policy or of educational need in much greater detail than this document has tried to do. In fact, all contributions from the public have been filed and classified for easy access, so that they can continue to be consulted.

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Chapter Two

Why Education and Training

An integrated approach

1. The terms "education" and "training" are coupled in the

title of this Ministry of Education document, and at many points in the text. This needs explanation.

2. Training is a vital part of many learning programmes administered in schools, teachers colleges, technical colleges, technikons and universities. The Ministry of Education therefore has great interest in the training function by virtue of its own responsibilities.
3. Education and training are each essential elements of human resource development. Rather than viewing them as parallel activities, the Ministry of Education believes that they are in fact closely related. In order to maximise the benefits of this relationship, the Ministry is committed to an integrated approach to education and training, and sees this as a vital underlying concept for a national human resource development strategy.
4. An integrated approach implies a view of learning which rejects a rigid division between "academic" and "applied", "theory" and "practice", "knowledge" and "skills", "head" and "hand". Such divisions have characterised the organisation of curricula and the distribution of educational opportunity in many countries of the world, including South Africa. They have grown out of, and helped to reproduce, very old occupational and social class distinctions. In South Africa such distinctions in curriculum and career choice have also been closely associated in the past with the ethnic structure of economic opportunity and power.
5. Successful modern economies and societies require the elimination of artificial hierarchies, in social organisation, in the organisation and management of work, and in the way in which learning is organised and certified. They require citizens with a strong foundation of general education, the desire and ability to continue to learn, to adapt to and develop new knowledge, skills and technologies, to move flexibly between occupations, to take responsibility for personal performance, to set and achieve high standards, and to work cooperatively.
6. In response to such structural changes in social and economic organisation and technological development, integrated approaches toward education and training are now a major international trend in curriculum development and the reform of qualification structures. An integrated approach to education and training will not in itself create a successful economy and society in South Africa. However, the Ministry of Education is convinced that this approach is a prerequisite for successful human resource development, and it is thus capable of making a significant contribution to the reconstruction and development of our society and economy.
7. An integrated approach to education and training, linked to the development of a new National Qualification Framework (NQF) based on a system of credits for learning outcomes achieved, will encourage creative work on the design of curricula and the recognition of learning attainments wherever education and training are offered. It will open doors of opportunity for people whose academic or career paths have been needlessly blocked because their prior knowledge (acquired informally or by work experience) has not been assessed and certified, or because their qualifications have not been recognised for

- admission to further learning, or employment purposes.
8. Such concepts are not the property of the Ministry of Education alone, but are part of the emerging consensus on the importance of lifelong learning as the organising principle of a national human resource development strategy. The National Training Board, a consultative and research body which advises the Minister of Labour, has made a major contribution through its research on a National Training Strategy Initiative. This was an investigation undertaken by a task team comprising representatives of organised labour, organised business, education and training providers, and the former Department of Manpower.
 9. The concept of lifelong learning organised in terms of a National Qualification Framework, is incorporated in the human resource development strategy of the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme.
 10. In promoting an integrated approach to education and training under the NQF, the Ministry of Education does not wish to assume executive responsibility for the provision of training which falls within the competence of other Ministries.

Inter-departmental cooperation

11. The Ministers of Education and Labour have established an Inter-Ministerial Working Group to develop their common interests in an integrated approach to education and training and a National Qualification Framework, and to clarify their respective competencies with regard to training. Both sides are strongly committed to achieve these goals. The joint policy work of the Ministries of Education and Labour on this matter necessarily involves very close cooperation between the two sides, on the basis of a careful definition of where their respective interests, responsibilities, and competencies converge and diverge. The Ministry of Education recognises the Ministry of Labour's essential interest in its active labour market policy, of which the promotion of skills development outside the formal provisioning system for education and training is an integral part.
12. The Working Group includes representatives of the Departments of Education and Manpower, the National Training Board, organised business and organised labour. The Working Group recognises that the prospect of an integrated approach to education and training has alarmed some professionals in both the formal education and the skills training camps. Some training practitioners are concerned that the specific requirements of occupational skills training will be swamped by unreasonable demands for the inclusion of general or academic courses. Some educators are concerned that the intrinsic values of general or academic education will be over-ridden by a narrow vocationalism or a merely economic approach to learning.
13. To some extent, such concerns probably reflect past divisions between the education and training sectors, and may not be fully informed by the most advanced international practice in the design and assessment of learning programmes, either in industry or in educational institutions. Nevertheless, they are not unreasonable and

they need to be addressed seriously. Enabling the National Qualification Framework to be developed in an evolutionary, participatory, and consensual way, within clear policy guidelines, will be the best way of implementing the new strategy. The organised teaching profession, and the representative bodies of the university, technikon and college sectors, as major stakeholders, will be invited to become fully involved in this process.

14. The draft National Qualification Framework Bill being prepared by the Inter-Ministerial Working Group will therefore allow ample scope for the NQF to be developed from within the diverse education and training sectors, in terms of national guidelines and a mutually agreed regulatory framework, not by bureaucratic dictation from one or other department. The decisive steps to set the NQF in motion are expected to be taken early in 1995, when the Ministers of Labour and Education will consider the text of the draft Bill, and release it for general consultation.
15. The National Qualification Framework, for which the Minister of Education will accept executive responsibility in Cabinet, is envisaged as being developed and implemented on an inter-departmental basis, with fully consultative processes of decision-making, including all concerned government departments, education and training providers, and major national stakeholders in education and training. The establishment and operation of the NQF on this basis is the main strategic objective of the Ministry of Education in the development of an integrated approach to education and training.
16. Most other Ministries have responsibilities for skills development and professional training within their spheres of competence, such as Health, Agriculture, Water Affairs and Forestry, Local Government, and the Public Service. The provision and examination of professional education and training is also undertaken by many professional institutes and by a wide range of private colleges. The establishment of the NQF will enable all existing public and private sector education and training providers to assist in establishing appropriate national standards in their specialist fields through the respective accrediting bodies, and to seek recognition for their programmes in terms of such defined standards. Learners engaged in education and training under the auspices of RDP programmes will be able to earn credits towards national qualifications by so doing.

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Part 2 - The Reconstruction and Development of The Education and Training Programme

Chapter 3

Transforming The Legacy of The Past

Introduction

1. For the first time in South Africa's history, a government has the mandate to plan the development of the education and training system for the benefit of the country as a whole and all its people. The challenge the government faces is to create a system that will fulfil the vision to "open the doors of learning and culture to all". The paramount task is to build a just and equitable system which provides good quality education and training to learners young and old throughout the country.
2. This is a national task, acknowledged by the government as a fundamental priority of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). Developing the human resources of the country is both a goal of the RDP and a requirement for achieving other RDP goals. Appropriate education and training can empower people to participate effectively in all the processes of democratic society, economic activity, cultural expression, and community life, and can help citizens to build a nation free of race, gender and every other form of discrimination.

Past and future

3. In a democratically governed society, the education system taken as a whole embodies and promotes the collective moral perspective of its citizens, that is the code of values by which the society wishes to live and consents to be judged. From one point of view, South Africans have had all too little experience in defining their collective values. From another, our entire history can be read as a saga of contending moralities, which in our era has culminated in a historic agreement based on the recognition of the inalienable worth, dignity and equality of each person under the law, mutual tolerance, and respect for diversity. In the charter of Fundamental Rights and the schedule of Constitutional Principles, the 1993 Constitution expresses a moral view of human beings and the social order which will guide policy and law-making in education as in all other sectors.
4. The closing paragraphs distil the essential moral vision of the constitution-makers:

"This Constitution provides the historic bridge between the past of a deeply divided society characterised by strife, conflict, untold suffering and injustice, and a future founded on the recognition of human rights, democracy and peaceful co-existence and development opportunities for all South Africans, irrespective of colour, race, class, belief and sex. "The pursuit of national unity, the well-being of all South African citizens and peace require reconciliation between the people of South Africa and the reconstruction of society. "The adoption of this Constitution lays the secure foundation for the people of South Africa to transcend the divisions and strife of the past, which generated gross violations of human rights,

the transgression of humanitarian principles in violent conflicts and a legacy of hatred, fear, guilt and revenge. "These can now be addressed on the basis that there is need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for ubuntu but not for victimisation."

5. This vision has power because of its honesty and generosity. Frankly and without recrimination, it acknowledges past evils and conflicts, and in their place offers a national agenda of reconciliation and reconstruction, leading to national unity, well-being, and peace. The policy of the Ministry of Education takes its bearings from this vision.
6. When all South Africans won equal citizenship, their past was not erased. The complex legacies, good as well as bad, live on in the present. Difficult as it may be to do so, South Africans need to try to understand each other's history, culture, values and aspirations, not turn away from them, if we are to make the best of our common future.

Educational legacies

7. As with other basic services, the distribution of education and training provision in our country follows a pattern of contrasts and paradoxes. South Africa has achieved, by a large measure, the most developed and well-resourced system of education and training on the African continent, with the highest participation rates at all levels of the system. In the best-resourced, well-staffed, highly motivated, elite sector of the school system, almost all students succeed in their senior certificate examinations, and an impressive proportion qualify for admission to higher education. The quality of South Africa's diploma, degree, postgraduate and research output has created and sustained the country's sophisticated modern economic and financial infrastructure, industrial, business and communications technology, medical, legal, media, cultural and other professional services. In these respects South Africa compares well with other industrialising countries and seeks to match itself with the world's best.
8. At the same time, millions of adult South Africans are functionally illiterate, and millions of South African children and youth are learning in school conditions which resemble those in the most impoverished states. In the large, poorly-resourced sectors for the majority of the population, a majority of students drop out prematurely or fail senior certificate, and a small minority win entrance to higher education. Access to technological and professional careers requiring a strong basis in mathematics and science is denied to all but a fraction of the age cohort, largely because of the chronic inadequacy of teaching in these subjects.
9. Gross inequalities in educational attainment, skills, employment opportunity, productivity and income have been typical of industrialising economies in the modern era, on all five continents. In that respect, South Africa resembles many other countries, and South Africans grapple with similar needs for social justice, employment

creation, housing, primary health care, environmental protection, and educational services. Measured by international indicators of human development and economic competitiveness, South Africa's overall performance is poor because the achievements of its outstandingly well-developed elite sector are overshadowed by inadequate provision for the basic needs, including education and training, of the majority of the population. Low levels of life-expectancy, basic health and nutrition, skills and productivity are the result.

10. In these respects, our circumstances may be similar to those of many other developing or industrialising societies, but our circumstances are the result of our own history, not any other people's. The unique pattern of South African inequality and under-development has been laid down over the generations of minority rule and ethnically-based economic, labour and social development policies. The gradations between rich and poor, articulate and voiceless, housed and homeless, well-fed and malnourished, educated and illiterate, therefore mirror South Africa's complex racial and ethnic hierarchies. By every index, African communities, followed by Coloured communities, have the highest deficits in the provision of basic services, and lowest level of access to the means of providing a better quality of life.
11. The national and provincial Ministries of Education are dealing daily with the legacy of South Africa's historically separate education and training systems. The historic pattern of organisation has changed manytimes during acentury and moreof public educational provision, butfrom the viewpointof the majority of the population, it has always been the case that schools and colleges were ethnically segregated and ultimate control of funds and policy was retained by White central governments. From 1983, education was organised through the three separate "own affairs" services of the tricameral parliament, for Indians, Coloureds and Whites respectively (the latter being organised in four semi-autonomous provincial departments), with provision for the Black population being divided between six self-governing territory departments, a central government department administering education for Africans living in the "White RSA", and four nominally independent state departments. A "Department of National Education" controlled policy and budgetary allocations on behalf of the central government.
12. Until recently, all these separate systems have operated in more or less total isolation from each other, except at the level of top management. Mutual ignorance has therefore been the norm, even between teachers and administrators working virtually side by side in neighbouring systems within the same city, town or rural village. In 1995, as their educators and administrators are absorbed into new non-racial national and provincial departments, the pre-democratic ethnic departments will dissolve and their separate institutional cultures, personal networks and community relations, good and bad, face extinction.

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A transformative mission

13. The fact that South Africans have experienced different educational histories is therefore a significant factor in the transition to a single, national non-racial system. In this situation, a priority for the national and provincial Ministries of Education is to create a transformative, democratic mission and ethos in the new departments of education which can completely supersede the separate identities of the former departments. It is now the joint responsibility of all South Africans who have a stake in the education and training system to help build a just, equitable, and high quality system for all the citizens, with a common culture of disciplined commitment to learning and teaching. In this task the best expertise and experience from the old ethnic departments will be indispensable, just as all inefficient and reactionary administrative and professional practices from the past dispensations must be jettisoned.
14. Fortunately, the ministries have access not only to the best of the old departmental experience, but also to a wealth of innovative policy research, curriculum development, teaching, assessment and evaluation, in-service teacher education, educational materials production, textbooks, educational media, and practical experience in the delivery of education to neglected communities and sectors, which has been built up by educational NGOs, community-based organisations, research units, resource and training agencies, publishers, faculties of education, and schools and colleges outside the official system. These have worked for years within a non-racial, non-sexist and participatory culture, developing alternatives and supplements to what prevailed within the old departments, and preparing for the day which has now dawned.
15. In recent years, with the national compass set towards the democratic future, unprecedented investigations of national educational and training needs have been undertaken with the participation of a wide range of stakeholder organisations and agencies, at times including departments of government. The findings and recommendations have been widely disseminated and discussed. In the process, a convergence of view has emerged on many issues of fundamental importance, even if there is still principled disagreement over others, and considerable debate over questions of implementation, including the priorities to be set in the light of the limits to our resources.
16. New education and training policies to address the legacies of under- development and inequitable development and provide learning opportunities for all will be based principally on the constitutional guarantees of equal educational rights for all persons and non-discrimination, and their formulation and implementation must also scrupulously observe all other constitutional guarantees and protections which apply to education.

Acknowledgement and invitation

17. At the moment when the Ministry of Education in the first democratic South African government lays the foundations

of the new system of education and training, it is appropriate to recall, soberly and without recrimination, that education has been a deeply contested terrain from colonial times and throughout the long history of minority rule. Language, cultural and education policies have always been closely allied to the main themes of state policy. It is not surprising, therefore, that major political movements in the country's modern history have frequently been stirred by struggles for educational, language and cultural rights, in the face of overbearing state ideologies.

18. In the post-World War II period, the struggle for equal educational rights and equal citizenship became completely identified, because the denial of equal educational rights constituted a direct attack on the human dignity and life chances of the vast majority of South Africa's peoples. As a result, schools, colleges and universities became part of the arena of political mobilisation and confrontation with the security forces. Casualties numbered in the thousands, thousands were detained, thousands fled into exile. Many were killed. These statements are true, and they loom so large in recent memory that they cannot be ignored.
19. It is fitting for the Ministry of Education to pay tribute to the generations of parents, students and teachers who were willing to risk their lives, personal liberty, family life, educational progress and careers in the cause of democracy, equal rights, non-racialism, and equal education.
20. It is also fitting for the Ministry of Education to acknowledge with gratitude the selfless service of generations of educators in all communities who have exemplified the best traditions of their calling by dedicating themselves to the interests of their students, especially those who have been called upon to do so under conditions of severe inequality, hardship and danger.
21. It is also true that the culture of resistance in educational institutions created massive tensions and divisions among students, teachers, and administrators from which the country is only now beginning to emerge. Even in recent times, with a democratic government elected by all the people, abuses have taken place in educational institutions in the name of liberation, which cannot be condoned.
22. It is time to declare that a new era has dawned. In publishing this document, the Ministry of Education opens not just a new chapter but an entirely new volume in the country's educational development. The efforts of all South Africans will be needed to reconstruct and develop the national education and training system so that it is able to meet the personal and social needs, and economic challenges, that confront us as we build our democratic nation. The Ministry of Education invites the goodwill and active participation of all parents, teachers and other educators, students, community leaders, religious bodies, NGOs, academic institutions, workers, business, the media, and development agencies, in bringing about the transformation we all seek.
23. For its part, the Ministry of Education undertakes to pursue an open and transparent process of policy-making, to tell the truth about the condition of the education and training system and the problems the government encounters, and

to do everything in its power to assist those who bear the responsibility at all levels for turning the vision of a learning nation into reality.

An Education and Training Charter

24. A significant step in this direction will be taken if, in the spirit of reconciliation and reconstruction, all parties in the government and key stakeholders and roleplayers can agree to a common statement of essential goals and principles for the reconstruction, development and protection of the education and training system.
25. The Ministry of Education will shortly invite a representative group of South Africans to prepare a draft Education and Training Charter. This draft will form the basis for a country-wide consultation, out of which a revised text will be developed and agreement negotiated. The Education and Training Charter is envisaged as a solemn pact, in its own way as significant for peace and progress in our country as the Constitutional Principles on which the new Constitution will be based.

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Chapter Four

Values and Principles of Education and Training Policy

1. It is necessary to identify the values and principles which, in the view of the Ministry of Education, should drive national policy for the reconstruction and development of education and training.
2. Education and training are basic human rights. The state has an obligation to protect and advance these rights, so that all citizens irrespective of race, class, gender, creed or age, have the opportunity to develop their capacities and potential, and make their full contribution to the society.
3. Parents or guardians have the primary responsibility for the education of their children, and have the right to be consulted by the state authorities with respect to the form that education should take and to take part in its governance. Parents have an inalienable right to choose the form of education which is best for their children, particularly in the early years of schooling, whether provided by the state or not, subject to reasonable safeguards which may be required by law. The parents' right to choose includes choice of the language, cultural or religious basis of the child's education, with due regard for the rights of others and the rights of choice of the growing

child.

4. Since countless South African families are fragmented by such factors as past unjust laws, migratory labour practices, and marital breakdown, and handicapped by illiteracy from participating fully in the education of their children, the state has an obligation to provide advice and counselling on education services by all practicable means, and render or support appropriate care and educational services for parents, especially mothers, and young children within the community.
5. The over-arching goal of policy must be to enable all individuals to value, have access to, and succeed in lifelong education and training of good quality. Educational and management processes must therefore put the learners first, recognising and building on their knowledge and experience, and responding to their needs. An integrated approach to education and training will increase access, mobility and quality in the national learning system.
6. The system must increasingly open access to education and training opportunity of good quality, to all children, youth and adults, and provide the means for learners to move easily from one learning context to another, so that the possibilities for lifelong learning are enhanced. The Constitution guarantees equal access to basic education for all. The satisfaction of this guarantee must be the basis of policy. It goes well beyond the provision of schooling. It must provide an increasing range of learning possibilities, offering learners greater flexibility in choosing what, where, when, how and at what pace they learn.
7. In achieving this goal, there must be special emphasis on the redress of educational inequalities among those sections of our people who have suffered particular disadvantages, or who are especially vulnerable, including street children, out-of-school youth, the disabled and citizens with special educational needs, illiterate women, rural communities, squatter communities, and communities damaged by violence.
8. The state's resources must be deployed according to the principle of equity, so that they are used to provide essentially the same quality of learning opportunities for all citizens. This is an inescapable duty upon government, in the light of this country's history and its legacy of inequality, and it is a constitutional requirement. There must be purposeful strategies for ensuring that the system protects the rights of teachers and students to equitable treatment. Fair opportunities for training and advancement in the education service, including an affirmative action policy, are essential, in order to ensure an effective leadership cadre which is broadly representative of the population they serve. The representation of women in leadership positions must be drastically increased.
9. The improvement of the quality of education and training services is essential. In many of the schools and colleges serving the majority of the population there has been a precipitous decline in the quality of educational performance, which must be reversed. But quality is required across the board. It is linked to the capacity and commitment of the teacher, the appropriateness of the curriculum, and the way standards are set and assessed. A national qualification framework will be the scaffolding on

which new levels of quality will be built. Other quality assurance mechanisms will be developed to ensure the success of the learning process.

10. The years of turmoil have taken a heavy toll on the infrastructure of our education and training system. The relationship between schools and many of the communities they are expected to serve has been disrupted and distorted by the crisis of legitimacy. The rehabilitation of the schools and colleges must go hand in hand with the restoration of the ownership of these institutions to their communities through the establishment and empowerment of legitimate, representative governance bodies.
11. The principle of democratic governance should increasingly be reflected in every level of the system, by the involvement in consultation and appropriate forms of decision-making of elected representatives of the main stakeholders, interest groups and roleplayers. This requires a commitment by education authorities at all levels to share all relevant information with stakeholder groups, and to treat them genuinely as partners. This is the only guaranteed way to infuse new social energy into the institutions and structures of the education and training system, dispel the chronic alienation of large sectors of society from the educational process, and reduce the power of government administration to intervene where it should not. Representative governance structures do not exclude the importance of governments and institutions calling upon expert advice to supplement their own professional resources.
12. The restoration of the culture of teaching, learning and management involves the creation of a culture of accountability. This means the development of a common purpose or mission among students, teachers, principals and governing bodies, with clear, mutually agreed and understood responsibilities, and lines of cooperation and accountability.
13. The realisation of democracy, liberty, equality, justice and peace are necessary conditions for the full pursuit and enjoyment of lifelong learning. It should be a goal of education and training policy to enable a democratic, free, equal, just and peaceful society to take root and prosper in our land, on the basis that all South Africans without exception share the same inalienable rights, equal citizenship, and common national destiny, and that all forms of bias (especially racial, ethnic and gender) are dehumanising.
14. This requires the active encouragement of mutual respect for our people's diverse religious, cultural and language traditions, their right to enjoy and practice these in peace and without hindrance, and the recognition that these are a source of strength for their own communities and the unity of the nation.
15. Education in the arts, and the opportunity to learn, participate and excel in dance, music, theatre, art and crafts must become increasingly available to all communities on an equitable basis, drawing on and sharing the rich traditions of our varied cultural heritage and contemporary practice.
16. The education system must counter the legacy of violence by promoting the values underlying the democratic process

and the charter of fundamental rights, the importance of due process of law and the exercise of civic responsibility, and by teaching values and skills for conflict management and conflict resolution, the importance of mediation, and the benefits of toleration and co-operation. Thus peace and stability will become the normal condition of our schools and colleges, and citizens will be empowered to participate confidently and constructively in social and civic life.

17. The curriculum, teaching methods and textbooks at all levels and in all programmes of education and training, should encourage independent and critical thought, the capacity to question, enquire, reason, weigh evidence and form judgments, achieve understanding, recognise the provisional and incomplete nature of most human knowledge, and communicate clearly.
18. Curriculum choice, especially in the post-compulsory period, must be diversified in order to prepare increasing numbers of young people and adults with the education and skills required by the economy and for further learning and career development.
19. An appropriate mathematics, science and technology education initiative is essential to stem the waste of talent, and make up the chronic national deficit, in these fields of learning, which are crucial to human understanding and to economic advancement.
20. Environmental education, involving an inter-disciplinary, integrated and active approach to learning, must be a vital element of all levels and programmes of the education and training system, in order to create environmentally literate and active citizens and ensure that all South Africans, present and future, enjoy a decent quality of life through the sustainable use of resources.
21. Two operational principles-sustainability and productivity-are given strong emphasis in the Reconstruction and Development Programme. They need to be upheld in the development of plans and programmes for the reconstruction and development of the education and training system.
22. The expansion of the education and training system must meet the test of sustainability. The education and training system has not been given an open cheque book by the government. Development needs to be planned for, and balanced across the full range of needs, from early childhood to postgraduate study. Unsustainable development is not development at all, but a kind of fraud practised on the people. However, sustainability is not just a financial concept. True sustainability occurs when the people concerned claim ownership of educational and training services and are continuously involved in their planning, governance and implementation.
23. The system of education and training, taken overall, has developed many areas of inefficiency, where funds are wasted and staff are not well employed. The productivity of the system-what it produces in terms of personal learning, marketable skills, and examination results, in relation to what it has cost-is very low in much of the system. Improving efficiency and productivity is essential in order to justify the cost of the system to the public, to secure more funds for development when they are needed, to raise the quality of performance across the system, and

thus improve the life chances of the learners.

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Chapter Five

Developmental Initiatives

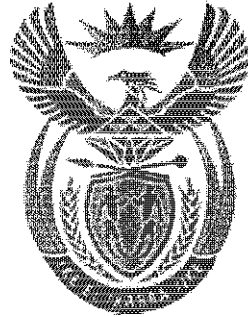
Introduction

1. The government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is designed as an integrated, coherent socioeconomic policy framework. The main theme of the RDP's human resource development programme is the empowerment of people, through education and training, including specific forms of capacity-building within organisations and communities, to participate effectively in all the processes of democratic society, economic activity, cultural expression and community life.
2. All Ministries are expected to re-orient their programmes and budgets in accordance with RDP priorities. From one perspective, the entire work of the national and provincial Ministries of Education supports the objectives of the RDP, since education and training are by definition developmental. From another perspective, the education and training sector requires transformation like any other, because of the structural imbalances in provision, funding, quality and output, the need to deliver education services to neglected adult, youth and early childhood constituencies, to rewrite curricula and textbooks, link schooling and the world of work, restructure governance systems, upgrade the professional competence of teachers, gear learning outcomes to the country's reconstruction and development agenda, and much more.
3. These vast needs cannot be met all at once or satisfied in a short period. The Ministry of Education does not have a free hand, a clean slate, or a blank cheque with which to plan and implement the future. The need for a strategic plan, including both general and specific targets, is difficult to deny. In principle, a well-founded plan would enable efforts and resources to be concentrated, and would help prevent national and provincial ministries being swept along on a tide of immediate and perhaps unrelated or conflicting demands and crisis-management decisions.
4. Macro-planning exercises up to now have been focused primarily on the rationalisation of the system, organisational development, broad policy, and interim curriculum reform, since the entire organisational, institutional, financial and legal infrastructure of the national education system has been in flux since May 1994. Departmental capacity for strategic planning has been limited, and the new education information system and data base are still being constructed.
5. The developmental initiatives in this chapter, which together comprise a large part of the Ministry of Education's main policy agenda for the reconstruction and development of the system, will be brought within the

ADDENDUM B

Extract from the Whole-school Evaluation Policy (DoE: 2001)

University of Cape Town



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GOVERNMENT NOTICE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

No. 695

26 July 2001

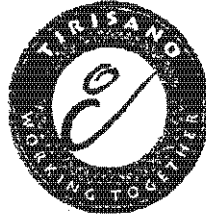
NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY ACT, 1996 (ACT NO. 27 OF 1996)**POLICY ON WHOLE-SCHOOL EVALUATION.**

I, Kader Asmal, Minister of Education, hereby determine national policy in terms of *Section 3(4)(l) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996)*, relating to curriculum frameworks, core syllabuses and education programmes, learning standards, examinations and the certification of qualifications, that the policy on Whole-School Evaluation (Schedule 1) be declared national policy.

I further give notice in terms of *Section 7* of the said Act that this policy is obtainable upon written request from the Director-General, Department of Education, Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001. For attention Dr N Mgijima at telephone (012) 312-5118/9 or fax 012 326 2191.

Professor Kader Asmal, MP
Minister of Education

Schedule 1



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE NATIONAL POLICY ON WHOLE-SCHOOL
EVALUATION

University of Cape Town

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MINISTER'S FOREWORD

Assuring quality of the education system is the overriding goal of the Ministry of Education. This National Policy on Whole-School Evaluation introduces an effective monitoring and evaluation process that is vital to the improvement of quality and standards of performance in schools. The adopted model is radically different from the previous school inspection system carried out in South Africa under the apartheid regime. Together with the accompanying guidelines, this Policy prescribes an approach that is built upon interactive and transparent processes. These processes include school self-evaluation, ongoing district-based support, monitoring and development and external evaluations conducted by the supervisory units.

The Policy places particular emphasis on the need to use objective criteria and performance indicators consistently in the evaluation of schools. Recognising the importance of schools as the place in which the quality of education is ultimately determined, focus is primarily on the school as a whole rather than simply on individuals and their performance. The multi-sources of evidence that are used, will enable valid and reliable judgements to be made and sound feedback to be provided both to schools and to the decision-makers. The findings must be used to re-orientate efforts towards improving the quality and standards of individual and collective performance. They should complement other initiatives to improve the work of schools, such as developmental appraisal for educators. This makes the model less punitive and more supportive, with a feedback mechanism that enables schools and their support structures to agree on improvement targets and developmental plans.

Throughout the development of this Policy and its accompanying documentation, the Ministry has enjoyed the co-operation and support of many interest groups, education authorities, organisations and our provincial colleagues. I would like to thank all of them.

Professor Kader Asmal, MP
Minister of Education
June 2001

SECTION 1

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 For many years, there has been no national system of evaluating the performance of schools, and there is no comprehensive data on the quality of teaching and learning, or on the educational standards achieved in the system. As a result, the National Policy for Whole-School Evaluation is being introduced. This complements other quality assurance initiatives conducted under the aegis of systemic evaluation, namely; accreditation of providers, programme and service reviews and monitoring learning achievements. It should also align with Developmental Appraisal for Educators so that educators are confident that the features of good practice sought in whole-school evaluation are the same as those encouraged through appraisal and development programmes.
- 1.1.2 The National Policy on Whole-School Evaluation has been designed to ensure that school evaluation is carried out according to an agreed national model. It sets out the legal basis for school evaluation, its purposes, what is to be evaluated and who can carry out evaluations. It also provides guidance on how evaluation should be conducted. It further sets out how the evaluation process should be administered and funded. The Policy indicates ways in which very good schools should be recognised and under-performing schools supported. It makes clear the links between those at national and provincial level who are responsible for the quality of education, and supervisors, schools and local support services.
- 1.1.3 This Policy is aimed at improving the overall quality of education in South African schools. It seeks to ensure that all our children are given an equal opportunity to make the best use of their capabilities. As a process, whole-school evaluation is meant to be supportive and developmental rather than punitive and judgmental. It will not be used as a coercive measure, though part of its responsibility will be to ensure that national and local policies are complied with. Its main purpose is to facilitate improvement of school performance through approaches characterised by partnership, collaboration, mentoring and guidance. The Policy also contains a built-in mechanism for reporting findings and providing feedback to the school and to various stakeholders - the National and Provincial Education Departments, parents and society generally - on the level of performance achieved by schools.
- 1.1.4 The Policy is supported by national guidelines, criteria for evaluation, and instruments that have to be used by trained and accredited supervisors in order to ensure consistency in the evaluation of schools. These also provide the means by which schools can carry out self-evaluation and so enter into a fruitful dialogue with supervisors and support services.

- 1.1.5 Whole-school evaluation is not an end in itself, but the first step in the process of school improvement and quality enhancement. The National Policy on Whole-School Evaluation is designed to achieve the goal of school improvement through a partnership between supervisors, schools and support services at one level, and national and provincial governments at another.
- 1.2 Education policy and legislative context**
- 1.2.1 The transformation of education in South Africa emphasises the right of all to quality education (Education White Paper, 1995). The first intent is to redress the discriminatory, unbalanced and inequitable distribution of the education services of the apartheid regime, and secondly to develop a world-class education system suitable to meet the challenges of the 21st century.
- 1.2.2 According to the National Education Policy Act (No.27 of 1996), the Minister is mandated to direct that standards of education provision, delivery and performance are monitored. Evaluations need to be carried out under the aegis of the National Department annually or at specified intervals, with the object of assessing progress in complying with the provisions of the constitution and with national education policy. This Act also specifies that, should the evaluation reveal that a province is not complying with the provisions of the constitution or national education policy, the Political Head of Education in the affected province has to account to the Minister in writing within 90 days.
- 1.2.3 Similarly, the Assessment Policy, gazetted in December 1998, provides for the conducting of systemic evaluation at the key transitional stages, viz. Grade 3, 6 and 9. The main objective is to assess the effectiveness of the entire system and the extent to which the vision and goals of the education system are being achieved.
- 1.2.4 Also, the Further Education and Training (FET) Act (No.98 of 1998), makes it obligatory for the Director-General, subject to the norms set by the Minister, in terms of the National Education Policy Act, to assess and report on the quality of education provided in the FET Band.
- 1.2.5 The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995, requires that Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) bodies be established for the purpose of monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of national standards and qualifications.
- 1.2.6 In line with the above legal provisions, this Policy elaborates on the responsibilities of the Minister with regard to the conduct of whole-school monitoring and evaluation. It confirms that external whole-school evaluation is an integral part of the new quality assurance approach.
- 1.2.7 The shift in terminology from 'inspection' to 'whole-school evaluation' is important. Whole-school evaluation encapsulates school self-evaluation as well as external evaluation. It also provides for schools to receive advice and support in their continual efforts to improve their effectiveness. It does not interfere in any way with existing

activities and agreements, for example, Systemic Evaluation and the Developmental Appraisal System. Part of its purpose is to evaluate the effectiveness with which such initiatives are being implemented and provide information aimed at strengthening their contribution to educational improvement.

- 1.2.8 The focus is on both internal monitoring and external evaluation, i.e. self-evaluation by the school and external evaluation by the supervisory units, and the mentoring and support provided by the district-based support teams.

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SECTION 2

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE POLICY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The principal aims of this Policy are also integral to the supporting documents, the guidelines and criteria. They are to:

- (a) Moderate externally, on a sampling basis, the results of self-evaluation carried out by the schools;
- (b) Evaluate the effectiveness of a school in terms of the national goals, using national criteria;
- (c) Increase the level of accountability within the education system;
- (d) Strengthen the support given to schools by district professional support services;
- (e) Provide feedback to all stakeholders as a means of achieving continuous school improvement;
- (f) Identify aspects of excellence within the system which will serve as models of good practice and;
- (g) Identify the aspects of effective schools and improve the general understanding of what factors create effective schools.

2.2 Whole-school evaluation and quality assurance

2.2.1 Whole-school evaluation is the cornerstone of the quality assurance system in schools. It enables a school and external supervisors to provide an account of the school's current performance and to show to what extent it meets national goals and needs of the public and communities. This approach provides the opportunity for acknowledging the achievements of a school and for identifying areas that need attention. Whole-school evaluation implies the need for all schools to look continually for ways of improving, and the commitment of Government to provide development programmes designed to support their efforts.

2.2.2 Effective quality assurance within the National Policy on Whole-School Evaluation is to be achieved through schools having well-developed internal self-evaluation processes, credible external evaluations and well-structured support services.

2.3 Principles

2.3.1 The Policy is based on the following principles:

- (a) The core mission of schools is to improve the educational achievements of all learners. Whole-school evaluation, therefore, is designed to enable those in schools, supervisors and support services to identify to what extent the school is adding value to learners' prior knowledge, understanding and skills;
- (b) All members of a school community have responsibility for the quality of their own performance. Whole-school evaluation intends to enable the contribution made by staff, learners and other stakeholders to improve their own and the school's performance, to be properly recognised;
- (c) All evaluation activities must be characterised by openness and collaboration. The criteria to be used in evaluating schools, therefore, must be made public;
- (d) Good quality whole-school evaluation must be standardised and consistent. The guidelines, criteria and instruments must ensure consistency over periods of time and across settings;
- (e) The evaluation of both qualitative and quantitative data is essential when deciding how well a school is performing. For this reason, whole-school evaluation is concerned with the range of inputs, processes and outcomes. These are associated with, for example, staffing and physical resources, human and physical, the quality of leadership and management, learning and teaching, and the standards achieved by learners;
- (f) Staff development and training is critical to school improvement. A measure used by whole-school evaluation in judging a school's performance is the amount and quality of in-service training undertaken by staff and its impact on learning and standards of achievement. In this way whole-school evaluation will make an important contribution to securing well-focused development opportunities for school staff;
- (g) Schools are inevitably at different stages of development. Many factors contribute to this. A basic principle of this policy is to seek to understand why schools are where they are and to use the particular circumstances of the school as the main starting point of the evaluation. The policy recognises that schools in disadvantaged areas, for example, must not be disadvantaged in terms of whole-school evaluation.

2.4 Approach

- 2.4.1 The approach is designed to help schools measure to what extent they are fulfilling their responsibilities and improving their performance. The means of achieving this are through: