

**REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS: A  
CASE STUDY IN FACILITATING  
TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN FOUR  
AFRICAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN  
CAPE TOWN**

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The pre-schools and primary schools are fundamental in any modern educational system since the children's mould is set in these early years. Hence, primary school teachers ought to occupy pride of place in any training or retraining programme. (Alexander, 1990:169)

In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a high, hard ground overlooking a swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solution through the application of research-based theory and technique. In the swampy lowlands, messy, confusing problems defy technical solution. The irony of this situation is that the problems of the high ground tend to be relatively unimportant to individuals or society at large, however great their technical interest may be, while in the swamp lie the problems of greatest human concern. The practitioner must choose. (Schon, 1987:3).

## ABSTRACT

The thesis is an action research study of the work of a university-based facilitator and a total of 34 teachers from four african primary schools in Cape Town between 1987 and 1989. The study is premised on the argument that teachers are important in developing quality schooling, and that teachers should be active producers of pedagogical knowledge, shaping the curriculum through their engagement in a process of reflection-on-practice.

It examines a relatively underresearched area in action research studies - namely the role of the facilitator in the process of educational change. The reflective practitioners of the thesis title are both the university-based facilitator conducting 'second-order' action research into her own educational practice, and the 'first order' reflective practice of the teachers which the facilitator tried to encourage. Both levels of reflection shape and are shaped as facilitator and teachers explore together the limits and possibilities of curriculum development. The second order research thus: informs the facilitator's action with teachers; generates practical knowledge for INSET; contributes to knowledge of staff development processes; contributes to the general literature on action research; and also provides a comparative dimension for those working in developing countries.

The study outlines the historical and political context shaping educational work in schools between 1987 and 1989, including an account of the nature of intellectual production at african teachers' colleges. It highlights two key dilemmas in the facilitator's practice - the dilemma of democratic vs directive practice, and the dilemma of only reforming the form and content of the curriculum vs the transformation of teaching. The study found that a recessive role for the facilitator was not appropriate where bantu education has severely limited teachers' exposure to alternative ideas of teaching and learning. The tension was for the facilitator to learn how to share expertise within a participatory framework in which teachers would take responsibility for their own learning. The study explains how teachers changed, or failed to change, in the areas of new methods, new materials and changing pedagogical assumptions - and the influence of the facilitator's interventions in all this. The limits of technical knowledge divorced from critical thinking, and the limits of emancipatory knowledge without technical skills are revealed in the work of both the facilitator and the teachers. A more nuanced reading of the reform-transformation dilemma, arising from the concrete experience of participants in this study, is suggested. Action research is evaluated as a project of possibility, both for teachers and for teacher-educators to research their own practice in pre- and in-service work. Based on the findings generated by this study, suggestions are made for democratic and reflective forms

of INSET for teachers, as a contribution to the reconstruction of education in a democratic South Africa.

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## INTRODUCTION

### The importance of primary education

The crisis in South African education is endemic. Struggles around bantu education<sup>1</sup> over the last fifteen years in particular have been characterised by prolonged school boycotts, violent clashes between school students and the police and army, and the widespread arrest and detention of students. The result has been a virtual breakdown of schooling in urban african high schools and the collapse of a 'learning culture'. What is absolutely clear is that bantu education has failed, and continues to fail to meet, the educational aspirations of students and their parents. What is less clear is how we might address the appalling educational legacy of a system designed deliberately to stifle the intellectual development of generations of students, many of whom have gone on to train as teachers.

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1. A note on terminology is needed. The South African government divides people according to 'racial' categories which are unacceptable to the mass of South Africans. The terms african, coloured, white and indian are used in this study for practical reasons to refer to these social groups. The use of lower case is deliberately used to indicate that these are imposed ethnic categories with no legitimacy in everyday life. The term 'bantu education' dates from the 1950s when africans were labelled 'bantu' - a term regarded as highly derogatory. In time this was changed by the state to 'african'. The term now used by the state to refer to africans is 'black'. But the label bantu education (and not 'black education' as used by the state) has been retained in this thesis as a statement on the origins and inferior quality of this system. Chapter two outlines the history of bantu education. Finally it should be noted that the term 'black' is used as a political term in this study to refer collectively to all the oppressed - africans, coloureds and indians.

This has become even more urgent in the wake of the opening of political space since February 1990. The discourse around education has begun to shift from a discourse of critique to one of addressing the reconstruction of education for a post-apartheid democratic South Africa. Although the Primary Education Project (PREP) in which I was involved was conceived in 1986 and undertaken in Department of Education and Training (DET)<sup>2</sup> schools from 1987-1989, it was informed by strategies of engagement and possibility, not dissimilar from the emerging discourse of reconstruction:

We think that we need to build now in our schools for what we want later. We do not believe that we can set aside the educational needs of a generation of students to some future time. Schools can, we think, be sites of change. So we need to think seriously about what kind of programme might be developed to help deepen the understandings of pupils and teachers in the schools now, of what is educationally possible within current school frameworks, and so empower them to realise education in their practice. (PREP Preamble, 1986:7)

In order 'to build tomorrow today' (Friedman, 1987), myself, as the university-based researcher, and african teachers in four urban schools, explored what was educationally possible within current school frameworks, overlaid with a vision that looked beyond the immediate to a different future. This study of educational change demonstrates that improving the quality of education is not impossible. But it is also hard, slow and difficult work.

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2. Under apartheid laws, South african schools are 'racially' segregated and controlled by a number of different education authorities. The DET controls education for africans, excepting in the 'homelands'. It should be noted that there have been moves in 1991 to open up formerly white schools to limited numbers of black pupils.

My research has been informed by a strong commitment to the importance of primary education in South Africa. As new educational policies are shaped, choices regarding priorities in education in a post-apartheid South Africa will obviously have to be made. But it is never sufficient to ask only 'What should we do?', but rather always necessary to specify what we should do first (Hawes, 1979). If, as Carnoy (1982) argues, investment in primary schooling can play a crucial role in the redistribution of income to low earners, then it would seem vital to concentrate state resources in primary education - in resourcing and building schools, in curriculum and teacher development and in educational research - to redress the massive inequalities that exist. Furthermore, as Neville Alexander pointed out in a recent paper, what happens in any modern, relatively industrialised country 'is to a large extent determined by what is taught (or is not taught)' in the primary and pre-primary sectors (Cape Times 15/1/91). Primary education is terminal for the majority of pupils at present, and likely to remain so in the short to medium term future. It bears repeating then, that a major priority should therefore be our commitment to quality primary education for all. Such an education would include critical literacy for citizenship in a democratic society, the skills for continuing education beyond formal schooling, and the skills and values for economic development in the interests of all South Africans, both at the level of the local community, and nationally.

Central to this study is the argument that teachers and teacher development are crucial for changes in classroom practice and the reconstruction of quality primary education. Yet little official encouragement is presently given to teachers who work for the DET to improve their work, apart from short courses organised by the education authorities themselves. Such courses, which teachers are 'instructed' to attend, are largely perceived as useless and irrelevant by the teachers, and disruptive and divisive by principals, who neither have a say in the timing of such In-Service Teacher Education (INSET), nor a voice in which teachers attend. This is further complicated by the prevailing conservative ethos of fundamental pedagogics in pre-service colleges explored in chapter three, and the problematic quality overall of such training. As we shall explore further in section four, african primary school classrooms today are mostly dominated by the same teacher-talk, recitation, and drill and practice which the teachers themselves experienced as pupils. Nor should one underestimate how early primary school pupils internalise these dominant patterns of teaching. The point is that current practices are deeply entrenched. Not surprisingly, teacher-educator Ruth Versfeld, finds that practising teachers struggle to think creatively about their work. 'They need to dare to think, and to get their kids to dare to think', she has declared (interview 20/7/90).

Nor should one be surprised that teachers generally perceive structural change - i.e. a single education system - as the

answer to their problems. In other words, when apartheid goes, everything that is now wrong with the schools will be set to rights. Yet as Brian O'Connell, rector of a coloured teachers' college, says, 'we underestimate the power of practice' (interview 25/7/90). What O'Connell means by this is the resilience of existing teaching practice to continue undisturbed by structural changes, such as the syllabus and the resourcing of schools. Similarly, Soraya Abass, from the progressive children's magazine, Molo Songololo, says that 'apartheid education has affected the way people teach today, whether we acknowledge it or not' (interview 14/8/90). More than different content is needed to transform primary school classrooms. Clearly all this raises important questions about how teachers might transform their classroom practice in a context where questions of practice have mostly been pushed into the background as struggles over education have focussed on the more urgent political question of control. This is not, however, to effect a false dichotomy between structural change and classroom change. Rather, the point is, that in building 'the new school', we should be careful not to confuse the power to effect change with the processes of change. In the end, changes in formal education must, as Thompson emphasises, 'mean changes in what goes on in the classroom, or they mean nothing' (1981:159).

Post-apartheid teachers will not simply 'break out' in the event of democratic political change. As Williamson reminds us, education 'is so heavily conditioned by constraints and

compromises of the past that it has to be seen as reproducing three societies simultaneously, the past, the present and the future' (1979:208). Furthermore, emerging research on developing countries shows that educational quality and not only quantity (number of years) 'strongly shapes academic achievement and eventual economic returns to educational investments' (Fuller, 1986:491). In other words, returns on investment in schooling depend on the actual learning that occurs, rather than simply the number of years of schooling. Nor should it be assumed that improvement in quality automatically parallels school expansion.

Any strategy for transforming primary education thus will have to recognise the disabling reality for thousands of practising teachers of the legacy of apartheid education generally, and bantu education in particular. A former township primary school teacher, now lecturing at a teachers' college, said:

I don't think teachers are well trained to do what they are doing. I don't think they get enough to go on because if you look at primary teachers, that teacher has to teach in english, and it's not mother tongue for the teacher or the pupils and that teacher hasn't been given enough training to teach english, so we're getting something third grade. So definitely you can't expect good results from the children because the teachers aren't confident and well trained. (interview 26/7/90)

Improving the quality of primary education means not only transforming current pre-service training, but more than this, the reeducation of thousands of teachers already in the schools. Taking teachers into account in the process of

change means firstly understanding what has shaped teachers' classroom practice and what it means for teachers to begin changing that practice. This study argues that democratic and participatory forms of INSET, in which teachers are participants in change, rather than users or implementers of 'teacher-proof' curricula, should be developed. But people have to be convinced of the need to change and shown how to change, especially in the context of a culture which views teachers as uncritical receivers and implementers of an official curriculum. While this does not necessarily mean that teachers will determine for themselves how best to organise curricula, it does imply that 'unless their perspectives are adequately taken into account, changes in practice are unlikely to be effectively implemented or have a substantial impact on outcomes' (Lewin, 1985:126). In the end, the quality of learning in classrooms is closely related to 'the enthusiasm, commitment and understanding of the average teacher working under much less than ideal circumstances' (Lewin, 1985:132).

Education for democracy, as well as the democratisation of the control of education, should be integral goals in the transformation of primary education, according to the principles underpinning people's education outlined in chapter two. At one level, education for democracy means that social policies should be decided by all those involved, in a context where people have genuine access to political power. Yet it does not necessarily follow that achieving participatory democracy in the organisation of

education will be an easy or even rapid process. What it does mean is that it is an ideal worth pursuing, given the educative potential of the practice of democracy. Thus, Raymond Williams argues for the importance of 'collective activity and self-organisation' in offering 'repeated evidence of practical possibility' (1980:263). Education must itself be organised democratically in schools and classrooms if it is to prepare young people for life in a democracy. As Spaulding puts it: 'Perhaps, in the long run, if education can better prepare young people for more intelligent and constructive participation in the democratic process, this may be the most significant contribution that it can hope to make' (1988:16).

But this raises again the problem of teachers' own apartheid education. Teachers, as much as their pupils, should be encouraged to work collectively and to enter into educative relationships with one another (Gitlin and Smyth, 1989). In the end teachers who are not themselves critical and creative thinkers, committed to collective work and building a participatory democracy, will find it difficult to facilitate these processes in their own classrooms. Equally, however, teachers who do not experience democratic and participatory activities in their own pre- and in-service education will hardly be well prepared to work in this way with pupils. In Tanzania, for example, while teachers were seen as the 'apostles' of Education for Self-Reliance, their own personal and professional education had been acquired in the context of values which rewarded

individual initiative and competitive behaviour. All this militated against their adoption of more democratic classroom practices (Urch, 1989).

### **The design of the Primary Education Project**

The project out of which this study emerged, had its origins in a two-week visit to the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Town (UCT) in February 1986, by Charles Hull, a British researcher. Hull had been invited by Wendy Flanagan, senior lecturer in primary education, to give lectures and run workshops for students and teachers on action research, which then had a small but enthusiastic band of advocates in the faculty, myself included. Briefly, action research, in the context of education, involves teachers and teacher-educators researching their own practice, adopting a critical and questioning stance in order to improve the teaching and learning in their institutions. Although I had not yet undertaken an action research study myself, I had helped edit a collection of papers on action research (Flanagan, Breen and Walker, 1984). I had also co-authored a conference paper 'Classroom Action Research' in 1984 (Flanagan and Walker, 1984). The conclusion to this paper captures my enthusiasm at that time for the potential of action research:

We believe too, that at last there is a mode of research which recognises the centrality of the teacher and offers him/her the opportunity to reflect critically on his/her classroom practice. We are optimistic that this form of research has the potential to generate progressive change in South African classrooms. (Flanagan and Walker, 1984:8)

Charles Hull had been involved for several years with the Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) at the University of East Anglia, one of the leading centres for the intellectual and practical development of action research in schools. Appalled by the lack of material resources and the overcrowded classrooms of primary schools in local african townships<sup>3</sup>, he was nonetheless interested in exploring the possibilities of working with teachers in these schools to contribute to change in education. While making no grand claims that individual teacher research might in itself reform schooling, he had earlier concluded that:

It is a means by which the constraints of these infrastructures on the radical possibility of authentic education can be locally resisted...teacher-pupil action research may offer a gateway to that authenticity of dialogue between teacher and learner which is the prerequisite of education. (1985a:19)

Hull believed that the process of action research might contribute not only to non-impositional change in classroom practice but also to a wider problematising of 'schooling' and 'education'. This thesis is therefore in part an investigation of whether Hull's beliefs were accurate for the South African context.

My own educational experience at that time included several years of teaching history, and english as second language, in two local coloured secondary schools. During my time at

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3. According to the Group Areas Act, urban areas are divided into separate 'group' areas for people classified white, coloured, indian and african by the state. African townships are always located on the outskirts of the cities, as far as possible from white suburbs. New legislation in 1991 looks set to abolish the Group Areas Act.

school I had carved out considerable space for myself to experiment with innovative methods and materials. I was a confident and successful teacher, I believed, and was convinced that space existed within apartheid schooling, including african schools, to work towards a future democratic and non-racial alternative. Further working experience included two years lecturing in history education for primary and secondary pre-service teachers in the Education Faculty at UCT from 1983 to 1984, and a contract post in 1986 to develop alternative curriculum materials, mainly for secondary schools.

Teaching had been a politically educational experience for me as well. In 1980 pupils at Western Cape coloured secondary schools embarked on a prolonged schools boycott. For the first time I was involved with political action first hand. Working with students to develop awareness programmes deepened my own understanding of how the form and content of education relates to the interests of the dominant class in South African society. I gained first hand experience of the consequences of a political challenge to the education authorities too. Following my work with, and support for students in 1980, in 1981 I was employed on the basis of three month contracts, being forced every term to reapply for my job and being further victimised by having to wait for my salary cheque, which invariably failed to arrive. More seriously, at the end of 1985 I was dismissed, together with a number of other teachers, for refusing to administer end of year examinations in the presence at

school of the army and the police. That same year, during the extended school boycott, I had been active in the establishment of a new democratic teachers' union, the Western Cape Teachers' Union (WECTU).

This brief account of aspects of my educational autobiography is important in explaining both the educational and political skills I had to offer, as well as some of the preconceptions arising from my own experience as a teacher that I was to bring to my work with african teachers. Because action research involves evaluating oneself, one cannot exclude those experiences which help explain why one acted in one way rather than another. Allied to this is the question of the researcher's own reflexivity - an issue I take up in chapter one.

It seemed appropriate that Charles Hull and I meet to pool our ideas - his own experience of action research projects in England, my understanding of the possibilities of the local context. Both of us, from our different positions, were committed to finding ways forward in the context of an endemic crisis in african schooling. Thus in the course of intensive discussions, Hull and I sketched a possible project to involve teachers in township schools in processes of curriculum development and professional learning. Before he returned to England we divided the work of fleshing out the rough framework into a coherent project proposal.

Thus Charles Hull's experience of action research projects at CARE (see for example Hull et al, 1985), and my lack of similar practical action research experience, meant that his ideas significantly shaped the project design. Furthermore, the project proposal underestimated the very different context of local township schools from those in England. For example, until the recent advent of the National Curriculum, teachers in English state schools have had a great deal of professional autonomy regarding the curriculum.<sup>4</sup> And because of the academic boycott, the Education Faculty had been largely isolated from personal contact with educational action researchers abroad. All this combined to deepen Hull's influence on the project design.

The primary aim of the project we sketched was 'to test the feasibility of action research as a means to support practising teachers who seek to improve the educational provision in which they work'. The draft document (May 1986) stated that the role for the university team was 'one of guidance, support and facilitation - not direction - of the teachers' investigations'. While the project document conceded that teachers might initially prove reluctant to take full responsibility for investigating and improving their own practice, it argued further that experience

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4. Grace (1978) argues that this apparent autonomy simply masks less visible and more subtle and diffuse controls over teachers' work. For Grace this control is constituted by the activities of examination boards and their definition of valid knowledge, by the constraints of the work situation and by what it means to be a 'good' teacher and to act 'professionally'.

elsewhere shows that 'this reluctance is soon overcome with the support of facilitation that is sensitive to the novelty such work has for practitioners'. Careful and sensitive support would be needed for teachers during the early stages of the work, but in time, these groups were expected to 'self-seed' and provide effective mutual support. At least one member of the project team was to be an experienced facilitator prepared to share experience and expertise.

The programme was to be implemented over two years with a voluntary team of some sixteen to twenty teachers from about four schools. In the first year of the project teachers would be supported in researching their own practice. Towards the end of this first year materials from the first phase would be prepared for wider dissemination and use in Phase II in which the project would expand to at least one other South African university. The programme optimistically anticipated that after nine months of working together 'it is expected that the demand for support will have lessened in intensity as members of the group learn to use each other as a resource'.

The dominant influences at that time on the design of the Cape Town action research project were then: a recessive role for the facilitator; an assumption that action research would prove attractive to teachers; that the action research process would be fairly straightforward for teachers; that videotape would be the primary source of evidence about

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their teaching; and that pupils would be involved in the process of developing new approaches to teaching and learning.

The Faculty of Education at UCT was seen as a home for the project for a number of reasons. It offered a pre-service degree for teachers in primary education. It had developed a good working relationship with some local township schools through their involvement in micro-teaching at the Faculty, and contact via UCT students undertaking teaching practice in those schools. Some teachers at these schools had expressed interest in learning new methods and improving their teaching. There was informal evidence that principals supported this link with UCT.

The draft proposal was discussed at a seminar for Faculty staff in May 1986. By this stage, the project had the support of Wendy Flanagan. Two key criticisms of the proposal emerged: firstly, that the programme was vague regarding what it had to offer teachers. It was felt that teachers were more likely to respond positively to involvement in concrete, subject specific projects, such as improving language or maths teaching. By contrast, what seemed to be the rather vague, and certainly unfamiliar, encouragement to 'research their teaching' was seen as likely to confuse, and discourage participation by teachers. The second major criticism was the time scale. It was suggested that we had grossly underestimated the time it would need for the project to take root. A minimum of three

years at local schools was suggested before considering expansion to other parts of the country. There was also some doubt as to whether such a project would even get off the ground, given the bleak outlook for african schooling at that time. There had been a prolonged school boycott in 1985, and 1986 was proving to be another turbulent year of student protest and boycotts in local african schools.

By now it was clear that Charles Hull would no longer be available as a senior research officer and it seemed unlikely that it would be possible to recruit an experienced action research facilitator. Nevertheless, Wendy Flanagan and myself were encouraged by reading the final report on a successful action research project in Lesotho, the only documented action research project in southern Africa at that time (Stuart et al, 1985). The Lesotho Action Research Group (LARG) had been initiated in 1984 by Janet Stuart, then teaching Development Studies at the National University of Lesotho. The team comprised five Basotho teachers of Development Studies, all recent graduates of the university, and herself, as consultant. The project ran for one year. Teachers identified and monitored problems in their teaching of development studies, and they all wrote reports on this research. Their assessment of action research was optimistic:

we have acquired deeper insight into our own roles in the classroom, and we have increased our own repertoires of professional skills, which may make it easier for us to deal with such problems in the future. Of one thing we are sure, however, we have proved that teachers in Lesotho can become their own action researchers; they can develop skills of

analysis and self-evaluation as well as those skills of evaluating their students. In the process the teachers do become much more aware of what is going on in the classroom and can act, themselves, to improve it. (Stuart et al, 1985:7)

Encouraged by this positive evaluation of action research for teacher development in a southern African context, Wendy Flanagan and I spent several days redrafting the proposal in November 1986. The primary aim of the project remained the same but was supplemented by three further aims:

- to explore a pedagogy for a future non-racial and democratic South Africa, while recognising what was educationally possible within current school frameworks;
- to place the professional knowledge and insight of the teacher at centre stage so that teachers become confident enough to innovate in their classroom practice;
- to design a model for the professional development of teachers in-service. (PREP - Document Two, 1986:8)

We took into account the criticisms raised at the UCT seminar and made provision for a three year period of working in local schools only. We further had to take into account that I would now be the only full time researcher-facilitator - and I was inexperienced. Thus we allowed for an initial pilot phase in one school only in order to allow time for me to gain experience in facilitating teachers' learning.

The pilot phase would draw on problems expressed by DET teachers, 'inviting' them 'to explore alternative methodology' to enable their pupils to understand selected areas of the curriculum. The method by which this was to be achieved was through the videotaping of lessons for discussion and workshopping - in other words an action

research process of action, reflection and change. The university researcher's role was still seen as non-directive. I was to be 'a resource to their [teachers] attempts to improve practice through action research methodologies' (PREP - Document Two, 1986:10).

The most important changes to the programme as reflected in the final project documents which were circulated to funders were: a pilot phase (1987) in one school; a first stage (1988) in which the project would spread to at least three other primary schools; a second stage (1989) in which teacher-researchers from stage one initiated and co-ordinated action research and professional development with teachers from other schools. It was also envisaged that teachers would begin writing case studies. As sections three, four and five will show, this was a very ambitious programme, rooted in an imperfect understanding of the actual implementation of change. In 1988 a masters student would work with teachers to trial curriculum materials developed in the pilot phase, while a second student would research ethnographies of african primary classrooms. On paper, at least, the programme met Elliott's (1977) three requirements for any action research programme:

1. That educational research as opposed to research on education focuses on the practical problems of educating pupils as they are experienced by teachers.
2. That classroom action-research involved the active participation of teachers in the research process.
3. That involvement in classroom action research requires outside researchers to enter into dialogue with practising teachers (cited in Hook, 1982:280).

Teachers' own practical problems, as they understood them, were to be focus of the project, together with collaboration with an outside researcher, who would also research her own practice as a facilitator.

At this time we named the project and secured funding early in 1987 for the first nine months (April-December 1987) from Anglo-American Chairman's Trust Educational Fund. Early in 1988, Chairman's Fund and the Mobil Foundation agreed to fund the project in 1988, and again in 1989. Sivuyile, a primary school in Guguletu, was chosen by Wendy Flanagan for the pilot phase. Her choice was based partly on friendly working relations over the years between herself and the school, but partly too on the fact that the principal and staff of this school were not perceived as having an oppositional political profile. She believed that this made it more likely that the DET would agree to the project gaining access to the school. In December 1986, she met with officials of the DET, the principal and the deputy of the school, and the local inspector. At this meeting she described the aim of the project as helping to improve pupils' english, rather than describing it as an action research project. On this basis it was agreed that the project would be given unofficial permission only to pursue work in the school. From 1988, it should be noted, even this unofficial permission was withdrawn, without any reason being given by the DET.

In April 1987, I began working part-time in one school as PREP's research officer. From April to July I worked with five english teachers drawn from std 3 to 5; from July to September I worked with five std 3 teachers, concentrating on the teaching of history. Towards the end of the year I prepared four booklets of history materials based on my experiences with the teachers. Then in 1988 and 1989 I worked full-time in three further schools, supporting teachers in improving their teaching of reading in the junior and senior primary school, and the teaching of history in stds 3 and 4. During 1988 and 1989 three project newsletters were distributed to all DET primary schools in the greater Cape Town area, and in September 1989 I prepared the draft manuscripts for a series of accessible booklets on the teachers and their work. Overall, I worked with a total of 34 teachers for varying periods of time between 1987-1989 (see appendix A). These experiences will be fully described and analysed in sections three to five of my study.

The project leader was Wendy Flanagan. In May 1987 Tozi Mgobozi joined PREP as the project assistant, responsible for general office work, transcribing tapes and helping produce the newsletters. This thesis documents only my own work in the project. However, there were other aspects to PREP. Lufuno Nevathalu, a masters student, spent one term in 1988 in a project school collecting data for an ethnographic study (Nevathalu, 1988). In the second half of that year Karen Morrison, worked as a part-time researcher with a small group of std 3 history teachers from three of

the project schools (Morrison, 1988). In 1989 a second masters student, Lorraine Marneweck, spent a term as a teacher-researcher in a fifth township school.

### **Setting the scene; the townships and the schools**

The older part of the township in which two of the schools, Sivuyile and Khanyisiwe, are situated dates back to the early 1960s. Africans were moved to the 'wind-swept, treeless, miles from anywhere township' (Magona, 1990:92) as part of the state's group areas drive, euphemistically known as 'slum clearance'. Naomi, one of the teachers who worked with me in 1987, was moved to the township from Retreat in 1962. She remembered the huge sand dunes that surrounded the school she had worked in: 'There were big, big dunes this side, and we usually said "that is Sokhanyo desert", there used to be a great pile of sand next to the classrooms, so we had to plant grass there to remove the desert' (interview 10/9/987).

Most of the houses surrounding the schools are tiny, shabby, semi-detached brick homes painted in different colours. They are in varying states of repair. Khanyisiwe is also adjacent to a squatter settlement of tightly packed tin shanties with no access to running water or toilets. Homes have no electricity - which has implications for pupils' home-based study and a culture of leisure reading. The only option is for residents to have electricity privately installed at considerable cost. Nor is the township

electrified, which means that streets are pitch dark at night. Crime is rampant. In the dusty central business district, a small supermarket, small businesses such as a tailor and a panelbeater, a Kentucky Fried Chicken outlet, a thriving minibus taxi terminus, three filling stations and an upmarket nightclub all operate.

The roads giving access to Sivuyile and Khanyisiwe are tarred, but badly potholed, and almost impassable in heavy winter rains. There are somewhat newer, but equally small, homes around the other two schools, Phakamisa and Sizithabathele, but the access roads are wider and in better condition. In the streets outside the schools one sees geese, thin scavenging dogs, a home based motor mechanic's business, poorly dressed children, unemployed youths and men, and informal 'spaza' shops operating from tin shacks and selling small packets of groceries, cigarettes, fruit and vegetables. During school break times, women arrive at the schools, wheeling supermarket trolleys, to sell various foodstuffs in small quantities - single sweets, handfuls of crisps, homebaked cake and so on. When their wares are spread on the ground, each school resembles a small market.

Sivuyile, where the project started, is a typical single story redbrick township school comprising two long rows of classrooms connected by three small rooms which serve as a staff room, a storeroom/school clerk's office and the principal's office. The school was built in 1968 with private funds raised by a national newspaper group. It is

enclosed by a high steel mesh fence topped by a row of metal spikes. Large double gates are kept locked, thus ensuring that access to the school is restricted to pupils and staff. The area between the two rows of classrooms is covered with grass, interspersed with a few limp flowers. Inadequate toilets are housed in a small building behind the school. At the end of the school building is a neglected, somewhat overgrown, open area used as a playground and sportsfield. The school houses 742 pupils from std 3 to std 5 and has 17 teachers.

In 1988 I extended my work to three more schools. Two of these, Phakamisa and Sizithabathele, are relatively new. They were built in 1981 for some of the former residents of a squatter community which had successfully negotiated a deal with the state whereby they would be provided with permanent housing. The schools were adjacent to one another and to a double storey high school. No maintenance work had been done on either school since they were built and the interior paintwork was shabby. The administrative block included a reasonable sized office for the principal, a secretary's office and two small rooms used for the heads of departments. There was a reasonable sized, but spartan, staff room in Phakamisa, and a similar room in Sizithabathele which the staff have tried to make more inviting by putting up curtains, providing chairs and a carpet. The staffrooms in both schools are seldom used, teachers preferring to congregate in classrooms or outside during breaks. In both schools, the 'library' seemed to

consist mostly of textbooks and a limited number of used reading books donated by white schools. Three long blocks of 24 classrooms housed the pupils - in Phakamisa there were 1086 pupils from sub A to std 5, and 27 teachers; in Sizithabathele, 1200 pupils from sub A to std 5, and 27 teachers. Quadrangles between the blocks of classrooms were tarred and used for the morning prayers. There were overgrown and neglected playing fields surrounding the schools. Both schools were fenced but the access gates were nearly always open.

The fourth school was similar in design to Sivuyile, having been built at the same time, also from private funds. The central quadrangle was not grassed but hard baked earth. The school was not properly fenced and was in extremely poor condition. In 1986 there had been fighting between progressive 'comrades' from the adjacent squatter camp, and conservative vigilantes. People fleeing the conflict had taken shelter at the school until forced out by the police. The school had subsequently been petrol bombed, probably by vigilantes. It had not been repaired by the end of 1989, but in 1990 extensive renovations were being undertaken by the DET. Only eight of the sixteen classrooms at the time of my research could be used in winter. The rest had gaping holes in the ceilings, blackened walls, and no doors or windows. Security was a problem according to teachers, because none of the classroom doors locked, the door handles and locks having been stolen. Teachers never left anything, either in the classrooms or displayed on the walls. In 1988

there were about 700 pupils from std 3 to std 5 at the school. In 1989 numbers dropped to about 500, given the poor conditions at the school, with parents preferring to place their children elsewhere if possible. There were still 17 teachers on the staff, however, despite threatened transfers by the DET.

At all the schools, according to the principals, the social background of virtually all the pupils' parents was either working class or unemployed. The deputy at Sivuyile, for example, explained that 'we've got a lot of suffering children, hence you see it is very difficult for them to wear the school uniform - they can't afford it' (interview 10/9/87). Thus the children at all the schools came from poor homes and the schools provided each child with two slices of plain brown bread at breaks. At one stage they had provided soup as well but could no longer afford this. Nearly all the pupils at the four schools came from the surrounding areas. All the schools had slightly more girls than boys.

In sections three and four the nature of the teaching situation will be explored so it is relevant to sketch in broad outline some of that situation here. Pupils at Phakamisa and Sivuyile were streamed, in the former because the principal said weaker pupils were being left behind, in the latter to avoid a tendency to teach to the level of 'weak' pupils to the disadvantage of brighter children. In Sizithabathele classes were mixed ability because staff felt

that streaming negatively labelled slow learners. Kanyisiwe also had mixed ability classes.

In Phakamisa and Sizithabathele there was whole class teaching in the junior primary school, i.e. one teacher taught her class all subjects. From std 3 in Phakamisa there was subject teaching, i.e. teachers taught one or two subjects only, to a number of different classes. Sizithabathele had class teaching in std 3 because it was felt that too many teachers confused the children in this crucial year where they switch from their mother tongue, xhosa, to english as medium of instruction. Sivuyile had class teaching in 1987 but switched to subject teaching in 1988 to ensure that 'pupils get the same quality of teaching'. Subject teaching was seen as drawing on the strengths of the teachers who seemed to prefer this arrangement. Khanyisiwe had class teaching in std 3 in 1988 and subject teaching in std 4 and 5 but in 1989 adopted subject teaching throughout the school.

Phakamisa and Sizithabathele had Student Representative Councils (SRCs) of senior pupils, who mostly acted as class monitors, but who were called on in times of crisis to share in decision making. Both schools had a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). At Phakamisa this had been operating effectively for some time, while at Sizithabathele the PTA was still new. Unusually, both principals were active members of a new progressive teachers' union, the Democratic Teachers' Union (DETU), established in 1985. The other two

schools did not have either a PTA or SRC, and both principals belonged to the established and more conservative teachers' association, the Peninsula African Teachers Association (PENATA).

In South Africa the school year is divided into four terms of eight to ten weeks: early January to the end of March; April to mid June; July to mid September; and October to the end of November. The DET requires that formal examinations be written in June, September and November. Schools start at 8.00 or 8.30 and continue to 2.00 or 2.30 with one ten minute break for tea and half an hour for lunch. The specific day to day constraints that faced me related to factors such as inspectors, appraisal of teachers by heads of departments, exams, the presence of student teachers, absence of resources, and the organisation of the school day. Some of this will be explored in later chapters. Suffice to mention here that it was seldom possible to plan ahead with regard to meetings and activities. Teachers were also not keen to work after school. Time was therefore always a problem and repeatedly mentioned by teachers - time for planning, time to talk on a one to one basis, and even more difficult, time to meet as collaborative groups. Nevertheless, I had learn to find a way to work with, rather than against, the often unpredictable rhythm of the school term, and the constraints on teachers. One of the features of a project operating in the townships is the virtual impossibility of making arrangements by telephone (two of the schools did not have a telephone anyway, and where

messages were left they were seldom passed on) or by mail (unreliable and irregular). Thus all arrangements are best made in person by visiting the school. The disadvantage was of course the time needed to visit every school and find every teacher to make arrangements and leave resources. The advantage was the familiarity it gave me as participant observer, over three years, of the daily routines, given that I visited the schools nearly every day.

### **Chapter outlines**

The thesis is an action research study of the process of educational change. It examines a relatively underresearched area in action research studies, namely the role of an outside facilitator. Stenhouse described two levels of action research: 'first order' action research by teachers and 'second order' action research by teacher educators (see Elliott and Adelman, 1973). The reflective practitioners are thus both myself as facilitator conducting 'second-order' action research into my own educational practice, and the teachers engaged in 'first-order' reflection on their teaching. Both levels of reflection, as sections three to five will show, shape and are shaped by each other. As teachers changed, or failed to change their teaching, in turn my own practice developed and shifted. These shifts in turn helped shape teachers' action, and so on. The second order research thus, as will be shown, influenced both my action, and generated practical knowledge for INSET. The study is organised into five sections,

comprising eleven chapters. The chapter outlines which follow are helpful in painting the broad themes and issues examined in the thesis.

Chapter one in section one examines the methodological issues informing and arising from my engagement in action research. The epistemology and methodology of action research are justified as an appropriate form for this study. Questions of the researcher's own reflexivity, of qualitative data collection and analysis, of validity and generalisation, and the relationship of theory and practice are considered.

Section two is made up of chapters two and three. Together, these chapters locate the social conditions of schooling in this study. The argument here is that the wider historical and structural context shapes the limits and possibilities of teachers' working lives and educational experience in significant ways and should be understood by anyone working with teachers. Ideally, in action research teachers themselves should become aware of such constraints and the cultural construction of schooling. Chapter two explains the history and politics of bantu education since its inception in 1953. The point here is to emphasise the damaging educational effects for pupils and teachers arising from decades of bantu education, and successive waves of resistance to this system. As Sindiwe Magona (1990) points out, bantu education had already begun to bear its 'bitter fruit' only a few years after its introduction. She writes

that by 1959, when she began her ninth year of schooling, she and others 'who were from the old stream [pre-bantu education], were faring much better than the products of this exclusively African system' (1990:79). The chapter further describes the highly repressive political conditions prevailing between 1987 and 1989, the period during which I worked with teachers. Chapter three emerged from issues raised by the day to day work with teachers in this study, in particular the need to understand schooling and society, and the prior shaping of teachers' professional knowledge. It should not be seen as either coming before my work with the teachers, nor as directing practice. Rather it describes and interprets questions that emerged from day to day work with teachers and which served to deepen my own reflection on my practice as a facilitator.

The chapter problematises the extent to which schools reproduce or transform society and the means by which they do it. Drawing from interviews with teachers in the study, the chapter examines the concepts of ideology and hegemony, and the essentially contested nature of schooling. In order to understand constraints and possibilities for change, teachers' class location and their professional knowledge is discussed. In particular, the disabling effects of teacher training underpinned by the philosophy of fundamental pedagogics is examined. Teachers' working conditions are described, especially the constraints of the official syllabus and the lack of resources in the schools. The

chapter ends by looking at the implications of educational change as the making of meaning.

Sections three, four and five constitute the core of the thesis. It is important to note that in sections three and four two dilemmas are used to explain my work with teachers. In practice, of course, the action giving rise to these dilemmas was occurring simultaneously and the teasing apart of the dilemmas is an analytical construct which examines the same action refracted through two dilemmas. For example, the teaching of history lessons on the free burghers in chapter four is analysed from the point of view of the first dilemma and my attempts to establish dialogical relations. Then in chapter six these lessons are examined from the perspective of the second dilemma, namely that of curriculum reform and transformation. The two sections thus complement each other in telling the story of my research.

Section three describes and analyses one of two key issues in my own practice as a facilitator - the dilemma of wanting to act democratically in working with teachers but finding in practice that teachers expected me to direct change. In other words, the problems that arose from trying to develop a 'power with' model (Kenway and Modra, 1989) of working with teachers in a 'power over' educational and political context. This was further complicated by the teachers' own lack of knowledge about alternatives to their current unsatisfactory classroom practice. The dilemma is explored in chapters four and five, firstly in the pilot study in

1987 and then in 1988 and 1989 when I worked with teachers in three additional schools. The thrust of these chapters is an exploration of my own growing understanding of how to share expertise, while empowering teachers both to assert their own voices in the process of change, and to take responsibility for that change.

Section four describes and analyses a second key dilemma in my own practice - that of the tension between only reforming the existing curriculum and a more radical transformation of its form and content. Underpinning my work with teachers, was the belief that quality primary schooling demands teachers who can be participants and owners, of the process of changing the form and content of the curriculum-in-use. The four chapters in this section demonstrate that an outside facilitator needs to support teachers both in curriculum development and in becoming reflective practitioners. Chapter six explains my work with teachers in the pilot study in 1987, first on the english oral lesson, and then on developing a cycle of std 3 history lessons. Chapter seven examines my work over two years with a group of std 3 and 4 history teachers. Chapter eight considers my work with junior primary teachers who were concerned to improve their teaching of english reading. Chapter nine details my work with a group of higher primary teachers and their concern primarily to improve the teaching of reading, but also to look more broadly at the teaching of language. These chapters assess the extent to which teachers improved their practice through changing the

content and process of their practice, and their pedagogical assumptions. My own learning of how to facilitate and support curriculum change is also evaluated.

Section five examines action research, from the perspective of my own experience, as a project of possibility for educational change. Thus chapter ten details my own learning about action research arising from the practice of action research. I evaluate whether my own action research was 'emancipatory' in practice as well as intent. The chapter also looks at the extent to which reflective practice might contribute to teachers developing their own judgement and understanding of the worthwhileness of pedagogic practices. Drawing also from the previous section, the chapter develops a case for a more complex reading of the dilemma of reform versus transformation in that teachers' engagement in change at classroom level might contribute to reshaping the limits and possibilities of structural change.

In the concluding chapter practical possibilities for working with teachers, in particular ideas for new forms of democratic and reflective in-service education, are put forward as a contribution towards a post-apartheid education system.

## SECTION ONE: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

### CHAPTER ONE: ACTION RESEARCH AS METHOD

we should consider action, research and training as a triangle that should be kept together for the sake of any of its corners.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter explores issues of method in action research arising out of my experience of conducting an action research study. It starts by looking at some commonly accepted definitions of action research. Three modes of action research theorised from Habermas's (1972) three knowledge interests are explained in order to show that forms of action research might range in practice from technical endeavours to emancipatory action. The chapter then goes on to explain why the values underpinning this study found expression in 'emancipatory' action research. The importance of the researcher's own reflexivity is considered. The appropriateness of qualitative research methods is discussed, together with issues relating to insider-outsider research, data collection (especially the interview) and analysis, and the issue of confidentiality. Finally, the chapter considers the questions of the validity and generalisation of this study, and the relationship between theory and practice in action research.

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1. Lewin, 1946 in Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988b:44

## What is action research?

The term 'action research' was first used by Kurt Lewin (1946, 1952), an American social psychologist, concerned to develop a form of research which not only investigated social problems but which also led to social action.<sup>2</sup> As Kemmis (1988) points out, action research aimed not only to understand practice but also to influence it. In pre- and in-service teacher education this form of research is seen as an appropriate strategy whereby teachers and teacher-educators might improve their work by adopting a reflective attitude to their practice. Action research is often presented as a means by which practitioners might evaluate the extent to which their educational values are implemented in actual practice (see for example Carr and Kemmis, 1986; McNiff, 1988 and Elliott, 1989). In other words such research is one way of addressing the quality of the curricular experience provided in schools and tertiary institutions - although the action research literature in education tends to emphasise action research for teachers, downplaying its importance for the development of teacher-educators as well. Action research assumes that the quality of schooling is crucially shaped by the behaviour of

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2. Chapter eleven provides an account of the history of action research. Understanding this history and the conditions under which action research was able to take root informed my own educational development, rather than the narrower issues of method - in so far as these can be separated.

teachers who are central to changing what goes on in classrooms and schools. More broadly, action research is relevant for any practitioner concerned with the quality of his/her professional work (Winter,1989). As this study will show, it has contributed to my own development as a teacher-educator. If teacher-educators are interested in facilitating critical and reflective work by teachers they need to be engaged in similar reflections on their own practices (Elliott, 1985a).

Definitions of action research have emerged over time out of attempts to develop this form of research as a valid education tradition. The definitions which follow tend to emphasise the democratic and empowering thrust which advocates claim for action research. Some definitions lay greater emphasis on classroom work, others make stronger links between classroom work and wider social processes. The strongest form of the latter is the definition by Carr and Kemmis:

Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understandings of these practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out. (1986:162)

They highlight two essential aims of all action research - improvement of practice, including the situation in which the practice takes place, and involvement of all the participants, who take responsibility for their own actions, in the research process.

A more recent definition of action research from Kemmis and McTaggart emphasises the importance of collaboration. In the revised version of the Action Research Planner they say:

Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations ...The approach is only action research when it is collaborative, though it is important to realise that the action research of the group is achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members. (authors' emphasis, 1988a:5)

Elliott, influential in shaping British action research, defines it as:

the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it...[The] total process - review, diagnosis, planning, implementation, monitoring effects - provides the necessary link between self-evaluation and professional development. (1982:1)

And McNiff says action research:

encourages a teacher to be reflective of his [sic] own practice in order to enhance the quality of education for himself and his pupils...as such, it actively involves teachers as participants in their own educational process. (1988:1)

Similarly Whitehead (1985) sees action research as a means to 'give a form to the researcher's life in education', generating a 'living educational theory' arising from the practitioner's 'claim to know his or her own educational development'.

Common to all these definitions is a creative role for educators as participants in their own educational process as they construct knowledge of the curriculum (Tickle, 1987). Nor is action research the same as good practice. Rather it turns on a notion of deliberate

learning (Boomer,1987) in which educators systematically collect and analyse evidence in order to reconstruct, rather than only recollect, the action for reflection and analysis. Put simply, teachers and other educators who work through action research collect data on instances of practice. From this reflection, strategies are developed to improve the studied practice. This is then implemented and further data collected. This data is again studied and further plans detailed as a result. This cycle of planning, acting and reflecting is repeated over a period of time and ideally becomes a part of an educator's practice.

The notion of a cycle spiralling into further cycles of action was first developed by Lewin (1946). He describes the research process as 'a spiral of steps each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action' (quoted in Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988b:42). This spiral of cyclical activities is a method to create a change and then study the change and its effect. Elliott (1982), Ebbutt (1985) and Kemmis and McTaggart (1988a), have developed and refined Lewin's original idea of a cycle of activities of action, analysis and implementation in the context of educational research. Two problems with these diagrammatic schemes, however, are that they lack inherent explanatory power, and might conceivably become prescriptive. The techniques become an end in themselves

and one loses sight of the essential purpose of the research (McNiff, 1988; Elliott, 1989; Winter 1989).

Nevertheless this is not to deny the importance and usefulness of refining the working methods of planning, data-gathering and reflective analysis by which action research is conducted. McNiff (1988), Stuart (1988) and Griffiths (1990) all suggest that the spiral of action research cycles should be reconceptualised to take into account the reality of research practice where one problem will 'spin off' into linked spirals (McNiff, 1988). Stuart describes this as 'a number of mini-cycles rolling alongside bigger cycles' (1988:121). In reality, action research is messy and complex and research cycles are not always sequential. Morphet, for example, refers to the 'density of the procedure' (1983:98). Importantly, recurring reflection leads one to modify the action throughout the study in a recursive, rather than a linear, research process (Oja and Smulyan, 1989).

In this study, my own second order research into my practice of facilitation would be the major spiral. But nestling within this broad focus were numerous spirals of action, spinning out from the interaction of my second order research with the teachers' first order reflection. In the pilot study there were two sequential action cycles consisting of work over one term with english teachers, followed by work over another term with std 3 history teachers. From 1988, as the project expanded,

the research structure became more complex, and the linear form of a written report does not always adequately represent this complexity. Through 1988 and 1989 there were spirals of action spinning off from each other, and nestling simultaneously one with the other, as teachers and I worked through several action cycles on the processes of changing the teaching of reading and history (see sections three and four).

Working with these teachers also led me to research the history and politics of bantu education to better understand why things were the way they were. In order to improve my own practice, I needed to understand something of what had shaped teachers' professional knowledge. Why, for example, teachers condemned bantu education but seemed to practise it in their classrooms. The chapters in section two might be described as more traditional historical and sociological research. Nevertheless these chapters emerged equally from the concerns of practice, and were research issues spinning out from spirals of action, to improve further action.

### **Three modes of action research**

In the end, guides to action research can be useful, but more important is understanding the principles that inform such research. In this respect Carr and Kemmis's (1986) and Grundy's (1982, 1987) theorising of three different modes of action research based on Habermas's

(1972) three constitutive knowledge interests contributed to my own research - both while working with teachers and in the retrospective writing of this study.

Habermas identifies three basic cognitive interests - the technical, practical and emancipatory. These interests play a particular role in constructing knowledge, but more than this, constitute particular relationships between knowledge and action within the context of a fundamental interest in rationality as a means for the human species to survive. Each cognitive interest gives rise to a different form of 'science':

The task of the empirical analytic sciences incorporates a technical cognitive interest; that of the historical-hermeneutic sciences incorporates a practical interest and the approach of critically oriented sciences incorporates the emancipatory cognitive interest. (Habermas, 1972:308)

Grundy explains the impulse towards control inherent in the technical interest:

The technical interest, like each of the fundamental human interests, is grounded in the need of the species to survive and reproduce both itself and those aspects of human society which are deemed to be of most worth. To achieve this purpose, persons have a basic orientation towards controlling and managing the environment. (1987:11)

The technical interest gives rise to instrumental action which is premised on empirical evidence of the laws that govern action so that appropriate 'rules' might be framed for action towards particular ends. In education this would involve a means-end approach whereby the teacher acts upon pupils and produces an educational outcome.

Grundy exemplifies the basic orientation of the practical interest as towards understanding:

it is an interest in understanding the environment so that one is able to interact with it. The practical interest is grounded in the fundamental need of the human species to live in and as part of the world, not to be, as it were, in competition with the environment for survival...it is an interest in taking right action (practical action) within a particular environment. (1987:13)

The interactive and intersubjective making of meaning is central and the importance of subjective judgement is acknowledged. Agreement is arrived at by consensus between acting subjects.

Carr (1989) sums up the relationship between the technical and the practical interest and the different forms of science to which they give rise:

the technical interest - is an interest in achieving mastery and control over the world of nature and is constitutive of empirical-analytic sciences which seek to formulate explanatory and predictive knowledge about the natural world. But, as well as being 'interested' inhabitants of a world of nature, human beings also inhabit a social world. They thus have a 'practical' interest in understanding and participating in the cultural traditions which shape social life. This 'practical' interest gives rise to those 'historical-hermeneutic' sciences which produce interpretive knowledge of social life and thus make it more intelligible. (1989:33)

Thus empirical analytic science seeks to explain phenomena in terms of cause and effect, while the historical-hermeneutic seeks to understand phenomena through the study of culture and the perceptions to which it gives rise. Both develop knowledge that may later be incorporated in change, or used to justify it. Carr (1989) suggests that most educational research has been

within these two traditions, where teachers and pupils are the subject matter of such research and their actions its data.

The emancipatory interest by contrast, transcends the technical interest in control and the possible deception of consensual meaning where, for example, unequal power relationships might distort communication (Grundy, 1987). This emancipatory interest involves 'a fundamental interest in emancipation and empowerment to engage in autonomous action arising out of authentic, critical insights into the social construction of human society' (Grundy, 1987:19). Central to the emancipatory interest is the act of self-reflection by individuals as part of a community seeking freedom, justice and truth on the basis of their own rational reflection and, I would add, expressed through and in, democratic practices.

The form of science to which the emancipatory interest gives rise is a critical social science that aims to:

'enlighten' individuals about the origins of their existing purposes, beliefs and actions by promoting emancipatory knowledge - a form of reflectively acquired self-knowledge which, by making individuals more consciously aware of the social or ideological roots of their self-understanding, thereby 'empowers' them to think and act in a more rationally autonomous way. (Carr, 1989:33)

Such a critical social science would seem to correspond with Lather's notion of 'research as praxis' which she defines as clarifying 'the critical and empowering roots of a research paradigm openly committed to critiquing the

status quo and building a more just social order' (1986:258). In her view, praxis-oriented researchers seek 'emancipatory knowledge which exposes the hidden contradictions in society and so makes possible social transformation' (1986:259). When I started work on this study, I hoped not only that my own second order research would be praxis-oriented research, but that the teachers first order research would also generate emancipatory knowledge for them.

Following Habermas's three knowledge interests then, action research could conform to a technical, practical or emancipatory mode (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Grundy, 1987). Grundy (1987) explains the different forms as follows. Technical action research emphasises rule-following, control and pre-packaged materials (including textbooks) designed by outside 'experts' for implementation by teachers. The technical form promotes 'efficient and effective' practice by teachers but precludes any concern for teachers' own understanding of their work. Proposals for classroom action are directive and prescriptive and claim to be correct. Nor is any attempt made to address the power relationships implicit in the educational and social context. Teacher empowerment would not be regarded as either desirable or necessary. In the end, teachers and their pupils are instruments, rather than agents of change, and the nature of the change reinforces the status quo. A facilitator in this mode, for example, would 'persuade' or even

direct practitioners to test the findings of external research in their schools.

Practical action research fosters the development of the teacher's judgement and understanding in decisions about classroom change in the educational interests, as she sees it, of her pupils. Proposals for action claim to be intelligent rather than correct, to provide guidance rather than direction. The focus is on practical and informed action to promote change in the classroom. Here the facilitator's role would be Socratic so that practitioners might try out their own ideas and learn about the process of self-reflection (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). According to Grundy (1987), a facilitator with an interest in practical action research would not include promoting critical awareness as part of her role. For example, she argues that, while Elliott and Adelman supported and facilitated reflective communities of teachers in the Ford Teaching Project, their lack of a critical focus meant that the structural context that circumscribes enquiry-based learning was not explored in the work of the project.

Thus the technical and the practical forms at both the second and first level (teacher-educators and teachers), lack a critical focus on how classroom action is structurally located. At the same time, in my experience, both the technical and the practical forms do adequately address classroom concerns where teachers turn

to action research to improve their teaching, a point developed in chapter ten.

By contrast, emancipatory action research 'promotes a critical consciousness which exhibits itself in political as well as practical action to promote change' (Grundy, 1987:154). The guiding ethics of such research are the social and political ideals of freedom, equality and justice. Emancipatory action research shifts between understanding and developing pedagogical strategies and politically strategic action for democratic schooling. A teacher or teacher-educator with an interest in emancipatory action research would be committed to educational change in the interests of the oppressed and exploited in society. She would be concerned to research her own pedagogical practices as a means of knowing whether her teaching was indeed transformative and empowering. In emancipatory action research the practitioner group takes responsibility for 'its own emancipation from the dictates of irrationality, injustice, alienation and unfulfillment' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:204). The practitioner group recognises the limitations of its power but nevertheless takes strategic action which can realise more completely the educational values to which the group is committed. An outside facilitator might be invited to help form such a self-critical group to act as a 'catalyst', a 'critical friend' who might bring to their attention 'critical theories which they can test in their own experience for

authenticity and against which they can test their emerging insights' (Grundy, 1987:153). Indeed, the 'fourth generation' action research seminar at Deakin University argued that groups were there to be joined, not facilitated. At best, facilitators might 'simply participate as organic intellectuals in critical communities struggling for emancipation' (authors' emphasis, McTaggart and Singh, 1986:424). As will be seen in sections three, four and five, the context in which I worked caused me to reexamine these arguments.

Kemmis (1986) argues that the potential of action research turns finally on teachers recognising the political context of their educational work and acting in their schools and classrooms with both pedagogical and political intent. Such action research is grounded in a participatory and democratic philosophy of situational and social improvement, and involvement of all participants as controllers of the research process (Grundy and Kemmis, 1981; Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Grundy, 1987). At the same time one needs to remember that this form represents an ideal model of critical and emancipatory research. [The actual practice of action research may only approximate to this ideal, as an examination of the processes in which I became involved,] and which are described in sections three and four, suggests.

## Action research and values

Action research was considered the most appropriate methodology for this particular study in that it held the potential for a democratic and emancipatory form of research, with practical intentions integral to the research endeavour. Carr captures succinctly the political nature of all educational research:

Nobody studies education without being committed to certain educational purposes, values and goals. Although educational researchers may, and usually do, study education without articulating any educational values, this should not be taken to indicate that such values do not permeate their work. (1988:1)

It follows, too, that:

The choice of a particular research methodology always implies a preference for a particular set of educational values, and the values of a researcher are always reflected in his/her research methodology. (1988:8)

Similarly, Grundy (1987) poses a key question about the construction of curriculum which can equally be asked of research: 'What sorts of beliefs about persons and the world will lead to the construction of what educational [research] practices...' (1987:7).

But this does not mean sacrificing rigour and intellectual integrity to one's political commitment to contribute through one's own work to a more just society. As Marris (cited in Walters, 1987) points out, in the end, the force of one's argument will depend on the quality and rigour of one's analysis. Similarly Bundy et al (1990), in addressing the issue of research and

accountability, argue that the researcher has a dual accountability, both to the community and to scientific enquiry generally. I will be considering therefore, throughout this study, my own second order research and its accountability not only to teachers, but to a wider research community.

### **Reflexivity**

Carr's (1988) argument regarding research and values raises the issue of the reflexivity of the researcher - the idea that researchers need to recognise and understand the processes and values by which they are making sense of the world through self-critical practice (Fox and Stronach, 1986; Popkewitz, 1987; Winter, 1989). Again, action research promised a reflexive critique of the role of the researcher in reaching particular judgments about practice (Winter 1989). Fox and Stronach argue that if research is to lay claim to being educational 'then it must demonstrate its own reflexivity and intentionality' (1986:143) instead of hiding behind 'objectivity under the pretence that processes of educating are distinct from processes of research' (1986:144). They criticise the 'invisibility' of researchers, for example, in the reporting of action research. Thus with regard to the Ford Teaching project, they suggest that Elliott and Adelman remain 'black box' mysteries:

We are told at the beginning of the project some errors of judgement were made about the teachers' experiences and attitudes towards enquiry. Throughout the paper we are provided with descriptions of the reduced scope of the project that is unusually candid in educational research. But the nature of the questioning process that the researchers underwent is not acknowledged or reflected upon. (1986:148)

They therefore pose this question: 'Where is the educational in action research?' Their response is to argue the necessity for introducing research and the researcher into critical focus so that there is a 'congruence between the reflective analysis of the research and of the researcher' (1986:150). As Winter (1989) argues in putting forward the principle of dialectic reflexivity, action researchers cannot transform other social actors without transforming themselves. Therefore a central concern in the chapters which follow will be to trace and assess my own role in the change process that unfolded between 1987 and 1989.

### **Research methods**

This study is an example of an action research case study using qualitative research methods (see Burgess 1985a, 1985b, 1985c). Such methods were used because they were seen as being able to answer questions about the processes of educational change. In this study, investigating education involved researching the complex everyday reality of interactive situations between people 'acting on different understandings of their common situation and on the basis of different values about how

the interactions should be conducted' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:180). Qualitative methods were aimed at 'uncovering meanings and emphasising the variability of human response' (Shipman, 1985:3). More than this, such methods are the means to unravel complex networks of social relationships and complex processes of action where quantifying would oversimplify the social reality. MacLean argues for the compatibility of the underlying values of qualitative research and person-centered teaching, both of which, she argues, enhance human agency:

Both activities affirm the personal capacity to generate knowledge in relationships with others in our social world. Both place emphasis on the lived experience of persons and both acknowledge that meanings are often ambiguous and invite interpretation. (1987:129)

Similarly, Winter argues that a theory of educational research 'which liberates the teacher [educator] is inseparable from a theory of teaching which liberates the learner' (1987:92).

The research I became involved in is an example of case study. Case study developed from dissatisfaction in the 1970s with experimental or quasi-experimental research designs for the purpose of educational evaluation (Simons, 1980). This gave rise to the term 'case study' to describe a family of research methods which would portray 'the complexity of the educational setting, the changing nature of the curriculum process and the unanticipated consequences of programmes' (Simons,

1980:5). Thus quantitative methods, where reality is seen as 'predictable, regular and capable of being fitted into a pre-determined structure' (McNiff, 1988:12), where statistical methods remove ambiguity, and where the researcher stands outside of the research process as an 'objective' recorder, were not regarded as appropriate for this study.

This is not to say that such methods may not be appropriate at times. Indeed statistics are drawn on to illustrate points made in section two. But what these statistics do not do for example, is problematise categories such as 'unqualified' teachers. The statistics are useful then for painting the broad brush strokes of educational provision. Qualitative methods should be seen as an alternative to quantitative methods, rather than oppositional. Eisner explains:

The identification of variables, the measurement of relationships between them, the abstracted and detached sense of language in the description with its impersonal voice and distance between the language written and the reality it represents...is one version But one version of the world is one version still. (1988:18)

The point is, as Eisner observes, that educational researchers should recognise that 'all methods and all forms of representation are partial and because they are partial, they limit as well as illuminate what through them we are able to experience' (1988:19).

[In action research the researcher is both practitioner and researcher. But traditionally research advocates

'objectivity' in the production of valid and generalisable knowledge - 'measurement without the measurer' as Raymond Williams says (quoted in Yeo, 1990:127). Action research, however, inescapably involves promoting certain values rather than others (Whyte, 1987), while data collection relies heavily on human instruments (MacDonald and Walker, 1975). Mc Niff (1988) suggests that action research is unavoidably subjective but that one strives for objective status through intersubjective criticism - a point taken up later when I look at validation. In similar vein Yeo argues, in the context of long-standing debates between historians, that subjectivity is the precondition for any real objectivity: 'The self as complicated, divided, conflicted, large enough and self-conscious enough to let others in to listen, is now a prime tool - a skill as well as an "understanding" for historians' (1990:127). Elliott maintains that the whole point of action research is reflection on the self-in-action and not 'to objectify the situation in a form which disassociates the self from its actions' (1989:98). By acknowledging the value-laden nature of action research, the researcher in fact enables the reader to take this into account in assessing the findings.

Elliott (1988a) usefully describes a number of ways of conceptualising insider-outsider relationships, each underpinned by its own cluster of assumptions and beliefs. At one end the outsider is the 'expert and

detached researcher' and the insider 'the practitioner of the activities the outsider researches'. This division of labour is grounded in a view that the 'generation of objective knowledge depends on bias-free observations of measurable events which are detached from the subjective values and interests of those who participate in social practices' (1988a:156). Such a relationship contradicts the philosophy underlying action research and case study where the meaning-making of all participants is taken into account. By contrast, the model towards which this study aspired was that of 'the outsider as reflective teacher-educator and insider as reflective teacher'. As Elliott notes, teacher action research projects have usually been led by 'outsider-academics'. But he reconciles the apparent conflict in the role of outsider-academic with the insider aspiration of collaborating with teachers in this way:

Outsiders associated with educational action research have tended to be practising teacher educators who have interpreted their special role as facilitating the development of teachers' reflective capacities. The outsider, therefore, is engaged in an educational practice, albeit one different from that of the teachers he or she works with. The latter is concerned with promoting pupils' learning capacities, whereas the former is concerned with promoting the learning capacities of teachers. The practice of teacher education is also capable of being developed through action-research. (my emphasis, 1988a:164)

Elliott explains that the outsider facilitates the process of teachers' development and also researches this development. But the outsider is also an insider as a teacher educator engaged with teachers in developing

reflective practice, including, crucially, the facilitator's own practice.

In the role of participant observer, I was an outsider, but as a participant in the change process, I was also an insider, as will be seen in sections three and four. The primary purpose of participant observation was understanding rather than change, 'seeing' as a form of 'sustained attention to the qualities of an object or situation; it is exploratory in character' (Eisner, 1988:17). Thus as participant observer visiting schools on a regular basis over three years, I spent time, for example waiting in the staffroom or corridor to see teachers, engaged in casual conversation with the principals, project teachers and occasionally other staff members, and a great deal of time in classrooms observing lessons. By simply being around at the schools I was able over time to develop a sense of the rhythm of the school day and a feel for the wider township environment. This was important for me as a white university-based outsider in african schools and townships.

In the case of my research, I would argue, nonetheless, that conceptualising insider-outsider roles is complicated by living in apartheid society where 'race' unavoidably impacts on relationships and perceptions (see chapter three). Where a researcher is not only an outsider-academic, but also white and non-xhosa speaking it is far more difficult to 'find vantage points and

roles within a web of human relationships without destroying the fabric' (MacDonald and Walker, 1975:60). To complicate the shifts between outsider and insider roles yet further, the university (UCT) at which the project was based was seen, rightly or wrongly, as not having shown much concern for the education of africans in the past. Furthermore, because conversation and interviews were in english, some of the richness of such data was unavoidably lost, while there was little chance of my blending into the school surroundings as the PREP masters student, Lufuno Nevathalu, was able to do. At the same time one could also argue that building a non-racial society means providing concrete experiences of non-racial relationships in action, a point made by one of the school principals in chapter five.

In order to explore teachers' responses to the 'race' of the researcher, I included a question to this effect in the structured interviews that Lufuno Nevathalu conducted with all project teachers in September 1988. Nearly all the project teachers said that my being white had made no difference to their work with me. By then, however, we had been working together for three terms and this would have affected their responses. Nevertheless a few teachers did cite 'race' as an issue and their comments are useful in alerting one to the ways in which racial definition might affect the building of relationships.

The interview question was: 'The fact that Melanie is classified white - does that make any difference to you when you are working with her?' Nombulelo from Khanyisiwe school observed:

Yes it did because I didn't have any contact with a white somebody, so it was the first time that I had a contact with a white, so there was a big difference, but otherwise she was polite, I mean there was no, I didn't feel any inferiority complex. (interview 28/9/88).

Zolani from the same school noted his initial reservations about the new methods I had suggested:

Because she is white, now this may be thought that this method can fit the white man's kids but later we found that, no man, this is not for the whites, at least we as blacks can benefit if we can use the method. Firstly we say, no we cannot, because the syllabus is made by the whites. Now another white lady is coming now saying the methods we are using are not quite okay, and trying to bring her own methods to us. We said no, her method won't work with us, but later as I was closer to her, then I found it's helping us. (interview 28/9/88)

At Sizithabathele, two teachers made negative comments. Cynthia expressed her uncertainty as to whether I was there to help teachers or only advance my own career using teachers, saying 'maybe she does the project because she has to, not because she wants to work with blacks' (interview 27/9/88).<sup>3</sup> David expressed the strongest reservations about working with a white researcher from UCT:

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3. Interestingly, this is not really a 'race' issue but one about whether university-based research will benefit teachers, i.e. a more general problem of research and perceptions of its usefulness by teachers. This is an interesting example of the way 'racial' explanations obscure deeper issues and may even close important lines of questioning, such as problematising which forms of educational research - regardless of the 'race' of the researcher - might be of value to teachers. This issue of 'race' is explored further in chapter three.

Politically I feel there was a big element of distrust that was within me. Personally, I wouldn't trust a white, be it a man or a woman, who comes around and asks me about education because this system was introduced to us by them and they know how horrible it is and you can't improve on something that was bad from the beginning. So at the same time when one asked you about education, one is aware, one has got to look at the background where one is coming from. The mere fact that she was from UCT, UCT itself couldn't allow black students in their School of Education before, but then later they did. (interview 27/9/88)

As MacDonald et al (1985) note, in South Africa relationships between black and white are fraught with tensions and the desire to like and be liked. Thus the existence of a racial social reality in South Africa complicates Elliott's (1988a) outsider-insider formulation.

#### Data collection and analysis

Data was collected through participant observation, audiotaped planning and discussion sessions with teachers, structured and unstructured interviews, lesson notes, audio and videotaped lessons and field notes. Field notes recorded all visits to schools, ranging from meetings with teachers, to the making of arrangements and dropping off of transcripts or resources. My record of visits shows the frequency of visits, for example: in February 1988 I visited schools on the 2, 3, 8, 9, 11, 17, 18, 23, 24, 25, and 26; in May 1988 I visited schools on the 2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 23, 24 and 25; in August 1988 I visited schools on 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 22, 23, 28, 29 and 30.

My fieldnotes varied in length over the three years of the project and were most detailed for the first fifteen months of the project (April 1987-July 1988). For the most part fieldnotes were written as soon as possible after the interactions. These notes were descriptive, but at times also recorded issues and worries in my own practice. Throughout this thesis the term 'fieldnotes' will refer to data from this source.

The process of working with teachers was recorded in audiotaped meetings where we planned and reflected on their lessons. Permission was first obtained from teachers for such recording and was granted on the understanding that copies of transcripts were to be made available only to the teachers concerned, and to myself. In 1987 and 1988 a rough verbatim transcript of each meeting was first made by Tozi Mgobozi, after which I made a corrected copy using the tape and her draft. The transcripts were not corrected with regard to language use to allow the authentic teachers' voices (and my own) to be heard. Copies of transcripts were returned to teachers as soon as possible - usually within a week or two of the meeting. In 1989, to reduce the burden of transcribing, I first listened to the tape and made a list of the contents and then selected extracts for transcribing after which we proceeded as before. All lesson discussions were audiotaped, most planning meetings, all group meetings, and the three workshops at UCT. I also transcribed some of the audiorecordings that

teachers made of lessons. Lufuno Nevathalu conducted structured interviews for me (see appendix B) with all project teachers in September 1988. In September 1989, Tozi Mgobozi conducted further structured interviews for me (see appendix B) with all project teachers to elicit biographical data for the study. I had also hoped that this would encourage a process of reflection on their own education but this initiative came too late in the life of the project for this data to be followed up. Unstructured interviews took place in October 1988 with four of the junior primary teachers at Phakamisa; with John from Phakamisa in March 1989; with Nombelelo, Adelaide, Nomonde and Gladstone from Khanyisiwe in April 1989; and with Beatrice, Cynthia, William, Thandie, Norman, Veronica, Bulelwa, Leah, Elizabeth, Lumka, Alice and Ruth in October and November 1989. Three of the principals were interviewed in October 1989 to elicit data on school statistics and the social composition of the school, as well as unstructured comments on the project. The fourth principal (from Khanyisiwe) was seldom present at school and I was unable to interview him. I transcribed all these interviews myself. I also negotiated permission from the principal of Sizithabathele to make use of an interview conducted by Lufuno Nevathalu in May 1988 for his research. Reference to the audiotaped material will be indicated by 'planning', 'discussion', 'meeting', 'lesson' or 'interview'. Further data comprised the videotapes of teachers' lessons, rough drafts and finished curriculum

materials, textbooks, the official syllabus, three project newsletters and three draft manuscripts prepared by myself in September 1989 on the teachers and their work.<sup>4</sup> Reflective conversations with two colleagues were audiotaped in 1988, as well as discussions with two colleagues as peer validators in 1989. In addition two conference papers in October 1988 (Walker 1988b) and March 1989 (Walker 1989b), two journal articles (Walker 1988a and Walker 1989a), and two seminar paper in February 1988 and July 1989 respectively (Flanagan and Walker, 1988; Walker 1989c) reflect my thinking during the project process. For chapter two contemporary newspapers were consulted to assist in the writing of an account of political and education conditions obtaining from 1987-1989. For chapter three I conducted unstructured interviews with Lufuno Nevathalu and Alan and Viv Kenyon in 1989 regarding conditions at african teachers colleges. These were supplemented by a further interview with the Kenyons in July 1990, as well as interviews in mid-1990 with a number of people involved in INSET with african teachers. Finally, limited use was made of a few of the structured interviews conducted by Sue Philcox, the project evaluator, in November 1989 and February 1990.

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4. These draft manuscripts were subsequently edited by the project leader Wendy Flanagan, and published by the project. See The Primary Education Project (1990) Teachers and Their Work - Junior Primary Reading; The Primary Education Project (1990) Teachers and their Work - Higher Primary Reading; The Primary Education Project (1990) Teachers and Their Work -History. In addition a collection of the papers I wrote between 1987 and 1989 was published by PREP as Action Research as a Project.

The names of teachers and their schools have been changed, but teachers would be recognisable to each other within their own schools. For the published documents arising from this study teachers were happy to be identified, together with their schools. Indeed teachers were not particularly concerned about the destination of the audiotapes and videotapes but this could possibly be attributed more to ignorance of research and research methods than to a lack of concern. Nor should it be interpreted as allowing unfettered access to material on teachers' lessons or interactions with myself. The agreed principle of confidentiality in the project was that material was made available only with each participant's consent. This included my negotiating with teachers for access to taped interviews with the project evaluator. However, once access had been negotiated, final control over publication rested with the researcher. This places additional responsibility on the researcher to report as truthfully as possible.

Audiotaped discussions and interviews have been an important source of data for this study. For this reason it is necessary in assessing the study to recognise that data collection is 'a process of creation, not a matter of finding' (Raven, 1990:96). Raven makes two points about the interview - firstly that it is a face to face encounter, and secondly that the purpose is to provide raw data for publication:

The interview as 'process' must keep the former description to the forefront in order to maintain the naturalism of the exchange. However the interview as 'content' means that the researcher remains alive to the meanings which throw light on the focus of his [sic] intended publication. Given that interviews take place within a limited time-scale and within a specific social context, the researcher must steer conversation into the areas which he perceives as of central concern to himself. In other words he is forced to have an agenda. (1990:100-101)

I found this dual purpose less easily reconciled, given the constant pressure both of time and for as accurate a research record as possible. This point is elaborated in chapter five in the context of Rob Sieborger's comments on an interview transcript with one of the project teachers.<sup>5</sup> Certainly the 'naturalism' of an unstructured conversation/interview was not easily achieved, and was further complicated by the 'content' purpose of the interaction.

Interestingly, Rob Sieborger had a sense of a more relaxed relationship underpinning taped interactions, a relationship arising, he posited, from everyday encounters at the school, the making of arrangements to meet and so on. This underlying relationship is suggested by Hull in his characterisation of a

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5. Rob Sieborger is lecturer in history education in the School of Education at UCT. He teaches pre-service and in-service primary and secondary teachers and has contributed to a primary history textbook series. He acted as one of the peer validators for this study. Alan Kenyon is senior lecturer in pre- and in-service primary education in the School of Education at UCT. He has wide experience of pre-service training in african colleges, and is involved in extensive in-service work with african teachers in the Eastern and Western Cape. Alan acted as the second peer validator.

researcher's 'blackmarket stock of understandings' (1985b:28) which one is able to bring to bear on interpreting data and writing the research, but which is not in itself available in the actual data. This 'accumulated knowledge of participants meaning systems' is thus not in the transcripts, which Hull likens vividly to 'the interactive situation pressed, neatly flat, like washing from a mangle' (1985b:28). This leads Hull to ask how a researcher might make the basis of his or her interpretations available to the reader. How in effect, to give readers 'access to participants' perceptions as they had voiced them at interview' (1985b:30). Similarly, Mathison suggests that there are several levels of evidence, one of which would be the raw data, but another would comprise 'a holistic understanding of the project itself, its history, the intentions of the developers, the ongoing relationships within the project' (1988:16). In order to help the reader, I have tried to 'get at the meanings between the lines' (Hull, 1985b) by contextualising lengthy transcript extracts wherever possible at significant points in the research. These extracts try to represent as many different voices as possible, remembering however, that in an academic study such as this, the researcher ultimately, selects and interprets the data. Certainly my account is rather less adventurous than Winter's (1989) concept of a 'collage'. Nonetheless it still tries to 'give readers the resources with which to disagree' (or agree), and to incorporate

different voices as independent interpretations (Winter, 1989).

McNiff (1988) makes the point that the diagrammatic schema for action research lack any explanatory power. Methods for the analysis of data as part of the process of reflection have been rather neglected in accounts of action research. In this respect, a seminal article for my own research was Winter's (1982) development of 'dilemma analysis' as a means to create an account which evoked the main areas of tension in the research and (illuminated the views of all involved.) Dilemma analysis is guided by the concept of 'contradiction' and is so called 'to emphasize the systematic complexity of the situations within which those concerned have to adopt (provisionally at least) a strategy' (1982:168). Winter outlines three levels of dilemma. The first level is 'ambiguities' comprising 'background awareness of the complexity of the situation but which are tolerable because they are not directly linked to action' (1982:169). At the second level, 'judgements' arise where complexity is not seen in negative terms but as 'interesting' and may be resolved. 'Problems' comprise the third level - 'those courses of action where the tensions and ambiguities actually seem to undermine the validity, the rationality of the action required' (1982:169). Sections three and four were structured around key 'problem-dilemmas' grounded in the action itself. Dearden and Laurillard (1976) developed the idea

of 'progressive focussing' as an analytical tool. This involves reducing the breadth of one's enquiry to concentrate on key issues. In this study dilemma analysis focussed the mass of data collected over three years and proved a useful tool to structure complex events. Social science concepts like ideology and hegemony were drawn on in chapter three to make sense of the contradictions between teachers' intentions and their practice, and to better understand the contextual limits on change. Content analysis was useful in section four for evaluating teachers' learning. The categories emerged from the data itself - for example group work, evidence of teacher understanding, and so on.

#### Issues of validity and generalisation

The issue of validity is a thorny one in action research studies. As Winter points out:

the analysis must in some way demonstrate sufficient validity to seem a plausible basis for decision making...In other words the question of the validity of an interpretation cannot be ducked by saying that contexts are unique. (1982:163)

Or as McNiff puts it 'does the research really do the things it claims to do, and are the results to be believed' (1988:131).

One of the ways in which action research data can be validated is by the technique of triangulation - essentially using more than one individual as a source of data (see for example, Elliott 1977 and Mathison, 1988).

The aim is to arrive at 'a truthful proposition' (Mathison, 1988:13). As Mathison notes, the strategy does not in itself make sense of events but rather provides more and better evidence for the researcher to construct an explanation. Nor should triangulation be seen as only a search for congruence. At times triangulation may reveal congruence but also ambiguity and even contradictions (Mathison, 1988). In this study two outsiders - Rob Sieborger and Alan Kenyon - were asked to comment on video and audiorecordings of lessons as evidence of teacher development. They were also asked to comment critically on transcripts of conversations between myself and teachers in the light of my intention to work with teachers in ways which were democratic and empowering for the participants. In November 1989 and early in 1990, Sue Philcox interviewed project teachers, asking for their perceptions of the project and about their relationship with me. Her data was compared with teachers' comments in structured interviews conducted by Lufuno Nevathalu in September 1988, teachers' comments about the merits of the project in interviews with myself in October and November 1989, and my own evaluation of the working relationship with teachers and the learning which resulted. This was further supplemented by the opinions of the school principals regarding teachers' development. To a limited extent the teachers' own peers have also been drawn on to present a richer and more complex picture. All these data sources will be considered in sections three and four.

McNiff (1988) discusses validation at some length and suggests that there are three steps to establishing the validity of a claim to knowledge - self validation, peer validation and learner validation. The first step has been met by making this study public and thereby inviting critique and comment on my interpretation of my own educational development. The second step, peer validation, was not as consistent as it might have been. The university at which this study was based concedes only reluctant recognition to action research as a valid form of educational research, and no consistent community of supportive action researchers existed at postgraduate level. While McNiff suggests setting up a validation group of peers to meet regularly, this was not possible. Nevertheless, the research was exposed to the wider Education Faculty through two seminars in February 1988 and July 1989, and an informal presentation in June 1988, and to the wider education community through conferences in October 1988 and March 1989. In addition, visits to CARE and Oxford in March 1989, and again from January to March 1990, gave me the opportunity to test my emerging insights against those of more experienced researchers. Critical comments on lesson and discussion data by Alan Kenyon and Rob Sieborger as peer validators further strengthen this study's knowledge claims. Other peer validation was provided by two 'critical friends' - David Cooper from UCT and Janet Stuart from Sussex University. Their careful and critical reading of draft chapters for

this study was invaluable in helping me clarify my thinking.

McNiff suggests that the third step - learner validation - provides 'perhaps the strongest support in the researchers claim to knowledge' (1988:135). Throughout this study teachers' views on their own learning and the merits of the project were elicited and documented in this study. Overall, such validation procedures aspire to 'critical intersubjectivity', i.e. a subjectivity 'sufficiently controlled to allow critical scrutiny' (Stenhouse 1978:33). McNiff usefully cites Lomax (1986) on the issue of validation as it effects action researchers:

as action researchers we do not claim to find the final answer to a question, but we do claim to improve (and change) educational practice through the educational development of practitioners...the validity of what we claim would seem to be the degree to which it was useful (relevant) in guiding practice for particular teachers and its power to inform and precipitate debate about improving practice in the wider professional community. (quoted in McNiff, 1988:131)

Similarly, Elliott argues:

In the final analysis the ultimate validation of specialised knowledge about education is that it enables educational practitioners to discover better solutions to the complex practical problems they confront in realising educational values in action. (1989:86)

In the light of these comments and the validation procedures followed, I would claim that this study has generated valid knowledge, relevant to the participants and the wider educational community.

This latter claim raises the issue of generalisation. Essentially generalisability involves asking whether or how work with a small group of teachers across four schools can make claims that are true for teachers and teaching more generally. Qualitative research does not eschew generalisation. As Atkinson and Delamont point out, this research tradition, within which action research studies fall, does not deal only with 'a series of self-contained, one-off studies which bear no systematic relationship to each other' (1985:39). Indeed action research studies should contribute to cumulative knowledge about educational processes. But generalisation is not achieved merely by surveys or the replicability of units:

Despite their diversity, individual classrooms share many characteristics. Through the detailed study of one particular context it is still possible to clarify relationships, pinpoint critical processes and identify common phenomena. (Delamont and Hamilton, 1984:19)

Thus this study suggests in the final chapter ways in which the knowledge generated in this study might be useful for a wider audience of facilitators and teachers.

### **Theory and practice**

In this study the relationship between theory and practice is framed dialectically in a non-prescriptive relationship (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Grundy, 1987; Winter, 1989; Elliott, 1989). Thus theory in this study guides, but does not direct practice. Theory is not

simply applied in action, nor excluded, but mediated by reflexive practice (Elliott, 1989). Grundy usefully exemplifies the theory-practice relationship:

There is no freedom in simply following what has been determined theoretically beforehand, even if one ascribes to the particular theory being implemented. Emancipation lies in the possibility of taking action autonomously. That action may be informed by certain theoretical insights, but it is not prescribed by them. (author's emphasis, 1987:113)

Grundy warns that even applying 'good' theory demonstrates a technical interest. In my own practice, I first tried to apply the theory of a recessive facilitator (see chapter four). The evident failure of this strategy and the tension between this action and my emancipatory intent confirmed the need to mediate, rather than apply, theoretical explanation through personal experience.

Oja and Smulyan suggest that 'acceptable' theory should include 'the understandings of practice' which emerge from practitioner action research (1989:207), while the type of theory generated by action research is described by Elliott (1989) as 'practical wisdom':

Wisdom can be defined as a holistic appreciation of a complex practical activity which enables a person to understand or articulate the problems s(he) confronts in realising the aims or values of the activity and to propose appropriate solutions. Conceived as an educational theory, wisdom constitutes a complex structure of ideas which cannot be broken down into its constitutive elements - as propositions - without loss of meaning. (Elliott, 1989:83-84)

The claims by this study to have generated 'practical wisdom' can only be assessed in terms of the process described in the sections which follow. Similarly an assessment of the methodological issues of data collection, analysis and validity are finally sought in the practice of this research as a contribution to the development of collaborative and empowering approaches to critical inquiry.

## SECTION TWO: LOCATING THE STUDY

As explained in chapter one, this section emerged out of practical concerns in my work with teachers. The account in these two chapters is a contradictory one. In order to understand the broad brush strokes of teachers' educational biographies and the schooling system within which my study was based, I turned to the history and politics of bantu education described in chapter two. It was to understand why teachers seemed not to require consistency of themselves that I turned to social science constructs to tease out the dialectic both of teachers' opposition to bantu education and also its accommodation in their working lives. I was also challenged towards the end of 1988 by Morrell's (1988) reproductive view of teaching to consider more carefully the possibilities of teachers contributing to change in education. Then in March 1989, a paper (Gwala, 1988) presented to the RESA conference made me realise how I had failed to comprehend the disabling effects of teachers' experience of bantu education at school and college. This led me to think more carefully about pre-service training in african teachers' colleges. All this has been drawn together into two chapters which are more than a backdrop to the process of change in sections three and four, they interweave directly with that process.

This section is premised on the understanding that if we view the change process only in terms of the school setting we set definite limits to our understanding of the

ubiquitous nature of the process and its outcomes in our society' (Sarason, 1982:44). Consequently this section describes what Silver (1980) refers to as 'the social conditions of schooling'. As Kemmis explains, this notion 'recognises that schools are a structuring element of contemporary society, and that the forms of life of society at large also structure schools' (1990:41). It would thus be inappropriate to draw a sharp distinction between the school and its 'context'. Furthermore, as Lawn and Grace point out:

teaching is more than a series of activities and assumptions operating within an insulated school or classroom. Teachers in their teaching incorporate social and political projects of one sort or another, whether that is consciously recognised or not. (1987:ix)

In South Africa, education cannot usefully be abstracted from apartheid structures and laws such as the Population Registration Act and Group Areas Act, which underpin segregated state schooling, nor from the wider structure of capitalist social relations (Levin, 1989). Kallaway argues forcefully that failure to study the structural location of educational issues 'runs the risk of naivete and irrelevance' (1984:2). Worse, he says, it contains the possibility of misleading those who would undertake the vital task of planning for a more just and equitable educational future.

In chapter two, then, the account of the history and politics of bantu education contributes to understanding the

political and educational conditions under which the research was carried out. Over several decades the effects of bantu education have been educationally debilitating, while successive cycles of political resistance have effectively undermined a 'learning culture' in the secondary schools. All of this impacts on those students who go on to study to be teachers. In order to understand the limits of teachers' professional knowledge, chapter three details the nature of teacher training. Working conditions of teachers in the study help explain the constraints on action for change. In order to show, however, that possibilities for change do exist, the concepts of ideology and hegemony, as well as the class location of teachers, are considered.

**CHAPTER TWO: THE HISTORY AND POLITICS OF BANTU EDUCATION  
1953-1989**

What we have here is not education. (Soweto teacher, 1988)

**1954-1960 The introduction of bantu education**

Prior to 1945, the state, capitalists and employers showed little interest in african schooling, and education was primarily provided in mission schools (Molteno, 1984). Although, as Molteno (1984) notes, even before the National Party came to power in 1948, schooling had already had some bearing on the shaping of capitalist class relations in South Africa. He cites evidence to show that schooling for africans, however limited, had as its objective africans 'acceptance of their place of inferiority, oppression and exploitation' (1984:62). Thus in the mid-1930s the government spent more than 40 times as much per capita on the education of each white child than on each african child, and only 25% of african children aged six to sixteen attended school (Molteno, 1984).

When the National Party came to power in 1948 it immediately appointed the Eiselen Commission to investigate african education. Its recommendations were incorporated into the Bantu Education Act of 1953 which aimed to implement Christian National Education (CNE) in the sphere of african education. The racist philosophy of CNE was clearly set out in a 1948 policy document:

We believe that the task and calling of white South Africa with regard to the native is to Christianise him[sic] and to help him on culturally, and that this calling and task has already found its nearer focussing in the principles of trusteeship, no equality and segregation. We believe besides that any system of teaching and education of natives must be based on this same principle. In accordance with these principles we believe that the teaching and education of the native must be grounded in the life and world view of the whites, most especially those of the Boer nation as the senior trustee of the native, and that the native must be led to a *mutatis mutandi* yet independent acceptance of the Christian and National principles in our teaching. (quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975:127-128)

Speaking to the Senate in 1954, Hendrik Verwoerd, as the then Minister of Native Affairs, elaborated the racist purposes of bantu education:

There is no place for him [sic] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour...For this reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community, where he cannot be absorbed. Until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze. This attitude is not only uneconomic because money is spent for an education which has no specific aim but it is also dishonest to continue it. It is abundantly clear that unplanned education creates many problems, disrupting the community life of the Bantu and endangering the community life of the European. (quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975:266)

Verwoerd hoped to allay white workers' fears of job competition from skilled africans. More than this, bantu education would reproduce and control a cheap, unskilled and semi-literate labour force, and at its higher levels, semi-skilled workers, to meet the economic needs of capital in the mines, farms and factories. Thus bantu education aimed at meeting the political and economic goals of both apartheid and capitalism (Unterhalter and Wolpe, 1989). At

the same time bantu education had an ideological force of its own, not just as a rationalisation for material interests but as the product of racist attitudes in South African society.

Bantu education became an integral part of an overall political plan to establish rural bantustans under the authoritarian rule of government-approved chiefs (Molteno, 1984; Christie and Collins, 1984). Because, as Verwoerd put it, bantu education 'should stand with both feet in the reserves and have its roots in the spirit and being of Bantu society' (quoted in Molteno, 1984:93), most educational institutions for secondary and tertiary education were to be located in the bantustans. The ideal product of bantu education would therefore be:

a person who accepts in full the Nationalist policy of apartheid, of white domination of the master-servant relationships as between White and Black; a person...whose highest aspirations will be to assert the superiority of his tribe over other tribes...a creature whose mind will have been thoroughly regimented into willing acceptance of the status quo. (E. Feit quoted in Molteno, 1984:94)

The Bantu Education Act empowered the government to centralise control of african schooling in its own hands. All schools now had to be registered and it became a criminal offence to operate a school not registered with the Department of Bantu Affairs. Mission schools, refusing to implement the new measures, were drastically effected. Of 5000 schools existing in 1954, only 509 remained by 1969. Syllabuses were now centrally prescribed and oriented

towards CNE. For example, the primary school syllabus stressed obedience, communal loyalty, ethnic and national diversity, the acceptance of allocated social roles, piety, as well as identification with rural culture (Lodge, 1984).

Not surprisingly there was considerable opposition to the Bantu Education Act from africans. Because there were very few african pupils in secondary schools, and no national student organisation, pupils were not a significant political force in the 1950s. Opposition was mobilised outside the schools by the African National Congress (ANC). Parents withdrew their children in significant numbers from schools on the Rand and in the Eastern Cape (Lodge, 1984). The ANC tried to provide alternative schooling through a network of 'cultural clubs', but these suffered from a shortage of funds, facilities and teachers. The clubs were further handicapped because their educational programme had to be informal, as they were not legally registered schools. Nonetheless, Unterhalter and Wolpe (1989) see the cultural clubs as a 'modest and unsystematic', but nevertheless embryonic conception, of alternative education. But state power was not yet being directly challenged, and the popular campaigns against bantu education in the 1950s did not yet turn on wider demands for the transformation of society as a whole (Unterhalter and Wolpe, 1989).

## 1960-1976 From Sharpeville to Soweto

The extra-parliamentary political terrain defined by organisations such as the ANC and the Pan African Congress (PAC) persisted legally only until the early 1960s. Following events at Sharpeville in March 1961 and the subsequent adoption of armed struggle by the ANC, the political sphere was decisively restructured by the ruling party to subordinate parliament and the judiciary to the executive. The ANC and PAC were banned, most of the ANC leadership imprisoned after the Rivonia Trial, and the possibilities of mass politics drastically curtailed (RESA 3, 1988).

Big business largely accepted the prevailing political conditions given the prolonged economic boom during the 1960s. Economic development was characterised by the emergence of giant corporations, and in particular by the massive expansion of the manufacturing sector. By the mid 1960s manufacturing rather than mining was the largest employer of labour. Corporate capital's priority demand now shifted from unskilled migrant labour to the skilled and semi-skilled workers required for mechanised operations. Increasingly therefore, corporate capital voiced its concern about the quality of bantu education.

The state responded by expanding secondary school provision and developing technical training facilities in urban areas. By 1975 the numbers of african children at school

had massively increased as more funds were made available to bantu education and better wages enabled more parents to keep their children in school. In 1954 there were 680,000 African pupils at school. By 1968 this number had jumped to 2,397,152, and by 1975 further increased to 3,697,441 of whom 318,500 were secondary school students (RESA 2, 1988:4). Significantly, the number of pupils who reached Std 10 had increased from a mere 0.8% in 1953 to 3.0% by the period 1965-1975. (Though the overall numbers were comparatively very low, with whites still providing sufficient skilled workers for capital.) In 1953, 332 africans matriculated; in 1975 there were 6,761 african matriculants (RESA 2, 1988:5). Similarly the figures for african university enrollment increased from 1,521 in 1955 to 9,181 in 1975 (RESA 2, 1988:6). At the same time, the weight of school enrollments remained concentrated in the lower primary sector.

Nonetheless, this concentration of large numbers of african students in schools and tertiary institutions was of considerable political significance. It opened up the space for organised resistance to the apartheid system at a time when virtually no other powerful extra-parliamentary oppositional groupings existed, given the intensifying repression of any such movements after 1961. By 1976 black school and university students<sup>1</sup> were organised under the banner of Black Consciousness, the dominant intellectual influence at that time. The black trade union movement was

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1. that is, african, coloured and indian.

also set for a resurgence. A combination of economic recession in the 1970s, and deteriorating conditions in african education resulting from its rapid expansion without adequate funding, precipitated organised political action in the universities and the schools (RESA 3, 1988).

By 1976 the apparent outward calm masked underlying tensions in the South African social formation. The economy was under stress. There had been a sharp fall in the gold price between December 1974 and August 1975 as the United States started to sell off its gold reserves. Growth rates slackened and the recession was further exacerbated both by the huge increase in the oil price after October 1973, as well as South Africa's failure to establish significant markets for her domestic manufactures either in Africa or abroad. Rising unemployment and high inflation, accompanied by poor transport and housing facilities, impacted harshly on the lives of black South Africans. Furthermore the successful conclusion of anti-colonial struggles in Angola (1974) and Mocambique (1975) boosted morale amongst the oppressed in South Africa.

As is well known, the student uprisings of 1976 were triggered by the Minister of Bantu Education's attempt to implement afrikaans as medium of instruction in african secondary schools. The resulting upheaval led by the school and university students, and the state's brutal response, has been thoroughly documented (Kane-Berman, 1978; Hirson, 1979; Brooks and Brickhill, 1980; Harsch, 1980; Lodge 1983).

The Soweto revolt marked a watershed both in the educational struggle and in resistance to apartheid as african workers were also drawn into spiralling resistance, providing the essential stimulus for the re-emergence of overtly political popular organisations and mass-based opposition as a political force (RESA 3, 1988).

### **1976-1983 Total Strategy: Reform and Repression**

The combined effect of worker and student action demonstrated decisively the failure of bantu education to create a servile african population, even while it limited their educational advancement. The government's response was to develop its so-called 'total strategy', a dual process of reform and repression accompanied by the centralisation and militarisation of state power. The overall aim of this strategy was to modernise (but not remove) apartheid in order to control and co-opt black South Africans and to ensure the survival of capitalism in SA (Kallaway, 1984 and 1986; Morris and Padayachee, 1988; RESA 3, 1988; Cobbett et al, 1986; Glaser, 1987). Overall the intention was to divide people along class lines, driving a wedge between urban and rural workers, middle class and working class blacks (Morris and Padayachee, 1988). Yet this is not to say that the state's reformist strategy was easily implemented. Rather it was marked by conflict between the reformists and those still committed to the continued reproduction of Verwoerdian 'grand apartheid' (RESA 3, 1988).

In the late 1970's the economy continued its downward slide, exacerbated by a marked decline in foreign investment (Gelb, 1988). Further concentration and centralisation in the corporate sector continued as large-scale capital took over weaker and smaller companies. The growth of a skilled and better educated black working class and petit bourgeoisie was seen as central to securing the conditions for economic growth and political stability (Unterhalter and Wolpe, 1989). Because 'grand apartheid' had proved increasingly dysfunctional to the further development of capitalism, the need arose 'to separate racism from capitalism' (Cassim, 1987:538).

Capital had already begun to initiate programmes of its own in order to pursue educational reform more purposefully. The Urban Foundation was established in 1976 by the Anglo-American Corporation and a number of other large corporations with a view to initiating projects in housing and education, specifically science education and teacher upgrading. Its aim was to foster 'the image of capital as the enemy of racial ascription and the champion of a colour-blind meritocracy' (Davies, 1984:354). Nevertheless the massive cost of education projects meant that capital still looked to the state to bear the main cost of reform.

In 1979 the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions were the means to implement reformist moves in the arena of labour relations by respectively legalising black trade unions and providing expanded residential rights for blacks in urban

areas. The later De Lange Commission was intended to fulfil a similar function for education and training. It began its investigation into education in 1981.

Essentially, De Lange attempted to move away from the overt racial stratification of Verwoerdian bantu education towards a deracialised system of merit and ability, both to meet the demand for changing skill needs and to win the consent of the governed (Chisholm, 1982; Nasson, 1984; Davies, 1984; Buckland, 1987). Verwoerdian racism was to be replaced by a political and educational discourse of equal opportunity of schooling. As Davies points out, however, what this meant in the rather tortuous explanations of the Commission was 'education of equal quality', which 'cannot be interpreted as equal share' but must be seen as 'rightful share' or more specifically 'equality-in-the-light-of-justice' (quoted in Davies, 1984:361). Nasson suggests that De Lange moved away from 'crude populist ideologies of race and racial domination' to 'the long term interests of the market order' (1984:11). And Buckland argues that the ideological discourse around education shifted in the 1980s 'in order to transform the way students perceived their domination, and to ensure continued capitalist development with minimal disruption of the "social order"' (1987:56).

The De Lange Commission proposed six years of 'basic' education which would be compulsory for all. State spending would be concentrated in this stage. Thereafter pupils would proceed to a further three years of post-basic

education which would be either academic, or technical, or non-formal i.e. in-service training. This stage was to be largely subsidised by parents and by the private sector. The technical and non-formal streams would be closely geared to perceived economic needs. In practice it seemed likely that middle class, mostly white, children would continue to academic secondary schooling, while working class, mostly african children, would proceed to technical education or non-formal on the job training as semi-skilled and skilled workers. The Commission recommended a single department of education for all races. Yet its support for 'non-racial differentiation' in practice extended no further than admitting a small black elite to non-racial private schools which would enjoy generous state subsidies, and to opening white universities to black students (Davies, 1984).

The government's response in the White Paper of 1983 reflected the contradictions within the ruling National Party. While the White paper accepted the need for more technical and vocational education for africans it rejected the proposal for a single education department. Furthermore the 'Christian National' character of education was reiterated. Nor should it be forgotten that the De Lange Commission had been preceded by the Education and Training Act of 1979 which centralised power in the hands of the Minister of Education and Training. The Act restructured educational administration by drastically curtailing the authority of local school boards and school committees which were divested of their power to hire teachers. Teachers

were now employed directly by the Department and subject to its disciplinary code. These changes, exacerbated by the state's conservative response to De Lange, shifted the focus of student opposition to the central state, and education struggles to the general political arena. Issues of state power began to permeate student campaigns (RESA 3, 1988). Furthermore, the limited reformist response of the state to popular political demands meant that the government's programme would have to be underpinned by repression. This in turn would widen the base of opposition to the apartheid state as it exposed the contradictions inherent in 'total strategy'.

**1983-1986 From tricameral parliament to nationwide resistance**

Unterhalter and Wolpe (1989) characterise the main political features of this period as, on the one hand, the attempt by the government to restructure the political terrain through the introduction of the tricameral parliament, and on the other, the development of a mass based opposition movement, particularly in the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The earlier reform strategy had failed to win the support of blacks because it had not addressed their political grievances. The second phases of reform sought to partially remedy this, at least for coloureds and indians (Hyslop, 1987).

In 1983 the tricameral parliamentary system was introduced with the intention of admitting blacks to government at different levels. At the national level, indians and coloureds could elect their own representatives to segregated parliamentary chambers. Africans were regarded as already having equivalent political rights in the bantustans, now renamed 'homelands'. Ultimate political power still rested with the white chamber, however. An executive president was appointed and power concentrated in this office, together with a number of appointed committees such as the President's Council, the State Security Council and various Interdepartmental Committees. In effect, the power of the cabinet and of parliament were considerably circumscribed by such measures.

The administration of education during this period was made a 'general' affair for common matters but also an 'own' affair for whites, coloureds and indians. African education, however, remained a general affair, indicative perhaps of the importance the state attached to it. Some of the local planning for african education, particularly after 1984/5, appears to have been carried out by Joint Management Committees (JMCs), chaired by members of the security forces (RESA, 3, 1988).

At the same time there was a massive increase in state spending on African education - from R143 million in 1978/9 to R709 million in 1984/5, although per capita spending on White and African education was still in the region of 7 to

1 (Hyslop, 1987:10). Enrollment in african secondary schools rose from 600,000 in 1980 to over a million in 1984. Technical and commercial schools were established. Technikons were built for africans and subsidies granted to private schools. The racial restrictions on entrance to these schools and to the 'white' universities largely lapsed.

Hyslop (1987) and Cobbett et al (1986) argue that all this represented a massive and real restructuring on authoritarian lines in the direction of greater state control and regulation, combined with greater emphasis on class divisions. Conceived and imposed from above, the state's reform programme reflected the growing militarisation of South African society in which the generals came to exercise growing influence over policy decisions.

Corporate capital's key co-optive strategy in this period was 'social responsibility'. The concern now was not with alleviating the skills shortage in the face of economic recession, but rather with ensuring political stability. After 1985 in particular, spending on education projects accelerated, with funds being channelled to teacher upgrading, science education, technikons and non-racial private schools (Swainson, 1989). While capital supported the tricameral constitution, the state-capital alliance was to come unstuck in the face of township rebellion and its economic consequences (Glaser, 1987).

On the economic front, after brief boom periods in 1979-1981 and again in late 1983 and early 1984, largely owing to a spiralling gold price, a sharp economic downturn followed, intensifying acute poverty in the townships. South Africa's foreign debt rocketed, interest rates climbed, inflation soared, the value of the rand plummeted, and the rush by foreign firms to disinvest gathered momentum (Kaplan, 1987; Gelb, 1988). By 1985 estimated unemployment stood at an average of 37% (Innes, 1988, Kaplan, 1987). From 1980-1986 only about 150,000 jobs were created whereas the labour force swelled by an estimated one and a half million (Cassim, 1987). Thus, not only were millions out of work, many would not hold jobs at all in the near future. Clearly this affected the job prospects of african school leavers, thereby exacerbating their dissatisfaction with bantu education.

Opposition to the tricameral system was spearheaded by the UDF, formed in 1983 as an umbrella body for over 600 extra-parliamentary organisations. Students and youth participated in large numbers through their organisations, particularly the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) formed in 1979 to organise school students. Popular struggles escalated from September 1984 in the Vaal area, sparked off by a one day stayaway by students and workers on election day. In the course of 1985 unrest spread across the country, drawing people into political involvement through rent boycotts, stayaways, mass funerals and school

boycotts. Student demands were no longer largely educational demands. They were now political, encompassing for example, the release of all detainees and troops out of the townships. Hyslop comments:

At a wider level, it was apparent that immediate educational demands were now seen by large numbers of students as mobilising issues which were just a facet of a wider struggle to overturn the existing social order. (1987:16)

The widespread national boycott of schools and escalating civil unrest led the state to declare a partial state of emergency in June 1985, extended to the Western Cape in August. The state unleashed the full force of its repressive apparatus on the schools and townships. COSAS was banned, students were detained, harassed and killed. The South African Defence Force (SADF) occupied townships and schools. The DET closed down schools. Repression was brutal and violent. Not surprisingly, by the end of 1985 the state's reform strategy was in ruins.

Student resistance had effectively derailed the education component of reform strategy. At the same time the extended boycott made it difficult to continue organising students. Waves of detention had removed successive layers of student leadership. Relationships between students and teachers had continued to deteriorate, despite the growth of support for progressive teacher unions such as the National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA) and new unions like the Democratic Teachers Union (DETU) in the Western Cape. The pursuit of wider and more immediate political goals had

diverted the challenge from more narrowly educational goals, opening up fissures between students and working parents who were concerned about the indefinite school boycott and the safety of their children. Nor could students begin to practically organise (as opposed to only demand) democratic control of schools while they continued to stay away.

### **1986 People's Education for People's Power**

In the light of the deepening education crisis, the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee (SPCC) was formed in October 1985. Its success in mobilising parents and teachers in Soweto led to a decision to call a national conference of teachers, parents, students and community organisations to find a way to resolve the crisis and take the education struggle forward (Kruss, 1988). The SPCC also sent delegates to Lusaka to canvass the views of the ANC, which expressed its support for a return to school.

The first National Consultative Conference took place in December 1985. A second conference in March 1986 led to the formation of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC).<sup>2</sup> Crucially, both these conferences initiated a debate over the form and content of a new education system within the context of the struggle for a democratic South Africa (Rensburg, 1986; Hyslop, 1987; Kruss 1987 and 1988;

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2. The NECC has now been renamed in the light of the changing political scene in South Africa from February 1990. It is now called the National Education Coordinating Committee.

Muller, 1987; Resa 3, 1988; Levin, 1989; Unterhalter and Wolpe, 1989). Hartshorne said of this important shift that:

The NECC has moved away from what had become a rather barren exercise, the recapitulation of the failures of bantu education, to a consideration both of the alternatives now and the form and character of a longer-term post-apartheid education system. (quoted in Kruss, 1988:8)

People's education could be struggled for in the present, even if it could only finally be implemented when the struggle for democracy had also been won.

The March conference defined the principles of people's education as follows:

- (1) it enables the oppressed to understand the evils of the apartheid system and prepares them for participation in a non-racial democratic system;
- (2) it eliminates the capitalist norms of competition, individualism, and stunted intellectual development and encourages collective input and active participation by all, as well as stimulating critical thinking and analysis;
- (3) it eliminates illiteracy, ignorance and exploitation of one person by another;
- (4) it equips and trains all sectors of our people to participate actively and creatively in the struggle to attain people's power in order to establish a non-racial democratic South Africa;
- (5) it enables workers to resist exploitation and oppression in their workplace. (quoted in RESA 3, 1988:21)

Peoples' power was inextricably part of people's education and present issues would be used to build organisations which could carry forward the longer term struggle. Eric Molobi of the NECC put it this way:

Since education as we have known it has been used as a tool of oppression, people's education will be an education that must help us to achieve people's power. People's education is therefore decidedly political and partisan with regard to oppression and exploitation. (quoted in Levin, 1989:3)

Thus the transformation of education and the transformation of society as a whole were now firmly linked as part of one common struggle.

Winning control of the schools was now a central goal. Such control could only be won by the organised struggle of parents, students and teachers for fundamental changes in education. The conference resolved that all people's education programmes should 'enhance the organisations of all sections of our people wherever they may be', and reciprocally, 'all student-teacher-parent and community based organisations must work vigorously and energetically to promote people's education' (quoted in Kruss, 1988:13).

In the wake of the two national conferences and the emergence of people's education, public statements by government ministers conceded that education structural conditions had changed and were changing. In April 1986, Gerrit Viljoen, Minister of Education and Development Aid, emphasised the government's commitment to providing equal educational opportunities, and the DET's commitment to offering the best possible education and training to enable children to develop their maximum potential (SAIRR, 1987:409). In the same month F. W. De Klerk, then Minister of National Education, announced that the government had decided to introduce a ten year plan to upgrade education in white-designated areas and 'non-independent' homelands. Crucially, however, the implementation of this plan depended on economic growth (SAIRR, 1987:409).

Addressing the House of Representatives in May 1986, Viljoen took a further step. He 'emphatically disassociated himself' from Verwoerd's notorious bantu education statements. Viljoen claimed that Verwoerd's approach had been 'sacrificed a very long time ago and in no way represents the approach of the DET or of any other department responsible for the education of africans'. Viljoen claimed that Verwoerd's interpretation of the purpose of african education was finally obsolete (SAIRR, 1987:410).

Viljoen conceded that there was some merit in people's education in so far as it offered greater community participation and more relevant syllabuses. On the other hand, he also made it clear that money not spent because of school boycotts would be made available for education provision in the 'non-independent' homelands because:

It is a sound principle that those parts of the country in which order prevails should be helped and advanced and that those parts in which order is not prevailing simply have to accept the results and pay the price (SAIRR, 1987:417).

Furthermore, the state would oppose people's education in so far as it led to 'revolutionary education', by which Viljoen meant 'violence and disorder, the political brainwashing of pupils and the passing of educational control from professional educationists to politicised community organisations' (SAIRR, 1987:425). It would seem that the state feared that campaigns over education would build

oppositional organisational structures such as PTAs<sup>3</sup>, civics, and local NECC branches. It was precisely these embryonic structures that the continuing state of emergency was intended to crush.

Hyslop (1987) suggests that there was conflict within the National Party leadership at this time over which course of action to follow. According to Hyslop the security establishment wanted order before reform could continue, while others favoured a combination of force and practical changes to win some support. He suggests the hardliners eventually won this battle, and in June 1986 a far wider state of emergency was declared. The effect was predictable:

The declaration of the state of emergency in June put paid to the last vestiges of restraint in the state's handling of the education crisis. Detentions of NECC leaders were carried out on a wide scale. The schools, which were on holiday at the time, had their reopening delayed until mid July. It was announced that all students would have to reregister and would be issued with identification and other new security measures would be introduced at the schools. (Hyslop, 1987:25)

This led to renewed boycott activity and further clashes between students and police. By the end of 1986 some 70% of DET schools, including primary schools, had been seriously disrupted (Muller, 1987). In Cape Town, for example, from July to the end of 1986, all the african primary schools were drawn into the boycott. A third consultative conference scheduled for December 1986 was banned. On 27

3. Parent-Teacher-Student organisations were formed from 1985 onwards. They were intended to be democratic structures which would work for democratic community control over the schools.

December, regulations in terms of the Public Safety Act of 1953 empowered the Director-General of Education and Training to prohibit all non-official syllabuses, courses, pamphlets or books in order to create a 'healthy climate' in the schools (Muller, 1987). Finally, on 9 January 1987, further regulations in terms of the Public Safety Act prohibited all gatherings on or behalf of the NECC to discuss unauthorised syllabuses (Muller, 1987). Muller concludes:

The harshness of this reaction made the state's attitude to people's education unambiguously clear. The NECC was left running its operation from hiding since its offices were regularly raided by the police. By the beginning of 1987 progress had slowed to a snail's pace. (1987:26)

This then was the highly repressive context within which I worked in township schools from 1987 to 1989.

#### 1987-1989 Education conditions in Cape Town

Conditions in DET schools were uneven, varying regionally regarding the extent of the collapse of schooling. Overall, however, continuing problems attested to the emptiness of the DET's claimed concern about realising the potential of african pupils. Evidence of chaos and confusion was reported in an account (Weekly Mail 2/6/89) of a visit to a Soweto secondary school at the time students were to write mid-year exams. For the first time pupils were supposed to be writing papers set by the DET rather than their own teachers. These papers often failed to arrive and pupils and teachers alike did not know which subjects were to be

written each day. When papers did arrive they were riddled with mistakes and inconsistencies and were so badly typed as to often be illegible. At much the same time, the DET came under further fire for irregularities and general mismanagement by its officials. For example, extensive corruption in the DET was uncovered by a Commission of Inquiry held in 1988 (Cape Times 26/6/88).

Despite the rhetoric of reform, educational provision during this period was still wholly inadequate and a source of great frustration to pupils and teachers. While 83% of all african children now attended school (Resa 2, 1988:2), there were still vast discrepancies in spending by the different education authorities, further compounded by the historical backlog in educational provision for african pupils. Per capita spending in 1987/88 ranged from R2299 spent on each white pupil to R366 spent on each african pupil (SAIRR, 1988:151).

Double sessions (the same teacher taking two classes per day) operated in 312 african primary schools, involving 68,700 pupils in 1987. The platoon system (two teachers for two classes in the same room) operated in 210 schools involving 169,188 pupils (SAIRR, 1989:263). Pupil-teacher ratios for white schools were 16 to 1; for urban african schools they were 41 to 1.<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly the drop out

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4. This ratio is based on every teacher teaching every period during the school day. In practice thus, classes are much bigger. Class sizes for the schools in my study averaged 50 pupils, while in the rural areas classes often contain up to 100 pupils.

rate at african schools was, and is, high. In 1987, 1,134,116 african pupils enrolled in sub A, the first year of primary schooling (SAIRR, 1989:269). In the same year, 171,700 dropped out of sub A (SAIRR, 1989:269). This appalling attrition rate continues throughout the years of primary schooling, so that 63% of african pupils had dropped out by the end of the primary phase in 1987, and over a million african children between the ages of 7 and 16 were not in school at all that year (SAIRR, 1989:259).

On the ground, these statistics translate into a situation where teachers often lack confidence in themselves as they struggle in overcrowded classrooms and hopelessly underresourced schools. For example, a recent news report sardonically made the point that Guguletu primary schools have to contend with 'the fourth R - Rain!' (Cape Times 25/4/89). Since 1986, according to this report, only three local primary schools had been renovated, and then at a cost of only R214,000. Yet in 1989, 50% of the education budget was allocated to white education (Argus 17/3/89). And in April 1989, De Klerk announced that the ten year plan to equalise education was 'on hold' because economic growth had not been sufficient to support the planned rise in spending (Cape Times 20/4/89).

Despite security force restrictions and the continuing state of emergency, student protest and DET intransigence marked each of the years 1987 to 1989. While primary schools continued to function, except during periods of community

wide protest, such as stayaways, nevertheless they too were affected by crisis and struggle. Pupils in all these schools were the younger brothers and sisters of secondary school students and hence aware of problems in these schools. Teachers were both the products of the system and, as part of the community, worked in a tense and unpredictable situation which at times erupted into violent confrontations with the security forces. The situation was further complicated after mid-1988 by the new and disturbing phenomenon of gang violence as gangs took their battles onto school premises, including one of the primary schools in which I was working. In the second half of 1988 attendance at the primary schools where I was working with teachers dropped, as pupils were often too scared to cross gang territory to get to school (Cape Times 9/7/88). My final working term in the schools, the third term of 1989, was marked by widespread protest against the tricameral elections, and my work with teachers had to be abandoned from mid-August. In short the situation was volatile and unstable. It was further exacerbated by the DET's manifest inefficiency. Arrangements to meet and work with project teachers were frequently broken. What follows then is a detailed account of the backdrop of student protest and community resistance which impacted on my work in the schools between April 1987 and November 1989. This is crucial to understanding the context and conditions in which my action research took place.

In January 1987 students agreed to a disciplined return to school in order to wage their struggle from within the schools (Hyslop, 1987). Country-wide, the first quarter of the year was relatively quiet. From the second term, however, unrest was triggered by student protests over detentions and conditions in the schools.

In 1987, for the first time in Cape Town schools, std 6 pupils were transferred from the primary schools to the secondary schools. This appeared to be a strategy by the DET to ensure that primary schools ran smoothly by transferring all the older pupils to secondary schools and thereby containing conflict. Secondary schools as a result were even more overcrowded than usual. Worst affected was Langa High which had 1800 pupils in a school designed to hold no more than 1000. The problems this caused, combined with conflict at the school over whether to participate in a sports meeting arranged by the DET, erupted in a school boycott. In events which followed the DET tried to force pupils to register before being re-admitted to school, parents countered by forming a strong PTSA, and the DET was forced to back down. In August there was a boycott, including primary schools, in support of the struggles at Langa High. On the 5th and 6th of May 1987 there were also widespread school stayaways in protest at the white general election. Significantly some 1200 teachers stayed away from school as well (Sash, 1988).

At the beginning of 1988, the DET announced that all pupils would have to register before they could be re-admitted to secondary schools. The registration form required students to declare that they would obey the rules and regulations of the school and would subject themselves to disciplinary action should it be necessary. Parents or legal guardians were also required to agree to disciplinary action against their children if necessary, and to undertake to pay the costs of any damage caused to school property or books (Cape Times 14/1/88). There was no similar requirement for primary schools but informal conversations at this time with principals revealed that they were unhappy with the DET ruling, and unsure of the effects on the community (fieldnotes 20/1/88). This was especially so as secondary schools would be closed until registration was completed and the premises guarded by the police. Three of the schools in which I worked were adjacent to secondary schools and it was difficult to ignore the empty schools, locked gates and the garish yellow police vehicles guarding school premises at this time.

Neither teachers' organisations, nor the PTSAs, had been consulted about registration and they were now prohibited from holding meetings to discuss the issue (Cape Times 15/1/88). A pamphlet was widely distributed by the security forces in the townships to encourage pupils to register. The pamphlet ended: 'Peace and Education in South Africa is a Way of Life'! (Weekly Mail 29/1/88) The NECC, although banned since February 1988, declared its support for a

return to school but stressed that the DET should work 'constructively' with parents to ensure acceptable registration procedures (Cape Times 3/2/88).

Secondary schools reopened on 3 February amidst a strong police presence. The new registration procedures resulted in three of the schools in the area in which I was working being only half full. The DET announced that a total of 1,544 pupils in Cape Town had been excluded from schools because they had either 'unacceptable and inadequate documentation' or 'frivolous and unsubstantiated reasons for delay in applying' (Sash, 1988:29). The response of Viljoen to the plight of over 1,000 excluded pupils was typically dismissive, suggesting that they go out to earn pocket money so that they could go to school the following year! (Cape Times 23/3/88)

The Joint PTSA's<sup>5</sup> mounted a court challenge against the exclusion of pupils and the ban on their meetings, but the court found that, while they had the right to meet, the DET was not required to recognise them as a legitimate representative body (Sash, 1988:29). Attempts to negotiate with the Deputy Minister of Education and Training proved fruitless.

Significantly for building teacher unity, however, the exclusion of pupils brought together the two local

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5. This comprised the PTSAs from the african high schools in Langa, Guguletu, New Crossroads and Nyanga.

organisations for african teachers in Cape Town - the more conservative PENATA (Peninsula African Teachers' Association) and the progressive union, DETU. Teachers described their first meeting with DET officials as 'very unsatisfactory' (South 18/2/88). A second meeting was aborted when a group of about 200 teachers was handed a statement outside the DET offices informing them that teachers did not have permission to be there. They were told to communicate with the DET through their principals. Teachers from 11 secondary schools then embarked on a boycott of their own. They agreed to return to work only when the DET extended the registration date for pupils by one week (South 18/2/88). Soon afterwards pupils organised their own boycott in sympathy with those excluded, calling for 'three days of concern'. About 5,000 pupils at seven schools boycotted school for three days (Cape Times 4/3/88).

Schools re-opened in April 1988 to a fresh crisis. Six teachers, all members of DETU, had been suspended for participating in the teachers' boycott. They had also refused to take part in an inter-schools athletics meeting on the grounds that they had been given only five days notice (Weekly Mail 21/4/88). When teachers planned a protest over the suspensions they were warned of 'serious repercussions' by the DET. In the end very few teachers from the project schools stayed away, although the principals of two of the schools did close their schools early on the day of the stayaway (fieldnotes 4/5/88). By this stage, absenteeism in the secondary schools had reached

about 90% (Cape Times 29/4/88). In an interview, Andile Jonas, chairperson of DETU, said there were definite parallels between 1985 and 1988. Pupils were still protesting about the shortage of textbooks, the presence of security forces and the suspension of teachers. One major difference which he pointed out was the way in which teachers were now also taking action (South 4/5/88).

In the light of this political activity, which included a three day stayaway in June, and the commemoration of Nelson Mandela's birthday, the DET sent secondary school principals a circular in September asking them to name 'radical' teachers and the extent of involvement in 'subversive activities' at their school of progressive parent, pupil and other organisations, such as WECSCO (Western Cape Students Congress), DETU, WECTU and the PTSAs (Argus 10/9/88). The DET was strongly condemned for this 'witchhunt' at a press conference called by DETU and other progressive organisations. A liberal opposition member of parliament claimed that the questionnaire 'ripped the benevolent mask from the face of the department to reveal its ugliness' (South 15/9/88). Having first denied any knowledge of the circular, the DET then claimed it was part of a programme of 'assessing progress' at the schools (South 15/9/88). The circular was eventually withdrawn.

The remainder of 1988 was quieter in terms of student protest. Suspended teachers remained in limbo and their classes were left without teachers. At the new

comprehensive secondary school in Guguletu, pupils boycotted briefly over alleged racist slurs by white teachers and the white principal who, they claimed carried a gun and co-operated with the police (South 11/7/88). The appointment of white principals to all township high schools was to lead to further tension in 1989.

The year closed on a pessimistic note. In February 1988 seventeen extra-parliamentary organisations had been restricted. These organisations included the UDF, COSATU, the NECC, SANSCO (South African National Students Congress) and SAYCO (South African Youth Congress). At the end of December the restrictions were extended to DETU, WECTU (Western Cape Teachers Union) and WECSCO because, claimed a Law and Order spokesman, 'they played an active role in the people's education struggle which was an ANC inspired education system for South Africa' (Argus 30/12/88). This was to make it impossible to develop any organisational links between my work with teachers and progressive education organisations, a point I return to in chapter ten.

Shortly after the beginning of the new school year in 1989, the Defend DETU Committee (DDC) initiated a campaign to address the situation in african schools. Their concerns included the exclusion of pupils from secondary schools, the appointment of white principals which was creating a 'baaskap situation'<sup>6</sup>, and the security force presence on school grounds. The DET responded by claiming that the

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6. 'Baaskap' means white supremacy.

police were patrolling I D Mkize High School because 'considerable damage' had been caused to a department vehicle the previous year, and DET officials had been threatened. With regard to the appointment of white principals, the DET claimed that all posts had been advertised nationally and the 'best qualified' people appointed. According to the DET, school quotas had not been reduced but were based on the capacity of each classroom to hold 35 pupils (Weekly Mail 27/1/89). Given that these same classrooms had in the past been expected at times to accommodate up to 100 pupils, this new concern for manageable classes met with a degree of scepticism from pupils and teachers.

Tension again flared at the end of April when a white principal was injured and his car stoned at I D Mkize School. Andile Jonas, the chairperson of the now banned DETU and a teacher at the school, was detained shortly afterwards, together with four students from the school. The cars of two other white school principals were also stoned (Cape Times 22/4/89).

The DDC launched a campaign to draw attention to this fresh crisis. They called for the resignation of Leon Nel, the DET deputy regional director, because he had 'clearly failed to identify the problems in the schools, and has rather decided to use the iron fist which only creates pandemonium in black education'. Despite having warned the DET at the beginning of the year 'of the folly of placing ignorant and

"verkrampte" [very conservative] white principals at the helm of our schools', the situation had reached 'a flashpoint' (Cape Times 18/5/89). The DDC expressed concern that SRCs were not being allowed to operate. Furthermore, teachers claimed that the DET had steamrolled the appointment of Parent Management Committees in place of elected PTSAs in 1988.

In May 1989, secondary school pupils began a boycott in protest against the detention of Jonas and the four students. But when the detainees were released at the end of May, pupils still did not return to school and mid-year exams were abandoned at affected secondary schools. A Western Cape meeting to address the new crisis was banned (South 7/6/89). Nevertheless, the announcement in July that Leon Nel was to be moved from his post as a result of a 'streamlining policy' represented a significant victory for the DDC campaign (Cape Times 11/7/89).

From August 1989 onwards, primary and secondary schools became caught up in the national protest against the September elections for all three houses of parliament. In the first week of August the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) announced a national defiance campaign which would include defiance of restriction orders on activists, the unbanning of organisations. protest action at educational institutions, and a mass refusal to observe laws segregating facilities such as hospitals and beaches. An MDM spokesperson explained that people were saying that 'we can

no longer jail ourselves, nor accept segregation and racial division, nor stand silent in the face of crushing economic problems of the mass of our people' (New Nation 17/8/89). Thus the defiance campaign had a dual aspect - a challenge to apartheid laws and to the security legislation underpinning the apartheid government (Collinge, 1989).

The defiance campaign proved to have overwhelming appeal:

What else could have drawn thousands to picnic on 'all white' beaches? What else caused students to march in remote Phutaditjaba, prompted workers to challenge residential and canteen segregation on the mines, drew pupils in the border region to demand admission to White schools and prompted challenges to hospital apartheid even in Free State towns like Welkom. (Collinge, 1989:6)

The mass protests were marked by unrestrained support for the ANC, demonstrated by posters, the open display of ANC flags, the wearing of ANC colours and the singing of ANC songs.

These protests did not go unchallenged by the state, and the Western Cape experienced a particularly severe police response. In Cape Town rallies and marches were met yet again with sjamboks (whips) and teargas, arrests and detentions. At times, areas like Guguletu and Mitchells Plain were enveloped in palls of black smoke from burning tyre barricades. Headlines such as 'Streets of Fire - it's war in our schools', and 'The tyre and teargas election' captured vividly the form and extent of resistance and repression.

Primary and secondary school teachers also participated in different ways in the defiance campaign. Apart from joining their pupils at meetings and supporting the stayaway on 5th and 6th September, african teachers also attempted to gather at the DET head office in Cape Town. They were turned back before they could reach their destination, but later handed in written demands to DET officials. These included the release of detained teachers and students, an end to police brutality, and better school facilities (Weekly Mail 7/9/89).

On election day, 6 September, black schools were deserted, taxi ranks empty and Cape Town's african townships eerily quiet. The brunt of election day violence was borne both by the coloured township of Mitchells Plain, and the african township of Khayalitsha, the latter some 30km from Cape Town. People here were arrested, and some killed. Shortly after the election, given the newly conciliatory line of the re-elected National Party, 40,000 people marched through the streets of Cape Town to protest at the election day killings. The march was a watershed event. The triumphant mood was captured by Jay Naidoo, general secretary of COSATU:

The people of Cape Town have made history today. You have liberated your own city. You have shown the government that the people are not with them; they are with the MDM. The people's flag was hung high in the city today. It is not orange, white and blue - it is black, green and gold! (Cape Times 14/9/89)

Indeed this historic march was followed by a re-opening of political space, as events accelerated over the next few

months, culminating in the unbanning of all political organisations in February 1990 and the release of Nelson Mandela.

#### 1987-1989 Limits and Possibilities of the Research Project

However, I worked in township schools during the period of severe repression, and this obviously set limits on what was possible at that time. Again, while the protest action centred on the actions of secondary school pupils, the nature of Group Areas meant that in the primary schools, the pupils and the teachers were inextricably part of a single community as brothers and sisters and parents of pupils in secondary schools. Simmering resentment and student anger occasionally erupted into open defiance and the police and army were very much in evidence, patrolling township streets and parked inside or near school gates. Resistance bubbled beneath the surface, evidenced daily by the apparent breakdown of formal secondary schooling and the collapse of the tattered remnants of a learning culture as pupils arrived late at school and left early, despite the attempts of white principals to impose discipline. If violence flared against the white principals, vanloads of police simply moved onto school premises to intimidate students into submission.

What all this meant was that my research could not be smoothly planned and carried out. Of necessity it had to take into account wider events. Two examples serve to

illustrate this. After the release of Oscar Mpetha, an ANC stalwart and trade unionist, and others from jail in August 1989, schools closed early so that all the teachers could visit Mpetha at his nearby Nyanga home to welcome him back (fieldnotes 10/8/89). On another occasion I arrived to find the schools completely empty at 9.30 in the morning because all the teachers had decided the previous day to march to the DET offices (fieldnotes 13/10/89).

Furthermore, severe repression and the banning of organisations in 1988 effectively closed the space to develop people's education in any overt way. The optimism of late 1985 and 1986 gave way to a hiatus in attempts to put into practice the principles of people's education. The overall mood was far less militant and less hopeful. This is not to say that classroom efforts to build education for democracy ground to a complete halt. But in the end, my own work with teachers needs to be considered in the light of the criticism made by Unterhalter and Wolpe (1989) of attempts to implement people's education divorced from mass political action, in particular during 1987-1989. They argue that the gradual introduction of alternative materials in english, history and maths proposed in 1986 was a constructive challenge at that time to bantu education. But they emphasise that these developments have to be set within the prevailing framework of developing structures of people's power as a project of possibility:

Although the partial 'reforms' which could be implanted in bantu education would be of value in themselves the fundamental point is that they were

intended to be the outcome of a political process, in particular the assertion of people's power in the sphere of education. It is precisely this which would have given the achievement of changes in bantu education their specificity as expressions of people's power and not merely as reforms. (authors' emphasis, 1989:15)

Because it was very difficult to develop and refine the principles of people's education after 1986, they argue that the concept was appropriated by reformist agencies such as private schools, and even by the state, all of whom sought to adapt people's education within the existing system, rather than to radically transform education.

The same applies, they suggest, to the development of new teaching methods which had been initially envisaged as being part of a much wider struggle for people's power in education and society:

This insertion of new syllabuses and texts in the private and bantu education schools may be a forward step to the extent that they are an improvement on existing syllabuses and texts, but once again, it is essential to recognise the political limitations of such developments, even where these materials conform to 'people's education'. First, the insertion does not take place through struggles involving collectives of teachers, parents and students. Second, in this situation, the improved means of teaching are simply accommodated within existing structures and do not present themselves as an element in the creation of a radical alternative. In this sense, there is a danger that they take on a narrow, reformist connotation. (authors' emphasis, 1989:18)

Given the conditions obtaining between 1987 and 1989, was it possible at all to reconstitute people's education at the level of the school site? What practices and forms of action would constitute transformation and what only reform? Having articulated transformative goals, an examination of

my own practices as facilitator, together with episodes from teachers' classroom work, must be the lens through which the achievement (or not) of transformative goals is refracted. Certainly the tension between transformation and reform emerged as a key dilemma in my practice as section four will show.

### CHAPTER THREE: TEACHERS AND CHANGE

Teachers are not passengers on the ship of education; they are crew.<sup>1</sup>

Overall, this chapter is concerned with the limits and possibilities of teachers contributing to change in education. It looks at the way in which formal schooling reproduces society, but qualifies this functional-reproductive perspective by examining the way in which schooling is a site of contestation and resistance as well. The concepts of ideology and hegemony are examined as a useful means to understand possibilities for educational change. At the same time these concepts help explain the persistence of relations of domination in educational situations and the partial understanding by teachers of the functions of education in society. The point being made is that teachers might accept, even actively uphold at times, and yet also resist, the practices and norms of bantu education which structure their subordination as teacher-agents in the education hierarchy. This leads into an examination of the position of teachers, including their contradictory class location, and the possibility of encouraging 'professionalism' as an oppositional strategy to bureaucratic control. The chapter proceeds to examine teachers' professional knowledge, particularly the nature of their pre-service training, and outlines the dominant philosophy of fundamental pedagogics underpinning this. This somewhat bleak picture is rounded off by describing

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1. Kemmis, 1990:iv

teachers' working conditions under the DET. Finally, the chapter looks at teachers and educational change, arguing that teachers should be participants in change, rather than only receivers and implementers.

### The role of teachers

Central in attempts to influence, innovate and change schooling anywhere are teachers, who play a key role in determining the quality of schooling available to pupils (see for example, Stenhouse, 1975; Hawes, 1979; Fullan, 1982; Hartshorne, 1988; Kemmis, 1990). Not surprisingly, the official role of teachers in South Africa is straightforward.<sup>2</sup> They are intended to reproduce state ideology. In 1953 Verwoerd bluntly stated that: "People who believe in equality are not desirable teachers for natives" (quoted in Harsch, 1980:99). He went on to outline the teacher's role:

the bantu teacher must be integrated as an active agent in the process of the development of the bantu community. He [sic] must learn not to feel above his community, with a consequent desire to become integrated into the life of the European community. He becomes frustrated and rebellious when this does not take place, and he tries to make his community dissatisfied because of such misdirected ambitions which are alien to his people. (quoted in Rose and Tunmer, 1975:262)

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2. In a decentralised system such as Britain, teachers' official role may appear less circumscribed but is nevertheless not dissimilar. For example, Sharp (1980) provides an account of the William Tyndale school dispute which ended in the dismissal of all the teachers and the reorganisation of the school. She makes the point that the autonomy of teachers 'seems to be only permissible where teachers' practices do not threaten the prevailing hegemony' (1980:157).

Speaking in Parliament more than 30 years later, another Minister of [African] Education and Training, made it clear that conservative views were still dominant, despite the liberal reformist rhetoric of the early 1980s. Any deviation in the content of education, he emphasised, particularly anything with a 'militant' or 'revolutionary' flavour, would not be tolerated, by the education authorities in any circumstances (SAIRR, 1988:).<sup>3</sup>

Now, counter-hegemonic forces also recognise the central role teachers play. Father Mkwatsha, keynote speaker at the December 1985 National Education Conference explained that:

History teaches us that the lack of qualifications (i.e. skilled and politicised) teachers and the absence of resources, have, in the end, stymied all alternatives. Teachers need to be prepared for alternative education and through alternative education for the future. (quoted in Kruss, 1987:14)

Similarly, Curtis Nkondo, president of the National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA), stated that teachers are 'the ones who will be able to effect changes in the curriculum, the syllabus and textbooks' and they should therefore be able 'to identify the ideology in the subjects and make students aware of sexism and elitism' (quoted in Kruss, 1987:29). Finally, Ihron Rensburg of the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) has argued that:

3. While the previous chapter's account of the De Lange Commission and other reformist moves suggested a shift from the Verwoerdian bantu education of 1953, nevertheless, the majority of pupils in african primary schools are still likely to end up as unskilled workers. Of the minority who make it through to secondary schooling, most will become semi-skilled workers and a smaller number, skilled workers. Interestingly, teachers and principals I met, understood bantu education, as they experience it in their schools, in its Verwoerdian sense.

teachers, not activists, will be most important in implementing People's Education. And we will have to rely particularly on teachers currently involved in democratic teacher organisations as the most effective people to implement People's Education. (1986:11)

Zwelakhe Sisulu summed up the choice for teachers in the light of mass-based struggles from 1984 by students, workers and communities throughout South Africa:

Gone are the days when teachers were forced to collaborate with apartheid structures. The people have opened the way. It is up to the teachers and the teachers' organisations to ensure that teachers follow the path of the people, the path of democracy. (quoted in Kruss, 1987:36)

Thompson, as pointed out in the introduction, emphasises that changes in formal education 'must in the end mean changes in what goes on in classrooms or they mean nothing' (1981:159). This means that teachers, and what they actually do in classrooms, are important in any strategy for change. Marlene Rousseau of the Junior Primary Language Project in african primary schools has observed that 'until we address the starting point - the teacher - we can't really talk about change' (interview 31/7/90). Similarly, one of the project school principals said:

The teacher must have some kind of introspection - that I do not have the means of being efficient. I've been through the mill of bantu education therefore I'm its product. So unless that 'product' is going to give again, you know, the poison [of bantu education], the 'product' has got to improve so that one gives out to the kids something totally different. So in a way you have got to start with the teacher. A teacher has got to be conscious of the fact that he is not a real teacher, he is an undeveloped teacher, even if he's 'qualified'. (Mr Lungiswe, interview with L. Nevathalu 29/5/88)

Finally, another teacher was quite clear where change, for her, begins:

My role as a teacher plays a big part in this because I'm the one who must change first, I must change myself first so that the kids can change...I can't say the education must change whereas I have not been changed myself. (Elizabeth, interview with L. Nevathalu, 29/9/88)

Teachers can and do make a difference. This point is underscored by Lewin:

The quality of school experience is heavily dependent on the quality of the staff, their motivation and the leadership they experience. If it were not so it would be difficult to explain the widely recognised differences between schools with a similar level of physical provision. Teacher morale and professional support, and awareness of educational possibilities through adequate pre- and in-service training are critical determinants of curricular quality over and above the level of physical support. (1985:130)

Fullan (1982) notes that educational change requires that teachers understand what they do and why they do it. This is more likely to be the case where they participate in action to recreate the curriculum in their classrooms rather than only receiving it from others (Campbell, 1985). As Van den Berg observes:

There are thus two powerful reasons why INSET strategies in South Africa should be based on the active involvement of teachers. The first, quite simply, is that such strategies have been shown to be more successful. The second is more important: within an autocratic society those who are concerned about INSET and who also claim to support the democratisation of South African society must be committed to the empowerment of teachers and not their continued subjugation. (1987:26)

Drawing on extensive experience of schooling in former British colonies in Africa, Hawes affirms the central role of teachers in curriculum development:

There is no conceivable way in which curriculum implementation can be divorced from the process of teacher education. The teacher in school interprets the objectives and content in the curriculum plan and manages the learning situation through which intention is transformed into actual practice. (1979:121)

Even in a centralised educational system like South Africa's, as Hurst warns, 'officials may issue reformist instructions until they are blue in the face, but unless teachers have the will, the knowledge and possibility of changing...mere orders will accomplish nothing' (1981:188).

Given that teachers cannot be, and should not be, overlooked in the process of change, one needs to examine those factors which might predispose teachers to the possibility of change, or to resist or ignore new directions in their work. The examination which follows of the concepts of ideology and hegemony, the class location of teachers, the nature of ideological production in the training colleges, and teachers' working conditions are all considered as a basis for beginning to answer these questions. It is worth repeating that these issues informed my practical work with teachers and my educational development in that this enquiry contributed to a better understanding on my part of how teachers come by their problems.

#### **Ideology and hegemony in schooling**

Formal schooling<sup>4</sup> plays a central role in legitimating the prevailing structure of society, in the case of South Africa

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4. Aronowitz and Giroux distinguish between 'education' and 'schooling' in this way: 'Schooling as we use the term takes place within institutions that are directly or indirectly

a racial-capitalist social order which discriminates on the basis of colour, privileging the wealthy few over the majority of the population.<sup>5</sup> Feinberg usefully exemplifies the reproductive function of schools:

Education [as social reproduction] has two functions. First there is the reproduction of skills that meet socially defined needs. These skills include not only those related to specific economic functions, but also those habits and behaviour patterns that maintain social interaction in a certain structured way. Here we include the appropriate patterns of interaction in everyday life, such as turn taking, greeting, physically distancing and so on. However, they also include the patterns of behavioural relationships that occur among people with different skills, such as interactions between owner and worker, doctor and nurse and so on. Second there is the reproduction of consciousness or of the shared understanding (whether formally articulated or not) that forms the basis of social life. These two moments are found in any society and, along with some degree of shared historical understanding, account for the maintenance of social identity across generations. Whereas schools are an important means of reproduction for contemporary society, they but represent the formalisation of the moments of reproduction into a structured curriculum, with a stipulated method of instruction. (1983:156)

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linked to the state through public funding or state certification requirements. Institutions that operate within the sphere of schooling embody the legitimating ideologies of the dominant society...Education is much more broadly defined. In a radical sense, education represents a collectively produced set of experiences organized around issues and concerns that allow for a critical understanding of everyday oppression as well as the dynamics involved in constructing alternative political cultures' (1985:131). In other words education may take place within schools but it should not be assumed that it does.

5. For accounts of the connections between schooling as a site for social and cultural reproduction see for example Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Dale et al, 1976; Apple, 1979; Sharp, 1980; Giroux 1981; Feinberg, 1983 and Kemmis, 1990. For specifically South African accounts of the role of schooling in reproduction see for example, Kallaway (ed) 1984 and Nasson 1990a and 1990b.

In South Africa schools do indeed play a functionalist role in meeting the economic, social and political ends of a racial-capitalist society. Hyslop makes the point that:

While ideological factors and fractional interests may mean that those perceived needs are not identical with requirements of capitalist accumulation, it would be strange indeed if there were not some relationship between the two. (1987:4)

But conditions for the stable reproduction of economic, social and cultural relations through schooling are ceaselessly contested and educational reform has to be struggled for continually. Kemmis succinctly summarises the contested nature of social and cultural (including educational) reproduction and change:

It is essentially contested not only because deciding what should be reproduced requires interpretation by the community at large and by the individuals whose concerns shape schooling (individuals and groups who disagree about what is to be valued in the society we have today), but also because different individuals and groups have different ideas and values about where society should be heading - different aspirations for the future of society. The formation of education at any moment in history is thus characterised by interlinked contests both about what features of existing society are worth preserving and about what values, views and skills should be developed for the good of society in the future.(1987:296)

The concepts of hegemony and ideology are useful tools for understanding change in education in the light of this tension between reproduction and transformation. Such tension recognises both the functional link between the education apparatus and the economy, but also highlights the space for contradictory processes in the control, content and methods of schooling. These same concepts of ideology and hegemony help identify 'fissures' in people's practical

ideologies (Sharp, 1980) in order to illuminate the contradictions in those practices, and hence the possibilities for change. At the same time, as this chapter will show, they help explain the difficulties of change.

At one level, ideology refers to a system of ideas and beliefs, but, according to Althusser (1971), ideology is more than an abstract system of thought. Rather it is a 'lived relation' so that one's experience of life shapes one's thinking and one's view of the world. Sharp usefully sums up this view of ideology 'as systems of representations which signify a set of relationships which are real but which hide another set of relationships between people which are no less real' (1980:92). Our experiences in the labour process, in the community in which we live, in the relationships between men and women, produce and reproduce a system of ideas and beliefs as experienced from a particular class position, but also refracted through the prisms of race and gender (Youngman, 1986). We live our lives 'within' ideology as it were (Sharp, 1980).

The concept of ideology illuminates the forms and processes of schooling in capitalist societies, and is crucial to understanding teachers and their work. Ruling class ideologies specifically portray existing social relations as given and of benefit to all by conflating the interests of the dominant group with the interests of society as a whole (CCCS, 1978; Apple, 1979; Sharp, 1980). However surprising the beliefs and actions of some people might seem to be -

for example teachers who persist in teaching strategies which seem, to an outsider, to be manifestly ineffective in promoting learning - Sharp reminds us that ideology 'may be insidious, but never crude to those whom it imprisons' (1980:ix). Ideologies may 'produce inversions and distortions but it is precisely because, so to speak, they gear into real social practices and routines, that they are so hard to transform' (Sharp, 1980:92). For example, accepted hierarchical and authoritarian patterns of schooling and classroom practices reinforce particular ideologies about schooling. And yet these particular ideas about teaching and learning would not seem to be in the best interests, for example, of african pupils.

More broadly, in South African society, 'race', as Fine points out 'is the crucial ideological glue which holds together the social order and underwrites the exercise of power' (1990:93).<sup>6</sup> He elaborates on this point as follows:

people have to live as if race is not merely a phantasma - the ideological expression of social relations of alienation and exploitation - but is real. The state demands that people behave as if race is, whatever they actually believe in their heart of hearts. Because of this life in the apartheid system is permeated with hypocrisy and lies. Whenever individuals reproduce the lie as reality - declaring that race is real rather than that the illusion of race has been turned into the reality of power - they become not just oppressed by apartheid but reproduce apartheid in the texture of their everyday lives. The dividing line between apartheid and liberation is not only one between a group of white oppressors and a larger group of black oppressed, but it necessarily runs through each individual. Everyone is object and

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6. For a recent account of the race and class struggle against apartheid see H. Wolpe (1988) Race, Class and the Apartheid State (Paris: Unesco). For critical reviews of this book see S. Badat (1989) and R. Fine (1990).

subject, victim and supporter of the system. (author's emphasis, 1990:93)

O' Meara (1983) provides an everyday example of the same point, namely that ideological beliefs are not merely abstract formulations but derived from the way we experience the world, however partially or inadequately. He uses the example of a black man waiting for a bus from the outskirts of the city to the centre. This man would have to wait for a bus reserved for blacks even if a number of empty white buses passed by. Thus, says O' Meara, he would experience this daily frustration as yet another instance of white racism that would reinforce his understanding of white privilege and power in South African society:

Now at the level of direct everyday experience, such racial categories of explanation adequately correspond to every black person's daily experience and provide a framework within which they can formulate courses of action to survive. However, such a common daily experience of intense racial discrimination is not the same as, and does not necessarily simultaneously evoke, an experience of the full ensemble of conditions which make such an experience both possible and common - that is, inter alia, the consolidation of capitalist production in a period of monopoly, the monopolisation of the means of production in the hands of white capitalists, the dispossession of African producers, etc. (1983:13)

As mentioned in chapter one, the interface of a white researcher committed to non-racial working relations with african teachers, and the social reality of 'race' made for more complicated outsider-insider relations than Elliott's (1988a) formulation. It further increased the pressures on myself as outsider-researcher where establishing good interpersonal relations with teacher-insiders, in almost any educational context, is seldom uncomplicated or easy.

Given the way in which ideology incorporates the dominant view of social relations, teachers that I worked with also articulated what can be described as a partial view of bantu education. They found bantu education unacceptable, as these comments drawn from structured interviews conducted by Lufuno Nevathalu illustrate:

We are knocking against a wall which does not allow us to do what we want to do for the upliftment of the community...they [the government] do not want the people to get together to discuss their problems...the problems of the location, the problems of the school.(Gladstone, interview 28/9/88)

I'd say it's not good...but we all know that you see but we have to learn what we are being told to learn. (Nombulelo, interview 28/9/88)

Everything changes but this education of ours doesn't change...and at the same time if you want to do anything that is of use they [the DET] become negative, they don't sit down and peruse that information, they just become negative to it. (Veronica, interview 29/9/88)

You know, if we can get same education, there must not be white education, coloured education, black education, because this thing of having white education, black education is really frustrating. (Stanley, interview 27/9/88)

There is no freedom of teaching. It [bantu education] is stereotyped. We cannot broaden ourselves. (Douglas interview 29/9/88)

Yet none of these teachers demonstrated more than a partial awareness of the wider reproductive function, not only of bantu education, but of all apartheid education. For most of these teachers, white or coloured education is uncritically viewed as desirable, not surprisingly given the much better resources. Where african pupils attended coloured schools<sup>7</sup>, teachers (often the parents) commented on the superiority of such schools:

7. At the time of this study, state legislation allowed coloured schools to accept african pupils, at the discretion of the principal, and only if the school had place.

The present schooling system? To me it's bad because I'm comparing it to other education departments, the coloureds and the whites. I've got kids who are in the coloured schools and when I look at their level compared to the kids I'm teaching here, they are far above, and when I look at the methods which are being used to teach them they actually open up ideas for those kids, they've got better library facilities, the programme and syllabus is structured differently as compared to ours...I would say [our schools] should be different in such a way that when you structure a syllabus you should make sure that it goes from point A to point B. (Oscar, interview 29/9/88)

There is certainly some truth in the assertion that coloured schools are 'better' - buildings, resources, smaller classes, and better qualified teachers. Nevertheless, in the end, such schools also function to reproduce apartheid ideology, as coloured secondary school pupils recognised in the school boycott of 1980 by linking their educational demands to an understanding of the workings of capitalism.<sup>8</sup>

The contradictory and multi-layered dimension of the teachers' perceptions of the system within which they work is illustrated by further comments from the same teacher, which demonstrate an awareness of the political nature of education on the one hand, and on the other, a somewhat conservative solution to the problems in DET schools:

I mean the situation under which we teach is political, the mere fact that a child doesn't stay in Sea Point [a white area] but he stays in Crossroads, or New Crossroads or Guguletu [african areas] is political, so I don't think there's any teacher who can refrain from being a political teacher. All teachers are political. (Oscar interview 29/9/88)

And:

Hey, I would say as far as I'm concerned we are bogged down, we as teachers are not given the opportunity to

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8. For a succinct account of this boycott see 'Conflict in the Western Cape' in Work in Progress, 13, July 1980.

take an active role because whenever we try to bring in something new, you're labelled you know, that's the problem we're having. Hence most of the teachers don't want to get themselves exposed to some of the people from outside in trying to help improve the situation. I would say if Melanie is serious in trying to help improve the situation why not go to the [DET] circuit office and say: 'It's the system you're having is hopeless. This is what you're supposed to do.' Then we can get the change from the top coming right down. (teacher's emphasis, Oscar interview 29/9/88)

Extracts from an interview with another teacher also illustrate a partial but still unarticulated recognition of how schooling functions politically and economically. She comments ironically on the state's own failure to implement the tenets of its ethnic policies in education planning. Nor is she unaware of the limitations of what she is officially supposed to teach:

Well I think that the government is a little bit, not even a little bit, the government is not giving us enough chance to express or to give the pupils what we think they ought to get. In the first place I think, if I'm not making a mistake, it is said that the syllabus is drawn according to the cultures and what have you of a nation, but now our syllabus comes from them [government] readily prepared so that you have to stick to this. At times when you're teaching a lesson you feel like, no, this lesson it's lacking something and now you are not free to add that thing because it's a little bit political and now the kids they find that, oh you are teaching politics at the school and tell the parents, and then it goes on like that until it reaches maybe the principal and then you are for it! We are not, we are not free. We are bound by certain rules, don't do this in class, teach in this way, and even our qualifications [are inadequate]. (Ruth, interview 30/9/88)

But when she goes on to talk about the limited subject options that are open to african pupils, she stops short of understanding why career choices have been deliberately limited for these pupils:

even in high schools they say the kids, it's where they should be taught the way to choose their careers, but now when you get to high schools it's not like that, you're not guided on those lines, you are only given information and there are very few subjects you can form for your career, maybe you don't want to follow a certain trend, you want to follow this and that and those subjects are not there. (interview 30/9/88)

As a result she hopes that the new 'comprehensive'<sup>9</sup> schools for african pupils will provide the solution by offering a wider career choice to selected pupils.

When other teachers were asked by Lufuno Nevathalu, 'What is your view of the present system of schooling?', they responded with a range of comments:

It's [bantu education] bad because, if you can take a std 8 child, he or she cannot express himself or herself in english in front of an audience...And yet if you go to the coloured schools or white schools you learn more things that you haven't learned. Like if you go to coloured schools you get computers and yet there are no computers in our schools. (Stanley, interview 27/9/88)

The pupils are not keen to learn, that is the problem we encounter, but we are teaching under those [poor] conditions. (Lumka, interview 29/9/88)

I don't know how I can put it because I'm not satisfied with it. I'm really not satisfied about it because you can find that our standard is not the same...I would like the white teachers to come inside our schools ...you see if each school will have a white lady who will deal with the lower classes, you see, just for reading. (Elizabeth, interview 29/9/88)

My feeling about the present schooling? I can say it's a really tough one, it's giving us problems

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9. In the past few years a limited number of these 'comprehensive' schools have been built in the townships - two in the Cape Town area. The idea is to offer commercial and technical subject choices to african pupils rather than only an academic curriculum. There are good reasons to support technical education for South african pupils. The problem is that the goals of this education - at least for african pupils - is still to limit their choices, for example to only being technicians and not engineers, while these schools are also not as well resourced as similar schools for whites. Furthermore, the limited number of comprehensive schools means that they remain an option for very few african pupils at present.

because the learning situation ends at school, in other words pupils don't learn anything from their parents. (Douglas, interview 29/9/88)

The situation of our school is not quite, because we are worried about the buildings of our schools. Even if you are trying to do your best, when you are in such a dull school you can't do quite a good education in such a condition...The school should be renovated. (Nomonde, interview 28/9/88)

Since the riots [1976] the children are not as they used to be...the children are very much forgetful, they are not as careful as the other children used to be, they do not want to concentrate. (Adelaide, interview 28/9/88)

Well there's nothing wrong with it, all I can say is if the pupils can be taught, like if certain people are interested in Art you know, he or she can continue with that Art. And the other thing is the syllabus, if you cannot rush it you know, if we cannot rush things. Like for instance in black schools we are forced to complete the syllabus. (Bulelwa, interview 29/9/88)

Other teachers saw bantu education as a system designed by all whites to oppress all blacks. One of them, as mentioned in chapter one, distrusted whites because 'they know how horrible it [bantu education] is. You can't improve on something that was bad from the beginning' (David, interview 27/9/88). A more nuanced understanding, however, was expressed by one of the school principals, who noted that bantu education was 'designed to keep us, at the lower level of society, I mean politically and economically so we don't have to be the equals of our white compatriots' (Mr Lungiswe, interview by L. Nevathalu 29/5/88).

Teachers' solutions to the problems of the present schooling system varied from the idea of a committee of teachers 'to decide what they want the black child to be in future'; to demands for better resources - including new buildings and smaller classes; to contact with schools of 'all the races,

all the racial groups'; to some teachers, like Leah, who felt they had no power to change anything 'because there are those that are above, so I can't change it myself, it has to go up and then come down next to us' (interview 29/9/88). Others recognised the space for change in their classrooms. As Veronica put it 'it's just to change in the classroom, change your pupils in the classroom, change yourself and change your pupils in the classroom, that's all' (interview 29/8/88).

A teacher at one school told me after these interviews that she and her colleagues were unhappy at being asked 'political' questions about schooling. Alice felt that teachers were 'not free' to answer such questions and preferred it that we keep to matters of classroom teaching only. It is therefore likely that she, and perhaps others, were cautious of how they responded to Lufuno Nevathalu's tape-recorded interviews, although he too is african. At any rate, in the actual interview, Alice had responded politely but very carefully, firstly to the question asking for her opinion of the present schooling system, saying only: 'It's a question, because we have our ups and downs as the year goes on. We are teaching under pressure but we carry on' (interview 30/9/88). Asked whether she thought she had a role in changing things, she emphasised her concern only with educating her pupils: 'There is nothing we can do unless we teach the children because our aim is to educate them and make provision for their future. We don't care for other things' (interview 30/9/88).

But even when this caution is allowed for, the general point remains that teachers demonstrated, not only in interviews, but also in their working lives, that they had a partial understanding of their subordination in bantu education. Arguably, however, this incomplete grasp of the political economy of apartheid education, makes change more difficult than if the ruling class used only overt manipulation. The concept of hegemony developed by Gramsci (1971) helps explain this problem of change. According to Gramsci, hegemony is a relation not only of domination by means of force, but of consent by means of political and ideological leadership (Simon, 1982). Consent and the threat of force are present simultaneously. Depending on specific conditions the interrelationship between coercion and consent will vary, although even under conditions of stability 'the machinery for repression and violence hover' (Sharp, 1980:105). Sharp explains hegemony:

Hegemony refers to a set of assumptions, theories and practical activities, a world view through which the ruling class exerts its dominance. Its function is to reproduce on the ideological plain the conditions for class rule and the continuation of the social relations of production. Hegemonic beliefs and practices thus shape practical ideologies and penetrate the level of common sense, mixing and mingling with ideological practices more spontaneously generated...hegemonic practice succeeds when it has produced an unquestioned, taken for granted attitude towards how things are, when subjects identify themselves within limits defined by the hegemonic meanings and operate unconsciously, via their ideological practice, within premises which derive from and help to reproduce the status quo. (1980:102-103)

As Raymond Williams (1976) puts it, hegemony 'saturates' our consciousness so that we come to accept our commonsense interpretations of the world:

If what we learn were merely an imposed ideology, or if it were only the isolable meanings and practices of the ruling class, or of a section of the ruling class, which gets imposed on others, occupying merely the tops of our minds, it would be - and one would be every glad - a much easier thing to overthrow. (quoted in Apple, 1979:6)

Where the dominant ideology permeates people's lives, it becomes internalised as part of their 'common-sense' way of seeing the world (Gramsci, 1971). But 'common-sense' is not systematic and may combine ideas that are contradictory, without one being aware of the fact. Crucially there is an absence of critical self-knowledge - we think within our assumptions, rather than about them (Hall et al, 1978; Sharp, 1980). This also helps to explain the contradiction between what teachers claimed to want to do in their classrooms - see for example chapter six - and what they actually did. Carr (1984) ascribes this 'gap' to the dual function of schools as educational and social institutions. If teachers find it difficult to 'practice what they preach', he notes, it is not because of their inherent weakness but rather 'because schools must reflect the purposes and pressures of contemporary society' (1984:3).

Nevertheless, the contradictory nature of 'common sense' means that hegemony can never be taken for granted by the powerful. Buckland explains:

Wherever there is an hegemony, there is the possibility of a counterhegemony. Hegemony as a mode of control is not simply a question of projecting the ideas of a dominant elite into the minds of the oppressed. Moreover, it has to be constantly reinforced and adapted to accommodate changing historical circumstances and new reforms of resistance. (1987b:23)

Educators thus would need to identify and exploit the spaces within the system for counter-hegemonic struggle, for example, understanding what and whose interests are at work in the content and form of the curriculum as a basis for changing the curriculum (Apple, 1982).

Nor should innovations at the classroom or school level be divorced from structural considerations where all the evidence points to the structural shaping of pedagogical relationships. In his examination of classroom language, Young (1983) argues that curriculum form - the structure of the transmission system itself - reflects structure, but is at the same time constitutive of that structure:

Cultural action as a real praxis is possible because classroom language is the situated but quite concrete (or 'material') manifestation of form of life, a structurally constrained and created situation. It is not only a reflection of structure but a constituent and actually constitutive element of it. Thus, the usual strictures about attempting to bring about change by merely 'raising people's consciousness' rather than making 'structural' changes are robbed of part of their force. As Freire argues, attempts to change the structure of classroom communication and to alter the normal discourse roles, even in pursuit of better means to quite ordinary educational goals, will result in the discovery of normally subterranean contradictions in classroom life. (author's emphasis, 1983:171)

Following Young's argument, then, to challenge the education relations of fundamental pedagogics for example, whether concretely manifested between teachers and their pupils or

between outsiders (including myself) and teachers, must be to challenge, to some degree, the social relations that underpin that education system. For this reason it seems valid to talk of educational change as having structural impact, to some extent at least.

Important for my own learning during three years of working with DET teachers, was the process of coming to understand how teacher-agents served or resisted (or did both), the dominant education relations through their teaching. Teacher-agents are not merely the subject of powerful constraints and ideas, but are themselves creators of theories and are involved in acting upon the world about them (see Giddens, 1979; Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985; Ginsberg, 1988). A critical and dialectical notion of agency 'rightly portrays domination as a process that is neither static nor complete' (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985:104).

Equally important, because ideology has an experiential element, changes in teachers' thinking about their practices need to be accompanied by changes in actual practice:

changes in thought must simultaneously be accompanied by alterations of the practices and routines which help sustain those outmoded thoughts; we cannot retain the material practices of another practical ideology with much hope of blending them with an alternative message. (Sharp, 1980:114-115)

The point here is that working with teachers for change in their classrooms means both changing ideas and changing how teachers act in those classrooms, as I detail in section

four. This in turn means establishing working relationships where the privacy of classroom practice, and the ideas that underpin that practice, are opened up for discussion and reflection. At the same time it also means recognising that a complex web of messages supports and structures the status quo in schools, which raised for me the dilemma detailed in section four of whether my practice was contributing only to making bantu education work better.

The concepts of ideology and hegemony are useful tools, then, for explaining the way in which human agents produce meaning when they engage in structurally located social practices, in this case in teaching. In later chapters I make use of these conceptual tools to critically understand my own interactions with teachers, the classroom practices that emerged as a result of our joint work, and to locate all this in terms of both practical possibilities and the contradictions encapsulated as elements of the dominant mode of teaching, and elements of transformation both within the same teaching process.

#### **The class location of teachers**

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, in November 1988 I read an article by Morrell (1988) in which he concluded that state reforms in education had, and would continue to give, teachers a stake in the status quo. 'Changes in the position of teachers', he suggested, 'are disposing them to support the status quo rather than

challenge it' (1988:57). According to Morrell, while teachers might organise around professional issues such as the dismissal of a colleague, or around political issues centered on racial or national oppression, they were unlikely to align themselves with workers in any struggle for socialism which might develop. Rather, teachers would choose to pursue material advantages and a more affluent standard of living for themselves. He attributed teacher quiescence in Natal/Kwazulu less to coercion on the part of the state and the educational authorities, than to a desire for job security and professional advancement.

Similarly, Lee (1987) claims that teachers 'collude' in the reproduction of education which legitimates the class structure of society. For this reason, she regards it as essential that the class position and class perspectives of teachers be examined as one important variable to understanding interrelationships between classroom practice and social context. In my own research there is only very fragmented and ambiguous evidence regarding teachers' class perspectives as this was not a priority in my own data collection. Nevertheless for my own learning, a broader explication of the class position of teachers has been important.

Morrell (1988) locates african teachers within the black middle class, whose political allegiance reformist capital and the state were (and are) attempting to secure. Consequently, he suggests, the economic interests of

teachers receive support from the state. He cites statistics which showed that education budgets for african education have increased substantially over the past few years, with the bulk of these funds having been allocated to teachers' salaries. Further, he notes, teachers are relatively affluent compared to most of the communities in which they live, particularly in the rural areas. All this leads Morrell to conclude that, while some teachers were politically active in progressive teacher organisations such as NEUSA and WECTU), teachers as a stratum are unlikely to be radicalised. The goals of people's education would not be achieved 'unless the schools themselves come under the influence of other powerful radical forces' (1988:59).

Having worked in DET schools by then for two years, I was struck by what I thought was a reproductive theory of teaching which ignored the contradictions in the position of teachers - both their contradictory class location 'in the middle', and the contradictory possibilities within the school and classroom. I wrote a response in November 1988 (published as Walker 1989a), in which I argued that Morrell's functional description of teachers was politically disempowering in the way it promoted pessimism about the contribution which teachers might make to educational and social transformation. At the level of the actual school curriculum, a reproductive view of teaching seemed to offer no room for developing oppositional modes of teaching in schools, and failed to open up questions of how classroom practice might be related to a democratic future. Carlson,

for one criticises this rather simplistic view of teachers as 'the witting or unwitting servants of power and direct agents of the state' (1987:283). Similarly Lawn and Ozga maintain that because teachers are 'state functionaries' one cannot read off from this a comprehensive analysis for their behaviour:

The blanket use of the term 'state functionaries' hides too many historical, local and particular possibilities and, importantly, ignores teachers' attempts at working class alliances on education and their varied interpretation of their role as perceived by the state and their resistance to it. (1988:84)

Instead, I would agree with Wright (1979, 1985) that teachers occupy a contradictory location within class relations. It is worth rehearsing Wright's (1985) argument for the light it casts on the position of teachers in South Africa. Wright defines class location according to three major categories: ownership of the means of production, organisation, and skill. He exemplifies teachers' contradictory class location as follows: at the economic level teachers, like workers, are employed by the state. Like workers, they do not own the means of production, and must sell their labour power in order to live. In Wright's formulation, however, teachers are economically oppressed but not exploited, given that he defines economic exploitation to include the appropriation of the fruits of the labour of one class by another. Teachers' possession of skills means that in theory they are in a position to negotiate some redistribution of the surplus from workers to themselves as 'experts'. In reality of course, one's position in the education hierarchy will determine the

extent to which this actually happens; african primary school teachers are poorly paid relative to qualified teachers or those at the level of principal, inspector and so on.

Nor do ordinary teachers control the education apparatus as a whole. In Wright's terms, they do not have access to organisational control. In South Africa teachers do not control schools. They do not draw up the syllabuses, nor work out the daily work plan, nor write the textbooks which, in the case of african schools, are chosen by the education authorities. The assessment function is carefully monitored and controlled by heads of departments, inspectors and school principals. Teachers' exclusion from the conceptual functions of their work might be called a process of 'ideological proletarianisation' or 'deskilling' (Apple, 1982; Sarup, 1984; Lawn and Ozga, 1988). Planning of the curriculum is undertaken by outside experts and encapsulated in curriculum packages or, more commonly in South African schools, in prescribed textbooks. The teacher's function is a technical one: to execute the materials as designed by the officially approved experts.

Wright sums up his argument regarding the class location of what he describes as the 'new' middle classes:

There is still a sense in which such positions could be characterised as 'contradictory locations', for they will typically hold contradictory interests with respect to the primary forms of class struggle in capitalist society, the struggle between labour and capital. On the one hand, they are like workers in being excluded from ownership of the means of

production; on the other, they have interests opposed to workers because of their effective control of organisational and skill assets. Within the struggles of capitalism, therefore, these 'new' middle classes do constitute contradictory locations, or more precisely. contradictory locations within exploitation relations. (1985:87)

Now, as Wright (1985) points out, teachers, unlike workers, have real control (albeit often not recognised) over their own labour process, i.e. classroom work. Apple (1982), endorsing Wright's argument regarding the contradictory class location of teachers, notes further that, unlike workers in a factory or on a production line, teachers work with children, who will react and act with their teachers in ways which machinery on an assembly line does not. At the ideological level, teaching is one of the critical locations for the dissemination and elaboration of bourgeois ideology. Teachers are employed by the state to help maintain ideological control and to serve the political interests of capital. Nevertheless teachers may potentially subvert bourgeois ideology at the level of ideological relations given some degree of autonomy over educational production. As Sarup (1984) reminds us, the extent to which teachers actually control their own labour process varies according to their position within the institution, and the status of the institution within the education system. Writing in a British context, Sarup is, however, sharply dismissive of the role of primary school teachers whom, he argues, fail to use their considerable autonomy. He posits three reasons for this: they have a 'limited' education; they mostly consider themselves as middle class; they are mostly married

women with few equally convenient career options. He concludes that 'radical changes are unlikely to take place in primary schools because of the characteristics of the teachers. Coercive restrictions on these teachers are unnecessary' (1984:121).

Unlike schools in Britain and the United States where the considerable autonomy enjoyed by teachers is only now being eroded (Apple, 1982; Lawn and Ozga, 1988), african teachers in South Africa were both effectively deskilled by the advent of bantu education and subjected to pervasive surveillance. Carlson (1987) explains that surveillance is necessitated by teachers' own resistance to the curricular and instructional role required of them. In other words the education authorities cannot safely assume that teachers will do as they are told and implement the official curriculum as laid down. In the 1960s and 1970s the South African state failed to win teachers' support for their new role as bantu education teachers largely because of the crude racism and menacing attitude to any form of dissent by the Department of Bantu Affairs, as it was then called. According to Hyslop, in the early years of bantu education the Department failed 'to create a coherent ideology which could hegemonise teachers' (1989:217). He captures the 'staggering crudity' of the Department's approach in two extracts from its mouthpiece the Bantu Education Journal (now renamed Educamus). In June 1964, the journal informed readers that South African whites were 'honest and sincere in their actions to all, people whose word is their bond and

who will not be frightened by violence' (quoted in Hyslop, 1989:216). On another occasion (March 1965) an editorial proclaimed:

It is about time that we take a look at our [sic] South African Bantu population to see in what respects they have exceptional qualities...choral singing is one of our strong points...Another talent which is manifested in our children is their neat handwriting...subversive activities and sabotage are not our strong points. There are some of our fellow men who, following the instigation of strangers, attempted this but they were bound to fail. (quoted in Hyslop, 1989:216)

While the Department of Education and Training (as it is now known) has abandoned its crude racist rhetoric - a recent editorial stated that teachers are now 'the indispensable partner in the challenge of education' (Educamus, February 1988) - it remains wedded nevertheless to a strategy of hegemonic incorporation. The same editorial concluded that, given 'the political rhetoric which characterises this age', teachers are exhorted to throw in their lot with the Department in 'the struggle against ignorance, prejudice and greed'.

In contrast to Sarup (1984), Alexander (1990) sees the greater autonomy of primary school teachers in the South African context as opening crucial space for change. Neither Sarup's dismissal of primary school teachers nor Alexander's optimistic assessment of the possibilities in primary schools is wholly correct, certainly in the case of the primary schools in which I did my research. On the one hand, the teachers' own awareness, at the very least of the

inferior material facilities within which they work, made possible some exploration of alternatives. On the other hand, Alexander fails to take account of the often disempowering ways in which african primary school teachers construct themselves as subjects. As we shall see in later chapters, the spaces apparent to Alexander are simply not perceived in the same way by the teachers and hence not filled with oppositional work by them. Given their contradictory location, the reasons for this could be threefold: economic, in that teachers might be reluctant to jeopardise their salaries, and accompanying perks of medical aid, pensions, and for a few, housing subsidies. At the level of control, they might be reluctant to challenge the hierarchy at the school. At the level of skill, they might either lack the expertise to do things any differently, or even where they could, might be unwilling to risk job security. There is certainly evidence in my own research for teachers' reluctance to challenge education hierarchies, and of teachers' lack of skill knowledge to change what they do, as sections three and four will show.

Teachers often blame problems on their pupils. For example, one teacher ascribed the failure of a boring transmission lesson to the pupils who were 'just dull' (Walter, discussion 30/3/88). Another teacher remarked that his lesson was 'normal', but 'that class are those kind of nuisances' (Joseph, discussion 29/4/88). Certainly in the early days of this study, it seemed that from the perspective of many teachers, it was always the pupils who

failed to understand, rather than the teacher who taught badly. Initially, many teachers even saw the videotaping of their lessons as an opportunity for pupils to see where they had gone 'wrong' in the lesson. Similarly, Stuart (in press) found that the teachers she worked with started off by articulating their problems in terms of the pupils' deficiencies. Importantly, as they proceeded with their action research, they began to shift responsibility to their own classroom action. And in her study of pedagogic change in England, Buswell (1988) found that teachers' difficulties in implementing new curriculum practices were justified by negative stereotyping of pupils: 'the kind of pupil we get in this school'. Thus teachers 'articulated their alienation, not with reference to groups above them in the hierarchy, but in terms of the group below' (1988:129).

In effect this brings us back to ideology. Sharp makes the point that one needs to assist people to come to terms with their taken-for-granted ideas and practices. She emphasises:

One obviously cannot ignore the mechanisms for the defence of the psyche and just announce an alternative authoritative message. It has to be recognised that people are already ideologized and cannot just be taught how inadequate their ideologies are, given that their ideologies are their lives, and to an important extent themselves. (author's emphasis, 1980:115)

This would be even more so given Nias's finding that teachers' personal and professional selves are inseparable so that 'who and what people perceive themselves to be matters as much as what they do' (1987:184). For teachers, this means that a challenge to their work practices is

easily construed as an attack on themselves. Fay (1975) explains the problem:

A person's ideas about himself [herself] are never merely true or false...[nor is he or she] free to accept or simply reject on the basis of rational argument. The reason why this is the case is that these ideas are also ways of coping with the social and natural conditions of life...they make it possible for him [her] to go on living as he [she] does in the situation he [she] lives. (quoted in Olsen, 1989:108)

As we shall see in later chapters, teachers' resistance to confronting their own degree of competence is a barrier to developing a reflective or critical approach to schooling. Teaching anywhere is an 'anxious business' (Olsen, 1989) and arguably nowhere more fraught than in african schools in South Africa where teachers claim that they are often the target of student anger. Caught between their pupils and the community amongst whom they live and work on one hand and the state employer on the other, teachers are seen by many 'as one who is for the system' (Nomonde, interview with L. Nevathalu 28/9/88). Another teacher I worked with explained that 'it's not as good to be a teacher as it used to be. I think teaching in our days is not a good profession judging from what is happening outside' (Ruth, interview with T. Mgobozi 29/8/89). Facing up to the realities of one's own practice, in a context where conditions allow for few (if any) alternative courses of action by teachers to an illegitimate education system, is uncomfortable at best, dangerous at worst. Not surprisingly, the Carnegie investigation into poverty in South Africa revealed 'disturbing insights' into the loss of teacher morale which often manifested itself in drunkenness, absenteeism and

assaults on pupils (Wilson and Ramphela, 1989). Nor should the coercive power of the education authorities be underestimated as an explanation of teacher quiescence (or survival). The 'witchhunt' mentioned in the previous chapter is just one such example of the bureaucratic surveillance of teachers.

### **Teachers and professionalism**

One of the arguments advanced for action research is that it contributes to teachers 'professional' development. Stenhouse, for example, elaborated the idea of 'extended professionalism' which involved:

The commitment to systematic questioning of one's own teaching as a basis for development;  
The commitment and the skills to study one's own teaching;  
The concern to test theory in practice by the use of those skills. (1975:144)

In short, he argues:

the outstanding characteristics of the extended professional is the capacity for autonomous professional self-development through systematic self-study, through the study of the work of other teachers and through the testing of ideas by classroom research procedures. (1975:144)

Now, Morrell's article (1988) equated professionalism with the winning of material benefits and day to day control by teachers over their work. He noted that:

teachers have been targeted by the state as a group that should be drawn fully into the professional realm and capable of providing an acceptable service, where political linkages with workers, progressive community organisations or students will become less likely and where conversely, support for the status quo will in future be counted on (1988:50).

But Morrell stripped the concept of 'professional realm' of contradictions and appeared to associate professionalism with a desire to be middle class, like Finn et al who see professionalism as primarily 'a petit-bourgeois strategy for advancing and defending a relatively privileged position' (1978:167).

Yet in african schools it is precisely this professionalism which might bring teachers into conflict with the education authorities. Indeed Connell et al (1982) argue that professionalism, by encouraging autonomy and innovation, may well be a powerful opponent of bureaucratic control. This would seem the more so in the case of the DET where, as Hartshorne (1988) observes, teachers are not treated as professionals, but as instruments of policy. For example, the then chairperson of DETU complained in an interview about the imposition of instructions from the DET hierarchy to teachers (South, 13/10/88). African teachers after all do not control the education system, they merely work within it. What then happens if teachers begin to demand job rights and an autonomy that the system cannot deliver? This could intensify existing problems of control and legitimation. Experience elsewhere suggests that 'professionalism' is neither wholly reactionary nor necessarily progressive, but should be historically located in specific contexts and specific struggles over education (see Lawn and Ozga, 1988). In the context of schooling for the oppressed in South Africa, professionalism may be worth supporting provided that it is linked to wider struggles

aimed at mobilising broad support for a fundamental restructuring of schools.

In the end I would affirm Grundy's (1989) definition of professionalism for capturing what it means to be 'professional' in one's attitude to one's work, while not necessarily equating this with the pursuit of middle class status or interests antagonistic to working class pupils in african schools: 'true professionalism re-establishes respect for persons, and re-enshrines human judgment as a legitimate basis for action' (Grundy, 1989:88). Understood this way, attempts to foster teachers' professionalism through action research would be counter-hegemonic to the ethos of bantu education which neither respects persons - whether teachers, pupils or parents - nor demonstrates any respect for their judgement. Finally, education as a social site of both reproduction and contestation opens space for changing schools, as human agents both produce and reproduce meaning in what Aronowitz and Giroux describe as a 'discourse of possibility' (1985:218). Subscribing to a language of possibility is not to ignore the contextual realities of educational change at the level of classroom practice and curriculum innovation. The examination which follows of the professional knowledge of teachers and their working conditions indeed demonstrates the formidable challenge to change within the state school system.

### The professional knowledge of teachers

Teachers, even more than their pupils, are the products of the curriculum content and processes of bantu education. Research in other countries, cited in Sachs (1987), indeed supports the argument that teacher behaviour is learnt during one's own schooldays, and that this school experience is more significant than pre-service training in shaping how one teaches. Teachers in african schools are likely to have internalised a particular understanding of teacher behaviour shaped by their educational experiences, and which they then act out in their own classrooms. For example, Ruth Versfeld of the Catholic Institute of Education commented: 'Teachers think the way they were taught, overwhelmingly they were taught dreadfully, and to them a good class is one which sits and takes notes' (interview 20/7/1990). Thus teachers' professional knowledge will have been shaped in the first instance by their own experience of schooling. Unless their professional training decisively breaks with this experience, it is likely to reinforce dominant patterns of transmission teaching, drill and practice and rote learning. It is important, then, to consider also the nature of intellectual production at the universities and colleges. Failure to do so leads one into the fruitless trap of blaming the teacher victims for their poor practice. Does their professional training then reinforce the confines of teachers' own experience or does it break 'the chains of continuity' (Zeuli and Buchmann, 1988:145).

The majority of african teachers are trained in colleges controlled by the employing authority, the DET. A minority of teachers who do not study at these colleges attend bantustan universities such as Turfloop and the University of Venda. Overall, less than four percent of african teachers have a university degree (SAIRR, 1989). Understanding the nature of intellectual production at these institutions means recognising firstly that bantu education has had contradictory outcomes. The student protests of 1976 are undoubtedly the most striking evidence of the political failure of bantu education. However, by collapsing the relationship between education and politics, political protest by students at schools, colleges and universities has tended to obscure the intellectual and academic costs of the system (Gwala, 1988). Immediate political opposition to the state has dominated protest, and educational and political imperatives have become blurred. Even a cursory glance at newspaper headlines and reports demonstrates why this has been so: The SRC President at Turfloop detained at knifepoint, Fort Hare students beaten and fired on by Ciskei police (Wits Student May 1989); the University of Durban-Westville closed after violence flared (Argus 31/5/89); 400 students expelled from the University of Transkei following a boycott of mid-year examinations (Cape Times 31/5/89). In 1988 students at Fort Beaufort College in the Eastern Cape were sent home after protesting about overcrowded accommodation, the lack of beds and poor food (Sash, 1988). Students at a Kimberley college boycotted classes in support of their demand that the

allegedly racist rector resign (New Nation 13/4/89), while Indumiso College in Natal was closed following student protests over the suspension of 35 students, the absence of an SRC and the poor food (New Nation 23/6/89).

But while bantu education may have failed politically, Gwala argues convincingly that 'it has been relatively successful educationally by controlling and suppressing the intellectual and analytical abilities of black students' (1988:172). Similarly, Jakes Gerwel, rector of the University of the Western Cape, declared that apartheid education has had as its deliberate objective 'the systematic underdevelopment of intellectual skills and human potential'. And, he continued, 'what apartheid education has done - not as incidental effect, but as deliberate policy - is criminal' (Sunday Times 29/4/90). In effect, a disabling gap exists between students' political rejection of the system and their acquiescence in the form and content of the educational process of that same system. Similarly, as pointed out earlier, teachers reject bantu education but mostly acquiesce in its processes at classroom level. The problem is summed up by the progressive rector of a coloured training college near Cape Town:

My own thoughts about the possibility of bringing about a change in primary education have taken a knock. And this is not a conservative campus. All our issues are debated hotly. Our political decisions are taken easily...but the move from overt political alignment, and the expression of political convictions, to teaching, there's a massive gap. The one does not necessarily influence the other. The fact that I consider myself to be a progressive educator might say nothing about my teaching. It says something about my politics, but it does not of

necessity say anything about what I do in the classroom. (his emphasis, interview 25/7/90)

Intellectual production in bantustan universities and teacher colleges is underpinned by the ideology of 'fundamental pedagogics'<sup>10</sup> developed by afrikaner academics to uphold 'Christian National principles', central to which is the assertion of segregation and white superiority (see Enslin 1984, 1988). But such bluntness of racial purpose needs to disguise itself under the cloak of scientific objectivity. According to fundamental pedagogics educational theory is a 'science' and must strive to be 'value free' in establishing 'universally valid' knowledge about education. So political questions are not involved in understanding education. The 'value-free' examination of education, however, always asserts the importance of relating education back to the 'values of society' which are seen as unchanging and pregiven. In this way apartheid and segregated education are justified as reflecting the 'scientifically' analysed 'values of society' (see Beard and Morrow, 1981; Enslin, 1984 and 1988; Unterhalter and Wolpe, 1989). Enslin cites Cilliers (1975) as typifying the fundamental pedagogician's lack of perspective on the realities of education in South Africa. She recounts the imaginary family Cilliers describes to illustrate his thoughts on education. Enslin comments:

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10. Fundamental pedagogics is studied as a sub-discipline of Pedagogics at the colleges. As such it constitutes the standard prescribed educational theory or philosophy at african (and all other) colleges. Other sub-disciplines would include the history of education and psychology of education.

Here is a family comprising Dad, Mom (who goes to formal dinners with Dad), Rian (who is untidy), Lorraine (who is tidy), and Hannes. The family has a lounge, access to newspapers (which Dad reads), and a car (which Dad drives). (1988:71)

Needless to say, this is hardly typical of the majority of african families! As Enslin points out, far from fundamental pedagogics being in retreat, the majority of teachers, and the vast majority of african teachers, are products of institutions in which fundamental pedagogics is 'the sole theoretical discourse through which to understand schooling in South Africa' (1988:67). This discourse, she argues, offers student teachers little hope of a language of critique and possibility.

Furthermore, fundamental pedagogics encapsulates an authoritarian conception of education in which the child 'must be moulded and inculcated into an attitude of obedience and submission towards the instruments and figures of authority' thereby making 'the coercive actions of both the teachers and the State correct and right by definition' (Parker, 1981:27). The child is viewed as 'immature', needing to be guided towards maturity by the teacher as authority figure. De Vries (1986) explains that the child 'is still dependent, in need of help and seeking help because he [sic] is incompetent, ignorant, unskillful, irresponsible and undisciplined' (quoted in Enslin, 1988:69). Pedagogical relationships are unquestioningly asymmetrical and 'closed' (Muir, 1981), the child's duty being to obey the teachers' God-given authority. Simons (1986) points out that this view of teaching 'reverberates'

through many of the prescribed and recommended books in african teacher training colleges and finds concrete expression in 'hundreds of lessons' presented by teachers and student teachers in african schools.

Not surprisingly then, the educational process in african teacher training (as in african schools) is dominated by dictated notes and rote reproduction of these notes rather than by the critical exchange of ideas. On the basis of the examination papers set both externally and internally in one college, Simons (1986) notes that the 'knowledge' finally required was uncritical. While conceding that research was needed into the frequency of critical debate at training colleges, if it exists at all, he adds that his own discussions with staff members and students at one college suggest that such debate does not occur. Teacher education thus perpetuates conservative traditions of white domination and black subordination, leading Simons to conclude that:

On the whole, the education that black student-teachers receive deliberately obscures the historically contingent and political nature of education. This in turn, does not equip teachers to interpret the ideologically loaded syllabus which they have to teach. ...On an even more fundamental level it goes without saying that the rotten system of Apartheid education has produced teachers who are simply underqualified to teach subjects for which they have received inadequate or no training. (1986:282)

Graduates of afrikaans universities, themselves trained in fundamental pedagogics, predominate on the teaching staff of african colleges and universities (Gwala, 1988). African staff at these colleges and bantustan universities are

themselves the product of the same philosophical approach to education. Occasionally the afrikaans university trained lecturers are perceived as inadequate by the student-teachers. One of the teachers I worked with commented:

our training colleges, they say they have qualified lecturers but at times you could see that this person, no he's not qualified, it seems as if he's just a person who is taken from somewhere. (Ruth, interview with L. Nevathalu 30/9/88)

While another teacher remarked:

The lecturer who presented pedagogics was really boring because we found out later that he was an outcast, a failure in the field, he couldn't shape up in the practice so he applied for a post in the college, and because he was a boer [Afrikaner], he was given the post to teach education. (David, interview with T. Mgobozi 20/7/1989)

A third teacher was more sympathetic to the position college lecturers often found themselves in, and positive about their teaching:

The college staff was mostly white, there were some black teachers...in the three years [1984-1986] that I was at the college there was a lot of rioting going on and the boycotts, so there wasn't such a healthy relationship between the staff and the students because the staff had to choose sides which was very difficult for them...Otherwise, the teaching, I think it was very good. There were some lecturers who were, you know were discriminatory and things like that. But most of the staff was okay. (Cynthia, interview with L. Nevathalu 21/7/1989)

Overall, however, despite such contradictions in the system, unstructured interviews with a limited sample of teacher-educators supported Gwala's (1988) argument that tertiary education is an extension of the form and content of bantu education provided in schools. On the 24 July 1989 I interviewed Lufuno Nevathalu, the PREP masters student in 1988, and himself a former bantustan university student and

college lecturer. Lufuno studied for a four year degree in education in the early 1980s at the University of the North (Turfloop). Lecturers were either products of the same university or had come from afrikaans universities. The dominant form of all teaching was formal lectures, with students memorising a study guide and reproducing it in examinations. No small group tutorials were held and no assignments written, only tests and exams. In History of Education, Lufuno recalled that black schooling was completely ignored, while the Comparative Education lecturer admitted to students that he did not know what the course was about! According to Lufuno, however, students were relatively uncritical of what they were taught. Any sense that the courses were inadequate and limited was offset by the ease with which all could pass the exams. He had no recollection of any student failing a course. While students were politically active at the time (the early 1980s), the only challenge they made to the content of their education arose in 1984 when they were forced to pass 'afrikaans communication'. Students refused to do the course and it was temporarily shelved. In other words, student action around an apparently educational issue was confined to a political protest about afrikaans, neglecting the deeper levels of the form and content of pedagogical theory.

After completing his degree at Turfloop, Lufuno studied for a one year full-time B.Ed degree (Bachelor of Education) at the University of Natal. He felt this was important in

exposing him to a critical view of education as well as challenging him intellectually, although, he said, it took him a long time to adjust to these demands. Thereafter, he spent a year lecturing at a training college in rural Lebowa. Facilities at the college, which occupied the buildings of a former secondary school, were poor, for example, there was no library. Only eight members of the entirely african staff, plus the rector, had degrees. The rest of the teaching staff, mostly former school principals, had matric plus a two year Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC).

Lufuno taught English Method and Education and found that the students were not interested in different teaching methods, preferring the more familiar lectures and rote learning, and examinations which only required them to fill in the missing words! They saw little point in trying new methods when lecturers did not encourage this on teaching practice. Instead their lessons were typically dominated by teacher talk. As Lufuno remarked: 'Oh, the teachers would talk a lot!' In the end, he left the college after only a year, feeling that he had no power to make real changes.

I also interviewed a number of other primary educators between September 1989 and July 1990. They included: Vivienne Kenyon, a lecturer at the african teachers college at Khayalitsha outside Cape Town, and formerly a lecturer at two colleges in the Eastern Cape; Wendy Colyn, a former primary school teacher working with african teachers in the

Primary Maths Education Project at UCT; Ruth Versfeld who was working with teachers in a few Catholic coloured and african primary schools; Marlene Rousseau working with junior primary african teachers; and Alan Kenyon, lecturing in primary education at UCT, and formerly a lecturer at two Eastern Cape colleges.

There was general agreement amongst them that pre-service education for african teachers was 'appalling', 'horrendous', 'of such poor quality', 'an alarming scenario'. For example, Wendy Colyn, in her own enquiries into the teaching of maths at the training colleges, had found that student-teachers never went beyond a study of the std 3 to std 5 syllabus, and worked from primary school textbooks. Her findings were that students were not challenged intellectually, not required to consider the history of maths, the politics of maths or the psychology of learning maths. Instead they did decimal fractions! One of the maths lecturers she spoke to prided herself on being able to teach maths education without ever having set foot in a DET classroom (interview 31/7/90). Alan Kenyon commented somewhat despairingly that 'students are supposed to come out of college with M+3 [matriculation plus a three year diploma], instead they end up with M-1!' (interview 26/7/90).

In my first interview with the Kenyons on 20 September 1989, they remarked that the situation at training colleges was 'getting worse' because the DET had focussed on colleges as

an important means to control the future teaching body. Prospective students were interviewed by the rector before being offered limited places<sup>11</sup>, but staff are kept in the dark regarding criteria for admission. Their feeling was that the interviews are used to screen possible 'radical' students. Yet the college system does have its own contradictions. According to the Kenyons, enlightened staff are tolerated up to a point, and they in turn 'make compromises because that's where you want to work, but it's insidious, you don't see it happening'. In the end, however, in their experience, 'subversive' strategies tended to be eventually 'closed down', for example an attempt to place enlightened staff in control of student interviews at one college. In controversial subject areas like history, only 'safe' appointments are made. Vivienne described some of the staff at her college as 'progressive', but explained this in terms of the DET having targeted this particular college as 'an important public relations exercise'. And this 'progressive' group was still a minority overall, lacking power in the college, and prevented from working cohesively by subject department divisions.

The Kenyons have found that student-teachers are willing to experiment with methods different from those at the schools. According to Alan, students in the Eastern Cape were critical of their own school experience. While they were initially put off by his own experiments with discussion-

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11. In 1991, only 210 students out of nearly 3000 applicants were offered places at the Good Hope College at Khayalitsha where Vivienne Kenyon lectures.

based collective work 'because it was such hard work', they found the rewards made it worthwhile. Vivienne observed that second year students at her present college had criticised changes in teaching practice that year, having had the opportunity the previous year to collaborate in planning and discussing their lessons. They now resent being told what and how to do it. 'But', she admitted, 'it's a slow process if you're going to help people develop critically'.

The Kenyons agreed that the educational process in the training colleges was still dominated by transmission teaching, bolstered by the running of the college 'as a semi-formalised school where bells ring every half hour'. Vivienne noted that 'most lecturers will just stand, either writing on the board or with a book, seldom encouraging group discussions'. The library at Vivienne's college was underused, partly, she said, because the librarian was 'unfriendly' and limited access to the library to breaks and an hour after school. At the other colleges where they have taught the libraries have been 'abysmal'. Exposure to the library took place only through the formal teaching of 'book education', rather than in the context of purposeful use of the library. And finally, the college syllabuses are drawn up by the education authorities, and the co-ordination of training and the award of certificates is tightly controlled. The DET is the examining body and arranges for the external examination of core subjects. The Department also employs inspectors to visit the colleges.

Understanding this broad educational background of the teachers I worked with was important, helping me in reflecting on and analysing my own second-order research and the teachers' first-order reflective practice. It certainly contributed to the development of my own 'practical wisdom' (Elliott, 1989), as later chapters will show.

### **Working conditions**

At one level, as an outsider, it was obvious that material conditions for teachers in the four schools were unsatisfactory: large classes of up to 50 or more pupils; overcrowded classrooms; a shortage of textbooks, and limited resources. It took longer for me, however, to understand how teachers themselves perceived their working conditions and official constraints, such as the prescribed syllabus. Again then, what follows draws together my learning about teachers' working conditions during the period I worked with them.

The majority of the 34 teachers I worked with were regarded as 'underqualified' according to the state's criteria - only eight were 'qualified' according to the prevailing criteria. The ruling that M+3 (matriculation plus three years post matric training) is the basis for 'qualified' status for african teachers has been in force only since 1983 as part of an attempt to upgrade teacher qualifications to the same level as that for whites. If one takes a three year post

matriculation diploma as the minimum qualification then 89% of african teachers were not qualified in 1987 (SAIRR, 1989:273). For the majority of teachers the new ruling meant that, at the stroke of a pen, they were underqualified. Most of these teachers have std 8 (ten years of schooling) followed by a two year Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC). Pupils are aware of their teachers' lack of qualifications, and a recurrent student demand is for qualified teachers. As the President of the Transvaal African Teachers Association (TUATA) said in an address to a teachers' meeting: 'It is very sad to listen to our children tell us: "We don't want you to teach us. You are not properly qualified"' (Murphy, 1985:95). One project teacher remarked:

Bantu education? No, it's bad, we don't like it...because they killed us...look now, PTC [Primary Teachers' Certificate] is not recognised, whereas they said we must do the PTC and they said after standard eight we may take, we may continue with the teachers' course that was PTC then, now we are forced to have matric. (Thandie, interview with L. Nevathalu 27/9/88)

The ruling regarding qualifications further laid down that two years training prior to matric (i.e. std 8 plus a two year diploma) was not the equivalent of a two year post matric diploma. Teachers wishing to upgrade their qualifications to the equivalent of matric plus three years training (M+3) must pass six matric subjects, study for a two year part time correspondence course with Vista University and pass five university courses in approved subjects. None of this part time study is financially subsidised by the education authorities. Teachers are

entitled to six months paid study leave after several years of teaching but in practice, from 1989, all study leave was cancelled, at least in the greater Cape Town area, 'to save money', as one principal due for a year's study leave, commented bitterly (fieldnotes 14/9/88).

Nor is there a developed tradition of in-service training for african teachers. Teachers in the project were mostly unfamiliar with the concept, and even the term, 'in-service'. Ten of the 34 project teachers had never been on an in-service course. When courses were organised, teachers were instructed by the DET to attend. Of those teachers who had attended courses on topics such as teacher etiquette, community councils and a management course, comments varied from the course being 'a waste of time', 'nothing new', 'not helpful at all'. The most popular courses were not in-service at all, but week long residential sports coaching courses. Bearing in mind that these take place during term time and that no supply teachers are provided, the waste in terms of money and teaching time seems appalling. A few teachers were positive about a one day science education workshop, run interestingly by Alan Kenyon and, although privately funded by the Urban Foundation, officially supported by the DET. Overall, however, the evaluation of in-service by teachers was unenthusiastic. Informal conversations with principals suggested ~~that~~ they find such courses disruptive. Usually they are informed at the ~~last~~ minute and 'instructed' to send a certain number of teachers who are then absent from the school for the duration of the

course. These complaints were more widely echoed in a 1983 memorandum from TUATA which complained that:

We are seriously concerned about some of the effects of the various in-service courses organised by the Inspectors and the Departments because some teachers attending these seem to spend more time outside the classroom than inside, thus causing pupils to be left untaught for considerable periods. (quoted in Murphy, 1985:124)

Furthermore these courses carry no accreditation or financial reward. Murphy sums up the provision of INSET:

Present provision for in-service education for Black and Coloured teachers in South Africa is very traditional, inadequate and not suited to present needs, its value to the teachers is therefore dubious...the needs of the teachers bear no relation to the courses offered. (1985:123)

He concluded that INSET as then organised (the mid 1980s) was unlikely to make any impact on african schools. The point here is that the low opinion of INSET further complicated my own work where teachers did not see in-service involvement as part of their professional lives, and where their experience of INSET was mostly such that they expected to be told what and how to teach.

The issue of 'qualified' status determines teachers' salaries which are based on their formal qualifications. From December 1986 there has been salary parity for all teachers with M+3 (post level C upwards), regardless of state imposed racial classification. Below that salaries drop sharply so that most african teachers are poorly paid relative to their counterparts in other schools. Because it is difficult to obtain information on the structure of teacher earnings, I have relied on the figures supplied by

Morrell (1988) for salaries in 1988. In 1988 teachers without matric but with teacher training started at salaries of between R5 442 - R8 604. Qualified teachers started at R13 473 - a considerable jump. Teachers receive an automatic annual increment, increments based on further formal qualifications, subsidised medical and pension fund contributions, and for those few as yet who can afford a mortgage, a housing subsidy. Compared to other wage earners, teachers at the lower end of the salary scale do not fare particularly well. In 1987 skilled metalworkers, for example, received R650 per month and commercial and catering workers R502 per month. Attaining a reasonable salary, comparative to wages in other sectors, presently depends on improving one's qualifications, at least to level C. This, as I have argued, is difficult without leave or financial support from the Departmental.

Working for relatively low salaries, regarded by the DET as 'underqualified', primary school teachers' working lives are further complicated by the highly prescriptive role played by the DET. At the time of this study few africans were employed in planning and administrative positions, and teachers had no say in the educational decisions which affected them. Joseph Lelyveld of the New York Times sardonically noted in 1985 that at the Ministry of Education and Training in Pretoria 'the only black faces belong to messengers and "teaboys"' (1986:55). Relations with officials from the DET are seldom other than authoritarian and prescriptive, actively reinforcing teachers' own lack of

confidence and discouraging the development of a sense of self-responsibility (Murphy, 1985).

Nor should one ignore the coercive 'misconduct' clauses of the Education and Training Act of 1979. 'Misconduct' includes doing, or causing to be done, or conniving at:

any act which is prejudicial to the administration, discipline or efficiency of a school department, office or institution of the government...[and] publicly, otherwise at a meeting convened by an association of teachers recognised in terms of Section 30, criticising derogatively the administration of the department. (quoted in Africa Perspective, 1984:59)

These provisions have been invoked mostly to victimise progressive teachers as in a recent case at one african secondary school in Cape Town, mentioned in chapter two, when teachers were suspended in 1988 for eighteen months.

Syllabuses are centrally prescribed for all schools, textbooks are chosen and supplied by the education authorities, and work programmes prescribe what each teacher shall do during every period throughout the whole year. Add to all this, teachers whose only educational experience at schools and colleges is bantu education and a state of emergency from 1985-1990, and the extent of the difficulties facing teachers in my study becomes apparent. Indeed such constraints led Jansen (1988) to conclude that 'meaningful' change could not take place within the state school system.

It was not always clear to me, especially not at first, how real the controls were on what and how teachers taught. Two of the four schools, Phakamisa and Sizithabathele, claimed

to operate democratically in that staff are consulted about matters such as whether or not to stream pupils, whether or not to participate in a project, and so on. Yet even in these schools, teachers felt constrained by the hierarchical form of organisation. At one of the other schools, Khanyisiwe, the situation was worse. Teachers commented on the lack of consultation with staff:

It's hard for a teacher to express himself you know, a teacher doesn't feel free to say a word in something. I think maybe he's afraid of the principal, you find that sometimes our principals are so hard on us, even if you want to say something he thinks that you want to take over the school. (Nomonde, interview 27/4/1989)

Her colleague confirmed the undemocratic way in which their school was run:

If the principal wants to decide upon what's to be done, then he's going to have a problem. because if he's calling a meeting, and in that meeting he wants something to be discussed, everybody will be quiet because he's the last man to give the answer. (Gladstone interview 26/4/89)

It did seem that teachers experienced pressure to complete the syllabus. While there appeared to be no prescriptions regarding the methods teachers might use, in practice long syllabuses and prescribed readers effectively limited innovative teaching styles. Principals and heads of departments seemed to check from time to time that the syllabus was being completed and the work plan adhered to, even at the more democratically run schools. At Phakamisa John explained that he had dropped out after the first year of involvement in my research because 'if I attend a course, sometimes I'm lagging behind the syllabus, so the headmaster

he quarrels for that you know' (interview 13/3/89). Other teachers articulated similar problems with completing the prescribed syllabus. Gladstone thought that introducing alternative content in history lessons would 'be a little bit time consuming because you find yourself short in finishing the syllabus' (discussion 13/10/88). His first concern was how to get through the syllabus. A colleague agreed that she taught 'according to the syllabus' because 'sometimes there's a lot of work to be done so we pass on whether the children have understood or not, we've got to rush for their final exams in November' (Nombulelo, interview 28/9/88). All project teachers expressed similar concerns. They were particularly aware of syllabus constraints and were unwilling to deviate much without the sanction of the principal and the DET. One teacher claimed that 'if I'm found teaching a thing which is not on the syllabus, is out of the syllabus, or political I get arrested!' (Stanley, interview 27/9/88). That teachers have been victimised more for their political activities than for what they do in their classrooms is not the point. Rather the point is how teachers (and principals and heads of departments) perceive bureaucratic surveillance and internalise ideological controls. As we shall see in section four, this 'keeping up with the syllabus' greatly influenced my work with teachers.

Yet inspectors seldom visit african primary schools unless they receive information of an impending stayaway by teachers and/or pupils. Instead, much of the control and

evaluation functions of inspectors has in fact devolved onto the school administration, that is the principal and heads of departments. One deputy principal explained that inspectors visited only to deal with administrative matters and 'they don't worry themselves with what's taking place in class' (interview 10/9/1987). Evaluation of probationer teachers and annual evaluations of staff are carried out internally but, as far as I could ascertain, teachers are not allowed to read or respond to these evaluations. It would seem, then, that teachers and principals have, to a greater or lesser degree, effectively internalised at least some of the control and surveillance functions of the DET. As Zolani observed 'do not ask them [principals] about the new methods, and also my principal fears that the Department will come and say, no, you are doing this and that and that and that' (Zolani, interview 28/9/88).

And of course a major constraint on any innovative work is the shocking lack of resources in african schools - inadequate buildings, shortages of books, of paper and printing facilities, even of chalk. At one of the schools, the Std 5 english teacher was distressed that she was having to use the Std 4 reader. Understandably the pupils were bored. Her colleague complained that 'the facilities that we have are very poor, they are dragging us behind' (Ruth, interview 30/9/88). A colleague noted that 'we haven't got the material, that's our main problem, we have got nothing in the school' (Gloria, interview 8/9/87). Khanyisiwe, as explained in the introduction, was in particularly poor

condition after community conflicts in 1986. Two teachers at the school commented:

We don't have enough books, the grammar book is the only copy I have this year...it's difficult for us to write all the time on the blackboard. (Nomonde, interview 20/4/89)

This type of thing [the state of the school] that we are in is not very motivating. For an example, now I'm busy making some sketches for health education but I haven't got a place to keep them. After school I just put them in my [car] boot and go, just take everything home...this school needs to be renovated. At the same time we should be supplied with sufficient books, we haven't got prescribed books here, we haven't got overheads, we have got nothing, you just get in class empty-handed with your record book, that's all. (Gladstone, interview 26/4/89)

While the other two schools were better supplied with textbooks, even so there were not enough class readers for all the pupils. Teachers were issued with one set of textbooks to use in all the classes, unlike white schools where every pupil receives a set of textbooks which can be taken and used at home. In the schools I worked in it was never possible for a pupil to take a textbook home.

Teaching as it is structured under the DET operates, then, to disempower teachers at all levels. They have little control over the syllabus or the textbooks or their work plans. They (and their principals) internalise many, perhaps most of the controls, constructing themselves as teacher subjects in ways which are profoundly disempowering. And they work within a system in which surveillance, while intermittent and uneven, is nevertheless real. All of this made it difficult to promote a view of teachers as participants in the shaping of the curriculum, Sections three and four show my frustrations, reversals and

adaptations as I learnt to work with teachers in a way which was consistent with my educational values, while still contributing to change in teachers' classrooms.

### Teachers and the meaning of change

And change was indeed possible, if difficult - sections three, four and five describe and analyse the limits and possibilities of the change process for myself and the teachers. Retrospectively, the literature on educational change to which I turned only when I visited CARE early in 1990, has been important in deepening my understanding of that process. For example, (Fullan, 1982) emphasises the meaning of change for participants in the process. (Although recognising the importance of meaning, and received, rather than intended change, should not mean that one loses sight of the equally important need for change to occur at the structural level.) Fullan argues from his comprehensive survey of the existing literature on educational change in Britain and North America, that the problem of meaning is central to educational change, i.e. how participants actually experience change, rather than how the change was intended to be experienced:

the psychological process of learning and understanding something new does not happen in a flash (or for most educational changes in several flashes). The presence or absence of mechanisms to address the ongoing problem of meaning - at the beginning and as people try out ideas - is crucial for success, because ~~it is~~ at the individual level that change does or does not occur. (1982:38)

Fullan cites Marris (1975) to support his thesis that people need to attach personal meaning to experience. Thus educational change is about the making of meaning:

No one can resolve the crisis of reintegration on behalf of another. Every attempt to preempt conflict, argument, protest by rational planning, can only be abortive: however reasonable the proposed changes, the process of implementing them must still allow the impulse of rejection to play itself out. When those who have the power to manipulate changes act as if they only have to explain, and when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice, they express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own. For the reformers have already assimilated these changes to their purposes, and worked out a reformulation which makes sense to them, perhaps through months or years of analysis and debate. If they deny others the chance to do the same, they treat them as puppets dangling by the threads of their own conceptions. (quoted in Fullan, 1982:25)

In a similar argument MacDonald and Walker (see Walker, et al, 1976) develop the concept of 'curriculum negotiation' to describe change as a two way process rather than a one way transmission. They argue that the gap between project intent and classroom practice is less the outcome of miscommunication and rather the result of negotiations at successive stages of a process which actively involves teachers. A project design cannot be imposed or transferred to the blank sheet of classrooms and schools but rather enters 'a complex dynamic of pre-established values, conflicts and individual rights and duties' (1976:25). I shall show how this happened in my study in the sections which follow, and how teachers made their own meaning, which was different from that I had intended. This in turn shaped my practice and led me to recast my intentions. As this

chapter has shown, emphasising educational change as the 'making of meaning' and 'curriculum negotiation' runs counter to the dominant view of educational change in South Africa where change has been (and is) imposed on supposedly passive teachers and pupils.

I had to learn too, and more than this, to accept, that all real change involves loss, anxiety and struggle, for myself as much as the teachers (Marris, 1975; Stenhouse, 1975; Berlak and Berlak, 1981; Fullan, 1982). Change is never entirely predictable nor unproblematic. Nor is engaging in action for change easy or comfortable. Like Fullan (1982), Marris (1975) and others, Hawes, not without optimism, echoes the view that curriculum change is 'untidy and unfinished', observing that we have to learn 'to live with the untidiness, the humanness of change, control our exasperation and be thankful that we are dealing with individuals who can laugh and who can change' (1979:5).

Change then is 'a process, not an event' (Fullan, 1982:115). And because it is complex, it is more likely to be slow. As Bukeka Bikwani, principal of an african primary school stressed:

There's a lot of work to be done. I think that it's teachers that first need to be approached and encouraged. And some of them will not be ready to start with it [the innovation], they might have different attitudes, so that will take time to get them to accept new things. (interview 23/7/90)

In the end, Apple captures for me the difficulty of change when he asks:

Can we as educators honestly cope with the probability that certainty will not be forthcoming, that many of our answers and our actions will be situational and filled with ambiguity? With this in mind, how do we commit ourselves to action?. (1979:166)

The chapters which follow attempt to address how one university researcher and a group of teachers tried to commit themselves to action for change, and how I learnt about the process of change through my second-order action research.

**SECTION THREE: LEARNING FACILITATION - THE DILEMMA  
OF DEMOCRATIC VERSUS DIRECTIVE PRACTICE**

These chapters elaborate a key dilemma arising from my own practice of facilitation - the tension between my intention to act democratically and the teachers' expectations that I would take an interventionist role. Section four examines a second key dilemma arising from my attempts to facilitate innovation in the curriculum - that of reform vs transformation of the form and content of the curriculum. In practice of course, these dilemmas comprised a seamless web of action and are not always easy to tease apart satisfactorily for the purpose of analysis. While separating the dilemmas helps capture and explain my action, it sacrifices some of the complexity and the messiness of what happened at the time.

PREP had intended action research to operate at two levels - the teachers researching their own classroom practice, and the facilitator researching her own interventions regarding the teachers' learning, both in becoming more effective practitioners (the curriculum innovation), and in developing as reflective practitioners (action research). As was noted in an earlier chapter, Stenhouse characterised this as first order (the teachers' research), and second order (the facilitator's research) action research (see Elliott and Adelman, 1973). It is this second order action research on my own practice on which this and the next section focus. But both levels of reflection shape and are shaped by each other, as pointed out in the introduction. My actions

influenced the teachers' action, which in turn influenced shifts in my own practice. Thus, while the next sections focus on my own educational development, in doing so they also address why and how the teachers themselves changed, or failed to change.

My dilemma of democratic versus directive practice was a key feature of my work during the pilot phase and one which continued into the second and third years of the project. It could also be described as a dilemma of the school's expectations of my role (directive) vs my own expectations of my role (democratic). The dilemma centered on how the teachers might learn about alternative methods and theories of teaching practice within a context of democratic working relations, where teachers themselves 'were defending their right to be taught in an appropriate way' (Millar et al, 1986:442). While the dilemma emerged during my work and was a continuing feature, it is, of course, being analysed retrospectively here as I reflect on my own action. Only retrospectively do I understand the difficulties of developing an in-service teacher education project based on a 'power with' model of working in a 'power over' society (Kenway and Modra, 1989). In their own experience of negotiating a curriculum in professional adult education Millar et al found that many students were 'committed to a more conventional theory of instruction' (1986:442). While teachers I worked with may or may not have been committed to transmission teaching and rote learning, they were certainly accustomed to such forms, both for their pupils and

themselves. More than a method or technique of working together was involved. Rather my participatory approach was underpinned by a view of teaching and learning rather different from that in DET schools, colleges and in-service courses. As Millar et al note 'to invite to participate was to invite [teachers] to value participation' (1986:442).

Both this dilemma and that detailed in the next section raise the wider question of how one sees practitioner development (both of teacher-educators like myself and teachers), whether as a technical issue involving instrumental action and the application of rules, or as developing new forms of understanding and action, as one learns in a practical context 'of modification, of changing, of reconstruction continued without end' (Dewey 1974:7, cited in Schon 1987:311).

Furthermore my work in this project did not emerge organically as a development from earlier attempts at staff and curriculum development, unlike the experience of educational change in Britain, the U.S.A., Canada and Australia. In these countries, ideas about the relationship of staff development and curriculum development have undergone considerable shifts over the last three decades (see for example Rubin, 1987). Their experience has seen a shift from the evident failure of top-down models of change, where teachers were seen as lacking the requisite skills to participate in curriculum development, to models of change which recognise the essential contributions teachers make to

curriculum design and development. Such involvement is further recognised as an important aspect of staff development. Similar developments and views of teachers, to say the least, have never prevailed in bantu education. Teachers have been consistently denied any voice not only in curriculum development but, given the tight prescriptions of the syllabus and work plan, even officially denied any say in interpreting the curriculum in their own classrooms. Thus there was no organic basis for a different form of in-service work in DET schools, and teachers expected forms of interaction similar to those they experienced working for the DET.

A section of the previous chapter outlined the working conditions of teachers and the constraints that impacted on the possibility of change. The specific day to day constraints that faced me included inspectors (their anticipated arrival, rather than their actual arrival), evaluations by heads of departments, examinations, student teachers, resources, and the organisation of the school day. It was seldom possible to plan ahead with regard to meetings and activities. For example, when I first started working with the teachers in Sivuyile in 1987, they were expecting inspectors to visit the school any time from 7 April. The inspectors never did arrive but it made planning difficult. During May 1987, there was a community stayaway, after which children straggled back to school over the next week, necessarily delaying an arrangement for me to observe Alice teach. In August there was a schools boycott in support of

a local african high school. In the second year of the project, meetings were often cancelled or postponed in the first term because of the inter-school sports, given that the DET tended to inform schools literally at the last minute that they were to attend a sports meeting. For example, on 23 March I arrived to find Sizithabathele deserted except for three teachers who were about to leave for the sports. As I had been stopped and had my car searched by the police at a roadblock at the entrance to the township I found this particularly frustrating (fieldnotes 23/3/1988). The second term of each school year was dominated by daily practice for the inter-school choir competition which seemed to take precedence over any other activity and led to meetings being postponed. In the third term of 1988, there was some disruption because of the problem with gangsters, already described in chapter two. The major disruption in 1989 centered around political protest which culminated in the defiance campaign held during the third school term, after which teachers' main concern was to rush through the syllabus for the year-end examination.

Student-teachers from the local training college and from UCT were at the schools for several weeks during the second term each year and teachers said this meant they could not teach the lessons we had planned together. Teacher evaluations by heads of departments happened at unscheduled times, often disrupting carefully made plans. The writing of exams towards the end of every term tended to bring the

schools to a halt for at least two weeks, usually more, as teachers did revision, after which the children from sub A to std 5 all wrote tests. Although pupils only wrote for one or two hours each day the rest of the day, and usually the following week as well, was given over to marking the papers at school, while the children were expected to work quietly from their textbooks.

Nor were teachers keen to work after school. They were adamant that workshops and meetings would have to be in the course of the school day. Time was therefore always a problem and repeatedly mentioned as such by teachers - time for planning, time to talk on a one to one basis, and even more difficult, time to meet as collaborative groups. Nevertheless, as I pointed out in the introduction, I had to learn to find a way to work with, rather than against, the unpredictable rhythm of the school term and the constraints on teachers. The change I was interested in supporting was change in the context of the school's reality, rather than some ideal form which would neither survive nor be possible in the context of average township classrooms.

Data for this and the next section will be drawn from my own fieldnotes, transcripts and notes of reflective conversations with teachers and my own peers, from teacher interviews, and from the video and audiotaped lessons and curriculum materials generated by co-operative work with teachers. Drawing on my data, I explain in these two chapters, how I learnt to come to terms with a democratic

approach to my own directiveness in the project. To analyse and evaluate my practice, I draw on the concepts of discourse, conversation, dialogical relations, and the ideal speech situation.

## CHAPTER FOUR: REFORMULATING MY RECESSIVE ROLE

Good change is hard work.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter I first outline my goals as a facilitator and explain what I understand as a 'dilemma' in my own practice. I then examine the role of the facilitator in three projects with which I was familiar when I began my own work in 1987. I had intended to play a non-interventionist role as a facilitator so that teachers would be participants and owners, not receivers, in the process of change. At first I failed to understand that it was impossible to be truly non-interventionist. My non-interventionist agenda was neither negotiated nor made explicit to teachers. Thus, ironically in view of my intentions not to impose, I in fact did try to impose a way of working together for change. The teachers, however, saw my role rather differently, and resisted this non-interventionist view of change. It soon became clear that they expected me to show and tell them what to do so that they might 'copy' my ideas in their own classrooms. The shifts in my practice in the pilot study in 1987 towards a more interventionist role is then recounted.

### The facilitator and adult learning

Boud defines a facilitator as 'anyone who helps others to learn' (1987:223). In action research literature, the term 'facilitator', 'encapsulates the stance of an outsider

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1. Fullan, 1982:63

supporting primary actors in the sometimes hazardous task of self-reflection' (Brown et al quoted in Grundy and Kemmis, 1981:328). This definition, however, still overlooks the importance of second order reflection by the facilitator as well. While Grundy and Kemmis (1981) suggest that the initial intervention of an outside facilitator is usually necessary to precipitate teacher enquiry into their own practice, the role of facilitator is generally under-researched within action research studies, even where there is a rapidly growing literature on teachers as researchers. In South Africa, the role of a facilitator of in-service teacher development has not been researched.<sup>2</sup> Those of us working in universities mostly lack firsthand experience of researching our own practice, and of providing intellectual and affective support to teachers who wish to improve their teaching. Most teachers and academics are more familiar with a research relationship in which academics engage in research about teaching and learning and teachers implement the results of their findings. If, as Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest, the relationships established between outsiders and the practitioner group influence the agenda of issues to be addressed, the data-gathering, the character of reflection and the interpretations reached on the basis of the evidence generated by the project, then the issue of

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2. But see Millar et al, 1986 and Millar, 1989 for an account of curriculum negotiation at UCT in a course for adult educators working in non-formal education settings. As the staff responsible for creating the opportunity for curriculum negotiation, Millar et al reflect on and analyse their experiences.

facilitation 'deserves a good deal of concentrated research' (Grundy and Kemmis, 1981:323).

In this project the facilitator was expected to facilitate teacher development and curriculum development through the process of teachers' action research. Because I had no body of research knowledge in South Africa from which to draw, and influenced by the British experience, I thought that curriculum change would flow inevitably out of the action research process. Further, I assumed that teachers would recognise the value of action research as a way to improve their teaching.

As the following chapters will show, my experience highlights the fact that an effective facilitator needs technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge. Many of my dilemmas and problems arose because of my focus only on the emancipatory interest - both for the teachers and for myself. I had hoped to effect what Mezirow calls 'perspective transformation' - 'the learning process by which adults come to recognise their culturally induced dependency rules and relationships and the reasons for them and take action to overcome them' (1981:6). While this would correspond to Habermas's (1972) concept of the emancipatory interest, nevertheless, Mezirow maintains that acquiring the knowledge and skills, building one's confidence and trying out new interpersonal roles, crucially involves all three of Habermas's learning domains:

To be able to facilitate learning adult educators must master the professional demands of all three [learning domains] and become adept at working with learners in ways that will be sensitive to both the interrelatedness and inherent differences among them. (1981:20)

I failed, then, at first to understand the importance of learning technical skills both for myself and the teachers, tending to confuse a technical knowledge interest with technical skill.

My practice was informed by a theory of learning that one cannot learn for others (although one can learn from others), that learners should take responsibility for their own learning and exercise control over what they choose to learn, and the direction of that learning. What I had hoped was that my work would enhance the teachers' self-directedness as learners, with the facilitator acting as resource and guide. Furthermore, the view of knowledge encapsulated in action research is one of knowledge as process rather than product. Freire's view of the act of knowing is similar to the action research process when he explains that the 'act of knowing involves a dialectical movement that goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action' (1985:50). The acquisition of knowledge should be an active process since, as the previous chapter pointed out, hegemony is the result of lived social relationships and not only ideas. At the heart of this view is one of learners as active agents shaping their own working lives. Grundy (1987) suggests that emancipatory action research is an expression of 'critical pedagogical practice', consisting of four

elements: it confronts the real problems of existence; it involves processes of conscientisation; it confronts ideological distortion; it incorporates action as part of knowing. I intended to develop a critical approach to facilitation which would be broadly similar and therefore chose a learner-centered strategy.

Yet as Youngman (1986) points out, such a strategy fails to address the internalisation by learners of the hegemonic ideology which I was trying to counteract, including a very different view of teaching and learning. As the previous chapter explained, subjects may well accommodate the logic of domination in such a way that they resist forms of knowledge which challenge their world view, characterised by 'an active refusal to listen, to hear or to affirm one's possibilities' (Giroux, 1985:xx). Giroux elaborates two important questions arising from this problem:

how do radical educators assess and address the elements of repression and forgetting at the heart of this type of domination? What accounts for the conditions that sustain an active refusal to know or to learn in the face of knowledge that may challenge the nature of domination itself? (1985:xx)

Initially then, there was a disabling gap between my theory of emancipatory action and what was possible or appropriate in practice.

### **Dilemmas**

This mismatch between my aims and my understanding of contextual realities gave rise to two key 'grounded'

dilemmas (Winter, 1982) which form the core of my study. These were the dilemma of being democratic versus being directive, and the dilemma of transformative curriculum innovation versus only reforming the form and content of the prescribed syllabus. Elliott usefully describes a dilemma as 'a situation which appears to have two equally desirable but mutually inconsistent courses of action' (1985a:240). A dilemma is not simply a technical problem to be resolved. Dilemmas highlight the elements of artistry as well as competence demanded by skilful professional practice where one cannot provide technical rules to resolve 'uncertainty, uniqueness, and value conflict' (Schon, 1987:6). As Schon (1987) argues, it is precisely these 'indeterminate zones of practice' which are central to the best professional practice.

Dilemmas may persist so that 'one is forced to opt for a course of action which satisfies one value but denies another' (Elliott, 1985a:240). In my case the dilemmas, as I understood my action at the time, did not involve equally desirable courses of action. Rather they involved what seemed to me at first to be one course of action consistent with my educational values, and another which seemed to me to involve denying those values in my own practice. Nevertheless, this is not to say that these dilemmas involved simple either-or choices as I first thought. Lieberman (1986), for example refers to 'issues' rather than 'dilemmas' to indicate the possibilities of compromise and

discussion, rather than outright rejection of one course of action. Oja and Smulyan sum up:

In practice, however, action researchers tend to make decisions that best meet their situations and goals and that include rather than exclude a variety of perspectives. In many cases, decisions made in action research require a balancing of divergent needs or views rather than a mutually exclusive choice of a single option. (1989:177)

In effect, what initially appeared as a dilemma for me, evolved into a rather more nuanced and ambiguous issue as exemplified by Oja and Smulyan. Somekh makes the point that a 'reflective practitioner' is 'someone who continually reappraises the wisdom of his/her judgments and can live with the tension of dilemmas without simplifying them in order to find easy solutions' (1989:8). Integral to my own learning then, was trying to live creatively with the tension of key dilemmas.

### **The role of facilitator in three action research projects**

When I began working in PREP, no other project had attempted facilitating action research or reflective practice by teachers in South African schools, whether in primary or secondary, in black or white. There was no local body of knowledge and experience available from which to draw. Thus for some form of guidance I turned to the available literature on facilitating action research in three projects with which I was familiar at that time. Charles Hull had drawn my attention to an action research project, based at CARE and co-ordinated by Jean Rudduck, in which he had been

involved. The final report, including case studies written by the teacher-researchers, had been published as A Room Full of Children Thinking (Hull et al, 1985).

According to the writers, the project had as its guiding principle 'the search for ways to help the individual teacher become more effective' (Hull et al, 1985:7). Central to this was the strategy of teacher research as an instrument of in-service evaluation. Teachers who became involved were introduced to techniques of data gathering and analysis at an initial two day conference. Thereafter regular meetings were held two or three times a term after school; one-to-one meetings when requested by the teachers; and two further conferences. The project ran for fifteen months, involving ten teachers in four schools. According to Alan Sigsworth, the university team were concerned that the role of researcher should belong to the teachers, who would also have rights of ownership to the research. The university team would act as 'consultants'. Sigsworth captures a key dilemma for them in playing this role:

Within this exposition and negotiation of roles one could discern the logic that informed the activity of the co-ordinators - an aspiration towards control in order to maintain momentum and the energy of the research activity, and an aspiration towards recessiveness in order to allow the teacher researchers freedom to shape their own research activities. (Hull et al, 1985:99)

The team chose neither to suggest a particular research model, nor to specify the research task at the outset, hoping to avoid the 'hidden compromise' whereby initial

control is assumed and then handed over once the research was underway. Thus the group meetings were to be a forum for discussion, not opportunities for the university team to criticise and evaluate teachers, although the team admitted that discussion did not develop easily in these group meetings. More productive were the one-to-one discussions which later developed, helping teachers acquire confidence in their emerging identity as researchers. Finally, while acknowledging the ambiguity of choosing a non-directive role rather than negotiating it with teachers, the university researchers argue that:

Looking back, we would claim that in every case the problem-in-context and the method used to explore it were dynamically related, informing each other with an intimacy that we do not think would have been possible had we chosen at the outset to specify the research task and suggest a particular research model 'for all seasons'. We think our decision to follow the teachers, if necessary, on a circuitous route, was essential to help them capitalise the assets of their classroom experience. (my emphasis, Hull et al:102)

A second project influencing my initial practice was the Ford Teaching Project (Ford T) involving forty teachers in twelve schools from 1973-1974 (see Elliott, 1977). The aim of the project was for teachers to undertake action research into the problems of implementing inquiry/discovery methods, developing thereby a pedagogical theory grounded in their practice. Elliott and Adelman were supported in their work by two local advisors from the Local Education Authorities. Inter-school meetings were held twice a term and, during the life of the project, teachers also met for three residential four-day conferences. The role of the university outsiders

was to assist each teacher in making 'more rational responses to evaluations of his [sic] moral agency in the classroom' (Elliott, 1977:223). But, stresses Elliott, it was not the outsider's role 'to make those evaluations'. I would now argue, however, that this fails to adequately recognise, as I had to learn, that outsiders always have some interventionist role, even if not an evaluative one. Indeed, at first Elliott and Adelman found it was necessary to assume a more pro-active role in order to activate teachers' self-reflection. Nevertheless, in a retrospective account, Elliott is careful to point out that 'the teachers appeared willing to collaborate and were reasonably well motivated' (1988b:40). Elliott maintains that Ford T succeeded both in generating reflective practice amongst teachers, and in developing reflective second order practice amongst the university researchers (Elliott, 1988b).

The third source from which I drew was the Lesotho action research project initiated by Stuart (Stuart et al, 1985) which envisaged a similarly recessive role for the 'consultant'. Thus Stuart writes that the consultants are only there as 'resource persons', but she does add without explaining further, that they might 'provide ideas through literature and discussions' (Stuart 1985:8). Again, I was not aware at the time that the small action research team were recent graduates who had studied development studies with Stuart at the National University (Stuart, 1990).<sup>3</sup> As

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3. In her role as 'critical friend' while I was writing this study, Janet Stuart generously shared a number of articles arising from the Lesotho project. These clarified for me

Stuart notes 'there was a certain shared background of interests and assumptions' (1990:4). Thus they knew each other and Stuart, they knew what the innovation was, and they could concentrate on the action research process.

Nonetheless, I must also admit that because of my own enthusiastic advocacy of action research at that time I did not consider carefully the different context and conditions of these projects. Nor did I understand at that time the way in which action research had developed organically, over time, out of teacher concerns for their own role in research and curriculum development (see Elliott, 1988b). The point is that these three projects all emphasise a recessive role for the facilitator, and a methodological role, i.e. how to facilitate the research process, rather than a role for the facilitator in curriculum development. Thus I anticipated both that I would be able to play a similarly recessive role, and that my main role would be to act as a facilitator of action ' research.

### **The facilitator and emancipatory action research**

During 1987 I found Carr and Kemmis's (1986) explication of the role of a facilitator within each of the three modes of action research, as outlined in chapter one, helpful in understanding how a facilitator might act in the interest of 'emancipation'. Later I was also to read Grundy (1987) and

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the pre-existing relationship between Stuart and the teacher team.

found this useful in clarifying the role of a facilitator. For example, she argues that a recessive role was less easily achieved than some of the literature suggests. Basing her argument on an examination of transcripts from the Ford T project, she suggests that the power relationships between facilitator and practitioner were not entirely symmetrical:

When the transcripts of the discussions are analyzed it is clear that it is the observer, not the teacher, who usually identified issues for discussion. At other times it is clear from the pattern of talk that it is the facilitator who is directing the discussion and lapsing into an instructional rather than a discussion mode. (1987:86)

Neither Grundy (1987), nor Carr and Kemmis (1986), helped me with technical knowledge, however. While I understood the philosophy underpinning emancipatory action, I lacked the practical and technical knowledge as to how to act. Retrospectively, I would suggest that the Deakin view that groups are there to be joined, not facilitated (McTaggart and Singh, 1986) begs the question as to how many practitioner groups could be thus described, not only in South African schools, but in other educational contexts as well, and how one might proceed where a critical focus is absent. Or even where a critical focus exists, as in my own practice, how to proceed without technical and practical knowledge. The process of facilitation, as my own action research revealed, is arguably far more complex, and far less linear, than either Carr and Kemmis (1986) or McTaggart and Singh (1986) suggest.

In the early days of the project (1987), I also found Day's (1985) emphasis on the need for teachers to articulate their thinking about teaching useful, and found further support for this approach to teacher conversations and teacher thinking in Yonemura (1982), Elbaz (1983), and Buchmann (1985). At the very least, I could begin a reflective conversation, embodying a democratic form of discourse in which all participants must be able 'to initiate discussion, to establish or influence the rules of conversation, to put forward statements, to request elaboration and clarification, and to call other statements into question' (Cohen and Garet, 1975 quoted in Buchmann, 1985:442). Similarly, the essential condition for Habermas's (1970) 'ideal speech situation' is that participants are 'free from any threat of domination, manipulation or control' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986:142). While previous chapters make it clear that the conditions for the ideal speech situation could not be met, given the oppressive and repressive conditions under which teachers worked, this is not to say that one cannot evaluate the aspiration towards the possibility and promise of a consensual truth arrived at through discourse.

Buchmann (1985), however, sounds a warning note against undue optimism regarding the potential of discourse. She makes the point that a democratic organisation of discourse 'cannot make people equally good at talking, let alone arguing' (1985:442). We are likely to be strongly influenced by the cumulative effects of our past participation (or lack thereof), nor should we naively

believe that all views of teaching and teacher education are equally capable of sustaining good practice. Buchmann (1985) prefers thus to contrast 'argument' and 'conversation', where the essence of the former 'involves contestants' and the latter 'involves partners'. While conversation is open-ended, argument is 'driven to conclusions' (1985:449). Similarly, Gitlin and Smyth (1989) usefully explicate the notion of 'dialogical relations' which involve a 'true conversation'. In the context of the prevailing hierarchical and authoritarian monological relations in schools, they argue the need for more democratic and dialogical relations. Dialogical relations do not 'pit one actor against the other to determine who can win the argument, but rather enable the participants to work together to understand the subject discussed' (1989:4).

To sum up then, I started work with teachers believing that a recessive role for the facilitator was appropriate. This seemed to match my theory of learning which involved teachers taking responsibility for their own learning. This gave rise to a key dilemma when teachers interpreted my role differently. As I struggled in 1987 to find an appropriate way to work with teachers under these circumstances, I found discussions in Grundy (1987) and Carr and Kemmis (1986) on the role of a facilitator in different modes of action research useful but not of immediate practical help. Further reading around the notion of 'conversation' was more helpful. Retrospectively the concept of 'dialogical relations' will also be used in evaluating my own practice.

What follows then is an account of how the dilemma emerged, the shifts in my practice, the moves by the teachers, and my reflections on this first year of working together.

#### A false start March - June 1987

My initial entry in 1987 for the pilot study at Sivuyile school had been negotiated by Wendy Flanagan, the project leader, at a meeting with the DET and the principal in December 1986. It is worth mentioning again that unofficial permission only was granted. My first contact with the school was on 4 March 1987, when Wendy Flanagan and I went to see the principal to arrange a meeting with his staff. From the outset my data shows both my concern with the dilemma relating to my own wish to be 'democratic', and warning signs of the teachers' own unhappiness. I failed at first to sense such signs because I wanted the teachers to teach and the teachers to do the research, while I took a supportive but backseat role. This is not to say I was at all sure of how I should act to realise this. My field notes for 14 March for example, record my continued apprehension and nervousness both before and during meetings with teachers (fieldnotes 14/3/87). My concern that the project should succeed blocked my perception of where the potential for unravelling lay. Everything I had read about action research in schools thus far, had made it clear that the teachers were the primary actors in classroom research.

At the first meeting with the principal, it transpired that Mr Motisi had already chosen five teachers with whom I would work. His choice provided the first clue to the school's expectations of the project. Not surprisingly, given that the project had been presented by Wendy Flanagan at the December meeting as a way of improving the children's english, he had chosen five english teachers, two from std 3, two from std 4 and one from std 5. Writing up my fieldnotes after this meeting, I expressed both optimism at the principal's warm welcome, but also disquiet over what was to evolve as a critical dilemma. Thus I wrote:

What expectations are there of the project by staff at the school? Are immediate results going to be looked for? Important when we meet the selected group of teachers that we stress the pivotal role they will play. The project has begun top-down but needs to move into democratic practices as fast as possible.  
(fieldnotes 4/3/87)

As discussed above, I did not see myself at this early stage as providing the project's central dynamic. I would be the 'resource person' and 'guide'.

Fullan (1982) argues that it is during the phase of adoption of an innovation that the direction or content of change is set in motion. He argues that 'the process of adoption can generate meaning or confusion, commitment or alienation, or simply ignorance on the part of the participants and others to be affected by the change' (1982:53). More than this, because the making of meaning is central to the process of people changing, one cannot assume that one's own explanation of the innovation is received and understood as one anticipates or hopes. Confusion regarding the aims of

the project, and the differing expectations of myself and the teachers, were to become evident in the first months of working together.

A week later on the 12 March, Wendy Flanagan and I visited the school, firstly to outline the project to the whole staff and then to meet with the selected group of english teachers. At this meeting, Wendy Flanagan justified the project as a response to requests from teachers whom she had met in the schools during her own UCT students' teaching practice. Some of the DET teachers who had also brought classes to UCT for micro-teaching lesson, had expressed problems with their teaching and an interest in learning new methods. In other words, the claim was being made that the project was rooted in teacher concerns and problems, even though it had been initiated by outsiders from the university. She referred to her own attempt in 1986 at working with a std 4 class at the school to develop six geography lessons on the Transkei. Crucially, Wendy had written the draft materials, taught the lessons and then revised the materials herself. The class teacher had agreed only to allow her class to be taught and to watch the lessons. In other words a model of university-school interaction had been established which was fresh in the teachers' minds. So when Wendy said she was concerned to find ways in which UCT and the teachers 'could work together on some classroom problems', there was nothing in UCT's previous contact with the school to suggest that teachers should expect to be the key actors in this process.

Nobody had questions at this stage, with the principal suggesting that 'the most important thing now was to get going'. This lulled me into a false expectation that we had all agreed on what would happen next. The meeting which immediately followed with the teacher group probably reinforced expectations that their agenda would be followed, given that teachers were asked where they wished to start. They identified the children's english, specifically their reluctance to speak english at all as a major problem.<sup>4</sup> We decided to focus on the english oral lesson, and the teachers suggested that we prepare two lessons for each standard. Looking back, I can see how teachers could have interpreted this meeting as fulfilling their expectations that I would intervene actively in suggesting how they should teach. I thought I was making myself clear, both when I offered to bring materials to a second meeting so that teachers themselves could choose materials for their classes, and when I emphasised that teachers' insights would be important because they were the experienced practitioners. But it was through my action for change that the meaning teachers' were making of the process was revealed. As Schon comments in referring to the joint action of coach and student, the 'clarification of intended meanings and the discovery and resolution of incongruities between instructors' intentions and students' understandings

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4. The language issue is dealt with at greater length in section four. Suffice to mention here that the teachers and the children are first language xhosa speakers, but the medium of instruction in the schools from std 3 (year five) is english.

are best achieved through action' (author's emphasis, 1987:161).

I next met the teacher group on 2 April. I took with me a wide selection of non-syllabus materials, including books, photographs and a box of finger puppets. The five teachers and I met during the lunchbreak in an empty classroom where the teachers spent about half an hour looking at the material and talking about it to each other. My strategy was to spread out the resources and then to remain silent while the teachers made their own decisions. Alice and Muriel from std 4 choose the book Not So Fast Songololo by Niki Daly about a young african boy and his grandmother. Mavis from std 5 selected photographs for class discussion. The two std 3 teachers, Gloria and Miriam seemed unsure of what they intended doing but thought they might try using the finger puppets. My field notes indicate that I thought things were going well thus far, although teachers were reluctant to allow their lessons to be videotaped. My feeling was that it would not be helpful to push them into filming at this stage. I thought that the teachers had identified their needs, selected material and undertaken to try it out in class (fieldnotes 2/4/87).

By the 23 April, all the teachers were to have tried out a lesson which they would then discuss with me. In fact they explained that the presence of student teachers had made this impossible and all the lessons were postponed to May. When I spoke to Gloria and Miriam they replied that neither

of them had yet tried out a lesson. After a long and rather uncomfortable pause, Miriam blurted out that she wanted me to come and teach an oral lesson, which I agreed to do, as I detail in chapter six (fieldnotes 23/4/87). Meanwhile, Alice had asked me to watch her lesson, insisting afterwards that I evaluate her lesson, even though I had attempted to avoid this by first asking Muriel and then Alice herself to comment on the lesson (fieldnotes 12/5/87).

At an interview conducted by the project assistant, Tozi Mgobozi, at my request, with the teacher group about a month later in June, the teachers spelled out their very different expectations and assessment of these early meetings. By this stage problems were evident in teachers' reluctance to continue talking about their work with me, even if they were not yet making explicit how I had failed to fulfil their expectations. When I had met with the group on 3 June, teachers had not been very forthcoming. Mavis, for example, said she was 'just not feeling herself today'. My notes indicate that the meeting did not go well. Teachers spoke reluctantly about the lessons they had given, they were unenthusiastic about resources and my general impression was one of lack of interest. I wrote that 'I have a feeling that teacher expectations of the project are not being met'. Certainly I felt depressed and unsure how best to proceed. Tozi Mgobozi had observed this meeting and her impressions were highly critical of the teachers and the slow pace at which we were moving. Contrary to what the teachers themselves were to say a few days later, she said that I was

doing too much for the teachers, that I should be demanding more of them, and that they should begin to realise that as teachers they must contribute to change (fieldnotes 3/6/87).

I asked Tozi to speak to the teachers, thinking that they might be more forthcoming with her. She negotiated with the teachers to allow her to tape record the meeting which was conducted in xhosa and then transcribed and translated by her. First of all, teachers wanted to know what the aim of the project was. Tozi explained that the idea was both to help the pupils with english, and the teachers to improve their skills. Alice responded:

That is why in our minds we thought that it would be ideal if Wendy or Melanie would take classes and we observe and see how it works out and how the children respond, so that we can be aware of how to tackle certain things. (interview 9/6/87)

Miriam voiced her expectations, complaining that:

We didn't know that we were going to conduct lessons because we do that every day. There is nothing new, we go on as usual without any guidance. So we had thought that Melanie and her group will come here and take lessons and so on, so that we could watch her. So there is really nothing that we gain from her, which is why we feel it is a waste of time. We are confused as to what is going on. When Melanie came here with Wendy we were introduced to them and told they were running a project. When she came the next time, she never uttered a word! But gave us pictures to work on, without consulting us, and she never told us what to do and we were confused. We still are. (interview 9/6/87)

Echoing their dissatisfaction, the deputy principal added:

One other thing that the kids like, is if Melanie could give them lessons. She should also take part in the class teaching so that we can copy some teaching styles from her, but she never started to. (interview 9/6/87)

While Mavis said:

I have been under the impression that one day when Melanie comes here, I would tell her that in this week I am busy with direct and indirect speech, and ask her to help by giving a lesson and I would sit and watch because I would have told her first how I run my lessons so that if there is anything that needs to be changed she could help. (interview 9/6/87)

#### Adaptations and shifts June-July 1987

I was extremely despondent after Tozi's interview with the teacher group on 9 June. I had a sense that I needed to start all over again. I seemed no nearer to finding answers to the two questions I again posed to myself: 'how to get a balance between democracy and direction; and how to ensure that teachers take control?' (fieldnotes 10/6/87). Inevitably, I began to consider doing some demonstration teaching not only because this was clearly expected but because I wondered if it might not be feasible to encourage teacher learning by modelling alternative practice. Although Wendy Flanagan continued to strongly discourage the practice of the facilitator teaching (memorandum from Wendy Flanagan 15/7/87; fieldnotes 8/7/87 and 27/8/87), in my own reading I began to look for examples of demonstration teaching being used positively to encourage teacher learning. Thus I was encouraged by reading an article at that time on the role of mentors in teachers' learning. Howell (1986) provides a convincing argument for mentors working with classroom teachers, including demonstration lessons, which she describes as 'a visual argument' (1986:162). Watching skilled teachers at work 'can be a powerfully motivating first step in the change process'

(1986:163). But, she says, for learning to occur this must be an active process in which 'teachers are actively composing meaning' (1986:162). There was admittedly not much evidence that this had happened when I had taught the oral lesson. Nevertheless, Howell's experience did suggest that demonstration teaching should not be excluded as a possible strategy for change.

My next step was to invite the teacher group to a workshop at UCT to try and thrash out our different expectations of what should happen in the project. I first approached the principal and obtained his permission for teachers to spend a day at UCT. On the 15 July I collected the teachers and the deputy from their school. As we started to draw up an agenda, the teacher group moved discussion in an unexpected direction. The deputy principal initiated the shift saying, 'Melanie, we have a problem. I wonder if we can't discuss that this project should start only for standard 3 this year because we are encountering problems'. She explained that the school had decided that the project should work only with std 3 teachers in 1987, std 4 teachers in 1988, and std 5 teachers in 1989. There were three reasons for this decision: firstly, to avoid problems arising with the completion of the official syllabus where some teachers were working or meeting with me, while others were busy with the regular classwork; secondly, so that all teachers would be involved in the project; and thirdly so that all the pupils would benefit. The school was still committed to participation in the project, with Alice for example,

pointing out that 'teachers are keen on this project, they like to be involved in learning new methods'. We translated the ensuing discussion into four aims, which I wrote on a sheet of newsprint:

1. All the teachers and all the children should benefit.
2. We will develop a language and learning policy for the whole school involving the understanding and agreement of all the teachers.
3. Teachers will be learning new methods.
4. The young child should get a good foundation.

There was still the expectation that I would demonstrate teaching methods. As the deputy remarked:

The teachers are already involved in the syllabus, they know what is going to be taught, but Melanie she will show, for example, she will show us new methods or we will copy from her. She will take the lesson and after she has taken the lesson I'm sure she will ask one of the teachers in std 3 to do the same lesson and see the difference. (discussion 15/7/87)

The teachers in effect had not shifted in their expectations of me.

Nor did teachers take the thrust of Wendy Flanagan's presentation at the workshop - that teacher's should make the decisions about change - the way she had intended. At the time I failed to appreciate the logic of the argument put forward by the teachers. For example, Wendy was arguing that outsiders from the university mostly have little experience of DET situations, that they don't know the children or the needs of the teachers. While the university people could provide 'support' it was up to teachers 'to look at what we're doing in our classrooms and see how we can improve our teaching in our classrooms'. She did not discount teachers asking for help, saying that it was 'up to

teachers and anybody teachers like to work with'. Yet it was precisely at this point that the deputy interjected, saying, 'Wendy, you have said that it so difficult for us to change the situation but we can improve, we can ask for help'. She continued:

I can't improve by myself, it is for us to get involved with other people because we don't have a university for blacks [africans] here where we can say we will go for help there, the solution is to go to the whites and ask for help...I think it is for us to accept that there is nothing we can do alone especially towards education because our education is rotten, it must just be accepted we can't do anything and we are there to ask for help. (discussion 15/7/87)

Although the implications of these remarks later became clear, at the end of workshop I still did not know how to reconcile the different interpretations of this 'helping' role. I still saw myself as having to be non-directive and 'democratic', while the teachers wanted to 'copy' from me.

#### **A more interventionist role July - September 1987**

Whatever my espoused theory, the data from the third term suggests that my theory-in-use (Schon, 1987) tended towards a more interventionist role. My first meeting with the std 3 teachers - Gloria, Jennifer, Naomi, Miriam and Gertrude - was on 22 July. All five teachers had std 8 plus a two year Primary Teachers Certificate. Naomi had started teaching in 1958, Gertrude in 1968, Gloria in 1974, Miriam in 1975 and Jennifer in 1980. All had subsequently studied part-time for matric.

After a lengthy talk by me on syllabus aims and language across the curriculum, I asked the teachers to decide what they wanted to teach, how many lessons they would teach, who would plan the lessons and so on. They reiterated their demand that I teach:

Gloria: When we teach these things, you will always be in?

Melanie: Not necessarily, I think that you will have to decide. Do you want me to be there, do you want somebody else to be there, if you want me there, why. What do you think?

Gloria: I mean, as we said, for instance, let's take science. I've done science the way I'm doing it. So what I would like to be done, if maybe you first take the lesson because with that, from the beginning we've got a problem with our kids because they don't understand really and it's the same problem because we start explaining [in xhosa] and that's what we want to get rid of. We start explaining in xhosa if they don't understand, so what I would like you to do, first of all if you take the lesson I can copy you and maybe the following week I will invite you 'Melanie, come to my classroom, I'm going to conduct such and such a lesson.' I don't know if that could be possible.

Melanie: If I understand you, you want me to teach the lesson and then you will go and teach either the same lesson or it could be the next lesson in the sequence, and I could come and watch you teach and then we talk about what I did and what you did and so on?

Gloria: Even if, because we are many, we are five [teachers], even if you will take the lesson in one class, then we all go there, then we watch, you know. Then we will invite you [to watch us]. (discussion 22/7/87)

I accepted this suggestion, seeing little alternative in the light of our previous problems. At the end of the meeting I

articulated what I now understood my role to be, saying to the teachers:

I have become a little bit clearer now about what is expected of me - to demonstrate and to teach, and bring new ideas for the teaching of history, and advice about 'stealing' time from english [for cross curricula work]. But then I think teachers will pick up the new ideas very quickly, then it will be time for me to withdraw and say, 'Okay you teach, you go on'. (discussion 22/7/87)

Thus while I had now conceded my role as demonstrator, I still emphasised that teachers should follow with their own attempts at similar lessons. Reading Schon (1987) on educating reflective practitioners while writing this chapter, I found it interesting to note that he too sees a place for what he describes as 'reflective imitation'. In Schon's view the 'coach' may at times 'demonstrate some part or aspect of the process he [sic] thinks the student needs to learn, offering it as a model to be imitated' (1987:101). Such demonstration, as Howell (1986) would affirm, need not involve taking control away from the teachers.

Despite the usual hiccups regarding the arrangement of meetings, not least of which was a schools boycott, I did finally teach a sequence of six lessons over three weeks (with interruptions for the boycott) in August. These were taught in Miriam's class and were watched by all five teachers. Such interruptions of course, are part of the same constraints that teachers face in their working lives. Such experiences contributed to my own understanding of the

difficulties teachers face in developing more creative approaches to their teaching.

### Reflecting together on action September 1987

We met again as a group on 3 September. At this meeting I tried to encourage teachers to talk about the methods I had used. I decided to include this conversation, together with extracts from the individual interviews, in this chapter rather than in section four. My reason is that this evidence shows teachers' learning about change as a result of a far more interventionist role than I had initially envisaged. Indeed, teachers expressed interest in trying the lessons with their own classes, provided they were given the resource material, and four of them went on to try some of the lessons with their own classes. This was important in my own learning. Equally, however, what the teachers say here applies to the process of curriculum change and should be seen as complementing the account of the pilot study from the perspective of the second dilemma in chapter six.

The lengthy extract below helps to capture the form and content of the discussion after I had taught six history lessons. It is, I would argue, an important instance of collaborative reflection and dialogical relations:

Melanie: Gloria, I remember you saying in one meeting that the way you always teach history is to tell the children the history. You said that you were very curious about how this new way would work, so that's talking about a way of teaching history. Now you might think that's a

good way or a bad way. If you think it's a good way you will have a reason for it, if you think it's a bad way you'll have a reason for it. So I think we begin to understand why we do things the way we do by talking about them. Is that clear?

Teachers: Yes.

Gloria: I think here I can say I like this method because really, I used to just talk with the children, I was doing the talking, so maybe I'm really interested to try it this way, more so because I can say it includes the language also, like for instance, the arrangement of paragraphs, the completion of sentences, of words in the sentence. I don't know if this will really work but I really learnt a lot. I'd like to try it because really I was doing all the talking.

Melanie: Why do you think that's a problem, you doing all the talking, why would you try it this way as opposed to continuing with the way you have been teaching?

Gloria: Because I want to try and do less talking, the children must work, they must learn to work, they must learn to talk, they must learn to do things themselves.

Melanie: So you think this way they are going to do the talking, the thinking, the work? How do you think this way of teaching is going to affect their english?

Gloria: How is it going to affect them?

Melanie: Do you think that will make their english better or will their english stay the same?

Gloria: I think it will make their english better, for instance, I think this completion of words in these sentences, by completing these sentences the children will understand better, they will learn how to talk english, because our aim is not just to know it, but to talk it, they must talk english I think.

Melanie: Other comments? Miriam? Jennifer?

Jennifer: I'm with Gloria, I also like this method a lot because this method teaches them to be independent, you know, not just to listen to the teacher always. I have noticed that they are always busy and I like that too much!

Melanie: Miriam, what about you, because it was your children that I taught?

- Miriam: They [teachers] can also use concrete objects, for instance in the case of the map [activity]. I can go outside with them and take two stones and arrange them on the map, and then tell them to show me using the stones where the different places are on the map.
- Melanie: So that's something you would add if you were going to teach it. What about the method of teaching?
- Miriam: I thought it was excellent the way you did this.
- Melanie: Why do you think it's a good method?
- Miriam: Because they seem to be interested and they understood you.
- Melanie: Gertrude? Naomi?
- Gertrude: Yes, they were interested, they learnt a lot, which means that the lesson was nice and we enjoyed it.
- Melanie: How have you all been teaching history up until now?
- Teachers: The telling method.
- Gertrude: Sometimes you would bring a picture.
- Melanie: I remember a comment that Gloria made earlier that the children find the history boring.
- Gloria: They should be okay because at least [now] they will be busy themselves instead of listening to me. And the grouping, the grouping is something interesting because the two or three of them in that group they are so anxious to know the correct things, finding information for themselves.
- Melanie: Can we talk about that a bit more, the idea that children work well with somebody else, either one other person or a group. In fact in the lessons, I switched from the bigger group to pairs because it seemed to take a lot of time to rearrange the classroom. I wanted everybody to work with somebody else and pairs seemed easier to organise. Can anybody comment on what they think of that, the children working together?
- Gertrude: It's a good thing because the other one will help the other and I think the pairs worked better, they were more helpful than in a group of five or six because the others do not get a chance, and the others are stubborn, they like to bully.

Melanie: That's a very interesting comment because I noticed that even in the bigger group they would tend to work with one other person. So the pair work is easy to organise and seems to work quite well. I think what comes out of this for me is that in the end, teachers are the experts, the people who work in the classroom, Yes, I can come in with material and we have a meeting and talk, but in the end you are the people who are going to grow. What I'm saying is that what you give to what I'm doing is going to be what makes it fail or succeed in the end, not what I do, but what you actually give, because you're in there with the children. (discussion 3/9/87)

I would argue that this conversation was a 'transforming moment' (Freire and Shor, 1987) in which dialogical relations do underpin the exchanges between the participants. That is, as Gitlin and Smyth (1989) explain it, the participants are working together to understand the subject.

Not surprisingly, for I appeared to be doing what was expected of me, the deputy seemed pleased with the new direction of the project:

Melanie, I think this project should have been done a long time ago. When I talked to the std 3 teachers after you had a lesson the other day in the class where the children were involved - they were really involved. I told the teachers that I think this is the best way, this is just the best method for them to learn. (interview 10/9/87)

But she did warn: 'Melanie, the tip I can give you, you did the teaching this quarter, now it is for them'. As mentioned earlier, four of the five teachers went on to try some of the ideas. Only Miriam, whose class had already been taught the lessons, did not try any of the new methods.

In these interviews I asked them to comment both on the lessons they had watched and their own classroom experiments. These comments are important again as an illustration of these teachers finding their own voices with regard to their classroom practice. Thus Naomi observed:

Yes it's [the method] right, they've [the pupils] got something to do, they like doing something you give them, you say read, even with that story, you say read and when they have read the story then they must answer just a few comprehension questions. And then I did what you did with activity number six. They liked it so much they all wanted to finish first. (interview 10/9/87)

I asked Naomi if she thought the children understood the language of the history textbook and she responded:

As you have shown us then, that is what I copied from you. If you let them read, then ask questions, they do try, yes they do try...You see because we're safe, because we're blacks you know, the children are black and so you try and explain it in xhosa. You let them read now, they try because you don't know xhosa, you let them read the other day, they tried to answer didn't they, yes, and they do it...I shall no longer explain it now in xhosa, they will read from now on...they will read and they will start understanding. (interview 10/9/87)

Two years later, Naomi, now teaching std 4, told me that she was still using these methods in history (fieldnotes 17/2/89).

Gertrude had tried one of the activities where the pupils had to complete a paragraph by filling in words from the list<sup>5</sup>:

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5. While this may not seem a very exciting activity to teachers accustomed to group work and enquiry based approaches to teaching, it was very new and different for these pupils. I had tried giving pupils a summary to complete by filling in their own choice of words so that the paragraph made sense. This had not worked at all as it was too different from anything they were used to and they battled with the english. Thus I adapted a later activity,

Well I can say half the class managed, because I gave them the textbooks and that worksheet that you supplied us with, so I said, I am not going to give you any information, you are just going to find it for yourselves and fill in those words. I think about half the class managed to fill in those words correctly but the others were just fumbling so at the end we did them together on the blackboard so they just understood and copied them into their books. (interview 9/9/87)

I asked how effective she thought this method of teaching history was:

Well I think it's effective, because when you use the telling method then the talking is done by you and they don't concentrate, the others like to play. When you come to the end and ask questions, one or two children are answering, but when they are taking part - just as in those lessons which you gave them - then it worked better. (interview 9/9/87)

In her interview Jennifer commented on group work:

I think the children must talk all of the time, I mean I think they learn best in that time, in that lesson when they talk a lot. Even today, they were so, I mean the lesson was interesting for them, they were doing things for themselves. Sometimes I asked them what's going on, they told me the whole story. (interview 8/9/87)

She thought the pupils learnt better in groups:

Well you know there are some lazy ones in the class, or they are shy, so when they are working in groups, you can see the shy ones they are busy talking to those ones, then you will notice, mmmmm, now they are doing the job because I'm not there. You know sometimes I make them to be shy, I'm harassing them. So when they work in groups they co-operate very well. (interview 8/9/87)

Jennifer explained what happened when she tried one of the worksheets with her class:

What I have done, first I gave them history textbooks, I said to them they must read the lesson about the free burghers and then after that I gave them the

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giving pupils a list of words from which they could choose. The issue of language medium in content subjects is taken up in chapter seven when I look at my work with a group of history teachers.

worksheet to fill in the missing words. They asked me 'Teacher, what is the meaning of khoikhoi?' We [the teachers] are saying to them 'hottentots' so we did not change that word to be khoikhoi.<sup>6</sup> So I told them this word stands for hottentot. They filled in the missing words, after that we did it together on the blackboard. It went very well. They were interested and they were inquisitive to go. (interview 8/9/87)

She added:

Firstly I was good in talking to them, they listen to me you know, but now I think I'm going to change myself to do this method you know. I want to try for this year, so next year I will be clearer about this method...next year I will be perfect in this one. Now I'm still learning to know, I'm not quite perfect in this one. (interview 8/9/87)

Finally, Gloria commented:

I liked this method because, as I stated long ago, we use it even in geography just like history. Most of the time we did the talking but now since I saw, I learnt about this method from you, I know I must give them the atlases. I've told them to find some places themselves before telling them. (interview 8/9/87)

I asked Gloria why she thought pupils learnt better in this way:

I think if they discover facts themselves it's easy to remember it rather than if I just told you, you forget, but they know now, oh, the Oliphants river, they see it, they know, so I think they will remember it better rather than telling them. (interview 8/9/87)

She thought the children's english would also improve:

Definitely, definitely, because first of all the sentence building, take for instance the filling in of words, they read the whole sentence, so now they know how to form a sentence. (interview 8/9/87)

Gloria's understanding of language across the curriculum evident here, and in the group discussion a few days earlier, should be compared to her contribution at the UCT workshop in mid-July when she had not demonstrated an

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6. In most DET history textbooks, the indigenous people of the western Cape are referred to as 'hottentots', a name now considered derogatory by progressive historians who use the term 'khoikhoi' which means 'men of men'.

understanding that language skills could be taught in content subjects.

### **My reflections on the pilot study**

At the end of 1987 I wrote a paper in which I argued for a positive interpretation of these instances of discourse: I said that we were 'developing a language of possibility about schooling' (Walker, 1988a:151); 'teacher descriptions of their practice and teacher reflections on alternative classroom practices are important moments which hold the promise for developing a reflexive pedagogy' (Walker, 1988:151); and 'these instances of teacher conversations about classroom practice are small but significant moments for teachers who have always acted out a transmission model' (Walker, 1988a:153). Looking back from the vantage of the three years which have elapsed since writing this paper, I would still support these broad conclusions, despite the problems and difficulties of that first year of working with teachers, and what may appear to be the limited gains to those unfamiliar with DET primary schools. Writing now, I would identify a number of transforming moments arising from our co-operative work: transformation of the communicative relations between myself and the teachers; teachers' exposure to a different way of teaching; active engagement by teachers with the unknown demands of the innovation in their own classrooms; and the germ of a process of reflection on practice.

What also emerges from reflection on this data is the shift in my role as I began to understand - although this understanding was to deepen over the next two years - the constraints which teachers perceived, and how they constructed themselves as teacher-subjects in ways which were disempowering. These concerns were drawn together in chapters two and three, but interweave as threads throughout my work with teachers. There were points beyond which the teachers could not and would not go. I had to learn in my practice something I subscribed to in theory, namely that 'facilitators should begin, not with their own knowledge, but with the learners' (Boud, 1987:228). Fullan (1982) makes an important point, too, regarding the need to reconceptualise one's own role in the change process. Rather than being impatient of delays or what might appear to be a refusal to change, he suggests:

The solution is not to be less committed to what we perceive as needed reforms but to be more sensitive to the possibility that our version of the change may not be the fully correct one, and to recognise that having good ideas may be less than half the battle (compared to establishing a process which allows us to use the ideas). (1982:86)

Almost a year later I wrote a paper (Walker 1988b) for an education conference in October 1988. Here too I reflected back on this first year of my work, saying that by the end of 1987 I felt that I had learned a number of important lessons from monitoring and reflecting on my role. I should note that such reflection was always less systematic than I might have wished, given the tension in suspending action for reflection in this project. My paper showed how my

second order reflections influenced first order reflection, and vice versa. I explained that I had learnt that when I introduced the project in 1988 to teachers at other schools, I would have to make clear the central role of the teachers in curriculum change and the development of effective classroom practice. I felt I needed to ensure that taking on the role of demonstrator precipitated teacher action and reflection on their own classroom practice. In 1987 this had not happened with the teaching of the english oral lesson, but had been more successful with regard to the history lessons. In chapters seven, eight and nine, there are other instances of successful uses of a 'visual argument' (Howell, 1986).

In 1988 the extra work involved in planning, teaching and reflecting had to be spelt out. Participation would require a commitment of time and effort by the teachers themselves. Interestingly, teachers working with Day (1985) commented that without the presence of the researcher they were unable or unwilling to find the time and energy to continue with the detailed and systematic process of self-evaluation. This reflected my own experience in 1987, in that I had tried not to pressurise teachers, with the result that limited investigation of their own practice had occurred (although they had begun to reflect on practice more generally). Fullan (1982) makes the point, that even where people want the change, they still need pressure to change. But he adds the important rider that such pressure 'will only be effective under conditions which allow them to

react, to form their own position, to interact with other implementers, to obtain technical assistance, etc' (1982:91). I was still unclear about what role to play in the process of curriculum innovation, a dilemma which I detail in the next section. With respect to the dilemma in this section, curriculum innovation raised questions about interventions such as the introduction of alternative teaching methods and having teachers act on such alternatives. I had yet to resolve the tension between whether to assert my own voice at all or whether to find a way to intervene while still encouraging teachers 'to affirm, tell and retell their personal narratives by exercising their own voices' (Giroux, 1988:64), or what Freire refers to as the radical difference between 'being present and being the presence itself' (1985:105). And, crucially, I had to develop 'a workable strategy based on reality' (Hawes, 1979:118) to facilitate critical scrutiny of teachers' own practices, given my interest in facilitating 'perspective transformation' (Mezirow, 1981).

All this was compounded by my own sense of insecurity regarding my lack of a primary teaching background which led me into the error of confusing experience with expertise. Knight and Smith make the point that experience 'is tied not so much to what the teacher has learned as to how the teacher enables the children to learn' (1989:433). Thus they argue that: 'Experience and practice do not guarantee expertise' (1989:432). At first I privileged the teachers

experience. I had to learn how and when to insert other voices as I detail in section four.

I would argue now that I was in the process of learning that a facilitator, as Boud (1987) explains, adopts a number of roles. He suggests that a facilitator needs to be any or all of the following depending on the context and the learners:

1. presenter of expertise (for example, new methods and materials for teaching);
2. democratic and student centered guide;
3. provider of access to personal and material resources;
4. supporter and encourager;
5. critical friend and stimulator of critical reflection and;
6. challenger of taken-for-granted assumptions. (Boud, 1987:235)

In practice this would mean that facilitators should be able, according to circumstances:

to deploy themselves with appropriate emphasis on any aspect of their potential roles and that they have the facility in doing so...In any situation there will be at least an implied contract between facilitator and learner which, while not specifying fully the range of permissible interventions by the facilitator into the world of the learner, will suggest boundaries which the facilitator should consider transgressing only with great care and with a high level of self-awareness. (1987:236)

In 1987 I was only slowly beginning to understand and adopt the first of these roles - presenter of expertise. I was all of the following three - democratic guide, provider of resources and supporter. There is only limited evidence of the fifth role in my attempt to problematise the history syllabus and to encourage teachers to use relevant reading texts as detailed in section four. The last role was never adopted in the pilot phase, nor indeed, in the project,

partly because of the need to build a working relationship based on mutual trust and respect which was complicated by having a white facilitator working with african teachers. Experience in the SEP project has been, for example, that such professional relationships in the South African context 'can be fraught with difficulties, based as they are on a willingness to like and be liked, but with a vast chasm separating the lives, cultures and experiences of the two parties' (MacDonald et al, 1985:249). Such relationships develop slowly and with care. Certainly the issue of 'race' cannot be wished away, and as noted in chapter one, I was to explore this further in 1988 in interviews conducted by Lufuno Nevathalu, the masters student attached to PREP in 1988.

My work with teachers in three additional schools in 1988 and 1989 is discussed in the next chapter. It shows how my understanding of the interventionist nature of what I came to understand as a staff development process gradually developed. Rather than interpreting my action as either democratic or directive, I came to situate such action along a continuum of 'relative intervention' (Campbell, 1988:122), which varied in degree depending on the concrete situation.

## CHAPTER FIVE: 'RELATIVE INTERVENTION' 1988-1989

This chapter describes how I introduced the project to three additional schools at the beginning of 1988. The shifts in my practice as facilitator are explained as I came to understand my own role as mediator of teachers' awareness of alternative forms of classroom practice, given their difficulties in speaking about and evaluating their own practice. The chapter examines instances of my own discourse with teachers to see whether it matches my intention of developing a 'power with' model of working with teachers. Comments by teachers and school principals regarding my relationship with teachers and the schools are drawn on as evidence of the empowering outcome of a different form of working with in-service teachers, despite the difficulties of working in this way and the gap between my intentions and my practice. Further evidence for teachers' learning will also be detailed in section four. I conclude that I learned over these two years what it meant to develop a 'democratic attitude to my own directiveness' (Shor and Freire, 1987).

### **Involving three more schools January-February 1988**

At the beginning of 1988 four more schools were approached. All had hosted UCT Bachelor of Primary Education student-teachers for teaching practice. At one time and another they had all sent pupils to UCT for micro-teaching lessons. At each school, I first outlined the project to the

principal. Three of the four principals agreed to allow me to speak to teachers. The fourth principal kept me waiting for about an hour on the two occasions I arranged to see him. At the second meeting he said that teachers were 'not in a good spirit' because of threatened transfers of 'surplus' teachers. They were not keen, according to him, to meet with any visitors and I should wait for a more suitable occasion (fieldnotes 21/1/88; 3/2/88). Thereafter I abandoned efforts to involve this school, given my impression that the principal, for whatever reasons, was not enthusiastic.

At the other three schools, Phakamisa, Sizithabathele and Khanyisiwe, each principal set up a meeting with the staff at which I told teachers about PREP and my role in the project. This was followed about a week later by a meeting with interested teachers who identified the aspects of their teaching which they wanted to improve. In all, 28 teachers from the four schools indicated interest in PREP. In the end I worked with 26 of these teachers. The way in which teachers became involved varied: at Phakamisa and Khanyisiwe it was left to the teachers to decide; at Sizithabathele I was told that a school decision had identified problem areas in stds 3-5, so that the teachers of those subjects were then automatically involved in the project (and others excluded); and at Sivuyile, the std 4 teachers were automatically involved in 1988. Standards taught ranged from Sub B to Std 5. The open subject agenda of my study meant that the schools and/or the teachers chose to

investigate maths and reading (in xhosa, english and afrikaans) in the junior and senior primary school, and history in Std 3 and 4. As section four will show, this open subject agenda was to lead to problems for myself as a non-primary specialist, in particular the maths initiative never really developed. The intention had been not to impose a direction on the teachers, rather letting them determine where their problems lay. The irony lies in the fact that the other side of the agenda coin was effectively non-negotiable, namely teachers as reflective producers and shapers of the curriculum.

Presentations to each school staff were broadly similar, although I grew in confidence with each meeting. At Sizithabathele and Khanyisiwe, Tozi Mgobozi, the project assistant, observed the meetings, while Lufuno Nevathalu, the masters student who joined PREP in 1988, acted as an observer at Phakamisa and Sivuyile. My talk was based on three key questions which I had written onto a sheet of newsprint:

What do I gain as a teacher?  
What do my pupils gain?  
How much extra work will it mean for me?

I began each meeting by explaining my own interest and involvement in the project. At the first meeting I addressed at Sizithabathele on 27 January, I explained my concern to establish a link between UCT and township schools 'on the basis that the community wants'. The second reason for the project related to the concerns teachers had

expressed over the years about learning new methods. Thirdly, there was the chance for me to 'understand better how to work with teachers and to write up and share this work' and to learn about primary schools. Underpinning all this was 'my belief that all children are entitled to equal educational opportunities and we need to begin finding ways to ensure that all children have access to better opportunities for education'. I summed up in this way, introducing also at this early stage the concept of teachers as researchers:

We are trying to find ways to do these things where we do not impose ourselves and our ideas on teachers... What we are trying to say is if the change is going to be real, what the teachers, and the school community and the children want, then we are suggesting that the way to do it is for teachers to research their own practice so that teachers take responsibility for their own learning in their own classrooms and investigate what's going on. (meeting 27/1/88)

I stressed the importance of teacher's becoming involved only if they were committed to becoming more effective teachers. The second question - what do my pupils gain? - was discussed in pairs, after which I noted teachers' responses on a chart. Finally, I spelled out the extra work involved - meetings with myself to plan and discuss lessons, watching videos of lessons or listening to audio recordings, reading transcripts, meeting other teachers and so on. A short handout on action research was left behind for teachers to read (see appendix C). I returned to each school a week later to meet with interested teachers, after which we began working together.

I thought I had been quite clear in my presentations, believing still that if I explained the aims of the project and my own intentions plainly enough, that teachers would accept the meaning I had made of how and why we might work together. Thus I thought the concept of teachers as researchers and teachers as active learners had been understood and accepted by those teachers who decided to work with me. Yet interviews later that year by Lufuno Nevathalu with teachers from Sizithabathele, showed how they actually interpreted the aims of the project. Norman joined the project because 'we were asked by the people who are doing the research, so I felt then I may as well help them because I'm teaching the classes they wanted to observe for their project' (interview 27/9/88). Stanley wanted to 'get used to teaching the kids and watching my teaching through the video lessons' (interview 27/9/88). Cynthia thought the project 'could maybe help us a lot to change' (interview 27/9/88), while David decided that it 'promised a good result and a new way of teaching' (interview 27/9/88). Joseph explained that he 'had it from Melanie that it is about methods of teaching' (interview 27/9/88). For William the project 'seemed to be helpful to me as well as the pupils - getting new skills and techniques of how to present the subject matter' (interview 27/9/88). Finally, Beatrice became involved despite the fact that 'when Melanie first came she just told us that she was going to do this project, then we were not aware of what was going to take place' (interview 27/9/88). And after the meeting itself, the principal, Mr Lungiswe, explained that teachers probably

assumed the project would be about supplying resources and equipment. In the past, he explained, when anybody white had come to the school it had been for this purpose, hence the teachers' assumption (fieldnotes 27/1/88). It is likely, too, that what I was proposing - teachers researching their practice and teachers shaping the curriculum - was beyond teachers' concrete experience, and they made sense of what I had said within the context of their own practical knowledge.

At Sivuyile, I used a similar approach because I was concerned that teachers should be clear about what was involved, and that teachers should be able to choose whether or not they wanted to be involved (even though the school had decided that all std 4 teachers would be involved). After the meeting at the school on 17 February 1988, Lufuno Nevathalu and I tape-recorded a discussion on his observations. His impression of teachers from Sivuyile was that there was still an expectation that I would be coming to demonstrate lessons. Lufuno suggested:

Maybe you could really emphasise it next time that they must understand the whole thing, that it's a question of them helping themselves, not like you coming with all the answers. (discussion 17/2/88)

He felt that the group seemed 'motivated' but he added 'maybe the question of confidence needs to be built up a lot'. At the time, I thought this confidence would be built through teachers watching their lessons on video, and talking about them with me as a non-evaluative listener. But as Lufuno noted on the basis of his experience with

student teachers who were struggling to teach well overt encouragement was important - 'a pat on the back, then they'll feel very free' (discussion 17/2/88). He added:

In some cases where they did teach well, I would go to them and say 'that's good, you know, I'm really impressed, it's surprising how you teach such a large number of pupils, I can't do it myself you know.' And this person gets so encouraged, and it's surprising how when I evaluate the next lesson, it improves a lot. So okay, now I know that this is the right track and I used to say that to almost all my student teachers just to encourage them, you know. They used to feel good, they used to feel really I'm handling the whole thing which perhaps a lecturer cannot. (discussion 17/2/88)

While I appreciated the need to build teachers' confidence, I expressed some reservations regarding his suggestions, arguing still, that even in building confidence, the teacher should eventually decide on the quality of her own teaching. Tozi Mgobozi, who came in towards the end of the discussion, queried my approach saying 'how would the teacher know, how would she evaluate her own teaching? I thought maybe she would ask you to comment on the lesson she gave'. I replied that, 'She'll learn to do it...I might pose critical questions at different times but not saying yes it was good, or it was bad, until she can make those judgements' (discussion 17/2/88). In other words, I still felt that the ability to evaluate themselves would emerge inevitably from the teachers' engagement in a process of action and reflection.

**Working with teachers February 1988 - May 1988**

Teachers from two schools asked for workshops to help them improve their teaching of reading and maths. The content of all these workshops is elaborated fully in section four where I describe and analyse the process of curriculum development and change. Suffice to note here that bringing in primary specialists to run workshops proved useful. It deepened a process for me of understanding children's learning, about which I had been reading widely (Britton, 1970; Barnes, 1976; Donaldson, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978; Smith, 1978; Meek, 1982; Graves, 1983; Clark, 1985), and some of which I had experienced in my own teaching, albeit at secondary level. Watching the specialists present workshops gave me a clearer sense of how the theories I had been reading about might translate into primary practice. Although I obviously never became an expert in primary education, nonetheless I did develop sufficient insight and skills over time to be able to provide support for teachers in certain areas. This learning process both for myself and the teachers is examined in detail in the next section.

My notes at this stage indicate that I was still wrestling with the issue of democratic practice within the project and, related to this, teachers taking responsibility for their own learning (fieldnotes 26/1/88). Because the follow-up classroom action support fell to me, the specialist workshops did not resolve what I perceived as overly directive interventions on my part in planning and

discussing teachers' lessons. Thus, after watching Zolani's video on 24 February I noted afterwards that 'I probably went on to comment too much. Difficult for me to find a balance as the critical friend' (fieldnotes 24/2/88). Again, I noted on 15 March after watching Beatrice teach, that I thought teachers still saw me as an evaluator: 'At the end of the lesson Beatrice asked me what I thought of the lesson. But I'm getting better at deflecting these comments and did not reply but countered by asking when she would like to watch the video' (fieldnotes 15/3/88). A day later on 16 March, I wrote that 'I talked too much' in the discussion of William's lesson (fieldnotes 16/3/88), and on the 17 March that 'Cynthia asked me at the end of her lesson what I had thought of it' (fieldnotes 17/3/88). On 30 March, after the viewing and discussion of Nomonde's lesson, I observed that I had talked too much (fieldnotes 30/3/88). And on 29 April, I commented that Alice had asked me to do a demonstration lesson as she wasn't sure 'if she was doing it right' (fieldnotes 29/4/88).

In my interaction with teachers as participant observer of their lessons (which were initially all videotaped with further lessons being audiotaped) I had tried at first not to comment much. Teachers said little, however, and I found myself 'lapsing into an instructional rather than a discussion mode' (Grundy, 1987:87) as I made detailed suggestions about alternative practice and concrete ways of improving particular lessons. This is an excerpt from a

discussion in March. Ruth and I had been watching the video of her std 4 reading lesson:

Melanie: What do you think of the lesson?

Ruth: Oh, I don't know Melanie, what do you think about it?

Melanie: Well you said while it was still running, you said it's a boring lesson, is it different from the way you would normally teach reading or is that the way you always teach reading?

Ruth: Well..that's the way that I usually teach it. (discussion 10/3/88)

Faced with Ruth's silence, I went on to give lengthy suggestions as to how one might build pupil involvement into a reading lesson. We ended the discussion by agreeing to meet to plan a reading lesson together.

Here is another example of an early discussion with Walter about his std 4 xhosa language lesson, also on 10 March:

Melanie: Having watched the lesson on tape, what do you think of it?

Walter: Uh, I don't see anything special, in fact the response of the, unless the children are just dull, ja.

Melanie: Mmmm, do you think that a way needs to be found to get the children more involved?

Walter: Yes, maybe, ja, but uh, in fact the children have been grouped [streamed] so I thought maybe this is the dull group, I don't know, ja. (discussion 10/3/88)

### **Towards dialogical relations**

I was coming to understand that the process of teachers learning new skills, applying these in their classrooms and reconstructing these lessons in order to reflect on their

experience with a facilitator and other teachers, develops very slowly. Not only had these teachers always been denied a voice, bantu education had severely limited their experience of different forms of classroom practice. As the year progressed, I began to understand more clearly that the teachers' silence could be attributed to their own lack of familiarity with alternatives, as well as to the fact that they had never been called on before to evaluate their own teaching. Similarly, in a recent conversation, Alan Kenyon recounted his own experience of workshopping with std 3 science teachers where teachers have asked him to keep repeating ideas and lessons on the same topic. He attributes this to teachers' disabling lack of experience of a range of teaching methods in bantu education (discussion 13/12/90). Teachers consequently expected me to comment and were quite uneasy with my reticence.

In the course of presenting my work in progress to colleagues in the School of Education at UCT in June 1988, I was made more aware of the way in which I was underestimating teachers' perceptions of myself as a university-based researcher with skills and useful knowledge (fieldnotes 20/6/88). This point was developed further in a reflective conversation with Alan Kenyon in August 1988. We were both concerned to find ways to work with teachers to engage them in shared responsibility for planning and evaluating classroom action. Alan echoed my sense of the importance of trying to reveal process in one's work with teachers, so that any lessons planned were 'co-owned'

(fieldnotes 3/8/88). The point was to find ways to reveal this process in the context of planning and teaching in concrete situations, while still leaving the final responsibility for change with the teachers. Yet I still felt that if teachers were to recognise and exercise their own power it was important that they begin to reflect on what they were doing and try and evaluate their own teaching. It clearly didn't help to pose very broad questions - What did you think of the lesson? - nor did it help to withhold my own point of view.

In May 1988, in order to encourage teachers to begin talking about their lessons, I had begun to write descriptions of the lesson in progress to supplement or replace the video, providing the teacher also with her own record of the lesson. (See appendix D for one such attempt.) As far as possible these accounts were not evaluative, although when I met with the teacher I raised questions about aspects of the lesson, trying however not to be overly critical and to find points to encourage. At this stage, I was intuitively trying to build teachers' confidence. Copies of transcripts and lesson discussion notes were made available to teachers as soon after our meetings as possible. In effect I now asked for step by step comments and reasons for doing things in a particular way, for example:

Melanie: Okay, then you divided them into groups. The groups started to talk. I noticed that they were looking at the passage again. You moved around and did not attempt to interact. Ummm, what was your reason for moving around ~~them~~ but not actually talking

to any of the groups. Why did you choose to do it that way?

Joseph: You know, because I wanted their initiative you know, because should I interfere there, I mean I will be helping them you know in some kind, I just wanted to know how do they cope on their own without the help.  
(discussion, std 4 reading lesson 10/8/88)

The longer extract which follows gives a further sense of how ordinary teachers were contributing to a discussion at their own level, as well as the nature of my own contributions. The discussion is the first between myself and Josephine, an experienced but 'unqualified' sub B teacher. We met in her classroom on 16 May while the children continued with work. Her english reading lesson had involved using a 'big book', that is enlarged illustrations from the story with the text written in large print on to strips of computer paper so that the whole class could read the book together (see chapter eight). This story was called 'I want an ice-cream':

Melanie: I'm trying to get you to think about why you did things the way you did because often as teachers we do things and they're often the right things but we never think about why we're doing them, so that's the reason for my questions, not because I think something is good or bad.

Josephine: Okay Melanie.

Melanie: You began the reading lesson and you introduced it to the children. You said today we're going to work from these pictures and so on.

Josephine: Ohhh, yes.

Melanie: Why did you start the lesson like that?

Josephine: Like the discussion on the lesson illustrations?

Melanie: Mmmm, Why did you start the lesson by saying this is what we're going to do today.

- Josephine: It's because we're used to reading in their reading [prescribed] books, you know, now when they are going to read from [photocopied] papers [books] they will be shy or what, they must know that even a thing that is written on paper, the same applies as what is written in their books, so there is nothing that is different.
- Melanie: So they would know what is going to happen in the lesson. Then you pinned up the first picture, you asked what do you see, you asked questions about the picture and individual pupils responded. What was the reason for that step?
- Josephine: I was trying in their minds, they must know what we are going to read about today.
- Melanie: Yes, yes, so in other words...
- Josephine: They must have an idea in their minds what is going on in the picture, they must be clear what this is, what that is, and same applies in a shop like a supermarket, they've been to supermarkets, they know what is in a supermarket, so now they understand what is going to happen here in this supermarket.
- Melanie: So they've got something they can hook on to.
- Josephine: Yes, yes.
- Melanie: When I was watching that, one of the things I thought of was, I wonder if it would be possible to allow the children to talk to the person next to them, so when you pin the picture up and say 'what can you see' and you ask questions, I wonder if the way to involve everybody in the class would be to say 'talk to the person next to you.'
- Josephine: Ohhhh
- Melanie: About what you can see in the picture, and then get them to respond. I'm just suggesting it as a possibility.
- Josephine: It will be good that. It is possible because some, they just look in the picture not knowing what, and the next one to her or him understands what is there and why.
- Melanie: Ja, ja. If one is asking them to talk to the person next to them, then everybody must think about it and, as you say, they can help each other.

Josephine: And even there are times when I'm giving written work to these children, when you take one or two from the advanced group and put that particular child in the front, you will find them being a teacher, and the children seem to be participating more than when I, the teacher, am in front.

[.....]

Melanie: Then you went on and pinned up more pictures, then you explained the story in your own words and you used some actions as you told the story. What was the reason for that?

Josephine: My reason for using gestures was because they don't know the meaning of 'kick' and 'smash'. When I'm using gestures they understand now to kick is [she demonstrates] and to smash is [she demonstrates].

Melanie: They can see it.

Josephine: They can see it and their minds are clear and they understand the whole story.

Melanie: And the telling of the story by you before they read the actual story?

Josephine: My reason I must retell the story in the easiest way so that they must understand. When it comes to reading, in their minds it's clear, now that our teacher has told this story. (discussion 16/5/88)

Working in this way, I found that teachers began to comment on their lessons and to develop their own understanding of how and why to act in the interest of improving their teaching. It also helped to ask them to discuss whether they would teach the same lesson differently the next time.

Recently I found support for this strategy in Gitlin and Smyth's (1989) attempts to develop educative approaches to teacher evaluation. They suggest the usefulness of observing and creating texts about teaching - a written descriptive account in which the observer needs to temporarily suspend judgement of the observed events. They

claim that such a record provides a useful starting point for teachers to own and analyse their teaching. At best such a record may 'open up for contestation and debate the nature of the hidden power relations in teaching' (1989:122). Arguably, within a monological education system, these conversations about lessons were moments of possibility, encapsulating rather different relations and giving teachers a voice in shaping the curriculum.

### **Reflecting on teachers as adult learners**

During a reflective conversation with Alan Kenyon in August, this issue of presenting teachers with alternatives was discussed as I attempted to understand my own practice. Alan argued that 'you have to throw people back onto their own resources...where it's their own perceptions of where they want to be going that's important'. He felt therefore that 'this whole thing of empowering people only begins to work when you do actually force them back on their resources' (discussion 3/8/88). I responded in this way:

I think that for that to happen is when people have a range of alternatives, they can't make decisions when they don't know what else there is to choose from. They start off by not knowing what the alternatives are, they know what they've got doesn't work but they don't know what else there is. (discussion 3/8/88)

In other words, as I was coming to understand, the facilitator did have an interventionist role as mediator of teachers' learning.

As teachers became more practised and confident in commenting on their teaching, I became much clearer about my role as mediator of the teachers' active learning of alternative methods. Still central to this mediation role was the assumption that teachers needed to pose their own problems and to take responsibility for their own learning. I nonetheless continued to suggest alternatives to the existing form and content of their teaching. As I was beginning to understand from my reading on adult learning, and my experience in 1987 and 1988, autonomy is not simply equivalent to learner control over goals and methods of learning 'since such control can be exercised without a full knowledge of alternative learning goals and possible learning activities' (Brookfield, 1986:57). Leaving teachers to make up their own minds before presenting them with a full range of possibilities reveals, according to Shor and Freire 'a false respect for students' (1987:174). They assert that the more one refuses to express an opinion 'out of respect for the others, the more I am leaving the dominant ideology in peace!' (Shor and Freire, 1987:174) Thus acting as 'resource person':

to adults who are unaware of belief systems, bodies of knowledge, or behavioural possibilities other than those they have uncritically assimilated since childhood is to condemn such adults to remaining within existing paradigms of thought and action. (Brookfield, 1986:124)

It would be misdirected then, to talk of self-directed (and self-reflective) learners, when they might be unaware of alternative ways of thinking, perceiving and behaving. Even in the more privileged educational context and the better

quality teacher education of the U.S.A. and Australia, Gitlin and Smyth suggest that one needs 'assisted self-evaluation' which:

acknowledges that leaving teachers to their own devices, somehow to mysteriously develop and flourish, is about as unhelpful as forms of close and sanction-ridden surveillance. Teachers need instead a form of collaboration that actively enables them to react intellectually to new ideas, rather than simply acquiescing in them as is so often the case. (1989:103)

Brookfield also deals at some length with the role of the facilitator in adult learning. He criticises those who see the job of facilitator 'as one concerned solely with assisting adults to meet those educational needs that they themselves perceive and express as meaningful and important' (1986:123). He maintains that an awareness of alternatives is a necessary prelude to taking action to change circumstances. In the end, the facilitator needs to find the difficult balance between encouraging people to consider alternatives and to scrutinise their own values without making this so threatening that learning is blocked:

The purpose of facilitation is to assist individuals to exercise control over their own lives, their interpersonal relationships, and the social forms and structures within which they live. This is not to say that facilitation will enable adults to exert complete control over all aspects of their worlds. However, it is possible to envisage existences that are more or less meaningful and authentic to the individuals involved, according to the degree to which they feel they have some proactive role in creating their worlds. (Brookfield, 1986:291)

And, as Brookfield notes, the real and messy world of practice contradicts daily the 'philosophical prescriptions

painstakingly derived from impeccably developed rationales' (1986:294). Given contextual constraints in the real world, one often acts in a more didactic fashion than one might wish. This is exacerbated where the learners themselves bring an expectation of transmission education, given that what they bring to the educative relationship will largely prescribe what is achieved. For example, the experience of the Education Policy Unit in Natal was that it was important 'to expect a level of responsibility on the part of the learner only to the extent that s/he had the appropriate experience/skills to fulfil that opportunity' (Lazarus, 1988:11). Thus, 'it will often be hard for educators to stand firm against the temptation to take more control over the learning encounter' (Brookfield, 1986:296). Responses by teachers in learning situations will vary then depending on what both teacher and facilitator bring to the encounter. The facilitator, however, still takes responsibility for coming to understand what the teacher (as learner) knows, noting what the evidence of her efforts suggests she can do (Schon, 1987).

In order to understand where the teachers were coming from as adult learners, my research and self-reflection on my practice spiralled into an investigation of training at the teachers' colleges described in chapter three. The point to be re-emphasised here, as research by Moll and Slonimsky into the learning of african B.Ed<sup>1</sup> students suggests, is

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1. In South Africa the B.Ed is post-graduate degree taken over two years of part-time study, or one year's full-time

that teachers who are 'products' of the DET and tertiary rote-learning contexts, conceive of educational activity as being to 'replicate what is given' and 'tend to be radically confused by a context which even suggests that there might be a range of ground rules' (1989:161). Such attitudes to their own learning, are evident for example, in teachers wanting to 'copy' my lessons. This meant learning to proceed in ways which both enhanced teachers' confidence, while not acquiescing in, or reinforcing, disempowering approaches to their own learning.

Rowland (1990) makes a similar point when considering the dilemma of his own power as the in-service educator of teachers whom he hoped would feel free to communicate as co-equals. For Rowland, emancipation involves struggling against the structures which hold current power relations in place. He argues that 'if the debates about Active Learning are to be raised above the level of mere rhetoric...then they imply a transformation of power relations in practice' (1990:2). I do not believe that this dilemma was ever resolved in my own practice, or could be, in the context of a teaching culture which views teachers as receivers and implementers of an official curriculum. As Rowland points out, one cannot equalise power relations where others are not looking for a shift in their relatively passive roles. He adds that:

For as long as you're in a position of objective authority, you are unable to step down, for the act of

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study. In addition students must have completed a professional teaching diploma.

giving power is itself an assertion of power. For power to be transferred from you it needs to be taken. (1990:17)

This does not, however, exclude looking for cracks in the dominant culture and working for shifts towards a view of teachers as producers of knowledge. What it does point to is the need for a wider and more sustained challenge to the power relations which underpin the dominant view of teachers, including the challenge for teachers to begin seeing themselves in different roles. My own work with teachers, I would argue, has been a contribution to this latter goal.

#### Instances of the dilemma in action

I would not claim that I easily learnt either to give up power or to work democratically. My conversations with teachers reveal shifts from an interrogative mode, to openings for teacher descriptions and reflections, and instances of co-operative work and power-sharing. In order to validate instances of the data generated by conversations with teachers, I asked Rob Sieborger, lecturer in history education at UCT, to listen to a tape recorded conversation between myself and Lumka, a std 3 history teacher. We met to discuss this in November 1990. I also invited Alan Kenyon to listen to conversations over two years with Leah, a junior primary teacher, and Beatrice a std 5 teacher. This meeting was held in December 1990. I asked them both to listen to the conversations in the light of my intention

to develop a 'power with' model of sharing expertise and encouraging reflective practice. As this was done only at the time of writing this chapter, late in 1990, their analysis informs my action retrospectively rather than having helped shape it at the time.

My conversation with Lumka took place on 27 February 1989. In the course of it we discussed a history lesson, of which she had tape-recorded a five minute segment, and we planned further lessons. While Lumka is not articulate in English - Rob agreed that she found the language medium difficult - nevertheless he identified patterns in our interaction which sometimes realised my intention but at other times closed off opportunities for Lumka to contribute. For example, he commented that he had a sense of my giving the impression that I was looking for right answers, or 'answers which would please you' by saying things like 'yes', 'okay', 'alright', exacerbated he thought by my need to 'get an accurate record' of the conversation for my own research purposes and hence repeating at times what Lumka had said. He described this as lapsing into an 'interrogative mode'. On the other hand where I say 'mmmm' he thought this sometimes revealed my 'working alongside' her (discussion 23/11/90). Thus our conversation began in what he saw as an interrogative mode:

Melanie: I've listened to the bit of tape

Lumka: What did you think

Melanie: Well I'd like you to tell me everything you've been doing.

Lumka: Okay, the first lesson

Melanie: Did you take one from here [khoisan booklet]?

Lumka: I just used this, this part of the lesson.

Melanie: Okay, and then which lesson did you use?  
(discussion 27/2/89)

Later Rob identifies a promising open question:

Melanie: What's your feeling about the lesson? Would you do it the same way if you did it again, or would you do it differently?

Lumka: I'll have another method to reinforce what they have learnt. (discussion 27/2/89)

But Rob thought I closed this opening by saying 'What would you do?' I would argue that I was trying, perhaps less skilfully than I had hoped, to encourage Lumka to describe her action and intentions as part of a process towards more complex forms of reflection on action. According to Schon (1987), the bottom rung of the 'ladder of reflection' would comprise the action itself, the next rung a description of the action, the third rung a reflection on this description of practice, and the top rung reflection on reflection of one's description of teaching.

Overall, Rob found too few open-ended comments, although there were other instances such as when I asked Lumka about the information sheets for the teacher in the book, saying, 'Did you find any of this useful?' And she responded 'Yes for me this is useful because I didn't have much knowledge of what happened'. He thought this was one of the few moments where Lumka began to tell me something that 'happens in her mind while she is constructing a lesson'. He described the following excerpt as an instance of 'getting alongside Lumka':

Lumka: In the beginning then, I explained, uhmm, explained in xhosa, then I told them to read the one in the book.

Melanie: So did you read one of these [information sheets] to them?

Lumka: Uh, huh.

Melanie: Which did you read of these two?

Lumka: This first information sheet. (discussion 27/2/89)

By way of conclusion, Rob commented that he didn't have a strong sense that there were 'power over' relations in 'the crude sense that this was your project and she was part of your project and you wanted her to achieve certain aims and this was a report back to you as the director of the project, it didn't have any of that sense'. He thought that there was evidence of 'power with' in the way that Lumka seemed to be 'quite happy co-operating although she's intimidated by the language'. He added that she did not give him the sense at all that she was intimidated by the teaching, indeed 'there was no sense that she hadn't owned the teaching'. But if I wished to examine my interaction more closely, he thought I was 'caught in trying to get information' for my own research, which at times is 'stronger than the intention to work alongside her' (discussion 23/11/90).

Alan Kenyon's comments were more general but equally enlightening. He noticed, as had Rob, that I often began 'to talk for the teacher', as he put it. I say things like 'so what you're saying is....' and, Alan observed, 'the

teacher agrees, even if it's not perhaps quite what she meant'. In part this arises from something Rob had noted - that the tape-recordings are evidence-driven, in other words, dominated by my concern to capture an accurate record for research purposes - a point I discussed in chapter one. At the same time, I would concede that this is also evidence of my own residual undemocratic practice.

Alan Kenyon agreed though that it was necessary to begin raising questions with the teachers, for example:

Melanie: Do you think the pupils understand better if they read quickly or slowly?

Leah: They understand it better when they read quickly.

Melanie: Why do you think that is?

Leah: Because if they read slowly they've got a tendency not to concentrate.

Melanie: Oh, so they're reading the words and they're not thinking about the meaning?

Leah: No, they don't know nothing about the meaning, just read for the sake of reading. (lesson discussion 16/5/88)

And:

Melanie: Mmmm, do you think when they work in that whole group, do you think they do help each other?

Beatrice: They do help each other, they do help each other because there's somebody in the group who knows at least one word from the story.

Melanie: Overall do you think that's a better way of doing it, than listing all the [difficult] words?

Beatrice: Ja, and it takes less time. (discussion 22/8/88)

Nevertheless, he still felt one needed to ask 'who is raising the questions here', and from there to ask whether

space was being created for teachers to raise their own questions.

An interesting and important point that emerged from our discussion of the transcripts was the possibility that the one-to-one structure of facilitator and teacher in itself seemed to subvert my democratic intentions. As Alan observed: 'Where do you get a sense of solidarity in a one-to-one meeting where the other person appears so much more powerful?'. At the same time he conceded that opening space for teacher contributions in discussion is 'intensely tricky stuff and I don't know how one gets that right'. He suggested that it may well be essential to develop structures where the numbers of teachers outweigh those of the facilitators. In his experience of lecturing at colleges and extensive workshopping with DET primary school teachers 'it's in the force of numbers that a kind of power comes' where one can 'structure in moments of anonymity for people to contribute and make statements'. He further thought it would have been useful to analyse the transcripts alongside the teachers to tease out our respective contributions. In this way he thought we would have developed a conversation which moved beyond talking about teaching 'to thinking about how we talk about teaching'. This is an important point and one I return to in chapter ten when I consider my failure to open up for teachers the 'black-box mystery' of my own research process. Nevertheless Alan noted that as time moved on, the teachers did assert their own voices, making longer contributions and

expressing 'quite strong convictions'. He found instances, for example in a meeting with Leah and her colleagues in June 1989 where 'you try quite hard and sensitively to help her articulate her practice' (discussion 13/12/90).

Rob Sieborger had noticed on the tape the way in which Lumka and I shifted into a relaxed conversational mode when we began discussing when we would next meet. He suggested that most of the interactions that show a 'power with' model are those which are not on tape - those interactions as one meets, says goodbye, greets and chats in the corridor of the school, and so on. I would argue, then, that these tape-recorded interactions need to be imaginatively situated in a wider context of establishing a working relationship which would include the moments Rob describes, one's general demeanour, tone of voice, and body language. A similar point is raised by Hull (1985b) and was considered in chapter one. It is this wider context which I would argue partly informs teachers' positive assessment of my own role and their learning at the end of the project. The micro instances are nevertheless still significant examples of how one's intentions might fail to match one's practice, while careful reflection on these conversations is important for my own professional development. Certainly this kind of discussion on instances of interaction would have contributed more powerfully to my professional development had they been prospective to action at the time I was working with teachers. A future project would need to consider carefully ways of structuring such validation into

the project itself, for all the participants engaged in researching their own practice.

Yet despite these signs of a more directive role than I had intended, I would argue that this did not contradict attempts to establish dialogical relations with the teachers based on mutual self-respect, and cooperative work. Such relations were based around a continual process of action and reflection in concrete settings in order to empower teachers (Brookfield, 1986). In other words I attempted a 'democratic attitude' to my own 'directiveness' (Freire and Shor, 1987:172) where relations of domination were still struggled against so that learners interests were furthered. This also meant recognising, rather than avoiding, 'the difference between teacher[educator] and [teacher]learner' (Youngman, 1986:131).

### **Evaluating my own learning**

The above account has attempted to describe and explain a key dilemma in my own practice, one which could not be resolved given the prevailing context and conditions. Indeed it was one which I continued to wrestle with through the three years of my work with teachers. When I was interviewed in November 1989 by Sue Philcox, the project evaluator, I explained that I felt I had not yet achieved a satisfactory balance between being democratic and directive but that I thought I had learnt a great deal about working

with teachers in ways which would both support and extend them (interview 23/11/89).

In structured interviews conducted in September 1988 by Lufuno Nevathalu, and my own interviews with 12 project teachers in October 1989, teachers were mostly positive about their working relationship with me. Lufuno asked teachers 'how has Melanie helped you and what could she have done to help that she didn't do?'. All the teachers spoke about the importance of learning about new methods of teaching, of being given resources, and being supported in their classroom work, although three of the teachers (Alice, Beatrice and Oscar) said in 1988 that they thought I should have presented demonstration lessons. My way of working is captured in comments by four teachers. In September 1988, Gladstone commented to Lufuno on my role in the project:

She's a person who is within reach you know and if you talk to her she will listen to you, you simply share ideas, she is not the person who always puts words into your mouth or puts ideas into you. No, she comes over with ideas and lets you decide on the ideas and change them the way you see them and at the same time discuss how to change those ideas so as to suit you. (interview 28/9/88)

While Ruth remarked:

If I have problems we sit down together and discuss it, and then we plan the lesson together. She gives her views and I give my views and thereafter I prepare the lesson and teach it in class and then after the lesson we will sit again together, maybe at times with some other teachers, and comment on the lesson. And then if it was televised I could see my mistakes and maybe in the following lesson now improve and if it was tape recorded I could hear how the kids struggle at times and then we sit down with Melanie and discuss these problems (interview 30/9/88).

Veronica said at the end of the project:

At first I couldn't understand what you were trying to do because when you called us you asked ideas from us. And I said 'No!' I thought you were going to give us ideas, but in the long run I could see that this project introduced something new to me. (interview 17/10/89)

In August 1988 Cynthia commented to Lufuno that she felt she didn't gain much 'because most of the time she asks questions from you and you give the answers but she doesn't really tell you how to do a lesson', although she adds 'maybe that could be good in itself'. Later in the interview she comments that the problem might be that I am white because:

sometimes I may be prejudiced in the sense that if maybe a black person was doing the project then they would give us more advice because they are in situations that are real, they are involved with the kids. I don't think Melanie has been involved with black kids as such so sometimes she expects maybe like, when you're giving a lesson, she expects a lot from you. (interview 27/9/88)

Interviewed by me at the end of the project, over a year later, she responded in this way when I drew her attention to these earlier comments:

No, I've changed. I thought maybe you weren't helping but now, like Nosipho said, she said Alan Kenyon showed them that is the kids that have to do the work. What you wanted was we had to do the work and you were only here to help, not to show us how to do it, but researching our own teaching. (interview 12/10/1989)

At the end of my work in the schools, I approached all the school principals for comment on my role. Mr Magona, principal of Phakamisa, thought pressurising teachers, which had bothered me a lot at first, was a good thing! Thus he observed that 'to me it means you are thorough with your job. If it was somebody else, they [teachers] would be running around you and having a lot of excuses and so on'.

Then he comments on the way teachers at his school had worked with me:

The way of handling teachers also impressed me. There are some people who, I think you have outgrown now, you are not using your skin to communicate with teachers, some people use their skin, just because a person is white and he's using that whiteness, you are not using that whiteness because teachers could communicate with you, and I know that bantu education is so evil that some teachers are unable to structure english sentences correctly, but what I've noticed as you were talking to some of my teachers, you were never worried about 'is' and 'ed', past tense and all that jazz, you were picking up what the teacher is trying to say and your way of communicating with them, and also when you come to school, I have never been bothered to worry because I know you are not going to be a nuisance in the school. You have never done anything without consulting me as the principal of the school, you have never at any stage undermined my authority as, you know, other white people. I've seen quite a lot coming into the school who just go straight, they don't see the need of getting to the principal because after all, he's black, even those who are working for the DET, for instance, the guys who are working for the electricity or building, you just see a man measuring the yard, without consulting the principal. Just because he has a white skin he thinks that he can just get into this school and start measuring but they don't do that where the principal is white. That alone means to me, those petty things you've outgrown, and so I don't have negative criticisms because I know you, I know what type of person you are. (interview 12/10/89)

Later in the conversation I said that I had had to learn how to work with teachers 'so that they grow and have a say over that growth. It's a difficult balance in getting things to happen but not forcing people'. He responded with an indictment of the monological relations in DET schools, the effects of which trap him as much as the teachers:

I was quite happy the way they [teachers] were when they were dealing with you because, I think the image of the principal as far as the regulations and rules of the DET are concerned, is making teachers to be very much unwilling to talk to their principals freely, but I noticed also that teachers were talking with you very much freely, although in my presence I could realise that the talk is short, but when I'm not

there it's quite okay...I know that because of the structure of the DET teachers have a tendency of not even trying to criticise principals because one is taken as somebody who is insubordinate, who does not want to take instructions from the principal. And that's the make-up in our department...That's one aspect that you have won my teachers about, to make them talk, because I've noticed some of the papers you are giving me, I've looked through and I've noticed they are talking freely. (interview 12/10/89)

Other principals were positive in their assessment of my relationship with their schools as well when interviewed by Sue Philcox. Mr Motisi noted that 'eventually Melanie was accepted not only by the teachers but by the kids as well' (interview 16/2/90), while Mr Lungiswe commented on the fact that I had been 'approachable' and 'relaxed' (interview 9/2/90).

I had not resolved the tension between being democratic and directive by 1989 by the final year, nor even by the end, of my work with teachers. But Somekh (1988) reminds us of the sensitivity demanded in consultations with teachers as one listens, reflects, reassures, balances questioning, and so on. She observes that it is 'a complex process and we have to forgive ourselves if we don't always get it right' (1988:203). I had come to understand that being democratic did not mean either withholding my point of view, nor denying teachers access to alternative views of practice. It did mean continuing to emphasise first-hand experience for teachers who were the primary actors in classroom change. Responsibility for action lay with them. The detailed accounts of my work with the teachers in the following chapters illustrate my attempt to model a more

appropriate use of power with. While acknowledging the asymmetrical relations of expertise, these chapters focus on the more crucial issue pointed out by Misgeld (1987), namely:

not the fact of expertise but how the teacher [educator] handles it. Expertise is special knowledge of some field of activity that can be entered into the common knowledge of a cultural group under two conditions: the appropriate vehicles of translation and interpretation must be available...and those possessing special knowledge must be accountable to the cultural group with which they work. (quoted in Kenway and Modra, 1989:10)

**SECTION FOUR: LEARNING FACILITATION - THE DILEMMA  
OF REFORM VERSUS TRANSFORMATION**

This section describes and analyses a second key dilemma in my practice of facilitation arising from working with teachers for curriculum change. Was this work only reform of the existing curriculum or a more fundamental transformation of the form and content of teachers' practice as I had hoped? As explained in the previous section, this dilemma ran alongside the difficulties arising from my intention to act democratically. At the risk of repetition, this separation out of key strands of the action is an analytical construct. While in reality, both dilemmas were closely intertwined, this section describes and analyses the same action from the perspective of the second dilemma. Thus in this section there will be evidence of democratic practice and dialogical relations to complement the account in the previous section. Here, however, democratic working relations are contextualised as part of the process of curriculum change and refracted through this process. Inevitably there is some overlap, more especially with the account of my work in the pilot study in 1987. This section then should be seen as complementing the account of the dilemma of acting democratically in a 'power over' context. This same democratic intention, often imperfectly realised, underpins my attempts at curriculum change.

The first chapter in this section examines the pilot study where I started to learn the different roles of a facilitator, particularly the need to intervene to share

expertise with teachers in participatory ways. The next three chapters have been organised by teaching subject - history, junior primary english reading and senior primary reading. I thought this way of organising my experience, rather than, say writing about each school, appropriate for a number of reasons. Firstly, the effects of a highly centralised system of schooling and teacher training, and the dead hand of the DET bureaucracy, have led to a teaching culture which is common across schools. This is not to say that there are no differences between schools. In my study there were material differences in terms of textbook resources, and one school was in a particularly poor state of repair. But in general, the syllabus, class sizes and workloads were identical. Although two of the schools, Phakamisa and Sizithabathele, were more efficiently organised, all four were subject to the authority of the DET, including the regulations regarding examinations and annual teacher appraisal. In the end, the structure and processes of each school were more similar than dissimilar, and where there were differences these were outweighed by the common culture.

Secondly, in working with teachers in each subject area I learnt about different possibilities for sharing expertise, while this work also generated important knowledge about curriculum development of the subject. With the history teachers I was both specialist in history education and facilitator of reflective teaching. There were also particular problems, notably the issue of the syllabus, the

content and language issues associated with change in history which made it seem sensible to deal with history teachers as a group. In the case of junior primary english reading, the specialist role fell largely to outsiders, one of whom was also available to work alongside teachers in classroom. This group was also based in one school and began to develop a collaborative ethos, unlike the fragmented groups in other subject areas. In this way they revealed the possibility of whole school innovation. In the case of the higher primary reading teachers, my role was different again. Although I was not a reading specialist, limiting specialist help to a workshop only placed particular pressures on me in supporting teachers in their classwork. Furthermore, the entrenched hierarchical organisation of schooling, meant a sharp (if unsatisfactory) division between junior and senior primary, even where both sections were located in the same school. Senior primary teachers were unwilling to work with those from junior primary classes. Junior primary teachers, in turn, were often disempowered by the attitude of senior primary teachers who blamed them for all the teaching problems they themselves encountered. The emphasis in the senior primary school on subject teaching and their approach to 'reading-comprehension', made it easier to write about this group separately. This was also the largest group of teachers and the most fragmented, which meant finding a creative way for them to share experiences where the size of the group most emphasised the difficulty of working without DET support.

Nor was it possible to generalise regarding commitment to change and self-selected involvement in the project, or involvement as a result of a school decision. Even where teachers were involved through school decisions at Sivuyile and Sizithabathele, thereafter my work was with individual teachers rather than the school. The teachers themselves stressed a desire to work with the same subject and standard teachers rather than working with their whole school. On the one occasion when I brought teachers together across the project for a workshop in May 1988, one of the requests that emerged was for further meetings to be standard and subject based.

Once I had negotiated access to the teachers, principals also left me to my own devices to work with individual teachers, especially since I was careful to keep them informed of my movements. In the complete absence of any such tradition, I had no sense at all of schools wanting to own the staff development process. If anything, schools and principals expected me to adopt a very interventionist role, controlling and directing the pace and direction of change. Constraints of time also made it difficult to involve schools more widely in the curriculum development process. In the end, change was much more the result of teachers' personal engagement and thus much more the result of where the teachers themselves started from and the commitment they were prepared to make.

Chapter six first elaborates the dilemma of reform or transformation as it emerged over time. It then explains the difficulty arising from the unexpected need for the facilitator to be the mediator of curriculum development, as well as the process of reflective teaching. An account of the pilot study in 1987 follows, in which teachers voiced their interest in improving only the form and content of the official DET syllabus. Chapters seven, eight and nine detail my work over the following two years, 1988 to 1989, with teachers from four schools, in the areas of junior and senior primary reading, and history in stds 3 and 4. Like the teachers in the pilot study, these teachers had as their prime concern the 'improvement' of practice within prevailing constraints. As with the previous section, data is drawn from a number of different sources and triangulated in order to arrive at as authentic an account as possible of my action. This section then, describes further aspects of my own learning process as mediator of teachers' learning about new methods, new content and new materials by describing how I learnt to work with teachers within the curriculum constraints which they determined, while still extending their repertoire of teaching strategies and skills. Using the broad categories of new content, new methods and materials, and changing pedagogical assumptions, I describe, analyse and evaluate the learning process of the teachers with whom I worked. My own learning of appropriate ways to intervene in the process of change is also evaluated. Our work is refracted through the concepts of reform and transformation and evaluated in the light of what

was possible at that time under particular education conditions.

Interwoven in this account is the wider question raised in the previous chapter of a view of practice, my own and the teachers', embodying both competence and artistry, rather than only technical action. Proposals for curriculum change were intended, as Stenhouse puts it:

not to be regarded as an unqualified recommendation but rather as a provisional specification, claiming no more than to be worth putting to the test of practice. Such proposals claim to be intelligent rather than correct. (1975:142)

As Britton points out, teaching rules and recipes (even new and better rules and recipes) is reproductive in the end:

Teaching recipes will only help the newcomer to reproduce aspects of his [sic] culture, whereas taking part in social activity that amends the rules or generates new ones allows for the production of cultural forms. (author's emphasis, 1985:74)

In this view, providing teachers with techniques to 'copy' could only have been reformist and reproductive. Teachers' engagement in curriculum change needed to shift beyond rule-following - even where this was what teachers wanted - into producing their own relevant knowledge. Evidence of the latter, together with evidence of change in the form and content of the curriculum, would be required to support claims for transformative change.

## CHAPTER SIX: THE DILEMMA ENCOUNTERED

So I'll say one can try to be pragmatic about improving the situation. You could be successful to a certain extent but success again has got its problems. These are problems within the system because the authorities could misconstrue your success as to the effectiveness, or to the genuine nature of bantu education. They could say the fault is with the teachers, it is not with the system itself, because if it could be seen to be working very well in some schools, then you could be made a model of success for bantu education.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter first elaborates the dilemma emerging from my intention to work towards transformative change. What I now understand as reform only, and what I came to see as reform as a possible entry to more radical change, has been part of a learning process not only during my work with teachers, but also in writing up this study. Hence there have been shifts in my own position: firstly, from a naive belief that my work in schools would inevitably contribute to transformative change; to a position by April 1989, after criticism at the RESA conference, where I saw my work as reform only; to the more nuanced understanding which I now hold of the dialectical connections of work such as this and wider change. This latter understanding is explained in chapter ten and the concluding chapter. The broad outline of the reform or transformation dilemma is presented below to inform the reading of the chapters which follow.

The dilemma emerged in the first instance out of one of the PREP aims mentioned in the introduction, namely 'to explore

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1. Mr Lungiswe, interview with L. Nevathalu 29/5/88

a pedagogy for a future non-racial and democratic South Africa [transformation], while recognising what was educationally possible within current school frameworks [reform]' (PREP, Document Two, 1986:8). This was bolstered by an uncritical belief in the possibility of action research to contribute to authentic education in schools - a point I elaborate on in chapter ten where I explore my own learning about the action research project. Thereafter the chapter shifts into an account of the pilot study from the perspective of the second dilemma. It explains why the facilitator assumed the mantle of curriculum change, as well as that of facilitator of teachers' classroom research, and records my difficulties, as a non-primary specialist in the former role. It describes the emergence, in the first three months of working with five teachers from Sivuyile, of the tension between the official syllabus and alternative methods and materials. The chapter then examines the action taken by the facilitator to try and address this tension through working with a group of std 3 teachers on the teaching of history. The history curriculum materials I wrote at the end of 1987 are briefly described as an outcome of this work. The chapter then shows how the unresolved tension between reform and transformation of the curriculum continued into 1988.

#### **The dilemma: reform vs transformation**

The notion of a second dilemma, namely the tension between teachers merely reforming the prescribed syllabus on the one

hand, and more radical innovation on the other, is used to explore my own learning of how best to facilitate transformative curriculum change. Whether this was even possible within DET primary schools at that point in time (1987-1989) is also taken into account. More broadly, this dilemma could be conceptualised in terms of the question posed by Unterhalter and Wolpe (1989) in the context of the increasingly repressive conditions which obtained politically in South Africa from 1986. Unterhalter and Wolpe ask how one might struggle for reforms in a way which would 'produce both reforms and the intensification of opposition and contradictions within the existing education system?' (1989:19). Similarly, in a critical review of a publication on in-service teacher education in South Africa, Parker noted that it is especially important 'to distinguish between change as reform and change as a more radical and progressive transformation' (1988:100). Finch makes the point, in the context of her own research into working class playgroups, that one's attempts at change 'can turn out to be profoundly conservative' (1985:124). She adds that, even when changes more closely approach one's aspirations, these are still unlikely to result in more than 'small reforms which only scratch the surface of the changes which one might ideally like to see' (1985:124). For Finch, this raises the 'classic dilemma' of having to decide 'whether it is better to do something rather than do nothing' (1985:124).

Yet this is not to say that action in schools should be mechanistically represented as either reform or transformation. Apple (1979) provides a considerably more subtle understanding of how one might take a reformist starting point in a radical direction. While admitting the need for honestly confronting dominant power relations, he warns against the danger of the 'personal and collective futility' which may result:

There is another side to this question of futility, however. It involves the concomitant belief that any action on a day to day ameliorative level in the schools, the work place, and elsewhere merely shores an unequal system. This position is just as problematic ...It assumes there is a one to one correspondence between attempting somehow to make life better today or in the near future, and preventing a revolution that will naturally arise if we just wait for conditions to get bad enough...struggles to better the day to day conditions of our economic and cultural institutions are critical. They can develop into political battles. That is, only by action on day to day issues can a critical framework be made sensible...and one's theories [be tested] in actual praxis. (1979:161)

Now, my engagement in the schools clearly demonstrated a concern to contribute to educational change where it seemed urgent, namely in african primary schools. My difficulty was in coming to terms with the gap between my goals and the reality of what teachers would allow and were able to do. What emerged from this work was the importance of a process which took the problems, needs and lives of the teachers themselves as starting points for the construction of knowledge within a democratic and participatory framework. What also emerged however, was the significance of curriculum negotiation, in this case the negotiation of an

in-service 'course' curriculum. Kemmis stresses that while curriculum negotiation takes teachers' concerns and interests into account, it 'does not start exclusively from the ideas, concerns and interests' of teachers (author's emphasis, 1988b:69). One needs to avoid a romantic celebration of teacher experience. At the same time change was complicated, as the previous section and these chapters show, where 'the interested construction of a shared understanding of "the Good"' (Grundy, 1989:92) was neither addressed nor made explicit.

Ultimately, curriculum change in South African schools involves both political (struggle over the control of education) and pedagogical (struggle over the form and content of education) questions, in so far as these can be considered separately. As chapter three pointed out, in South Africa the emphasis has been on the struggle over education - a struggle for power and structural change. As the same chapter noted the struggle in education - what is taught, how it is taught and why it is taught in one way rather than another - has been relegated a backseat role. At the same time, the struggle for pedagogical transformation in classrooms and schools is also political. This raises the question for any project interested in transformation of how work in classrooms might be linked to wider struggles over control - a point I return to in chapter ten.

The nature of my entry to the schools and the basis with which teachers agreed to work with me was pedagogical - to 'improve their teaching', but not political - to develop people's education. Thus, Sivuyile had become involved on the basis that the project would 'help improve the pupil's english', while teachers from the other three schools typically gave these reasons for having joined when interviewed by Lufuno Nevathalu in September 1988:

They said its going to improve the reading for our children. (Nzwakie, interview 29/9/88)

This PREP project is helping us as teachers to improve the quality of our teaching. (Douglas, interview 29/9/88)

I want to improve my teaching. (Lumka, interview 29/9/88)

I had some difficulties in coping up with certain things in my subjects. (Gladstone, interview 28/9/88)

I decided to take the project with Melanie because I wanted to upgrade the standard of the second language english in my school. (Nomonde, interview 28/9/88)

I felt I must improve my teaching within the changing classes. I was not satisfied with my teaching. (Adelaide, interview 28/9/88)

It sounded like a good idea and the project could maybe help us a lot to change. (Cynthia, interview 27/9/88)

It promised a good result and a new way of teaching, that is new methodology. (David, interview 27/9/88)

It is concerned with methods of teaching and I just wanted to explore how does it go - are there any other methods which I can get from other teachers...most methods as I have seen make use mostly of the teachers...some teachers they use old-fashioned methods. (Joseph, interview 27/9/88)

Well in the first place I have some problems...so I thought of joining PREP and thought they would guide me and also gain information from other teachers too. (Ruth, interview 30/8/88)

As became clear, 'improving teaching' meant working within the content of the subject syllabus, as drawn up by the education authorities and interpreted by the authors of approved textbooks, and sticking fairly rigidly to the

prescribed work plan which details how every period in the school year should be used.

### **The facilitator as mediator of curriculum change**

As previous chapters have indicated, I learnt over time about the context, conditions and constraints in african primary schools. At the outset of my own work I underestimated the facilitator's role in initiating and supporting innovation in the form and content of the curriculum. It seemed to me that the British experience had been that facilitators in action research projects did not take on the mantle of curriculum innovation. Teachers already knew what innovation (for example, enquiry-based learning) they wished to investigate, and a wide range of support for implementing innovation was available from local education authority advisors, teachers' centres and lecturers at colleges (Cook, 1975). Nor had Charles Hull thought that one needed expertise in primary education to act as a facilitator within an action research project. But in the context of bantu education, official support for transformative practice from inspectors, most college lecturers, in-service courses, or in the form of well resourced teachers' centres, not only does not exist for teachers, but would be a contradiction in terms. Teachers are viewed by the DET as instruments of policy rather than professionals, and, as chapter three pointed out, the INSET provided by the DET is mostly inadequate. This was further exacerbated, as chapters three, four and five showed, where

teachers' own pre-service training was inadequate and where they lacked knowledge of alternatives to their existing practice. In my study then, the facilitator had to take on a number of roles, including that of presenter of expertise (Boud, 1987). As the previous section explained, teachers had not been exposed to models of practice different from the dominant form of teacher talk in classrooms, with rows of silent pupils controlled by strict (often harsh) discipline, and with little access to resources beyond a textbook. (Even paper was in short supply, and schools normally used their limited paper allocation to print exam papers.) Interestingly, the early experience of facilitators from Deakin University was that they were often called on to make substantive suggestions regarding teachers' problems. John and Colin Henry (1982) found that teachers' main interest was not in action research, but in finding ways to solve their practical problems. They responded by 'coming up with useful suggestions that actually help teachers to do what they think needs to be done' (1982:371). They go on to explain:

Our preference for action research and the action research process has, at times, led us to exclude from our vision some of the real concerns teachers have. But now we are beginning to understand more about the importance of being ready to share not only what we know about action research, but what we know about teaching and learning. (1982:371)

They add:

Our recent experience indicates that teachers are not reluctant to accept even substantive assistance from facilitators, provided those facilitators demonstrate capacity and commitment and are ready to let teachers 'call the shots'. (1982:372)

### The pilot study March-July 1987

When I first began to work with the teachers from Sivuyile in 1987, I did not understand or even anticipate teachers' reluctance to deviate from the textbook and the work plan. Nor did I anticipate my own pro-active role in curriculum development in the face of teachers' limited exposure to alternative models of practice. When they identified the teaching of english oral<sup>2</sup> as a focus for investigation, I incorrectly assumed that the teachers would be willing to consider language across the curriculum in their practice. Enthusiastic murmurs and nods when I introduced this possibility, were not, as became apparent, the same as agreement to actually implement the idea (fieldnotes 12/3/87). Pursuing my own goal of transformative curriculum change, I brought in 'alternative' resources without considering that there might be syllabus topics for oral lessons.

This can largely be ascribed to my own experience of teaching history and english as a second language in two secondary schools falling under the control of the coloured education authorities. In english I had developed themes integrating written and oral work around topics of interest to my pupils. While a single period every week was

2. English oral is allocated one period a week during which pupils are supposed to develop their english oracy skills. In practice, as I was to learn, this lesson often consisted of the teacher finding an illustration and asking pupils questions about the picture. The rest of the english periods were divided up into reading, grammar and composition.

officially allocated to oral work, in practice pupil talk was a feature of language and writing lessons as well. Whatever other pressures may have existed in teaching in these schools, there was no pressure to follow a second language syllabus, apart from the requirement to complete a certain amount of written work and the reading of prescribed literary texts. Indeed, from 1985 teachers were officially encouraged to develop integrated theme work around topics of their own choice. Furthermore, I had been fortunate in that the two schools I had worked at between 1979 and 1985 had allowed teachers generous supplies of stencils and paper to design and reproduce their own curriculum materials. Considerable space for innovation thus existed in these coloured schools in the area of english teaching. While there was a prescribed syllabus for history which set certain limits, my confidence in my own pedagogical and subject knowledge meant that I pushed such limits as far as possible in order to develop creative and critical history lessons. The situation in the project schools - both falling under a different education authority, and as primary, not secondary schools - was to prove rather different.

Indeed, it soon became clear that teachers expected oral lessons related to the syllabus. For example, when Miriam suggested that I should teach an oral lesson, Gloria followed by asking that I take a comprehension passage 'from the syllabus', i.e. the language textbook. Yet despite this request I still pressed for an alternative. This was

politely accepted, while they also agreed to my request for a double period for the lesson, although the oral lesson should only be a single period. According to Miriam and Gloria they struggled to get the pupils to speak english. To illustrate how difficult this was they informed me that the UCT student-teachers had 'run away' from std 3 and asked instead for std 5 classes where the english was a little better. At the same time they admitted that they translated into xhosa as soon as the pupils appeared not to understand. Thus on the one hand, they blamed pupils for not acquiring english. On the other hand. they did not seem to make the connection between their own practice of translating lessons and the pupils' failure to learn english. At best, by watching me they would see how pupils coped where a teacher did not (and could not) translate into xhosa at all. But until they themselves taught in english, the problem would remain.

Nonetheless I agreed to do the lesson, partly because I wanted to experience, in however limited a way, the classroom context within which they worked, partly because I was unsure of my own role and was trying out different ways to involve the teachers in changing their own practice. In particular I was wrestling with the role of 'expert' in my own work. It seemed to me once I started working with teachers that, unlike Charles Hull's claim that primary expertise was unnecessary in a project focussed on action research, a facilitator did need some expertise in order to support change (fieldnotes 23/4/87).

I used a sequence of pictures without text - the Binette Schroeder book Zebby Goes Shopping. Working in small groups, pupils were asked to make up a sentence about each of the eight pictures. Then we shared the groups' sentences by writing them on the chalkboard. This was a somewhat different lesson from the usual practice of the teacher bringing a picture and asking the class questions about it. After the lesson I suggested that Miriam might want to try another of the Zebby stories using a similar approach (fieldnotes 5/5/87). We had videotaped the lesson so that the other teachers could watch it as well. We met the following Wednesday together with the deputy principal and Wendy Flanagan, whom I had invited to join the discussion as a primary 'expert'. Unfortunately the discussion that followed was mostly between Wendy Flanagan and myself, and the focus of the discussion was my practice. Teachers' contributions were limited to Mavis suggesting a different way to start the lesson, and Gloria asking whether I was more concerned with correct pronunciation or encouraging the pupils to talk (fieldnotes 13/5/87). And when Miriam tried a similar lesson, using Zebby Goes Swimming by Binette Schroeder, she complained that there were too many pictures to complete the story in one period. Unlike my own lesson, she was not prepared to allocate more than the single 30 minute period allowed in the work plan each week for oral (fieldnotes 26/5/87).

Teachers' made known their unhappiness with my attempts to work outside of the syllabus in an unstructured interview

with Tozi Mgobozi on 9 June. In addition to their complaints detailed in the previous chapter, they saw the work they had done with me as a 'burden' over and above the normal syllabus. As Miriam expressed it: 'It is really difficult when somebody from outside tells you what you are supposed to do and having to cast out what you had planned to do at that particular time'. Hence they found the project stressful, arising from the pressure to complete the syllabus. They complained of being unable to complete their classwork because they were being called away to meet with me. Gloria said:

My main complaint about this project is that it takes up our teaching time. Whilst I am here I am missing another class because I have to attend to the project. Sometimes it's not english, it's another subject. The pupils are suffering because they are waiting for me.(interview 9/6/87)

Miriam added:

English itself is divided into various sections which we tackle on different days. Whilst the two of us are here, the other teachers in std 3 are progressing with their lessons and when exam time comes, we are lagging behind in our work, as determined by the syllabus, because we are guided by the syllabus, and what we are doing is not in the prescribed syllabus. (interview 9/6/87)

The deputy principal repeated this for emphasis: 'They have to work on the syllabus prescribed by the DET'.

When we met at UCT some five weeks later in mid-July, the teachers outlined the school's plan to resolve this particular problem by involving only the teachers in one particular standard, starting with teachers in std 3. As Gloria observed, 'if we are doing the same thing at the same time I think that will be okay'. At this stage I was taken

aback by teachers' emphasis on the syllabus and did not understand their reluctance to deviate from it. As chapter three and the chapters in this section show, developing this understanding was to be an integral part of my educational development as a facilitator.

The difficulty of finding enough time to participate in the project mesmerised the teachers. It seemed that they found it very difficult to visualise reorganising the school day (and did not know how), given that they had come to accept an imposed and tightly structured timetable. Yet, when the notion of 'stealing' time from one subject, for example doing some reading in the history lesson, was introduced later in the workshop, the deputy cheerfully noted:

It is true that there is time for the lessons, for the subjects we are teaching. What you'll find in our schools these days is that if I love afrikaans I will do afrikaans the whole day! (discussion 15/7/87)

I found it difficult at this stage to understand the emphasis on pressures of time, given that there were occasions when I had visited the school and found up to three teachers chatting together in one classroom, while their classes were left to work alone. Nor was it an apparent problem that teaching virtually ground to a halt after the lunch break for several weeks in the second term as all efforts were concentrated on the inter-school choir competition.

A further confusing contradiction for me at that time was captured in this remark of the deputy's at the workshop

during a discussion of teachers taking responsibility for change in their classrooms:

Now the other thing is even teaching in classes, we know our education is rotten, it is rotten, that is why the pupils in the location don't want to see us because they say we have taken the rotten education and we want to implement it, but we can't do anything, it is what we are given [in the syllabus]. (discussion 15/7/87)

Later, in response to the question - 'If I am changing the way I teach the syllabus, why am I doing it and for what purpose?' - the deputy responded:

If I may quote you correctly, you are asking why do we teach the syllabus. In fact the syllabus is prescribed for us. The answer for the 'why' is that we are given it, and I don't think any of the teachers present here have asked that question 'why is it', we just get into it. (discussion 15/7/87)

On the one hand, she recognised the gross inadequacy of the schooling system. Yet on the other, she seemed to say that in the end, teachers teach what and how they are told, mostly uncritically and usually contrary to the community's interests. Part of the difficulty for me in encouraging and supporting curriculum change lay in addressing and sympathetically understanding this gap between teachers' recognition of the 'rotteness' of the system and their acting (or refusing to act) to change it at the level of their own practice. Not understanding this contradiction, I too often assumed that teachers' political criticism of bantu education - like that of the deputy principal at this workshop - would easily translate into transformed practice.

During the July workshop, in order to introduce new ideas about practice, the possibility of improving the children's

english language within the context of a content subject was raised, for example, encouraging pupils to discuss and read in a science lesson. Gloria responded:

What about our, let's take english, our english is divided, like we have Mondays, we are doing reading, Tuesday is comprehension, Thursday language and spelling and recitation, and so on. So I wonder if, when doing language, then you know the aim is based on language, and then in reading the children must learn to read, because it's divided like that, comprehension, reading, spelling recitation and so on. (discussion 15/7/87)

In other words, Gloria had not apparently understood the point originally being made - that the children should be developing their language use in all subjects, a strategy for language across the curriculum embodying as well the theory that children use language to learn (see for example, Vygotsky, 1962; Britton, 1970; Barnes 1976). Yet by the end of this workshop one of the apparently agreed project aims was a 'language policy for the whole school'. What this meant in practice to the teachers and to myself was, not surprisingly, rather different.

Retrospectively, all this highlights the point made by Sarason (1982) about the assumptions we make when we talk about teachers as the agents of educational change. We assume that:

the teachers will possess that way of thinking, as well as appropriately derived procedures and tactics, that will bring about the desired kind of classroom life. It is rare indeed, to find in these discussions serious considerations of the consequences of this basic assumption for the change process. That is to say, there is remarkable blindness to the fact that one is confronted with the extremely difficult problem of how one changes how people think. (Sarason, 1982:231)

This is compounded by a lack of sensitivity to the demands placed on teachers to both unlearn and learn. We need to understand, Sarason maintains, that teachers 'come by their problems quite honestly' (1982:233). Similarly, in his emphasis on the meaning of educational change and the difficulties of taking on even a single innovation, Fullan writes:

The crux of change involves the development of meaning in relation to a new idea, program or set of activities. But it is individuals who have to develop new meaning, and these individuals are insignificant parts of a gigantic, loosely organised, complex, messy social system which contains myriad different subjective worlds. (1982:79)

In other words, I had to confront the difficult task of facilitating and supporting changes in classroom practice in order to change how teachers thought about their teaching. And this process had to be situated simultaneously within a wider context which teachers experienced as determining, in large measure, how they thought and acted as teachers.

### **Experimenting in std 3 history July-September 1987**

I worked with the five std 3 teachers in the third school term - Gloria, Jennifer, Naomi, Gertrude and Miriam. The focus of the third term's work was decided by Gloria who asked 'can't we work first of all according to the prescribed syllabus?' I agreed to look carefully at the actual syllabus before meeting with the std 3 group.<sup>3</sup> I was

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3. It should be noted that it is extremely difficult to obtain copies of DET syllabuses. Teachers do not have their own copies and a school's copies are often incomplete. I had been fortunate in having the opportunity to make a

struck by the apparently reasonable aims in the higher primary syllabuses documents (DET Syllabus, 1983). In std 3 geography for example, one of the aims is to 'develop the pupil's ability to reason and to think' (DET Syllabus, 1983:49); in std 3 science 'to emphasise the scientific approach not just the facts' (DET Syllabus, 1983:43); in std 3 history 'pupils should have some knowledge of the methods of the historian' (DET Syllabus, 1983:52). One could argue that such syllabus aims open space for teachers to innovate, and that had been my own practice as a teacher - to use the aims to justify what I was doing in the classroom. The problem was that teachers did not even have copies of the syllabus, but only a work plan and textbooks. Their primary concern was to teach the content in the time allocated.

On the one hand then, if teachers see themselves as bound to follow the dictates of the work plan and the textbook, one can hardly unilaterally ignore their fears. On the other hand, however, I was not sure that the project should support the uncritical implementation of the form and content of the DET syllabus (which also seemed to bear little relation to many of the aims), albeit more effectively than might otherwise have been the case.

At the first meeting with the five std 3 teachers on 22 July, I reiterated the workshop discussion on children developing language skills in the content subjects, namely

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copy of the std 3-5 syllabus obtained from another school the previous year for a different purpose.

history, geography, general science and health education. I suggested we think about how to teach the required facts, while also helping the pupils to improve their english. I then spoke at some length as to how this might be done. Once we had decided to look at history, prompted by Gloria's concern that the pupils found it 'boring', the teachers specified that I should work on the chapter on free burghers, pointing out that they covered one chapter in each 30 minute period.<sup>4</sup> The textbook followed the work plan, with each section being divided into lesson one, lesson two and so on, each comprising about two pages of text and a crude illustration. I tried but failed to pin teachers down to a pre-arranged programme of lessons. Thus when I asked how many lessons we should plan, Gloria remarked: 'Let us not worry about the terms' work. We will see as the times go on because we will always be together'. I suggested planning a few lessons, leaving the draft materials at the school, and then returning after a few days to find out which of the lessons teachers thought would be appropriate. In this way I hoped to draw teachers into sharing responsibility, at their own level, for the history teaching (fieldnotes 22/7/87).

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4. The free burghers were the first Dutch settlers granted farms in present-day Cape Town by Jan Van Riebeeck, in his capacity as commander of the settlement at the Cape. What most textbooks (including the one these teachers were using) fail to point out is that the land allocated to the free burghers was used for grazing purposes by the khoikhoi, the indigenous hunter-herders. The first armed clash between Dutch and khoi over land thus occurred in 1658, thereby setting in motion events which were to culminate in the dispossession of the khoi and their reduction to the status of wage-labourers by the early nineteenth century.

What was also becoming apparent by now was the teachers' disabling lack of content knowledge.<sup>5</sup> At the UCT workshop for example, Gloria had said:

And then in other subjects there's difficulty, for instance let's take our history in std 3...you will find there are lessons you don't know yourself. Like they have the Mfecane. I don't know anything about the Mfecane. (discussion 15/7/87)

This lack of subject knowledge was exacerbated by their reliance on a sterile textbook which presented knowledge as 'factual' and unproblematic, with no mention of original sources or different historical interpretations. South African history as presented in school textbooks reflects the view that whites (and white men in particular) are the makers of history. As Buckland and Van der Berg say, this paradigm 'corresponds closely to the interpretation of history propagated by the ruling Afrikaner nationalist power elite in particular, and accepted by the white population in general' (1982:23). Thus the std 3 textbook History to the Point by Oosthuizen et al, presents the indigenous people as 'problems' to be dealt with by the Dutch settlers:

The first Free Burghers had many difficulties. There were droughts and floods. They had few labourers to help them and the Hottentots [sic] stole their produce. (1981:55)

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5. As chapter three pointed out, the educational effects of bantu education in schools and tertiary institutions have been damaging. According to one lecturer at a coloured college the history syllabus is as fragmented as at school. How, he wondered, was he supposed to teach students about the nature of history, and the content and methods needed to teach it effectively, in the bits and pieces of time allocated to it? Where lecturers do not even share this concern, and where, as Vivienne Kenyon pointed out in chapter three, 'safe' appointments are made in subjects like history, one can only speculate at the quality of history education at colleges.

The same book later glibly justifies the land dispossession of the indigenous inhabitants in the interior of South Africa by the voortrekkers:

The Voortrekkers therefore took the land on which no-one lived or else made treaties with black chiefs who were willing to give them some land. The Voortrekkers looked on these treaties as legal. (1981:88)

Ideally the textbook should not be the only determinant of history teaching. Nevertheless the reality is that in DET classrooms, it is the only source of information, not only for pupils, but also for the teacher. Furthermore, these books carry the authority of print in a print-starved educational and social environment.<sup>6</sup> All this is compounded by teachers' own fragmented experience of history at school and college. The point of all this is to emphasise teachers' dependency on textbooks which provide a particular interpretation of history as fact, exacerbated by teachers own lack of understanding of what 'history' is, and their limited content knowledge. Thus when I pointed out the bias and distortions in the history textbook Miriam had lent me, Gloria said that she had not known the book was 'wrong' and so had been teaching 'all the wrong things' (fieldnotes 29/7/87).

According to Shulman (1987), and I would agree, the lack of what he calls pedagogical content knowledge limits the teachers repertoire of teaching skills. Thus he argues that

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6. A recent survey revealed that 30% of african households in South Africa did not have a single book (Cape Times 6/8/90).

knowledge of the scholarship in content disciplines constitutes a major source of teaching knowledge. He further observes that teaching techniques are closely tied to the teacher's own comprehension of what is to be taught. Using an example from Grossmans's (1985) research, he concludes that:

teaching behaviour is bound up with comprehension and transformation of understanding. The flexible and interactive teaching techniques that she [the teacher] uses are simply not available to her when she does not understand the topic to be taught. (1987:18)

In South Africa, MacDonald et al (1985) note that the initial phase of the widespread Science Education Project (SEP) involves teachers in improving their content knowledge, before examining pedagogical strategies. Although I was discovering that teachers in PREP would need to learn about the subject as well as the methods for teaching it, I hoped rather that these processes could happen simultaneously - that content would be mediated by classroom action. What was also becoming apparent was that teachers were being called on to engage with multiple layers of innovation - the content of their teaching, the process of their teaching (including the language medium), and learning to be reflective practitioners.

The task of changing classroom history was further complicated by the simplistic, as opposed to simple, style in which most textbooks are written, making it more difficult to grasp the topic being studied. For example, to say that 'the hottentots [sic] had always been cattle owners

and were no good at working on the lands' (Oosthuizen et al, 1981:61); or that 'The hottentots [sic] bartered their cattle and when game became scarce they stole cattle from the [white] cattle owners' (Oosthuizen et al, 1981:9) neither helps to explain the relationships and tensions between coloniser and colonised, nor to understand the concepts of dispossession and resistance.

I prepared six activities around a single chapter in which the pupils would be involved in reading, writing and talking about the history, given that language is crucial to learning history (Wilson, 1985). I felt that improved history teaching needed to view the subject lesson as a context for language acquisition (see Brown, 1987). More than this, teachers needed to begin to understand the role of language in learning - that language not only reflects one's knowing but also causes one's knowing (Barnes, 1976). With regard to content, the activities were a compromise in so far as they included a sequencing activity using the textbook chapter, while also venturing a more critical approach to the content in other activities, and encouraging group work and discussion. Although teachers did not say which lessons I should teach, this was partly because I overwhelmed them with too much unfamiliar material. At our next meeting on 29 July Miriam asked me to teach the lessons because they were 'not familiar with this method', while Gloria commented that she was interested for us to try the lessons as her pupils 'are lazy to think'. Such comments suggest that they had looked through the material, even if

they were still unwilling, or perhaps unable, to comment on its suitability (fieldnotes 28/7/87).

As chapter four has suggested, in the end teachers were positive about the methods employed. Indeed, at least three of the teachers (Gloria, Naomi and Gertrude) even spoke about using the methods in the teaching of other content subjects. Gloria, too, now had a clearer grasp than previously of how the children's english could improve, even in a content subject. At the same time, the most popular activity with the teachers was undoubtedly that based on the textbook where children worked in groups to sequence the jumbled up paragraphs. While the process in this lesson was innovative, the content - the 'factual' account of the dispossession of the khoikhoi by the first Dutch farmers in 1657 - remained unchallenged. There was some evidence of a shift by Gloria and Jennifer into understanding the new methods, but overall there was no evidence of teachers' demonstrating an emancipatory interest, even though their voices were breaking the 'culture of silence' (Freire, 1972).

#### **Writing history curriculum materials November-December 1987**

I went on to write four history booklets - The Free Burghers, Life in the Rural Areas, Slaves at the Cape, and The Khoisan - at the end of 1987 for another PREP researcher (Karen Morrison) to trial with teachers in 1988. These booklets encouraged language across the curriculum in the

hope that such an approach might stimulate teachers to consider alternatives to their present practice. The introduction to one booklet thus stated:

The activities have been organised in such a way that pupils will learn history, and at the same time, learn english by talking, reading and writing about the free burghers. The activities encourage the pupils to use english by:

- \* talking - group discussions  
                  general conversation
- \* reading - for information  
                  for pleasure  
                  silent reading
- \* writing - completing sentences (The Free Burghers, 1987:2)

This meant allocating more than two periods per week to each textbook chapter. I still hoped that because the std 3 teachers were all class teachers, that some of them would experiment with the activities in an english lesson, for example a story about slavery in activity two of Slaves at the Cape. The booklet explained the purposes of this particular activity as being:

- to help understanding in history by reading a story and studying pictures to imagine what it was like to be a slave;
- to practise silent reading;
- to practise writing in english;
- to encourage better learning by working together. (Slaves at the Cape, 1987:11)

While some concessions were made by including the syllabus content, and even the textbook chapter, in each book, nevertheless the materials attempted to introduce a critical approach to history, both by including information sheets for the teacher, and by designing activities to encourage the pupils to think about the history they were learning.

In the introduction to each booklet I wrote: 'The activities include sources other than the textbook so that learners can read and hear about other points of view'. For example, activity three in the Free Burghers asked pupils to discuss this question: 'The Khoikhoi said the Dutch had taken their land. What do you think?' (The Free Burghers, 1987:14). Activity six, to take another example, outlined a situation for group discussion: 'Imagine that one of the khoikhoi and one of the free burghers visit your class one day. What questions will you ask them?' (The Free Burghers, 1987:22).

Sivuyile teachers, then, had been exposed to different methods and materials for teaching history, and had begun to think and talk about their practice. Indeed, giving these std 3 teachers choices about practice and asking them to reflect on practice was arguably in itself a radical step, under the circumstances. I meanwhile had learnt that facilitating reflective teaching had to be situated within a broader process of curriculum development and specialist help, thus highlighting the limits of my own non-primary experience. Retrospectively, I would argue that this was less of a problem in the area of history teaching where I felt competent to help teachers. What I was unsure of at first was how my ideas might translate into good practice in that particular context. Indeed I had a clear vision of what constituted transformative practice which informed my work with history teachers in 1987 and again in 1988 and 1989, a point I elaborate on in the next chapter.

I knew too that I should stress that teachers try out new ideas in their own classrooms. While I was beginning to understand constraints (the syllabus and work plan) on curriculum change, I had yet to accept teachers' interpretation of what such constraints meant for their own practice. This is evident in the form and content of the history booklets which I produced that year, materials which I would have wanted to try with pupils, rather than materials appropriate for the skills and contextual constraints of teachers with whom I had worked. Thus, in 1988 std 3 teachers working with Karen Morrison chose to try only isolated lessons from the booklets. This was because the std 3 teachers with whom she worked were all subject teaching according to a timetable which allowed little space for experiments with language across the curriculum (Morrison, 1988).

#### **The dilemma continues into 1988 and 1989**

Underpinning my work in 1988 and 1989, was still the tension between my agenda of transformation versus reform, the latter being represented by teachers' desire to 'improve' their teaching within official constraints. As I was unexpectedly finding out, this was true even of those teachers who were members of a progressive teachers' union (DETU) committed to people's education. For example, when I outlined the project to the deputy principal of Phakamisa, who was an active member of DETU, he asked whether I would be bringing in a lot of extra-curricular resources.

Teachers found it difficult, he explained, if they had to teach the syllabus and then set aside time for such alternatives (fieldnotes 20/1/88). Similarly, Oscar, a politically progressive teacher at the same school warned that any workshop on a new way to teach reading would have to take into account that in the higher primary school only one period a week was set aside for reading: 'When running a workshop you must confine yourself to a 30 minute lesson so that at least I would be able to see where I fit in, but if you run it for an hour I won't be able to see' (fieldnotes 10/3/88). All of this was further compounded by a rigid timetable, dividing the day into subjects and the further division of subjects into periods for writing, oral and so on. For example, when I went to film Zolani at Khanyisiwe on 24 February, he told me that the principal had informed him that he could not deviate from the timetable. Thus he would not be able to teach the lesson he had prepared on a listening-comprehension but would have to teach an oral lesson as laid down in the timetable (fieldnotes 24/2/88).

As with Sivuyile, when the project expanded to three more schools in 1988, teachers joined because they wanted to improve their day to day teaching rather than to transform education. At that time of increasing repression it seems unlikely that teachers would have pursued the goal of implementing people's education, even had they wanted. Because I had made my political interest clearer from the outset by explaining my interest in promoting 'equal education', this did not in practice mean that teachers

would participate in a transformative working through of what this meant - not least with an unknown outsider from the university. Indeed, as chapter three shows, they all shared my concern with the inadequacies of the education system. But like the teachers at Sivuyile, this did not necessarily impact in 'radical' ways on their classroom practice, even when they expressed aspirations congruent with progressive change in such practice. Thus at the initial staff meetings in 1988, teachers at Khanyisiwe expressed aims such as encouraging 'independent thinking', the importance of the pupil having 'a good understanding of the subject', and of pupil participation so that 'the teacher doesn't take centre stage' (meeting 28/1/88). Similarly, at Sizithabathele teachers thought that effective classroom practice involved 'developing pupil participation', and 'self discovery and creative learning' (meeting 27/1/88). While at Phakamisa, staff thought an effective teacher 'should know your subject matter', 'be good at explaining', use different teaching methods, and develop 'confidence, curiosity and observation' in pupils (meeting 3/2/88). I, however, continued to confuse a willingness to try new methods with a desire to transform the education process. Nor did I take into account the gap between teachers' intentions and their actual practice.

CHAPTER SEVEN: EXPLORING HISTORY TEACHING 1988-1989

This chapter describes my work with four history teachers. It explains how, as facilitator, I tried to encourage teachers to look critically at the content of the history syllabus; to introduce new ideas for teaching history while acknowledging the constraints on changing practice, and to support teachers in exploring their classroom work. This work is situated within the wider dilemma of reform and transformation. The chapter explores the difficulty of introducing new processes and new content where a long syllabus and the rigid school time table, together with the limits of teachers' own professional knowledge, combined to ensure the difficulty of overcoming the dominance of transmission teaching and rote learning in overcrowded and under-resourced classrooms.

My work was informed by my own vision of good practice, best exemplified at that time in a progressive and oppositional schools' history book (What is History, 1987) which I had prepared at the end of 1986 as a member of the history commission of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). The content of the book attempted to break with 'the stereotype of history as it is taught in schools, as a collection of pre-existent, non-negotiable facts, to be transmitted, memorised, and repeated in examinations' (What is History, 1987:1). Instead, history was viewed as a problem solving discipline. The paradigm informing the contents of the book was explained - that history is more

than only an account of the deeds of people in authority but also the story of ordinary men and women. Thus history 'should identify the historical sources of dispossession, oppression and exploitation, and should examine the ways in which these were resisted' (What is History, 1987:1). The methodology of the book, as I outlined in a paper written in 1988 (Walker 1988c), was rooted in the belief that 'the development of language is central to the development of conceptual thinking' (Walker, 1988c:79); that collaborative work and discussion 'enables students to develop reflexive and hypothetical modes of thought and to become the subjects of the learning process and not its passive objects' (Walker, 1988c:79); and that group learning attempts 'to develop democratic social relations' (Walker, 1988c:79). Working with history teachers involved me in an exploration of the limits and possibilities of such a vision in DET primary schools.

In 1988, initially only Mike from Sivuyile and Johnson from Phakamisa looked at ways of teaching history. In the third term of 1988, Gladstone from Khanyisiwe and William from Sizithabathele also decided to experiment with methods of teaching history. Johnson taught std 3, while the others taught std 4. In 1989 William carried on investigating his teaching of history, Lumka from Phakamisa changed from investigating xhosa to investigating history teaching, while Mike changed to geography teaching and Johnson left Phakamisa to become acting principal of a primary school in Khayalitsha. Gladstone taught english in 1989 and, being

rather dissatisfied with this arrangement imposed by the principal, decided that he did not wish to continue experimenting with his practice. In 1989 I also passed on resources, developed with William, to Douglas at Phakamisa.

Lumka was the only 'qualified' teacher in the group, having completed matric and a three year junior secondary teachers' diploma before starting her teaching in 1987. She was studying for a B.A. degree at the University of the Western Cape at the time of the project and hoped to complete these studies in 1990. The other four teachers had all completed matric before studying for a two year teachers' diploma. Johnson had started teaching in 1978, Gladstone in 1980, Mike in 1981 and William in 1986. Apart from Lumka, only Johnson was busy with part-time studies at the time of the project.

### **Problematising the content of history teaching**

As I outlined in the previous chapter, the content of the syllabus was a major stumbling block to change. It was firstly far too long. The work plan allocated single and double periods to long sections of work which, in practice, teachers found impossible to complete. A std 3 teacher explained:

There's a lot of work to be done in the textbook and then they [pupils] are expected to cram or recite it so they are not learning to understand, they are just learning for exam purposes. We are chasing ourselves off to the finish the syllabus! (Nombulelo, interview 28/9/88)

In my own practice as a history teacher, faced with an equally lengthy syllabus, I had opted to concentrate on the more interesting topics, leaving out or glossing over others. Where I could also control assessment through internally set examinations, this strategy worked well. As I was to learn, however, other teachers were not keen to do this.

As explained in chapter six, the syllabus reflected the ruling class view of history. But, unlike the std 3 teachers I had worked with in 1987, there seemed to be some awareness amongst these teachers of bias in the history syllabus. For example, in an interview with Lufuno Nevathalu, Mike noted:

If you can look at the history textbooks, they are so biased you know, I mean we are not very happy about it and you don't see our heroes in the books, but you come to learn things about the whites and nothing referring to the xhosa people at all. (interview 30/9/88)

Then, in October 1988 I organised a history workshop at UCT attended by Mike, Gladstone, William and John, all std 4 history teachers. To encourage them to think about the interpretation of South African history in the school textbooks, I introduced the possibility of looking at migrant labour and the compound system when teaching the discovery of diamonds in std 4. The discussion over this issue captured the contradictions and ambiguity in teachers' dissatisfaction with the syllabus, while still continuing to teach it. Thus Gladstone said:

Now that type of information, somewhere along the line you will bring in confusion, because now you've got

the prescribed syllabus that you've got to follow and now going another way out, like bringing a little bit of confusion like that, you won't see that information in the textbook. (discussion 13/10/88)

As the discussion continued, he conceded:

You can do it, but not for syllabus purposes, you are only doing that maybe when you want to tell them more, you know, in a conversant way, just as you are talking with them, not necessarily for exam purposes. (discussion 13/10/88)

But then he brings the discussion back to what the teachers see as their main difficulty:

But the problem that we are faced with now is how to teach them this [the textbook], that's the very first thing we are having to do before going to that [alternative] (discussion 13/10/88).

What became clear through working with Mike, Gladstone, Johnson and William in 1988, and William and Lumka in 1989, was that teachers, while recognising its problematic content, also felt they had to teach the syllabus. Changing the content of the syllabus thus proved difficult. Yet this problem is by no means confined only to DET primary schools. Sieborger's (1988a) work with history teachers from an elite private primary school, revealed the history syllabus to be 'deep-frozen'. While the teachers with whom he worked had the freedom and resources to change the syllabus, he found that they 'accepted unquestioningly the content matter' (1988a:6).

Retrospectively, I would also suggest that, while project teachers were concerned about the syllabus emphasis on the history of whites in South Africa, there is a great difference between recognising this and having the skills to

uncover and comprehend the distortions and myths of school history. And further, there is a great difference it seems to me between a 'surface' recognition of bias and locating this within a particular historical paradigm. In other words, new bits of history knowledge, alternative facts and so on, might superficially address gaps in their teaching but would not constitute emancipatory knowledge. Neither would simply substituting a new syllabus for the old, in the absence of teachers understanding what history is, and developing a progressive philosophy of history.

Given my earlier point that teachers' own subject knowledge was limited, I concentrated some of my efforts on making accessible revisionist interpretations of South African history available to the teachers. Thus I loaned copies of books such as Gold and Workers by Luli Callinicos to Mike and Gladstone, the Readers Digest Illustrated History of South Africa to William and Lumka, Kevin Shillington's History of Southern Africa to William and Lumka, and articles from the progressive magazine Upbeat to Mike and Gladstone. I also prepared a two page handout on 'What is history?' in January 1989, and made available copies of what I thought was a much better school textbook series Time for History by R. Kingwell et al, to show how the same syllabus could be interpreted differently. All of this was intended to help teachers read history critically, as well as develop confidence in their own subject knowledge. For example, when Lumka and I planned her first history lesson in

February 1989, I gave her a copy of the 1987 PREP booklet, The Khoisan, saying:

You might find it useful to read a little bit around the content you're teaching. What these information sheets do is tell you more about the san and the khoikhoi and they also show how these groups of people were affected by the arrival of the white colonists. Some of the stuff you won't find in the history textbook and then you have to decide whether or not you want to pass that on to the children. (planning 8/2/89)

Later in the same conversation I said:

I think a teacher needs to recognise that there are different points of view in history. So this writer will have one point of view, this writer will have another. One of the things you need to think about as a teacher is how accurate the interpretation is of what happened in the past, and it's particularly important in school history because it's written from the point of view of afrikaner nationalists. (planning 8/2/89)

Retrospectively however, what this extract reveals is the possible extent to which I underestimated, or took for granted, my own historical knowledge. Thus I was able to locate 'a point of view' within a paradigm. But it now seems doubtful to me that Lumka, who had not studied history beyond std 7 at school, or at college, and had not even chosen to teach history at the school, would have understood the meaning of 'the afrikaner nationalist paradigm'. This reminds one again of Fullan's (1982) argument regarding change as the making of meaning. The point here is that presenting these ideas to Lumka did not mean she would understand me in the way I hoped or expected. Rather, she would make sense of these ideas in terms of her own knowledge (or lack of knowledge) of history. Furthermore, this conversation and the more general issue of pointing to

alternative history paradigms, epitomises the interface of the two dilemmas - on the one hand my wish to see the content of the curriculum transformed; on the other, the need to find a way to make content knowledge available within a democratic and participatory framework underpinned by informed choice.

Lumka went on to read one of the information sheets for teachers, explaining to her pupils that the use of the term 'hottentots' was insulting:

This name hottentots was not their name, they were the name given them by the Europeans when they were insulting them. Today the name hottentot is no longer used by the good historian, so you will use the people's name for themselves, the khoikhoi. (lesson 18/2/89)

While in a later lesson on the arrival of the Dutch colonists, she reminded her pupils that the Dutch were the newcomers to the country, not the khoikhoi (lesson 11/7/89). When she taught her class about the arrival of British settlers in the Eastern Cape in 1820, she asked: 'Who were the people living in the eastern Cape before the British', telling the pupils after they have answered 'the xhosa' that 'the xhosa were settled in the eastern cape - here the chiefs Ngyika and Ndlambe' (lesson 1/8/89). But although she adopts more acceptable terms and reminds pupils that the indigenous people had settled the region long before the arrival of white settlers, nevertheless I would argue that she is not locating this new knowledge in a paradigm - these are only new 'facts' in certain lessons. Similarly, in William's case, even though when he taught his pupils about

early mining in South Africa he noted that: 'Many years ago, hundreds of years ago, before the arrival of the Dutch people or the British settlers, people in South Africa mined or dug copper, iron and gold in the earth' (lesson 3/8/89).

This is not to underestimate the importance of exposing teachers to sources beyond the textbooks. In his interview with Lufuno Nevathalu in September 1988, Mike noted that it had helped him to have access to history books as reference sources for himself (interview 30/9/88). In her final interview with me in November 1989, Lumka commented that 'I must know the background of the history, if I'm teaching history I must have the background of that particular part'. She had found the readings 'useful' and wanted to know more about the subject matter because 'I want to know, be clear, on what is taking place so that I can give the children what is needed or what is important'. She explained that 'I'm not having confidence in the textbook' because 'it is not so clear' and 'did not have enough information' (interview 27/11/89). But while she is aware of gaps in her information, Lumka has not yet begun critiquing or problematising historical knowledge. However, William is arguably approaching such a shift in that he thought a teacher:

should also consult other material relevant to the lesson because other writers expressed their feelings to suit, they write facts to suit their feelings, but another book, says something different, and the other one, so I think it is wise to use different materials. (interview 5/10/89)

None of this claims that this group of teachers had a comprehensive and critical understanding of the history subject matter, nor that they were confidently challenging the official version of history in their own classrooms all, or even most, of the time. What it does suggest, though, is the importance of initiating a process whereby teachers themselves become critical readers of history. As Smith (1984a) points out, in our concern to emphasise the importance of pupils developing critical thinking skills, we too often neglect a similar concern for their teachers' development of similar skills. Introducing these teachers to sources alternative to the school textbooks was intended to encourage a process of engagement with those texts, and at best, introduce some of this thinking into their own lessons.

### **Learning the limits of change in history**

My intention in working with teachers was to involve them in a process in which they would think through new definitions of practice and new materials, adapting these for their own context. The decision as to what and how they taught always rested with the teachers themselves.

The dominant form of history teaching was transmission teaching. Given the large classes of 50 to 60 pupils, minimal resources, and a lengthy syllabus to be completed, such patterns seem the most rational response. Mike, for example, described his typical practice for each 30 minute

period. He first told the pupils the 'facts' in the textbook, he wrote questions on the chalkboard for the pupils to answer, and finally he wrote notes in paragraph form onto the chalkboard for pupils to copy into their books (fieldnotes 2/3/88). This method is described by teachers as the 'narrative' or 'telling' method and is sometimes varied with the 'question and answer' method as in the first history lesson I observed William teach. In this particular lesson, pupils sat in rows for a lesson dominated by teacher talk with a few questions at the end to elicit factual answers. Typical questions were: 'Name two minerals found long ago'; and 'The Limpopo is the boundary between which two countries?' (fieldnotes 2/8/88).

One of the most pervasive features of lessons was the whole class repeatedly chanting answers aloud even, as in the short extract below, in lessons which teachers and I had planned together:

Gladstone: Right look at this picture, looking at this picture, looking at that picture, the centre one, we say ancient mining, we what?

Class: the ancient mining

Gladstone: the what?

Class: the ancient mining

Gladstone: the ancient what?

Class: mining.

Gladstone: Right. The ancient mining. That is how the black people mined, that is their way of mining. (lesson 16/8/88)

This remained a feature of Gladstone's practice, and to a diminishing extent William's. There was minimal chanting

however, in Lumka's lessons - except where she asked pupils to read a summary aloud.

The interface of the two dilemmas is apparent in my interventions regarding teaching methods as well. Although I intended to be democratic in working with teachers, I had to learn how intervene regarding new methods without imposing my ideas. For example, in planning a lesson with Mike, I advocated a pupil-centered style of teaching which he attempted, despite his discomfort (fieldnotes 28/4/88). When he revealed after the lesson that he would only try something similar lesson in one lesson each term (fieldnotes 13/5/88), I had to consider ways to address the gap between Mike's usual practice and an alternative which would encourage pupil learning, only take 30 minutes, and teach the 'facts'. I had to learn in my practice, not only in rhetoric, that as the classroom teacher Mike had the right to 'call the shots'. Of course the tension lay in my wanting also to promote my own vision of progressive history teaching. I had again to confront the dilemma of reforming the curriculum, which seemed to meet Mike's needs, and transforming it, which was my interest. And of course, in terms of the first dilemma, teacher choices should be informed by an awareness of models of quality practice. Inevitably this demanded an interventionist role in the process of curriculum change. But intervention was not the same as imposing change which I had done at first with Mike.

We compromised by trying a lesson in which he spent a few minutes telling pupils the 'facts' and writing key words onto the chalkboard, then asking pupils to read the textbook silently and purposefully by thinking about a question he had posed. Pupil groups had to discuss the textbook chapter and work out two questions to ask the rest of the class. Finally they all copied down a five sentence summary of the main ideas from the chalkboard (fieldnotes 19/5/88). It was a more competent lesson in my view, while Mike liked this method and advised a colleague in std 3: 'Ja this is the best, I mean this method, try this one'. Mike thought the questions the children worked out were acceptable: 'For them they are good questions because they never ask, you'll never get questions from those kids' (discussion 23/5/88).

Interestingly, at the same time I did some work with Johnson in the course of which he too stressed the need to teach the contents of the syllabus. As deputy-principal he was always busy and in the end all we were able to do was to plan a double period on the lifestyle of the early farmers using the textbook content, but which he taught quite imaginatively, as I had suggested, using groups and whole class report backs (fieldnotes 21/4/88). There was never time for us to watch the videotaped lesson together and the following term he worked with Karen Morrison (see Morrison, 1988). The point here is that his more flexible repertoire of teaching skills - he had used group work before - meant that my suggestions were not an imposition as they were with Mike. At the same time he was equally concerned to adhere

to the syllabus and the textbook content. Nonetheless, my brief period of working with him did not throw my dilemma into sharp relief as did my work with Mike.

Working with Mike represented a considerable compromise on my part as I began to work within the prescribed syllabus and time limits, and to accommodate a mix of a teacher-centered approach with some group work. According to Mike, he had found the experience useful, although I doubt that there was much impact on his everyday practice. When Lufuno Nevathalu interviewed him in September, Mike said I had helped him by showing how pupils could work in groups, and by bringing history books as reference sources for him (interview 30/9/88). Mike had thus been exposed to an alternative classroom process (group work), and to more critical history sources which at the least would enrich his own content knowledge.

This experience informed my subsequent work with Gladstone, Lumka and William. I tried hard to balance opening genuine space for teachers' own ideas against also encouraging them to extend their repertoire of teaching skills. For example, I suggested to Lumka 'maybe it will help if I give you some of my ideas and then you can choose those you feel comfortable with' (planning 8/2/89). On another occasion I said to her that 'I wanted you to put your own ideas so I planned it [material on Shaka] very roughly. Do you have any ideas you want to talk about before we start?' (planning 14/4/89) By the end of our work together, Lumka felt

confident enough to fill this space with her own ideas, saying 'I'm thinking I'm going to give my ideas also of the lesson' (discussion 1/8/89), following this a few days later with a detailed lesson outline, and a guide to suitable materials based on reading and group discussion (fieldnotes 9/8/89). Returning to my earlier point regarding the limits of teachers' subject knowledge, I should add that the content of these lessons dealing with the voortrekkers followed the textbook closely. Although the methods were innovative, the content certainly was not.

At the start of our work on history in July 1988, William had decided to try his usual approach as well as the ideas I had suggested, saying 'Well I think I will start by my old approach then we'll meet halfway with your approach' (planning 19/7/88). As with Lumka and Gladstone, I asked him how he wanted to teach the lesson and then tried both to incorporate, but also to extend, these ideas. By January 1989, William still regarded the narrative method and question and answer as the mainstays of his teaching, but was keen to use more visual material in helping pupils to understand the content. By now, I felt it appropriate to suggest:

How about if I try and plan just these first three lessons [on Sir George Grey], we take it a section at a time and then I bring that plan to you with examples of material but I base it around question and answer and narrative, but looking for visual information to help understanding. Then you look at the stuff and if it's alright, you go ahead. (planning 24/1/89)

Similarly, in working with Gladstone in the third term of 1988, I was careful to elicit his ideas and intentions and then to bring material and add suggestions with which I thought he would feel comfortable. For example, in planning his lesson on gold mining, he identified the visual material he wanted - a map, pictures of early Johannesburg and its subsequent development, the development of transport - for a lesson to be done in a single period. In designing the worksheet I added visual material on african miners and a paragraph of text for each illustration, the idea being that pupils would match the jumbled text and the illustrations (fieldnotes 18/8/89).

According to the teachers, they had enjoyed this way of working together. William, for example, commented to the project evaluator early in 1990 on our way of working that 'Melanie was of help because before you tackle any lesson she would come to you and discuss the lesson, and you decide on the ideas' (interview with S. Philcox 9/2/90). Similarly, Gladstone remarked to Lufuno Nevathalu that:

she's a person who is within reach you know, if you happen to talk to her she will listen to you, you simply share ideas, she is not the person that always puts words into your mouth, no she comes over with her ideas and let's you decide on the ideas and change those ideas so as to suit you. (interview 28/9/88)

By the end of my work with the teachers I felt I had learnt better how to start from where the teachers were. At the same time this meant recognising that their primary interest was a limited reform of the curriculum. The tension in

terms of the key dilemma structuring this section, lay in the fact that I continually sought ways to move teachers beyond reform. In this way the dilemmas of reform and transformation, and democratic and directive practice intersected as I intervened to encourage curriculum change.

### **The language question and changing history teaching**

Such compromises as I was having to make did not mean that I no longer tried to find space for alternative methods and materials. Innovation in methods of teaching was further complicated, however, by the question of language - both the medium of instruction and the language of the subject itself. The language demands of history include the subject register, the readability of the textbook and the teacher's own use of language. Such demands should not be underestimated in the context of DET schools, as I was coming to realise by 1988.

Since 1982, in response to pressure from the African Teachers Association of South Africa (ATASA), english has been the medium of instruction in DET schools from std 3. From their first year of school in sub A to their fourth year in std 2, pupils are taught in their mother tongue (xhosa in the Cape), learning english and afrikaans as subjects from their second year (sub B). These children thus face the formidable task of learning three languages. Linguists estimate that whereas std 3 pupils need a vocabulary of 8000 english words to cope with english as

medium of instruction, they only have about 700 'poorly rehearsed' words by the end of std 2 (Southey 1990). French (1990) suggests the transition to english is 'deeply disabling', while Ellis points out that where english is a second language for pupils and their teachers 'the resources for overcoming constraints imposed by the choice of classroom roles are less readily available' (1987:83). MacDonald's research in Boputhatswana primary schools found that teachers had great difficulty in coping with the switch to english in std 3, even where teachers in std 2 had been competent english teachers and experimental in their overall approach to teaching:

We found anxious teachers who were struggling to get their children to understand difficult concepts in english, teachers who were racing against the clock to get their lessons finished, teachers who were no longer using group work in any meaningful way...At this stage teachers find it difficult to teach and children find it difficult to learn. (1988:3)

Teachers in the project identified language as a major problem. As Lumka explained:

The std 3s, they say history, geography, health, all these, because they were taught from the junior primary school in xhosa, [but] now everything is taught in english, [so] they say 'Oh! it's difficult' (interview 27/11/89).

Similarly, at a meeting between myself, Karen Morrison and the std 3 teachers from Khanyisiwe, Adelaide commented:

the only problem we are having is the language problem because when we teach we find they seem to understand but when we test them we find that there are very few passes and we discover it's because they don't understand the language. (meeting 19/7/88)

Gladstone captured the problems facing history teachers who have to teach through the medium of a second language:

Our kids don't understand english because it's not their first language and we are having difficulty there. Now I have two concerns, that is teaching the language, at the same time as giving the kids the facts and encouraging them to think about the event. (discussion 13/10/88).

This situation is exacerbated by the crippling effects of bantu education. Over several decades the standard of school english has declined, for example, matric passes in english fell from 78% in 1978 to 45% in 1983 (Hartshorne, 1987:77). Hartshorne emphasises:

it is stating the obvious to say that english-medium can be effective only if both teachers and pupils have the capacity to use english in the classroom at a level appropriate to the learning required by the curriculum, and also have the textbooks and other materials in english that have been written at a level that has to take these factors into account. Yet the effects of both policy and practice over the last thirty years have been to reduce this capacity seriously and to lower the standards of english throughout the system. (1987:77)

Teachers thus will often translate from english into xhosa in the classroom, while the everyday language of the school assemblies, the staff room, the playground and the community is xhosa rather than english. Teachers tended to justify the use of xhosa by saying the pupils did not understand.

Yet on more than one occasion, teachers and at least two of the school principals, remarked on the fact that the pupils appeared to have no difficulty in following lessons given by english-speaking UCT student teachers. Lufuno Nevathalu found that std 3 teachers in his ethnographic study at Sizithabathele did a lot of explaining in xhosa, even though pupils themselves said they would rather be taught in

english (Nevathalu, 1988). Segregated residential areas and apartheid schools further entrench the limited use of english in DET schools. As I began to understand from working with teachers in these schools, beginning in 1987, and deepening over the following two years, changing the process of history teaching meant addressing english as medium of instruction, as well as entrenched transmission teaching practices. It also meant that in evaluating changes in the teaching of history, what might seem to be limited gains in a context where pupils are learning through a first language, are in fact far more significant in this context, given the difficulties these teachers and their pupils faced.

I encouraged teachers to use only english in their lessons because it seemed to me that teachers assumed too quickly that children did not understand and resorted to xhosa explanations. Lumka initially had difficulty with this, feeling that 'you have to explain in xhosa' (planning 8/2/89). She asked me to teach a lesson to the weakest std 3 class because she felt she was using 'too much xhosa' (discussion 27/2/89). She followed this with a similar lesson of her own but with a different class, and spoke only in english. She was satisfied that the children had understood, and said she intended to stick to english in future lessons (discussion 14/4/89).

Both William and Gladstone were quite skilled, I thought, at explaining in english. Rob Sieborger, who viewed videotapes

of two of William's lessons, commented on William's facility in explaining and using language with the pupils. Nevertheless, Rob felt William himself did not appreciate 'that he has a reasonable gift for making his language accessible', because of his habit of following good explanations with a xhosa translation. Significantly, Rob was impressed by William's lesson on early mining taught in August 1989, and concluded that 'by just sticking to english in a lesson and working at it he was pretty much succeeding at what he was trying to do' (discussion 23/11/89). A year after the first lesson on early mining which I had observed, William had developed a good feel for the words the pupils were likely to find difficult. Here he explains the meaning of 'mineral':

Why do we say they are minerals? We say they are minerals because they are mined or extracted from the earth. In other words, all metals which are dug or mined in the earth are called minerals.(lesson 3/8/89)

In the same lesson he explains the meaning of blacksmith:

William: What is a blacksmith?

Pupil: Blacksmith is black people

William: Not quite. Blacksmith is one who works with iron, he's called a blacksmith.(lesson 3/8/89)

And the meaning of spear and hoe:

Now you see people fixing the wooden handles to the spears, so that you use the spear to defend yourself against your enemy. This picture shows us the hoe, the hoe is used when we plant our crops and remove the weeds.(lesson 3/8/89)

Rob Sieborger also watched the video of Lumka's lesson on the 1820 settlers. He felt her use of language was even

better than William's, in that she consciously reinforced terms. She started the lesson with a clear explanation of the reasons for the emigration of the settlers:

About 200 years ago, the British settlers came to the Cape. They were, they came, because in Britain the jobs were difficult to find and times were hard and they came to the Cape to start a better life (lesson 1/8/89).

And she explained, for example, the meaning of town - 'see it is like a town, there's a lot of houses' (lesson 1/8/89).

Clearly these were skills the teachers already had, prior to their involvement in the project. In the case of both Lumka and William, Rob Sieborger identified their awareness and use of language as evidence of their skill as teachers. Douglas had observed in a conversation with me that pupils struggled with history, not only because of the medium of instruction but also because of the language of history. He had observed that even when the children understood the english, they struggled to grasp historical concepts (fieldnotes 27/11/89). What I am claiming as a result of the engagement of William and Lumka in reflective practice, is a greater sensitivity to language use and language medium, evident both in their own use of language and in their attempts to limit xhosa translations. As pointed out earlier, the latter was not usual practice in content subjects. For example, the principal of Phakamisa commented on the widespread tendency to 'xhosa-ise' the lessons. 'We translate too much', he said, 'we are spoon feeding the children...but this project has made teachers to realise

there's no need for them to be spoon fed' (interview 12/10/89).

#### **New methods and materials**

At planning meetings I also spoke about the role of language in learning, and hence pupils thinking and talking about history. When Lumka and I met to plan her first ever history lesson in February 1989 I said things like

Here are two pictures for the children to look at, and they talk to a partner or a group about what they see in the pictures, how the khoikhoi lived, whether they moved around a lot and so on, so they're thinking about it, they're talking about the pictures and they're building up their own understanding. (planning 8/2/89)

In planning lessons together, the teachers and I devised activities that involved the pupils in reading, talking and writing. Effective activities involved matching visual information and text, and building up a summary. In some cases pupils read a longer piece of text and helped each other understand it - for example Lumka's lesson on the 1820 settlers (see appendix E), and William's lesson on Sir George Grey. As evidence of where Lumka had moved in her own understanding, by the time we stopped working together she was able to plan her own lessons on the voortrekkers which included writing a piece of text for pupils to read and help each other understand, pupils' studying and talking together about a map, and pupils' building a summary (fieldnotes 9/8/89). And William, by the end of our work together, was able to articulate his understanding of language and learning when we discussed his lesson on early

mining. He had liked the early mining worksheet with text and illustrations (see appendix E) because 'because everything is involved. Reading is involved, writing is also involved, speaking is also involved (interview 5/10/89).

I encouraged the teachers to experiment with group work so that pupils could help each other understand the subject and the language and share ideas. For example, I suggested to Gladstone 'What about if they worked with a partner or worked in a small group where they might be able to help each other?' (discussion 29/8/88). This group of teachers said they found group learning effective. Lumka found this to be the most important thing in her teaching because 'I can say that the pupils are following, catching what I'm saying to them'. At first she had 'no idea how to start, how to make the children understand the lesson' but watching children work in groups with me 'that alone helped me, the way they co-operate with others also gave me another experience' (discussion 14/4/89). By the end of 1989, she was planning to use group work in teaching health as well. Although she had expected to encounter difficulties in teaching a content subject, instead she had found her pupils 'gained a love of history because it was not so difficult for each person because they were discussing in the class, helping each other' (interview 27/11/89). Thus Lumka had been 'so surprised' at how well the children coped. The principal of her school also commented positively on her use of group work:

Like the history lesson that was taught in one class, I think it was std 3, where they were discovering for themselves, answering questions, picking them up from the teacher, and looking for the answers because they were working as a group. And that talk amongst themselves, there is a tendency for the teacher to want to be a lecturer in the primary school and he goes and goes with the lesson...but with your project I realised that many classes are involving the kids. (interview 12/10/89)

When William first tried group work early in 1989 he commented that 'it gave me another attitude towards them [groups] because they seemed to enjoy what they were doing' (discussion 11/4/89). By the end of 1989, he had rearranged his classroom so that pupils were now grouped in clusters of desks, rather than in long rows.

We also found that visual material helped the children to understand both the english and the history, for example, William's earlier comments on his early mining lesson where the use of illustrations had helped pupils to understand both the english and the content. Gladstone felt the use of illustrations helped because pupils 'were very very interested in seeing the things in front of them' (discussion 18/8/88). Importantly, even Rob Sieborger, after watching the videos of lessons given by William and Lumka, remarked that their use of visual material had 'informed my own thinking' (interview 28/11/89).

In Lumka's lesson on the zulu king Shaka, we tried developing the skill of empathy and language skills. I brought an extract from the fictionalised biography Shaka by Thomas Mofolo, explaining that 'there are so few black

heroes that the children hear about in the history lessons, so it helps to get a feel for what it was like, to put the people in history - it's exciting for the pupils' (planning 14/4/89). The language of the extract was quite difficult for std 3 (see appendix E) but I explained that I hoped that pupil interest in this dramatic account of the young Shaka killing a lion, and co-operative group work, would enable pupils to cope with the text. Lumka went on to try the story with her classes and we discussed it afterwards:

Lumka: I first read the story for them, then one of them summarised it for me. After that it took them about an hour because they were talking to one another.

Melanie: To each other in the group?

Lumka: To each other, then they, then one of them summarised it in xhosa and another one summarised it in english.

Melanie: Were the summaries good?

Lumka: They were good and Cherry [UCT student] was also there.

Melanie: What did she say about the lesson?

Lumka: She was impressed about the talking in english. They are the last [weakest] group and the one's who was talking so proudly.

Melanie: And when they were talking about the story in their groups did you listen, could you hear the kinds of things they were saying?

Lumka: They were talking about the men, the old men who were running away when Shaka was coming to kill the lion, and the women who were not far from the place where Shaka killed the lion. And they were commenting about how this, how they felt after Shaka had killed the lion.

Melanie: Do you think they enjoyed the story?

Lumka: They enjoyed it, ja.

Melanie: Do you think that was a good way for them to get excited about history, hearing a story like that?

Lumka: They were discussing, talking to themselves, asking themselves questions, how these

people react when they saw, when a young man killed the lion. (discussion 3/5/89)

William and Lumka engaged in the most sustained experiments-in-action in teaching their history classes. By the end of our work together, William was able to present a lesson on early mining in 1989 which was noticeably different from the one I had observed him give a year previously. While his first lesson had been dominated by teacher talk, he was now able to involve his pupils in group and class work, he made skilful use of the materials we had planned together, handling the discussion of the visual materials well. As Rob Sieborger put it, 'making space for explanations and receiving responses well'. William used language in this lesson to shape meaning for the pupils, some of which Rob Sieborger noted 'must have come from the project'. Rob noticed a difference between the lesson on Sir George Grey in April 1989 and this lesson in August, remarking that William was now 'wanting to listen to pupils, to help them, and to explore understanding' (discussion 23/11/89).

Lumka, who had never taught history before, was able to present a lesson in which pupils worked in groups using worksheet material, she interacted comfortably with pupils while they worked, and she developed pupil understanding. Rob Sieborger remarked on her easy and comfortable management of pupils working in pairs, her attempts to develop understanding inductively, and her attempts to use illustrations to prompt pupil understanding (discussion 23/11/89). When Douglas was interviewed early in 1990 by

the PREP evaluator he commented that Lumka had 'found more problems than me [at first], but when we come together with her and discuss these concepts I find she is improving and she tried to help me!' (interview with S. Philcox 8/2/90) In conversation with me the previous year he had remarked on how different Lumka's history lessons were from the dominant telling mode. These classes were 'very motivated', 'interested' and 'they understood' although 'history is the most difficult subject in our school' (fieldnotes 27/11/89). Finally, Rob thought the physical arrangement of the classroom by William and by Lumka of pupils in groups of desks, the confident use of resources, and the breaking away from transmission teaching were all evidence of transformative moments (discussion 23/11/89).

In final interviews, Lumka and William commented positively on their own learning. Lumka said she 'was doing well although there are still things that I would polish up next time'. She was able to evaluate to some extent different textbooks, preferring Time for History because 'the english is simple, it has more information, and it is printed in the 80s'. She felt she had 'gained confidence and improved my teaching', and 'that there is nothing that is difficult in any subject if you are determined to know that subject' (interview 27/11/89). William felt that he had not completely changed his method but was now 'flexible' in his use of different methods. As a teacher he now felt 'quite happy and free and there's nothing that seems to be difficult, because everything now seems to be a challenge to

me' (interview 5/10/89). William had also decided to show one of his videotaped lessons to the staff at his school in May 1989. He had introduced the lesson and responded to comments and questions. He thought the experience was 'marvellous' (discussion 18/7/89), while Tozi Mgobozi, who had organised the equipment and observed the workshop, noted that William had been confident and assured (fieldnotes 28/7/89).

Gladstone had emphasised his own learning process the previous year, saying he valued the sharing of ideas and classroom experimentation:

You take that information for the first time. I know that's not an easy thing to do to use the methods perfectly, you know, 100% from the word go, but if you take them and use them you know you will see how they work and then after, if you are going to evaluate whether they have worked...now you are trying to improve by using your own thinking. (interview with L. Nevathalu 28/9/88)

There is evidence then from the teachers themselves, from their peers, from one school principal, from an outside observer, from the PREP evaluator and from myself of changes in William and Lumka's practice and their understanding of that practice. This is not to say that old methods did not persist. Both these teachers still reverted to transmission teaching. Indeed the main recurring problem was tests and exams, as one would expect in a system where such a pervasive testing paradigm dominates practice. The teachers continued to exhibit a strong concern with knowledge as a product and to use exams and tests as the means by which

they evaluated the success of their teaching. Lumka, for example, assessed her lesson according to student performance in tests, remarking at a meeting in July that 'to be sure whether they understand the lesson', she had given them a short test after the lesson (discussion 14/7/89). In our final interview she reported that 74% of the std 3s had passed history, with an average mark of 51% (interview 27/11/89). Concern for knowledge as product was also evident, for example, in her response to my question on what she thought pupils had learned in her lesson on the 1820 settlers. She explained that they now knew when the British settlers had arrived, where they had settled and the people with whom they had mixed - in other words they knew the 'facts' (discussion 4/8/89). To an even greater extent this 'testing paradigm' was evident in William's lessons. Thus at the end of a lesson on Sir George Grey, he asked the pupils how many words they had managed to fill in correctly in the summary because, he later explained, he wanted to see 'how much did they observe, did they master' (discussion 18/7/89). And he remarked to the PREP evaluator in 1990 that the pupils had 'performed rather good' in their history exams as evidence for how he had gained from working in the project. (interview with S. Philcox 9/2/90)

This is all to be expected in a context where pupils and their parents, as well as the school, regard passing exams as a criteria of successful teaching (if not learning), and where students are promoted, or not, to the next standard only on the basis of these exam results. For as long as

this testing paradigm is so powerful, teachers will need to meet its demands in order to win space to experiment with new ideas and materials which encourage understanding rather than rote learning. This recognition applies equally to any outside facilitator working with teachers for educational change. In terms of transforming teaching, a major gap in my work lay in not raising or addressing with teachers the critical question of assessment. As Sieborger (1988b) notes, for as long as the effects of the public school-leaving matriculation exam have a backwash effect throughout the school system, changing the form and content of the syllabus must also incorporate changes in the form and content of examinations - if such changes are to have any significant impact.

The point about these experiments-in-action with different methods is that they were part of a process of teachers' imagining how their teaching might be different. There is less certain evidence for Mike, as I explained earlier in this chapter, or for Gladstone whose tape-recorded lessons suggest the persistence of question and answer and teacher telling, albeit now supported by some good visual material. There is some evidence for a broader approach to the content of history lessons but arguably no unambiguous evidence of teachers' locating this content in the terms of an historical paradigm. At the same time, in my own practice, the records show a growing ability to work with teachers from their own concerns, while still extending their repertoire of teaching skills in a context where

responsibility for determining classroom action finally lay with the teachers themselves.

CHAPTER EIGHT: EXPLORING JUNIOR PRIMARY ENGLISH READING  
1988-1989

This chapter first introduces the group of junior primary teachers, all from Phakamisa school, with whom I worked in 1988 and 1989. As with other participants from this school, involvement in the project was voluntary and teachers were free to withdraw at any point if they wished. The concern of these teachers was to improve their teaching of english reading. The chapter considers attempts to widen the content of reading lessons beyond use of the class reader only. The role and input of specialist help through workshops and classroom support is detailed. Teachers' classroom practice is considered, together with their perceptions of change and learning in their practice. Comment by the school's principal is included, as well as the observations of an outsider - Alan Kenyon - on the work of one of the teachers in the group.

Unlike history, I had no specialist knowledge of junior primary teaching. The open subject agenda of the project was intended to enable teachers to say what the problem areas were in their teaching but this also meant risking not being able to provide specialist help. Indeed, when the junior primary teachers from Phakamisa said they wished to join the project, I agreed only on condition that help would be available from a primary specialist (fieldnotes 2/3/88). Two specialists worked with the teachers. In the first instance, Wendy Flanagan presented a workshop in March 1988. In July 1988 Jan Davidson not only presented a workshop, but

worked alongside the teachers in their classrooms as they experimented with the ideas she had suggested. My role with this group was more of a facilitator of reflective teaching and resource person, although even in that role I found it important to acquire an understanding of the reading process with young children in order to enrich my discussions with the teachers.

In the junior primary school pupils are taught in mother tongue (xhosa), studying english and afrikaans as subjects from sub B. English periods are divided each week between reading, language and written work, with only two half hour periods a week allocated to reading. Testing is emphasised from the first year of school and pupils write regular tests on language, maths, religious education, health education and environmental studies. The results of these tests determine whether they will proceed to the next year of schooling. This emphasis on the importance of testing over teaching, includes approaches to teaching reading.<sup>1</sup>

In 1988 six junior primary teachers were involved in the project - Josephine and Nzwakie taught sub B, Veronica and Bulelwa std 1, and Elizabeth and Leah std 2. Bulelwa joined the project in the third term of 1988 after being favourably impressed by what she had seen Veronica doing with her

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1. It is worth repeating that very few households would have any books, while public library facilities are non-existent or poor in the townships. While an oral tradition of story telling has survived, there is no sustained reading culture in the townships and children are unlikely to see family members reading for enjoyment, or to have stories read to them, or to be encouraged to read.

class. Josephine and Nzwakie only worked with me in 1988 for reasons which I explain later in the chapter. This account therefore concentrates on the work of the other four junior primary teachers, although both Josephine and Nzwakie said at the end of 1988 that they had learned new ideas and changed as teachers.

Josephine had been teaching since 1961, having completed std 6 plus a three year junior primary diploma. Veronica, Nzwakie and Elizabeth had all finished std 8 plus a two year junior primary diploma. They had been teaching since 1977, 1978 and 1981 respectively. Veronica and Elizabeth were studying part-time for matric. Leah and Bulelwa only started teaching in 1988, after matriculating and completing a junior primary diploma and senior primary diploma respectively. None of these teachers had ever attended in-service training organised by the DET, nor had they been involved in any other projects.

Like the history teachers, these teachers are faced with teaching english as second language speakers themselves. Classes are large - on average 50 pupils - and resources are limited. For example, teachers did not have enough readers for each child in the class. Nevertheless all these junior primary teachers made an effort to make their classrooms attractive. They made bright and attractive language and maths charts, displayed posters, pinned up the children's art work, even in some cases, set up simple nature tables. As Veronica put it, 'the classroom must not be a jail cell,

it must be bright so that when the child comes into a classroom he must feel "I am in my classroom", not a cell' (interview 17/10/89).

### Changing reading texts

Teachers are expected to read and complete the prescribed class reader with their pupils. Thus teachers felt constrained to follow the readers although expressing problems with them. As Leah said of a fellow std 2 teacher who felt that reading should be based only around the class reader:

Well I won't blame her because she knows that here at school at certain periods or a certain time, the principal or the h.o.d, she goes from class to class, asking where we are with the book now, and if you're behind they write it down, she gives a report and it goes in your file. (interview 17/10/88)

Given that teachers felt they could not entirely ignore class readers, in 1989 we tried developing a different way of using the prescribed reader, as well as finding ways to incorporate the prescribed reader into teaching ideas suggested by Jan Davidson in July 1988. At the same time, teachers' insistence on using readers was problematic in terms of my transformative intent. As Smith (1984b) points out, the programmatic instruction in class readers 'rarely engages children in meaningful reading and writing activities', being more likely to teach children that 'reading and writing are meaningless, laborious and often stressful' (1984b:10). He argues that reading programmes are underpinned by an interest in control:

Teachers need programmes if they do not trust children to learn, if they feel they must control their learning every step of the way. And people outside the classroom insist on programmes if they do not trust teachers to teach, if they feel they must control what teachers do every step of the way. The issue is not pedagogical at all - it is political. (1984b:11)

The point here is that class readers ideally would have a limited place in emancipatory literacy teaching, but we were working in far less than ideal circumstances.

Smith notes that the language of reading programmes is 'fragmented, decontextualised and trivial' (1984b:10). Project teachers, for example, complained that the language of the readers was too formal, and 'not like everyday language' (fieldnotes 13/4/88). They found stories too long in std 2 for a single lesson, and often 'boring' for the children (fieldnotes 1/6/89). Teachers did not comment much on the ideological content of the stories. Only Veronica noted that the readers 'led pupils to be stereotyped' (interview with L. Nevathalu 29/9/88). For example, stories such as 'Mary Looks For Work' perpetuate stereotypes of africans as domestic workers for wealthy whites. For example, when nine year old Mary loses the money she has been given to buy bread for her family, she says, 'I will go and look for work at some of the big houses, they will give me money and I will be able to buy bread' (English Through Activity Std 2:30). In the same reader, Isabel and Bongani have to leave school because their father can no longer afford to pay their fees. Their problem is solved when they help catch a gang of thieves for which they are given a reward. Such stories do not problematise the social

relations of the wider society, and no questions are raised as to why some children receive expensive schooling provided virtually free by the state while others do not, or why some families suffer poverty and unemployment and others do not. There are potentially confusing inaccuracies in some stories as well, for example 'The Proud Monkey' tells the reader about South African monkeys swinging by their tails through the trees (English Through Activity Std 2). Now South American monkeys swing by their tails, not South African ones! A child coming from the rural areas, or even encountering this story in a rural school, may well be confused by the contradiction between her own personal knowledge of monkeys and that presented in the story. This is also not to say, however, that selected stories from the readers might not be of some use.

Each teacher also had a 'box' library in her classroom, supplied by the privately funded Read Educate and Develop (READ) project. This was a large sturdy wooden box containing a selection of books in english and xhosa carefully chosen for content and readability by READ. But teachers were not making use of this valuable resource when they first became involved in the project, simply because they did not know how to use it. Indeed, Alan Kenyon commented, after listening to the transcript of an October 1988 interview with Leah and Elizabeth, that he had been struck by how teachers were almost disempowered by the looming presence of this unexplored box! (discussion 13/12/90) Elizabeth explained that 'we didn't have time for

the library books' (interview with L. Nevathalu 29/9/88), while she also 'hadn't realised' that she could use material other than the prescribed book. Similarly, Leah observed that 'We didn't know that we can supplement - we were just sticking to that book of the department' (discussion 28/8/88). By the end of the project, however, teachers were using not only the prescribed reader, but also photocopied reading material and books from UCT, and integrating the READ box library into their reading lessons.

They were also confident enough of their practice to take some risks regarding the prescribed reader. The conviction that the class reader was only one resource for reading varied from teacher to teacher, with Veronica and Bulelwa most persuaded of its limitations. In a final interview, Veronica commented:

It's not necessary to use it [class reader] a lot because as I see it a child becomes stereotyped. There must be a variety. I don't think it's necessary to stick to the prescribed book. Sometimes you see the book doesn't teach anything to the child, the stories aren't meaningful. They are just there to be read. In my class I don't believe in reading quantity because what I've discovered is you do the first lesson, you go to the second lesson, and so on. When you go back to the first lesson you find the pupils didn't grasp anything. So I just go according to the pace of the pupils. It's no use to read all the stories in that book and the pupils don't grasp anything and you can see there's no improvement. That means you are just interested in the syllabus, to finish off the syllabus. (interview 17/10/89)

Bulelwa, whose library box was not even in the classroom when she first became involved in the project - we had to collect it from the school storeroom - said at the end of our work together:

the pupils must be able to gain knowledge, so if they can only read the prescribed book, I don't think it will work. I think they must read other books so they can gain knowledge and improve their reading. (interview 20/10/89)

Leah and Elizabeth were more concerned to complete the prescribed book. Elizabeth, for example, noted as evidence for improvement in her teaching by the end of 1989 that for the first time she had been able to finish the reader (interview 16/10/89). Alan Kenyon raised the possibility that this emphasis might arise from their position in the final year of junior primary. There is a tendency for the std 3 teachers to blame the std 2 teachers for any problems they encounter in teaching the children. Leah, for example, complained that std 3 teachers 'say the pupils don't know nothing, they cannot even utter an english word', with Elizabeth adding that 'you the teacher are blamed' (interview 17/10/88). Hence the std 2 teachers may well be concerned to complete all that is required in order to absolve themselves of such blame. This, however, was not raised with the teachers themselves and remains an unconfirmed supposition. Nevertheless, Leah and Elizabeth still made use of their box libraries and additional story material with their classes (discussion 1/6/89).

### **Changing the process of teaching reading**

The use of additional materials was closely related to the process of teaching reading which we explored as a group.

The practice of the teachers before they became involved in the project was later described by Veronica:

When you teach reading you are supposed to drill those words. You choose the difficult words which you think they are not going to be familiar to the pupils, and then you drill them, you use them in sentences, and then you read the passage aloud for pattern reading to the pupils, and then the pupils read after you, the teacher. (interview with T. Mgobozi 24/8/89)

This practice was reinforced by the class reader which suggested a similar method: first teach new words on the chalkboard; present new words on flashcards; read the passage aloud with the class, all reading together; the whole class reads the same passage aloud but each child at her own speed; and finally ask a few easy questions about the story. Each story in the reader is preceded by a list of 'difficult' words, followed by the story itself, and a few questions at the end (English Through Activity Std 1 and Std 2).

At three workshops held between 1988 and 1989, teachers were introduced to new ideas for teaching reading. The first workshop was presented by Wendy Flanagan on 25 March 1988. Present at the workshop were Nzwakie, Josephine, Veronica, Leah and Elizabeth. I sat in on the workshop taking notes which I later wrote up in the form of action steps for a reading lesson. This was not meant to be prescriptive, but rather to support teachers in working through the ideas in ways appropriate for their own classes. At the workshop Wendy Flanagan placed great emphasis on reading as a source of pleasure and satisfaction using stories the pupils would

enjoy, and on the development of comprehension of print. Reading meant understanding, not just recognising the words on the page, and children would learn to read by reading (see appendix F). She was careful to explain the reasons for each step, rather than simply presenting teachers with a new recipe or technique. For example, illustrations were important, she said 'because I want the children to understand, and because I don't want to translate into xhosa, I use a picture that gives information about the text' (fieldnotes 25/3/88). At the end of this workshop teachers voiced their concern, however, at not using the prescribed reader, agreeing to try the new ideas only after I had obtained the agreement of the principal a few days later (fieldnotes 29/3/88).

After this workshop all five teachers went on to try the ideas and to videotape a double period reading lesson in their classrooms in May 1988. Teachers first chose suitable stories from a selection I brought in April, I enlarged the illustrations and they made the matching strips of text. While each teacher watched her own video, together with her pupils, I wrote a lesson description with a few comments running alongside. We then met one-to-one to discuss their lessons using my lesson notes. As explained in chapter five, this proved more successful in encouraging teachers to describe and explain the reasons for their action than my adopting a recessive role (discussion 5/5/88; 16/5/88; 17/5/88). My overall impression was that teachers had enjoyed trying new ideas, although they found that the

workshop suggestions could not all be implemented in two reading lessons each week, and they felt they needed to continue practising the method.

Still feeling the need for further specialist support, I invited Jan Davidson to present a second workshop in July 1988. Jan had completed a four year Bachelor of Primary Education degree at UCT in 1984. Recently, she had spent an exciting year teaching young non-english speaking Maori children in New Zealand, using big books and a language experience approach to reading (see Melser, 1987), not unlike the method advocated at the first workshop. I again observed at the workshop and took notes to write up afterwards for the teachers. Jan outlined a way of teaching reading (see appendix F) using relevant and interesting stories, poems and songs and a range of activities in groups, including: reading stories to pupils; pupils reading aloud and silently; pupils discussing what they read, and children writing and drawing about what they had read (fieldnotes 20/7/88). I thought teachers were confused by what seemed to be a rather complicated method - at least organisationally - with large classes and limited materials. Nevertheless Leah volunteered to have Jan visit her class, and afterwards help her plan and run a lesson. Jan's own New Zealand experience in learning this teaching method had been similar, she said - having an experienced teacher-facilitator working alongside her in the class (fieldnotes 20/7/88).

The whole group met in August after Jan had worked alongside Leah in her classroom. At this meeting Jan told us that both the head of department, as well as Elizabeth and the third std 2 teacher, had watched part of Leah's lesson and 'from not being interested were quite interested' (discussion 2/8/88). Leah confidently described for the rest of the group how she had first read to her class, then organised a range of group activities (see appendix F), including listening to a story from the prescribed reader on audiotape, and reading library books. She pointed out enthusiastically that: 'I think this method works because, the first thing, they did enjoy this because before they were getting bored. It was just me in front reading for them' (discussion 2/8/88). While Elizabeth, having watched Leah and Jan at work, observed:

I think it works because it's a lot of activities happening during a short period because we at first, we were just concentrated in reading, we were just holding that book and read to the children or with the children. We did not know that we can apply so many activities during a short period. (discussion 2/8/88)

Later Leah added: 'It was very interesting because everyone was serious, busy'. Certainly Alan Kenyon thought this the most successful of Leah's three videotaped lessons (discussion 13/12/90). Apparently it had been important for both Leah and Elizabeth to see the method in action, for, as Jan remarked 'when you see it happening all of a sudden it doesn't seem so difficult'. After this meeting, arrangements were made to video lessons in the std 1 and 2 classes. Nzwakie had not been involved in Jan's workshop or the follow-up, preferring to concentrate on the ideas

suggested by Wendy Flanagan, while Josephine preferred to wait before committing herself to trying out these new ideas. Impressed by what she had seen in Veronica's class, Bulelwa had joined the group and Jan went on to work with her, Elizabeth and Veronica helping them plan and teach a reading lesson.

Given the group's enthusiasm, we arranged to meet on a Sunday to begin viewing these lessons. On 28 August I fetched Veronica, Leah, Elizabeth and Josephine from the township and took them through to UCT where we met Jan and watched the std 2 lessons. Two days later, having been given permission for the teachers to leave school at 11.30, and joined also by Bulelwa and Nzwakie, we watched the std 1 lessons, also at UCT. By now Leah was convinced of the benefits of dividing her class into smaller groups. Until then, when the teachers spoke of 'group work', they meant dividing their class into three ability groups, about twenty in a group. Often the two faster groups were sent outside to read alone so that the teacher could work with the weaker pupils. Working with smaller groups, Leah reflected 'it's easy for you to see which one did not understand' (discussion 28/8/88). Similarly, Veronica noted two days later, that previously it might be September before the teacher 'can see there are pupils who cannot read, because you didn't get time to see each and every child' (discussion 30/8/88). Nzwakie was sufficiently impressed by what she saw to invite Jan to work with her as well.

While Jan contributed to the discussion of the lessons, I noted the extent to which teachers' owned the occasion and their changing classroom practice. For example, when Nzwakie raised questions, it was Elizabeth who explained the method to her. When she asked how a teacher could tell if the children understood the story if they did not all read it aloud, it was Elizabeth and Veronica who pointed out that correct pronunciation and reading were not the same, for, as Veronica explained, a child could read aloud perfectly and yet not understand what she had read (discussion 30/8/88). These teachers had thus begun to understand and articulate the problems with their previous method of teaching reading, compared to only expressing a general dissatisfaction at the start of the project. For example, Elizabeth pointed out:

The other thing, we've been wasting time for so long, for many years, explaining words. We choose, we used to choose difficult words and we use such a long time explaining those words to the children [rather] than getting them to read. (discussion 30/8/88)

Veronica, too, related how 'I was reading and then they read after me and then I discovered that no, these pupils are memorising what I say'.

Leah had suggested that we show one of the videos to the principal. Given the strong sense of ownership of the process emerging from these two meetings, I suggested we follow this with a workshop for all junior primary teachers at the school. This workshop is evaluated later in this chapter, together with a second workshop in October 1989.

By the end of 1988, the teachers were confident that they were improving. In an unstructured interview with Elizabeth and Leah in October 1988, they first described their problems with the way they had been teaching. For example, Leah observed:

And the other thing, you will see that they don't understand nothing when you ask them a question. It's when we see, no, this one did not understand, he was just saying the words as they were coming from my mouth. (interview 17/10/88)

But now she noted:

And the other thing that I see that they have improved. One day I said to them that they must read for me from the prescribed book, ETA. I said to them that they must read very silently inside and after that they are going to tell me what is happening from that particular story, and I was surprised they just tell me the story as it was. They told me in xhosa but they have read it in english. (interview 17/10/88)

Elizabeth was excited by the different group activities, adding that 'I can say that my children have improved because now they can also read those library books...the child selects a book that she thinks suits her, yes, and enjoys it' (interview 17/10/88). Leah remarked that until they had worked with Jan 'we only thought that reading was just taking a book and read, but there were many things that were involved, things like poems'. Elizabeth noted that she had found it helpful to watch Jan because 'we did not know that when you read a book you must read as if you are telling a story...we just read the book, we don't change the voice, and the children were so interested about that' (interview 17/10/88). Both Josephine and Nzwakie were also positive about their involvement in the project in 1988. Josephine particularly remembered her lesson in May using

the story I Want an Ice-cream, of which she said, 'You know every child paid attention and he sees what they have discussed, those written words and the drawings' and 'now when they come to my class those children cannot forget that first lesson I teach with them' (interview 18/10/88). Nzwakie mentioned that 'as teachers we didn't know how to go away from that monotony [of the class reader]' (interview 18/10/88). Although it was not possible to interview Veronica and Bulelwa together at the end of 1988 because Veronica was busy with her exams, the records of discussions and of their lessons show them also experimenting-in-action and asserting their own voices.

This is not to say that all these teachers had experienced sudden and irreversible changes in their practice, even older teaching habits like chanting aloud and meaningless repetition died hard. Interestingly enough, when Jan visited Leah's class to observe a reading lesson, Leah's practice was no different from before she joined the project. Jan reported to me that Leah was still using the traditional method because 'the principal checked' whether they were working through the reader (fieldnotes 25/7/88).

In 1989 Nzwakie worked with Wendy Flanagan. She particularly wanted help with 'slow readers' and I did not feel able to provide specialised help myself (fieldnotes 25/1/89). Josephine moved to sub A and decided not to continue because she saw what we had done as relating to english reading only, and sub A pupils do not learn english (fieldnotes

18/1/89). In effect this was a relative failure in so far as she saw her experiments in the project as applying only to the teaching of reading in English, rather than understanding reading as a process, regardless of language medium. In the first term of 1989 my contact with the other four teachers was limited because of a decision by the project leader that an assistant researcher would work with them to find ways to help them write accounts of what they had done in 1988. By the end of the first term, however, things had not progressed very far and the researcher decided to leave the project. I meanwhile hoped that teachers would continue with their classroom experiments, even without my support or encouragement. I met the four teachers in January to help plan their reading programme around the prescribed reader, library books and other reading material (fieldnotes 23/1/89; 27/1/89). At the beginning of the second term we met and decided that teachers would keep experimenting on their own, while I asked if they would keep journals on their lessons and think about observing each other teach (fieldnotes 17/4/89). Later that term each teacher received packages of reading material, containing a story and group activities, prepared by Karen Morrison for PREP (fieldnotes 12/5/89).

At the beginning of June the four teachers and I met to discuss what they had been doing. Leah and Elizabeth had been concentrating on the prescribed reader, although Leah had used two of the story packages, Zebby goes Shopping and A Dark Dark Wood. Bulelwa was using mostly the prescribed

reader and had tried a story package, The Wind and the Sun. Veronica had been most innovative, trying all four story packages, as well as material prepared the previous year when Jan Davidson had worked with the teachers. For example, she had used a story, The Hungry Giant, in this way:

At first, I just tell the class the whole story, using pictures and then there were strips of computer paper, the story was written on those strips, and then I hand those large strips of computer paper and then they read the story silently. From those strips, then I jumble the sentences, and then the pupils rebuilt the story, and now everybody reads the story aloud and then I was moving the pointer quickly so that they don't read word for word, just to give the normal pace. Now they read in groups, uhmm they were rebuilding sentences from the story, for instance I took 'I want some bread' and then cut it into three pieces and then they rebuilt the sentences and then I cut the words into letters, they build the words from those letters and then I did this, uhmm wrote sentences leaving spaces for them to fill in the words easily and then they dramatised it. (discussion 1/6/89)

While Bulelwa and Leah had kept journals, these consisted of brief lesson outlines, written only because I had asked them to, rather than because they saw any purpose to the activity. Realising this, I stopped asking them to keep journals. Only Veronica had kept a record for her own purposes, and at our final meeting she in fact commented that she 'preferred writing to talking' (interview 17/10/89). She read aloud at this June meeting from her journal:

I have learnt that pupils enjoy reading, if you the teacher prepare thoroughly, bring pictures, they become curious and always want to know 'what next?' The most important thing, the book you choose must be suitable for that class. The lesson was very effective - pupils really enjoyed the lesson. They

even said they want to dramatise it. That means they read with understanding. The pupils selected the actors themselves. I just helped here and there. (discussion 1/6/89)

She then described how she had used one of the packages, The Dark Dark Wood, and how excited the groups had been as they rebuilt the text to match the pictures:

So the whole group were busy, they are all working and the other one said 'whooooe this one fits here', 'this one fits here' and then I let each group read the story logically, and then if there is a mistake, then they correct themselves. (discussion 1/6/89)

Because teachers continued to be concerned about the prescribed reader and were evidently using it the same way they always had, we decided to experiment with a more interesting method. This raised the dilemma of working in seemingly very reformist ways. At one level it might seem that working with the class reader could only be a reformist initiative. However, I would argue that such work should be more carefully contextualised. We came to the reader only after experimenting successfully with new ideas and a wide range of materials, by which time teachers were at least aware of what constituted a richer reading experience for their pupils. The problem for me was whether to leave the dominant form of teaching the class reader undisturbed, or whether to begin looking at how new ideas and skills could be implemented, regardless of the material used. In other words to emphasise understanding the process of reading, rather than teaching recipes. In addition, we could draw on the ideas of the previous workshops, and the skills learnt implementing new ideas. Finally, this was a real concern of teachers which could not simply be ignored because it did

not meet my transformative interest. There is, I would maintain, a difference between teachers feeling constrained to use the reader, and teachers being committed to the reader. The latter would represent a profoundly conservative interest with little hope of shifting to more progressive practice, while the former still embodied possibility, however limited. I therefore made a number of suggestions as to how we might use the class reader, including sequencing main ideas and group activities, being careful to explain the reasons for my suggestions (see appendix F) (planning 7/7/89). I typed up these ideas with explanations for the different steps, helped teachers with making worksheets and working out the main ideas, and also acted as participant observer and supporter in their classrooms, writing lesson notes as they tried out these ideas (fieldnotes 17/7/89; 24/7/89; 7/8/89). Leah, Bulelwa and Elizabeth went on to video one of their reading lessons, but only Leah and Bulelwa were able to watch each other's videos. By that stage of the year, it was becoming increasingly difficult to find time to work together or discuss lessons as a group, given the accelerating pace of the defiance campaign against all apartheid laws from mid-August (see chapter two), and the impact on school life.

By the time school resumed towards the end of September, there was time to organise a workshop on 5 October for junior primary teachers from Phakamisa and only a few other schools - Sizithabathele, one school in Nyanga and one in Khayalitsha, all of which had shown interest in PREP. The

workshop the previous October had not been a success. Instead of only the junior primary teachers from the school attending, as I had asked the principal, all the teachers had come. We had shown a half hour edited video of extracts from the four lessons taught with Jan's help. Lack of interest from higher primary teachers and criticism from one std 2 teacher who was not involved in the project had demoralised the project group (fieldnotes 12/10/88). The point here is that the main impulse for this workshop had come from me. Teachers had suggested only that the principal look at their videotaped lessons. They were neither ready, nor yet confident enough, to explain their practice to a wider group of teachers. Given the sharp divide between the junior and senior primary phases, this was exacerbated by senior primary teachers taking the opportunity to criticise junior primary teachers for problems encountered higher up in the school. For the second workshop which, unlike the earlier one, teachers wanted, we invited only junior primary teachers. I prepared a booklet for each teacher with examples of worksheets we had used and the outline of the method (Ideas for Junior Primary Reading, October 1989).

This was a much more successful workshop, with teachers agreeing that this was a somewhat different way of using the prescribed reader. This is not to say that all the teachers decided they wanted to change their practice. Teachers from Sizithabathele felt they did not want to change, while those from Nyanga and Khayalitsha were keen to experiment.

Bulelwa responded to questions and comments at the workshop, while both Veronica and Elizabeth were confident enough to explain their practice as well (fieldnotes 5/10/89). In a final interview Bulelwa remarked that 'one teacher, after the video, she came to me and said if she has any problems she is going to come to me so that we can discuss. But she'll try the method because it was good'. Of the same school colleague who had been fiercely critical at the previous years' workshop, she remarked that 'at the end, although some didn't comment, like one teacher from our school, she was so interested in the way I presented the lesson' (interview 20/10/89).

#### **Teachers talk about changes in their practice**

All four teachers were emphatic in final interviews that they had changed their method of teaching reading from drill and practice and pattern reading to a varying mix of the prescribed reader and alternative material. These teachers valued highly the interest and participation of their pupils in the reading lessons, all placing pupil interest and success in reading at the centre of their evaluation of the new methods. Veronica noted that she had learnt that 'you can get a lot from the pupils. It's not always you that should tell the pupils what is what'. Not only had her pupils improved, now 'the most talking is done by the pupils. That means they also get a chance to give their ideas'. Her pupils were more independent, using their own initiative to borrow and read library books:

And when you ask them, narrate for me any story you have read, they just narrate the story. That means they have read with understanding. They don't need me. They are so curious. This way of reading really made them curious. (interview 17/10/89)

Bulelwa had noticed her pupils' interest in the 'big books' and their developing ability to retell stories. She noted that her pupils 'find reading very much interesting', while they also 'read with understanding' (interview 20/10/89). Elizabeth had observed how interested her pupils were in stories like The Wind and the Sun. She liked the range of activities pupils were now involved in as 'there are such a lot of things that they are doing through this project that was not done before because we did not know that reading is so broad' (interview 16/10/89). Leah also found that her pupils really enjoyed the reading activities: 'And also they enjoy the activities when you jumble the main ideas, and when you give them some worksheets you see they are excited. I didn't know this before'. Later she added, 'they do need the activities, they ask for them' (interview 16/10/89).

Teachers were positive about group work because, as Veronica remarked:

they get a chance to talk to each other because another child can get something from the other child. So that teaches them to communicate with other pupils. We are preparing them to be adults so they must be free outside. (interview 17/10/89)

Bulelwa thought that 'pupils are able to share ideas and they are able to rectify each other's mistakes' (interview 20/10/89). Leah said that it helped pupils to work in groups because 'they differ in their thinking and also they differ in seeing ways. Maybe if someone doesn't know that

particular word, maybe they will think and they will share ideas' (interview 16/10/89).

There is evidence that teachers evaluated their own teaching with more confidence. Veronica said 'she discovered her weak points' from watching lessons on videotape and felt she could now evaluate her good points and the areas that needed to be improved. So confident was she of her own teaching that she was prepared to advise the junior primary inspector at a meeting of teachers on 4 October. She told me what had happened:

They [Miss Nama] were preaching the group teaching. And they explained this group teaching and it is said it has been introduced in the training colleges. And I said 'Ah! We are doing this group teaching in our school with Melanie'. I said so to my principal. And now at our school we are doing what Miss Nama is saying. We even contributed there about this group teaching. You know what they [Miss Nama] said? They said we must group the pupils and then you give different activities and different subjects. And I said 'No, it won't work out. If you are doing english and you give another group a maths activity, no! it won't work. That is confusion for the pupils. If you are doing english you must give the pupils english activities. If you are doing maths you must give the pupils different activities for their abilities. (interview 17/10/89)

When I asked about the response from those present to her intervention, she replied: 'They [teachers] congratulated me! And the inspectress even herself said so: "No let this be done like they are doing at Phakamisa"'. Veronica asserted further that 'the other thing, this project made me to be confident. And these talks, these interviews I am sure they are doing something for me'. She said she had developed confidence in talking english, whereas before 'it

was difficult for me to talk to other persons in english' (interview 17/10/89).

Bulelwa felt 'proud'. 'At first,' she said, 'I was stuck, at least now I can stand in front with confidence'. She maintained that 'if you cannot evaluate yourself you won't be able to know if you are a good teacher or not' (interview 20/10/89). Similarly, Elizabeth commented on her own growth from the first videotaped lesson in May 1988, saying 'it was not at all a success, I can see that now'. She felt able to evaluate herself, knowing where her mistakes were and 'where I have done the lesson well'. She remarked on the excitement of entering the READ storytelling competition and winning the regional finals - success which she attributed to her involvement in the project.<sup>2</sup> Her principal also mentioned to me that 'she has never even come third in that competition, but this year she went as far as the national finals and she has picked that up from the PREP project - to me that was wonderful' (interview 12/10/89). Leah thought it vital 'to know at least if this method did not work, which other method can I try'. She considered it important to evaluate herself 'unlike waiting for the inspector to come and tell you what to do'. And if an inspector questioned her methods, she would voice her disagreement

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2. READ organises an annual competition for teachers and pupils to encourage reading and storytelling. There are several categories - dramatising stories for pupils, story reading and storytelling by teachers, all in xhosa and in english. Winners from the regional finals are flown to the national competition. Success at the competition is highly regarded by teachers and schools.

'because it is me who is in the classroom, the inspector just comes for the day' (interview 16/10/89).

Significantly both Veronica and Bulelwa reflected on how important it had been for them to work with other teachers.

Veronica put it this way:

I could see that this project introduced something new to me because now, I can go to other teachers and ask them 'How can I tackle this?' That is what I've learnt from the project. I can go to other schools and ask 'How do you make this?' And even now I can talk in front of other teachers and say something, what I do in my classroom. All those things I got from the project. I was just a self centered somebody. I just go to my classroom. I teach, I go out, I go home. Now I discovered that, no! You must go to other people, to other teachers. And you must also give help to other teachers. (interview 17/10/89)

Later she added:

I used to try things in my classroom but if I see it doesn't work I try to do it in other ways. And then I go back to this teacher who has told me do this and this, and tell her 'I did what you said but it didn't work but I tried this again.' And then we talk and talk and she or he also goes and tries mine and also comes back again, and so on. (interview 17/10/89)

Bulelwa had realised that 'you must be able to share your ideas with other people and you must welcome questions and discussions', then 'at least if you've got a problem it's easy for you to solve it, if you share, if you discuss the problem with another person, its easy to solve it' (interview 20/10/89). Elizabeth observed that as a teacher 'you must mix with people because sitting alone there you won't gain anything'(interview 16/10/89).

This junior primary group was the only one to develop a collaborative ethos through watching each others videos,

talking about lessons together, planning together and so on. Structurally this was facilitated in part by their being class teachers with a shared purpose - unlike subject teachers working in different standards in the higher primary section. In 1988 they had adjoining classrooms, although in 1989 the std 2s were moved to a separate block. The point is that this collegial relationship seemed to strengthen and contribute to their development and the likelihood of that growth being a process which would continue once the project was over. Nor should one underestimate this shift in these teachers' attitudes to collaborative work with their colleagues. Research by Urch in Tanzania (1989) and Barnes (1982) in Mocambique shows how difficult it is for teachers to develop a co-operative work ethos even where that same quality is being advocated for their pupils and officially encouraged. And while Fullan (1990) and Hargreaves (1989) argue that instances of collaborative work cannot impact significantly on an uncollegial school ethos, nevertheless, the shift for this teacher group offered at least the promise of new and radically different forms of working relationships.

In an interview with the school's principal in October 1989 he observed that these teachers 'are doing so well'. To understand their growth one might note that in his view many teachers don't want to change - something he had warned me of when I first approached him for permission to speak to teachers about the project (fieldnotes 21/1/88). Even more pointedly, he has found other teachers in his school cannot

describe the methods they use - 'they don't know, they are just teaching', he said. But working with me had enabled teachers to talk about their teaching and to say 'now I'm using such and such a method' (interview 12/10/89).

Because specialist expertise (Verduin, 1967) was available to the teachers through the workshops, I was able to take more of a support role. In particular, Jan Davidson's work with four of the teachers in their classrooms, and her participation in the follow-up discussion, was very valuable as experimentation-in-action and reflection on the ideas she had suggested. This is not to say that I did not comment on lessons where I felt able - for example the discussion with Josephine reported in chapter five. I still acted as a resource person, and in July 1988 I put together extracts for the teachers from The Story Box Teacher's Book by June Melser (1987), and an extract from an article by Von Lierop (1985) on early literacy. The latter piece stressed the importance of reading material with high personal interest if children are to become readers for meaning.

By the end of 1989 there was evidence of teachers developing understanding of good practice, even though such beliefs were not always reflected in classroom action. Leah for example, was still strongly inclined in Alan Kenyon's view, and I would agree, to follow rules, implementing new ideas uncritically and reverting to traditional practice (discussion 13/12/90). While Elizabeth also spent most of her time 'simply reading', she was also audiotaping stories

so that better readers could listen and read alone; she had initiated pair reading - having pupils listen to each other read in turns; pupils were reading silently, and she was asking pupils to retell the story (fieldnotes 1/6/89).<sup>3</sup> My impressions, based on their class work and discussion of their practice, were that Veronica and Bulelwa had moved further along a continuum of change, interpreting new ideas in ways appropriate for their own classes.

With this group, some of the ambiguity inherent in the reform-transformation dilemma is captured by an incident in May 1988 when Josephine had enthusiastically called the visiting inspector in to watch her videoed lesson. Ironically, his reason for being at the school that day had been to check up on certain 'troublesome' schools (as the principal later told me) after the 3 May teacher and pupil stayaway (fieldnotes 11/5/88). Furthermore, working around the class reader seems obviously reformist but these efforts, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, should be viewed in the context of a wider process of growth and experimentation, teachers' recognition of the importance of alternative material, and the growth in their confidence and repertoire of teaching skills. For myself, the most significant lesson which I learned from working with this group was the importance of building teachers' confidence, seeing first hand the disabling effects of working within a

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3. Early in 1989 the teachers and I wrote to a local supermarket chain which gave us a small donation to buy two tape-recorders, one for std 1 and one for std 2.

system which demonstrates scant respect for teachers' practical knowledge.

The striking growth in their confidence and their ability to take successful action for change may well enable these teachers to move further along the change continuum in the future. This is more likely to happen if the education authorities begin to support such change. At the same time, Veronica's exchange with the inspector, Miss Nama, also demonstrates the importance of teachers being able to contribute to the debate on change and to confidently reshape suggestions in terms of what works in their classrooms. In other words I would argue for the importance of structural change in terms of the control of the department, new textbooks and new syllabuses. But I would argue equally strongly that change in classrooms should not be imposed as a new, albeit different, set of prescriptions for teachers to follow. The process described in this section is one of working with, not on, teachers. The evidence for this junior primary group suggests that this was empowering, contributing to real change in classrooms and teachers' understanding of practice. The latter practical knowledge in particular, seems the most likely indicator of their ability to make further shifts, to strengthen and deepen their professional knowledge, as they participate in constructing knowledge about practice.

CHAPTER NINE: EXPLORING HIGHER PRIMARY  
READING 1988-1989

Between 1988-1989, 19 higher primary teachers chose to look at reading, not only in english but also in xhosa and afrikaans. This was a diverse group, most of whom stayed with the project only for 1988. Hence evaluating change is rather more complicated than in the previous chapters. The data for this group of teachers is uneven, being richer for those committed to a more extended exploration of the process of change, and somewhat more sketchy for others whose involvement was limited to a one-off classroom experiment with a new method. The chapter confirms the point made elsewhere in this section regarding the need for specialist intervention in the process of curriculum development. It explores changes in reading texts before going on to look at changes in the process of teaching reading. A reading workshop at the end of 1988 provides evidence of teachers asserting their own voices in the process of change. In 1989 a smaller group of six teachers continued to experiment with the reading process. They were interviewed at the end of 1989 and their learning evaluated by myself, by the teachers themselves, through comments by the school principals, and by Alan Kenyon who commented as an outsider on the lesson data from one teacher. The learning of the other teachers by the end of 1988 is also evaluated.

The absence of official DET support was a problem in working with a large number of teachers. Although this was a factor

with the other teachers groups as well, it was most obvious with this much larger group, proving difficult to bring people together both within schools and across schools. This was exacerbated by the teachers being locked into standard and subject paradigms. Increasingly, higher primary school schools choose subject teaching where one teacher, for example, will teach english to all the std 4 classes, while another teaches maths to all std 4 classes, and so on. The subject-based school timetable and the absence of a tradition of shared work across standards within subject divisions made co-operative work difficult. The std 5 english teacher did not collaborate with either the std 4 or std 3 english teacher. The afrikaans teacher did not work with the xhosa teacher, and so on. Even where there was still whole class teaching in std 3 at Khanyisiwe and Sizithabathele, teachers tended to follow the same rigid timetable.

The fact that most of the teachers in this group were not strictly volunteers was a further complicating factor. Unlike the junior primary group which was entirely self-selected, and the history group where four of the five teachers chose to look at history, the 11 teachers from Sizithabathele and Sivuyile were involved as a result of school decisions. In the former case, a decision that english and afrikaans teachers in stds 3 to 5 should be involved, while the basis for Sivuyile's decision, as explained in chapter six, was for all teachers in the school to be involved starting with the std 3 teachers in 1987. At

the same time the teachers whose growth over the two years was most striking came from these two schools. It is therefore difficult to generalise regarding the relative commitment to change of volunteer and non-volunteer teachers. In at least some cases, it seems likely that teachers would have joined the project anyway.

The teachers involved spanned the entire range of experience from Adelaide and Alice who had been teaching for 30 and 22 years respectively, to Cynthia and Lumka who had started teaching in 1987. The overall experience of INSET by the group was limited, and none of these teachers had ever been on a course, or involved in a project on the teaching of reading. Seven of the teachers had started teaching with std 8 plus a two year Primary Teacher's Certificate: Adelaide, Thandie (only joined in 1989), Alice, Alfred, Walter, Nombulelo and Nomonde. Except for the first two, they had all subsequently completed matric part time. Six teachers had started teaching with matric plus a two year primary diploma - Norman, Stanley, Beatrice, William, Oscar and John. Six of the 19 teachers were 'qualified' by 1988, having matric plus a three year post-matric diploma or its equivalent, namely David, Ruth, Lumka, Joseph, Zolani and Cynthia. Eight teachers from the group were still busy with part-time studies: Thandie was studying for matric; Oscar for a Secondary Teachers' Diploma through Vista University; David, Alice, Beatrice, Alfred, Lumka and Ruth for B.A. degrees.

Classes were large - averaging 50 pupils - and language resources minimal. Teachers at Khanyisiwe were particularly short of books as most of these had been destroyed in the arson attack on the school in 1986 mentioned in the introduction. The DET had consistently ignored requests for replacement textbooks. There was only one set of english readers for std 3 classes, and no books at all for std 4 and 5. Sivuyile had insufficient readers for std 4, and no readers at all for std 5. Phakamisa and Sizithabathele were better supplied with class readers and were trying to build up school libraries. At the time of the project these consisted mostly of textbooks and donations from white primary schools of second-hand reading books.

In higher primary schools reading is usually limited to a single reading-comprehension lesson over one or two 30 minute periods a week. Pupils read a passage with the teacher and then try to answer the questions which follow the text. Reading-comprehension is tested in the final examination. Like the other subjects then, there is an emphasis on testing. As Smith (1984b) notes, the danger is that teachers, pupils and their parents think that literacy 'instruction', and the tests and exercises are reading and writing.

#### **Changing texts used in reading lessons**

All the schools relied on class readers in english, afrikaans and xhosa. As pointed out in the previous

chapter, prescribed reading programmes are underpinned by a conservative interest in control (Smith, 1984b). By contrast, an emancipatory and critical approach to literacy would involve, according to Smith:

lots of collaborative and meaningful reading and writing activities, the kind of things that are characterised as extras, rewards or even 'frills', things like stories (reading and writing), poems, plays, letters, newspapers, magazines, posters, menus, notes, packages, reviews...(1984b:120)

Yet, as Smith also reminds us, teachers work in less than ideal circumstances (especially teachers in bantu education), and it is 'often difficult, if not impossible' to eliminate prescribed readers imposed by education authorities. Changing practice in the teaching of reading should be evaluated by the extent that new practices shifted in the direction of a critical approach to literacy, for example in collaborative teaching methods, meaningful reading materials, a more critical and selective approach to the existing reader, and teachers understanding of the process of reading itself.

According to teachers at Sizithabathele, they had no say in the choice of readers. Even though a list of readers would be sent by the DET, teachers' choices were ultimately ignored and 'the DET sent the same old books as before' (fieldnotes 8/2/88). None of the readers seemed to contain much that might be meaningful to urban children of higher primary age (about 12 to 15), growing up in townships in South Africa. The format was the same for all prescribed readers: the difficult words highlighted at the beginning of

the passage, the text itself, and a series of questions at the end to be answered.

At the first meeting at Sizithabathele, teachers seemingly agreed that interesting stories would motivate the children to read. Nonetheless, bearing in my mind my experiences at Sivuyile in 1987, I checked with teachers as to how much pressure there was from the DET to use only the prescribed reader. Teachers indicated that there would be space to use interesting material in place of the reader - they would simply not tell the DET what they were doing. It appeared, too, that the principal, who was present at the meeting, would support teachers (fieldnotes 8/2/88). Yet despite these complaints about the readers at Sizithabathele, no-one asked for alternative resources, and all except Norman used the class reader for their first videoed reading lessons. There are two possible explanations: firstly, my experience at Sivuyile in 1987 had made me overly cautious about introducing alternative materials. Where teachers had no access to such resources, nor the skills or facilities to design and reproduce them, it was not surprising that they opted first for the class reader. Secondly, Smith (1984) points out that one of the reasons for the pervasiveness of reading programmes is simply inertia. So perhaps it was not surprising that teachers did not ask for alternative texts at first.

The situation at the other three schools varied. At Sivuyile the shortage of english readers meant that Alice and Ruth,

were willing to try alternative materials in 1988 and again in 1989. Given the problems of the previous year, I first suggested choosing extracts from a DET approved reader, Active English, borrowed from Sizithabathele (fieldnotes 17/2/88). Once I had got to know them better, however, I suggested material which was not from approved readers (fieldnotes 20/4/88). Both Alfred, the afrikaans teacher, and Walter, the xhosa teacher, were willing to try different materials and both went on to experiment with such stories in 1988. At Khanyisiwe there were insufficient english readers for std 3 but Adelaide, Nomonde and Nombulelo did not raise problems with the content or quality of the readers. As there were no std 4 readers at all, Zolani requested interesting material from which to choose texts for his classes. At Phakamisa, Lumka, the std 3 xhosa teacher, John the std 4 afrikaans teachers and Oscar, the std 5 afrikaans teachers all chose alternative texts from stories I left with them.

As with the history and junior primary groups, it was important always that the choice as to whether to use alternative material was made by the teachers, both to respect their autonomy and because they were finally responsible for taking risks in their own classrooms. This meant, however, that in terms of the reform or transformation dilemma, that I had to compromise. On the one hand it meant accepting that teachers 'call the shots', on the other, it meant still being concerned to encourage a shift into the use of relevant texts. Where possible I

tried to support the latter with examples of teachers themselves choosing and using alternative texts. For example, when I met the teacher group from Sizithabathele in July 1988, I referred to Norman first reading a book I had recommended. After deciding that his pupils would enjoy the story, he went on to choose an extract for them to read. I thus noted:

What we did for that language study lesson is we didn't use the textbook. I don't know to what extent you feel you actually want to work from the textbook, which we can do if you feel more comfortable with that, but in the case of this lesson we took an extract from a story - we tried to use a meaningful text for a language lesson. (discussion 15/7/88)

The compromise lay in my both opening space for alternative material, while also allowing teachers to reject such material. Nonetheless, teachers agreed with Beatrice that what was important was rather that the pupils should 'know the language' and 'it doesn't matter what material you are using'. I therefore offered to bring resources 'that I think the pupils might be interested in', but teachers would choose what they wanted to use (transcript 15/7/88). A similar approach was used with the other schools, for example I said to Alice and Ruth in April 1989: 'I'll show you some of the material that I brought and you can see if any of this is of use and we could then talk about how it might be used' (fieldnotes 20/4/89).

Although in some ways it was easier to introduce more interesting material in language teaching than in history, teachers were still severely limited by the lack of resources and reprographic facilities, and so continued to

rely on prescribed texts. The point was, however, their exposure to using texts which were meaningful for their pupils, and hence the opportunity to experience for themselves the response of pupils to such material. For example, after using 'Sophiatown Schooldays' (see appendix G), Joseph reflected that pupils 'cope better with passages which are familiar to them'. He went on to explain that 'the passage is a little bit familiar to them because the children are bullying at school, and working with your mother is something familiar to them' (discussion 10/8/88).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Beatrice went on to experiment in 1989 with an extract from Not So Fast Songololo which she thought would interest the children, as well as watching me teach her pupils using an extract from Some Are Leopards Some Are

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1. 'Sophiatown Schooldays' is an extract from the autobiography of Dinah Makgoke and tells of growing up in the vibrant township of Sophiatown in the 1950s. She recounts how the older pupils would bully younger children. At the end of the school day she would help her mother by chopping wood and collecting water from a communal tap. Sophiatown was destroyed in the mid-50s by a group areas edict, people were moved out and a new white suburb, ironically named Triomf (Triumph), erected in its place. Other extracts and books which proved successful with a number of classes included an extract from Pele's autobiography telling of the hardship when he was growing up in a family which was very poor and where there was often not enough to eat. Not So Fast Songololo by Niki Daly is the story of an african boy, Shepherd, from a large and not very well off township family, who helps his grandmother, Gogo, with her shopping. In return she buys him a brand new pair of red takkies to replace the old ones which are full of holes. Some Are Leopards Some Are Lions by Mike Kantey is the delightful story of Mpumelelo who moves with his family from a rural area to an urban township. The story tells us of his difficulties in adjusting to life at his new school where his rural knowledge is not valued and where it seemed to him that all the other children were either clever or good at sports. However his opportunity to show his bravery comes unexpectedly one day when a large spider is spotted in the classroom. Both the latter stories are by South African writers and have excellent illustrations.

Lions. In her final interview, Beatrice commented that such stories were 'relevant', that is 'things that are happening at the moment' and more appropriate than 'giving them fairy tales - they are not interested in them' (interview 11/10/89). Early the following year, she commented to the project evaluator that 'some of this does not fit with the curriculum, it fits with the environment of the children. But we concentrated on enjoyment and understanding so we chose relevant material' (interview with S. Philcox 9/2/90).

Alice, from Sivuyile school, was even more convinced of the need for appropriate materials. After using an extract from Pele's autobiography (see appendix G), as well as 'Sophiatown Schooldays' with her std 5 class in 1989, she was convinced that pupils should be exposed to 'things they are learning outside, not the olden stories they do not know, but the ongoing things they see in their daily lives'. She added that after pupils had read the story set in Sophiatown 'they were firing me, there were a lot of questions after the lesson'. Pupils had wanted to know more about Pele's life and the history of Sophiatown. In the actual lesson Alice had explained that Sophiatown:

is like KTC, like Crossroads, and some of them [pupils] live there. And you'll see some of them are so political minded because they hear this from their parents. So I just tried to be simple in those lessons but even after we had done those lessons we had about two periods the following day discussing about that. (interview 4/10/89)<sup>2</sup>

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2. KTC and Crossroads are both large, sprawling squatter camps adjacent to the areas in which the project schools were situated. Here people live in tin shacks, paying low rentals for a site. Water is drawn from a number of communal taps, while sanitation consists of 'bucket toilets'

She explained why:

It was like what they are experiencing, that Sophiatown. It's what they are experiencing in their daily lives. They enjoyed those lessons. But some of them were not quite happy, were not quite happy at all [because] this thing [poor housing] it's from the olden times and still carrying on. This thing is not new. It's not something new. (interview 4/10/89)

Retrospectively, as I noted earlier, I think that I was too cautious with regard to introducing teachers to alternative reading materials. Chastened by my experience in 1987, wary because of the problems with Mike in history, I hung back too much. I now think that space existed to push not so much for use of alternative material - there was evidence that where it was available teachers were using it - but into a more challenging and critical approach on the part of teachers to these texts. Only in Alice's classes was there evidence of pupils' embryonic development of critical literacy - understanding the processes by which the world has made one and how one might act upon that world to reshape it.

#### Changing the process of teaching reading

This development of critical literacy involves both texts and a process of learning, to which this chapter now turns. Teachers at all four schools identified the teaching of reading in english and afrikaans as a problem, while

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organised by the Divisional Council. Recurring struggles have taken place over the last decade in Cape Town for permanent housing facilities for squatters or, at least, for an upgrading of facilities.

Sivuyile and Phakamisa also wanted to investigate xhosa. They explained that the dominant teaching method was to drill the difficult words highlighted at the beginning of the extract, then to read the passage aloud, usually with the teacher reading a section aloud and the class reading aloud after her. Finally, pupils worked laboriously through the questions at the end of the passage - orally first and then writing the answers into their notebooks (fieldnotes 26/2/88). Answering the questions was usually accompanied by a great deal of repetition and chanting, with the emphasis on full sentence answers as in the extract below.

Thandie: And when did this [the wedding] take place? When did this take place? Mind the past tense of take. When did this take place? This took, when did this, yes?

Pupil: This took place last week.

Thandie: Class.

Class: This took place last week.

Thandie: This happened last week, this happened last week.

Class: Last week.

Thandie: When did this happen class?

Class: This happened last week.

Thandie: When did this happen?

Class: It happened last week.

Thandie: Very good. It happened last week. Why was everybody there? Why was everybody there? Yes.

Pupil: Everybody was there because it was the wedding of the year.

Thandie: Class.

Class: Everybody was there because it was the wedding of the year.

Thandie: Class.

Class: Everybody was there because it was the wedding of the year.

Thandie: Because it was the wedding of the year.  
(lesson 7/3/89)

Teachers complained that pupils did not understand what they were reading and could neither retell the story nor answer questions. The most common practice was to pick any sentence from the passage which contained the same words as those in the question and write that sentence down as the answer (fieldnotes 26/2/88). Except for Alice, none of the higher primary teachers encouraged silent reading. It was simply not part of their practice.

Given my lack of specialist knowledge, I asked Wendy Flanagan to run a workshop on reading, first at Sizithabathele and then at Phakamisa. I was then able to draw on these presentation, together with my own continuing study of specialist texts (for example Smith, 1978 and 1984; Chapman and Czerniewska, 1978; Meek 1982, 1983 and 1988; Meek and Mills, 1988; Clark, 1985; Melser, 1987; Kohl, 1988) to assist teachers at the other two schools. Wendy Flanagan outlined a way of teaching reading in which she emphasised children actively using, not copying, language (see appendix G). Unlike the junior primary workshop, she did not stress the importance of teachers using alternative texts. She was careful to explain the reasons behind her ideas, for example, that it was important for pupils to say which words they did not understand rather than learning the words the writers of the textbook had decided all readers would not understand (fieldnotes 26/2/88). Several weeks later I ran a similar workshop for four teachers at Khanyisiwe

(fieldnotes 14/3/88), while at Sivuyile teachers decided to first teach a reading lesson as they would normally do, and then discuss ways to improve (fieldnotes 17/2/88).

I wrote up Wendy's suggested lesson 'steps' and, while I had not intended the workshop handout to be prescriptive, at least some of the teachers interpreted it in that way. Joseph (discussion 16/3/88), William (discussion 5/5/88) and Norman (discussion 23/4/88) all commented on their own failure to follow the steps exactly. All saw this as a 'mistake', rather than recognising the importance of their own reflection-in-action as they reshaped the lesson ideas in their own practice.

After Wendy Flanagan's workshop, Cynthia still wanted assistance from an afrikaans specialist. I finally located a very good afrikaans teacher at a non-racial private school who was willing to have project teachers sit in and watch her teach as the first step to a mutual dialogue. Although I extended this invitation to Cynthia, David and Oscar, none of them took it up (fieldnotes 17/3/88).

All the teachers at Sizithabathele and Sivuyile videotaped a lesson in March or April and showed it to their pupils, not so much for pupils to comment on the methods but so that pupils might see where they had made mistakes in the lesson. The videos were discussed with me, and if possible, teacher colleagues as well. At Khanyisiwe one of the three teachers taught a reading lesson and all three watched the video

afterwards, agreeing to then try the method with their own classes (fieldnotes 30/3/88). Zolani videoed a writing lesson in February, after which we shifted into looking at reading in the context of planning english themes (fieldnotes 7/3/88). At Phakamisa we made a late start, delayed firstly by a school funeral and then because the junior primary workshop was held first. Thus the higher primary reading workshop for Lumka, John and Oscar was only held in the second term (fieldnotes 15/4/88) and experimental lessons only happened in the third term. None of these teachers videoed a lesson. I sat in as participant observer for John (fieldnotes 3/8/88); Oscar and I planned and discussed lessons together, as did Lumka and I, in August and September (fieldnotes 5/8/88, 10/8/88, 17/8/88, 9/9/88, 12/9/88/ 30/9/88), although I never observed either's practice.

### **Adapting the method and developing an understanding of practice**

Once the lessons were underway, we began to adapt the workshop method somewhat. While acknowledging that I was not a reading specialist, I felt sufficiently confident on the basis of my own reading and my experience of second language english teaching to introduce further practical ideas in the context of action. Teachers found for example, that it took most of the lesson just for pupils to say which words they found difficult and for the pupils and teacher to explain the meanings of these words. I noticed pupils

becoming very bored, while Cynthia pointed out that pupils were providing 'everyday words that they know the meaning of'. She had noticed this both in her own lesson and when viewing Beatrice's video (discussion 30/3/88). The suggested method was interpreted as 'getting the difficult words right', rather than as providing an enjoyable and meaningful reading activity. Interestingly, in a recent discussion with Alan Kenyon after he had seen the video of Beatrice's first lesson, he too commented that asking second language speakers to provide the meanings of all the words they do not understand is a difficult task. While the pupils may understand the general sense of the text, they may not be able to explain individual words (discussion 13/12/90). This highlights the problem of confining specialist help only to a workshop with no follow-up support when teachers actually try out the ideas in their classrooms, and the limits therefore of one-off workshops to contribute to change in classroom practice.

What I then proposed was that we adapt the method by having the pupils working in groups in which they helped each other with the English. The teacher would move around from group to group helping as well, where necessary. For example in the discussion of Beatrice's first lesson I suggested:

The other thing that you might want to think about doing is group work, put pupils together in groups so the learning is more powerful, where they can share ideas and help each other. The points in the lesson when I thought that could happen were the difficult words, instead of them working on that as a class, they work in groups. (discussion 30/3/88)

Later I added:

And the other point at which it seemed groups could be introduced was the retelling of the story - to practice retelling the story in English first in groups, and then more children will be involved in trying to retell. (discussion 30/3/88)

This process of encouraging pupils to make sense of the text and to practise retelling the story in groups, significantly modified the workshop ideas.

In July 1988 I wrote a revised version of the reading method arising from teachers' experiments. With all the teachers, not only this higher primary group, I was concerned to find ways of facilitating teacher judgement of practice, rather than only rule-following. In planning sessions with the teachers, and in workshops, my concern had been not only to develop knowledge of teaching techniques but also of teachers' understanding of the rationale for the new methods. This particular insight had been precipitated by watching reading lessons, both by junior and higher primary teachers. For example, I noted after a meeting with Joseph:

I wonder how useful new methods are if the teachers aren't clear about what is wrong with their present methods and why the new method is better. It seems like grafting new and misunderstood ideas onto existing bad practice. How does one address this I wonder?. (fieldnotes 29/4/88)

This point underscores the one made in chapter seven regarding teachers lack of an historical paradigm. In the same way, there was a significant difference between simply trying new ideas compared to shifting one's thinking from seeing reading as pronunciation and word recognition, to seeing reading as a process of making meaning, while also

understanding the philosophy underpinning different approaches to reading practice.

Although I would not have expressed it as clearly at the time, it seemed important to share ideas (theory), but in the context of action, that is, a process in which theory was mediated by reflective practice. At the end of July I recorded that I thought one needed 'to inform teachers about process, not just providing finished recipes or solutions' (fieldnotes 20/7/88). Alan Kenyon further confirmed the importance of 'revealing processes', in his view, in one's work with teachers (discussion 8/8/88). Similarly, in discussing with Karen Morrison the workshop she was to present, I emphasised that she should try to make her thinking explicit, letting teachers share the thinking and planning that had gone into her preparation of history worksheets (fieldnotes 22/7/88). One way of addressing this issue was to uncover that process when the teachers and I looked at lessons, thought through possible strategies for problems, and planned new lessons. What was important in this way of working was to continue explaining the rationale for practice. In the course of her own work with DET primary school teachers, Marlene Rousseau has also noticed that:

teachers struggle to understand the theoretical framework within which a particular innovation is being located so that teachers are trying to apply a method usually not understanding where that method comes from. So there's a sense in which we're 'tinkering'. Teachers don't have - there's not much time spent at colleges looking at how people learn and yet that's absolutely basic to any innovation. So unless the teacher really has an understanding of what

she is doing, it isn't really fundamental change.  
(interview 31/7/90)

This brings us back to the concept of the technical interest, characterised by situation specific teaching knowledge of 'how', and a practical interest characterised by practitioner judgement. Grundy (1987) explains the crucial difference as one 'between developing understanding and gaining ideas'. She adds that, while 'the latter can be picked up and applied, the gaining of understanding is a long process' (1987:90). In developing practical understanding, theory provides 'guidance, not direction' (Grundy, 1987:93). And, I would add, guidance in the context of action. In effect this was no different from my own learning where specialists were consulted during my work in the project, not to direct my practice, but to deepen understanding and reflection on the theories arising from research into my own practice. Additionally then, accessible theory was introduced in the context of action, not to direct it but to deepen reflection. The booklets which I prepared for both junior primary and higher primary teachers both cited Smith's (1978) argument that what will make a difference to the teaching of reading is an understanding of the reading process. In the higher primary booklet, the reworked method explained the reasons for action, citing specialists to support the use of interesting texts, silent reading and the idea that 'learning is social - so allowing pupils to work together should strengthen the quality of their learning and understanding' (Higher Primary Reading Booklet - Learning to read is done by reading,

reading and more reading, 1988:4). I explained why I had prepared the booklet in this way when I met Sivuyile teachers at the beginning of the third term:

The other thing I'm trying to do, and what I tried to do in the framework of the reworked reading lesson [in the booklet], was to try and include what people who are 'authorities' on the teaching of reading say about it so that teachers begin to understand processes. In other words, so that I don't just come with a recipe that says step one, step two, without people knowing why it's being done in that way. I think teachers are empowered when they know why they teach reading in this way as opposed to only knowing how to teach reading. (discussion 8/7/88)

Similarly the reading workshop invitation for October 1988 was accompanied by four relevant, but short, extracts from Meek (1983), and practical ideas from Kohl (1988).

#### **The reading workshop October 1988**

Given the difficulty of working without DET support, this workshop was the only occasion during the project in which higher primary reading teachers from the different schools were able to meet and share ideas. It was important, too, in terms of my own growth and confidence. With the junior primary group specialist support had been available not only in workshops but also in classrooms. With the history teachers, I had a background in history education. But not only was the higher primary reading new to me, so was acting to support reading teachers in their classrooms. Thus the workshop was as much an exploration and confirmation of my own understanding of my specialist role and the adequacy of my own expertise, as of teachers' developing understanding of the teaching of reading.

Hoping to confirm the central contribution of teachers to developing good practice, I decided to use extracts (with her permission) from Beatrice's first videotaped lesson. Ideally we should have chosen these extracts together but time always worked against us: there never seemed to be enough time for Beatrice to watch the video carefully enough to select from it. In addition, with Alice's permission I had taught a reading lesson to her std 4 class in August while she was away attending a sports clinic. The lesson incorporated features worth sharing from teachers' lessons, as well as new possibilities to further extend their practice. It was intended as a 'visual argument' (Howell, 1986) and, together with Beatrice's lesson, a potential exercise in reflection on learning during that year.

The schools would not release all the reading teachers for the workshop as this would have left too many classes unattended.<sup>3</sup> Eight teachers attended the workshop: Beatrice and Cynthia from Sizithabathele, Ruth and Walter from Sivuyile, Lumka and John from Phakamisa, and Nomonde and Zolani from Khanyisiwe. Lufuno Nevathalu was the participant observer for the workshop which was held at UCT in order to provide uninterrupted time for discussion and because teachers enjoyed the outing and lunch.

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3. Unlike schools in England, supply teachers are not sent to schools when teachers attend INSET courses - even those officially approved by the DET. If a teacher is absent, for any reason, her class is left unattended. During the life of the project, for example Leah's std 2 class was left without a teacher for about six weeks while she was on unpaid maternity leave. Other classes were left without a teacher for up to a week while their teachers attended sports clinics and DET courses.

We first looked at extracts from Beatrice's reading lesson. The discussion by the teacher group which followed, (in full below), shows them learning to assert their voices and agency in the process of curriculum development and change. I would further argue that the form of the discussion is an instance of dialogical relations contrary to the form of interaction teachers were most used to in schools, and in their dealings with the DET. Underpinning the discourse is a respect for personal experience which allows uncertainties and recognises all contributions, whatever the level of participation. It is also evidence that these teachers have been thinking about their teaching, and experimenting in their classrooms. Further, it demonstrates the intersection of my two dilemmas: my attempt at democratic practice by fostering dialogical relations; and reform or transformation in my encouragement of practical understanding and not only technique:

Ruth: But at times some of the children don't read, they pretend as if they are reading [silently] and when you ask them questions, you find they did not read the story.

Cynthia: I think what she says is correct, but some of them do read, and when they [the pupils] were asked [in my lesson] they said they prefer silent reading because they could read at their own pace and nobody was disturbing them, and they understand what they are reading. But there will always be kids who are not reading. Even if the teacher is reading [aloud], there will be kids who are not listening. I think silent reading is more successful.

Nomonde: The silent reading is new to them.

Melanie: I wonder then if it's that children need to learn to be silent readers? And the more they do it the better they will become.

Cynthia: I think if they know they will have to speak, they will read. But I don't know how a person will get them all to speak, how they will all get a turn to speak, then they have to read.

Melanie: With large classes you maybe need to call on different groups week by week, keeping a record of who you've asked.

[the video continues - explaining difficult words]

Ruth: She's trying to use grammar in the reading lesson.

Melanie: Mmmm And she builds on what the children know.

Lufuno: The integrating of the english and the science is very good!

[Everybody laughs. The video continues - the pupils retell at the end of the lesson]

Melanie: What Beatrice does is she doesn't ask one child to do it all.

Walter: I think it is better to do difficult words in groups, not individually, because when they give words as individuals, the whole board is going to be full of words.

Melanie: Which is what happened here. It was a very slow part of the lesson.

Zolani: The kids can read themselves and understand the words without my interference, the kids can understand the word now by reading up the context without explaining that this word means this, now form a sentence using the word.

Melanie: Walter, how do you find it in xhosa, do they tend to understand the words?

Walter: Sometimes they tend, even simple words, they say they don't understand. So it's better in a group whereby some simple words they can get it from the groups, help each other.

Nomonde: I also got the same problem, my blackboard was full of words.

Melanie: Have you tried groups, Walter?

Walter: Yes.

Melanie: And did it work well?

Walter: Yes it worked well.

Lumka: The children can share ideas. They can take a word and make a sentence for the class.

Melanie: To help everybody understand.

Zolani: You can do a reading lesson without being a teacher talking for the whole time.

Melanie: What do others think?

Beatrice: To me sometimes you must correct a child but you must not do it every time. Sometimes you must ignore the mistakes because the child is not going to talk if you keep correcting. But at the end you just correct the mistakes.

Melanie: What is the point of the teacher correcting the language?

John: You can say the child must speak the language fluently.

Melanie: And also they get the correct language from the teacher. So if you pick up on Beatrice's point, you need to be sensitive to the children.

Beatrice: I think that last part of the reading lesson, the pupils were not successful in retelling the story, so I think you must time yourself and give the groups more time so that the pupils can be able to respond.

Cynthia: I think it's very good that she doesn't tell the kids 'no you are wrong', because if they feel the story is true and then they support it, I think you should accept that, though maybe she could say at the end of the lesson, this is a fable, but allow the kids at first their own opinions.

Melanie: And she keeps asking what is your reason for saying that.

Beatrice: Say why, mmm.

Melanie: Anybody else want to comment? Lumka do you want to talk a bit about what you did in your xhosa lesson because you also asked interpretive questions in your lesson.

Lumka: I asked them how do they feel about the girl Lena who was badly treated by the [white] farmer.

Melanie: And the question you asked them about the writer?

Lumka: I asked them how they feel about the writer. They said the writer who writes this story was experiencing the story, and I asked how they feel about the whole situation of the bad treatment by the farmer.

Melanie: Any other comments?

Walter: I asked them about the writer in the Nyanga story. They said the writer is not from Nyanga.

Melanie: In fact they are right, Karen Press [the writer] is not from Nyanga

Walter: The pictures of Nyanga, the story, did not quite fit. (discussion 5/10/88)

We went on to look at extracts from my reading lesson. I first explained that the lesson was an attempt to incorporate the good ideas I had seen in practice during the year. For example, I had learnt from the junior primary group that illustrations helped the pupils to understand the english. I had observed Beatrice tell only part of the story at the beginning of the lesson. From Joseph's lessons, I had learnt that, even if the pupils worked in groups on retelling the story, they still tried to learn the story by heart. This, I explained, had made me realise that we needed to find a way to teach the pupils the skill of retelling a story. I ended by saying 'what you will see then is what I learnt from you'. Although the discussion which followed was fairly short, the teachers were active watchers and listeners. Like Howell (1986), Clandinin (1986) makes the point that observing somebody else teach can be useful for reflection. One places oneself in the role of, and imagines oneself as that teacher, but without taking the risk of judging one's own action. Thus, she notes that a teacher can 'make judgements both on his [sic] own imagined practices and on the practice of the demonstrating teacher' (1986:175). Teachers at the workshop could thus make such judgements both in watching extracts from Beatrice's and from my lesson. I would argue further that the timing of my videoed lesson as a 'visual argument' was crucial. It came, not at the beginning of our work

together, but midway, when the teachers and I had a shared history of classroom experiments-in-action where they, and not I, were the actors. Thus teachers commented:

Cynthia: So the teacher doesn't ask the kids what words they don't know, the kids are discussing the words among themselves and when they are stuck they ask the teacher.

Melanie: Yes, in Beatrice's lesson I observed her going from group to group and asking what words pupils were stuck with and it worked very well because the children got to grips with the text, and even when she interacted with the group, she first tried to get them to work out the meaning themselves. So it was a mix of the group learning from each other and from the teacher.

Nomonde: I think it was exciting because the pupils were involved, even the slow learners were able to say something when you asked them about the pictures.

Beatrice: And the pupils' vocabulary was built up - 'I see a boy with his wire car', that pupil was aware of the possessive, and 'a wire car', not a car made from wire.

Melanie: The pictures seemed to help the children get the language and I suspect that in afrikaans you need a lot of visual material. Any other comments?

Walter: (inaudible)

Cynthia: It's interesting that they understand everything you say! Very interesting!

Melanie: What I did was talk more slowly so the pupils could get used to my accent.

Cynthia: Accent mmm.

John: They did not all have some chance to talk in the groups. Only some were talking.

Melanie: Mmm, maybe the teacher has to intervene to help them learn group skills, teach them how to work in a group. That's an important point. Any other comments?

Beatrice: And picking out the main points in the lesson. I think that helps the children to keep the story in mind. Because if you were only telling it orally they would not remember.

Melanie: And you say 'when you retell a story this is what you do.'

Lufuno: What standard was that?

Melanie: Std 4.

Beatrice: I think the class was marvellous because all the groups were discussing in english because sometimes you get problems in getting them to discuss together in english. Some of them still want to speak in xhosa.

Melanie: My feeling is one has to encourage them to do it - it's happening there partly because I'm an english speaker.

Beatrice: But they are free! They don't speak in xhosa.

Melanie: I liked their confidence in dealing with the language. (discussion 5/10/88)

After making suggestions as to how they might organise a term's reading using different resources, I ended by saying that 'the key to the whole thing is understanding how children learn to read', and knowing not only 'how did I do it, but why did I do it that way, that's why when we've discussed your lessons, I keep asking you why did you do things in a particular way' (discussion 5/10/88).

There is evidence from at least two teachers that the workshop was worthwhile. In an interview with Beatrice the following year, she remarked that:

It's much better to attend a workshop. I mean from the workshop you see the things happening. Let's say a teacher is going to present a lesson for you in the workshop. So you see it. More than just having a lecturer lecturing you. So that is effective. When you go back to your school then you can remember all those things and try them out. And you won't forget it if you do it. (interview 11/10/89)

While Cynthia said:

When we went to UCT and looked at a lesson, and discussed it with other teachers, that helped a lot to get opinions from other people and watch other people's lessons. See why something works very well. And see maybe how you presented a lesson. (interview 12/10/89)

### Teachers' work in 1989

A much smaller group of only six teachers continued to work with me in 1989. Thandie joined the group, encouraged by Cynthia who rejoined us after working with Karen Morrison in the third term of 1988. At Sizithabathele, David dropped out in July 1988 giving as reasons the pressure of his own part-time studies and the externally set exam for std 5 (fieldnotes 15/7/88), Stanley was transferred to std 2 in 1989 and fell outside the project, Joseph decided to look at maths, and William had changed to history in July 1988. Khanyisiwe dropped out early in 1989. The std 3 teachers were now subject teaching and none of them taught english, although Nomonde taught std 4 afrikaans. In 1989 I maintained informal contact with Nomonde, supplying her with afrikaans stories, poems and paper, and informally discussing how she might use the material. Similarly, Nombulelo asked for maths and science resources, while Adelaide and I tried a few geography lessons together in February 1989 (fieldnotes 9/2/89). Zolani and I had a very fruitful planning meeting before he left Khanyisiwe at the end of January to take up another post (fieldnotes 24/1/89). He visited me a few weeks later wanting to know if the project could work in his junior secondary school (fieldnotes 14/2/89). At Sivuyile Alice, Ruth and Mike had been moved into std 5 so the original plan that all the teachers would be involved over three years could no longer

work.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, Alice in particular, and Ruth more informally, continued to monitor their english teaching from the second term, after first finding their feet in std 5 (fieldnotes 18/1/89). At Phakamisa Lumka switched to history, Oscar was on leave in the first term and from the second term only teaching geography, while John dropped out, he said, because of pressure to complete the syllabus (fieldnotes 13/3/89).

After an initial burst of enthusiasm, there was subsequently less interest on the part of Cynthia and Thandie, not so much in improving their teaching, as in the process of monitoring and discussing lessons, given the pressure of finding time in the school day to work with me. In the event Cynthia and Thandie confined their participation in the project to trying out books like The Wind and the Sun, used extracts from the children's magazine Molo Songogolo<sup>5</sup>, and looked for newspaper articles for reading-comprehension. We only managed to meet a few times to talk about this work. Cynthia was more convinced by now of the importance of using english in the classroom if the pupils were to develop communicative competence. Unlike her comments to Lufuno Nevathalu the previous year that I had 'expected too much'

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4. Walter and Alfred remained in std 4 and were thus no longer involved. The std 5 xhosa teacher left the school in the second term. While I provided stories for the afrikaans teacher to try in reading and materials for the maths teacher, neither were keen to discuss their practice, even informally.

5. Molo means 'hello' and a songololo is a type of centipede. Molo Songololo was started ten years ago in 1980 to provide a progressive, and now very successful, magazine for primary school children in Cape Town. The content is in xhosa, english and afrikaans.

in suggesting that the teacher should use english (interview 27/9/88), she now volunteered this comment:

When we started I was just talking to those kids and I tried to tell them mostly we are going to do our learning in english this year. And I told them that it's very important that we must all speak and we must all try and speak in english and, you know, try to build confidence. You know they are trying, they really are. (discussion 26/1/89)

Although both of them wanted to find a way to encourage greater pupil involvement 'because though we try most of the time its still the teacher who does most of the talking' (planning 25/1/89), the evidence from their lessons shows Thandie still teaching very traditional lessons (as the earlier extract in this chapter shows), and Cynthia adhering to the original workshop lesson steps. At the same time Cynthia was aware of the gap between her intention and her practice, for example her comments in the discussion of a lesson given by Thandie:

And I think what she could have done is to have maybe these questions on computer paper or writing them on the board and then allow them to work as groups to find the answers for themselves. I think we could have done that, but I didn't do it either, allow them to work it through finding answers themselves. (discussion 9/3/89)

In the second half of the year they decided to concentrate on 'remedial work' because pupils had fared 'badly' in the June examination (fieldnotes 12/7/89).

Norman continued to try ways of encouraging more pupil talk. We worked together on a series of lessons on housing and on an extract from Not So Fast Songolo, while I also passed on ideas and materials that others teachers, such as Beatrice

and Alice, had used successfully. Yet we never seemed to make much progress, it seemed to me, rehearsing earlier ideas and methods again and again at every planning meeting.

Beatrice though, was clear that she wanted to continue experimenting with reading and integrating language work with the reading text, something we had spoken about the previous year (fieldnotes 15/7/88). She intended evaluating her teaching according to the confidence and enthusiasm with which pupils were able to retell a story (fieldnotes 26/1/89). In the second term she asked me to teach her std 5 class which I did on 5 May, using an extract from Some Are Leopards Some Are Lions. To encourage her to consider further possibilities, I ended by asking the pupil groups to write letters to Mpumulelo, the boy in the story, which I then posted to the author, who wrote back to each group in the person of Mpumelelo. Like Lumka in history, Beatrice said she had been concerned to see how the pupils responded to an english speaker. After the lesson she observed that they had 'tried hard with the language' (fieldnotes 5/5/89). Her comment the previous year to Lufuno Nevathalu suggests a further reason for asking me to teach. On this occasion she had remarked that she thought I should have taken a lesson:

to experience it from her own side, maybe she could see how to cope with the children. Sometimes it's easier to say you must do this but when you do it yourself you experience the problem, and then you see, I don't know how to do it. (interview 27/9/88)

Taken together with my history lessons in 1987, my videotaped reading lesson in 1988, and Jan Davidson's work

with junior primary teachers, Beatrice's comments to Lufuno raise questions about how and when the facilitator works in teachers' classrooms. Thus far I have suggested that there is space to construct a 'visual argument' through such work but it needs to be work alongside teachers, rather than instead of their own experiments, or as a model for them to copy. Further, it seems that observing the facilitator teach might be a means for a teacher to evaluate the facilitator's claim to practical teaching knowledge in the light of contextual realities. This seems to further confirm the need for the facilitator to have at least some degree of specialist knowledge, unless specialists are available both to give demonstration lessons and participate in follow-up work with teachers. Certainly I would argue that one should not dismiss demonstration lessons. The point is how such a strategy is contextualised within the broader process of facilitating teachers' own reflective practice.

#### **Teachers' development 1998-1989**

Generally speaking the involvement of the higher primary teachers in the project was uneven and the experience of teachers was mixed. In 1988 the std 3 teachers from Khanyisiwe tried out a reading lesson, talked about it with me but did no further investigations with my support, concentrating instead in the second half of 1988 on their work in history with Karen Morrison (see Morrison, 1988). Nomonde, who had videotaped her lesson, liked the

introduction of silent reading and the pupils retelling of the story because 'it gives them chance to speak up for themselves', and this was supported by Nombulelo who said 'I gained a lot, especially the silent reading part and their retelling of the story - I never gave them a chance [before] to retell the story' (discussion 30/3/88). In September 1988, Nomonde remarked that 'it's much better in my reading now', while Adelaide thought that reading 'has improved a lot' (interviews with L. Nevathalu 28/9/88). However, as with Walter and Alfred from Sivuyile, and David, Stanley and William from Sizithabathele, it was difficult to evaluate the likelihood of this change being any more than a one-off experiment with no lasting effect on their practice. These five teachers each videoed a lesson in the first half of 1988 but, except for Walter, did no further monitoring of their practice. While they said they had learnt from the experience, it seems unlikely that there was any lasting shift in their practice. David, for example, continued to stress that the main difficulty lay in the children's own poor grasp of afrikaans, rather than his own practice (discussion 15/4/88). His language suggests a concern with 'how to' knowledge only, for example, saying that he had learnt 'a new skill of teaching reading the way she [Wendy] gave us and the steps she introduced to us' (interview with L. Nevathalu 27/9/88). Stanley's learning seemed rather limited - he had enjoyed being videotaped and thought only that he needed to speak more loudly (discussion 14/4/88). The following term (July 1988) he was supposed to work with Karen Morrison, Cynthia and Thandie on std 3 history.

According to Karen, she and Stanley never met and he 'avoided becoming involved' (Morrison, 1988). Although he told Lufuno Nevathalu that 'I can see my mistakes' (interview 27/9/88), evidence from Lufuno's own ethnographic study showed no change at all in his practice (Nevathalu, 1988). For Walter there is some evidence in his use of relevant xhosa stories and his contribution at the reading workshop that there was some shift in his practice. After his videoed lesson, Alfred continued to engage me in enthusiastic conversation whenever I visited Sivuyile but sidestepped further involvement.

There is of course the possibility that all these teachers had decided from the start to limit their involvement in the project to such one-off events. Change after all is demanding, untidy and risky. Especially so, I would hazard, in a project which was perceived as external to the normal life of the school. Although I visited the schools regularly, I was not based there but at UCT. On the other hand, one might equally argue from the available evidence that these teachers genuinely perceived themselves as being involved in change, but with these perceptions rooted more in the intention to change than actual practice, in much the same way as they condemned bantu education but were concerned to implement the form and content of bantu education syllabuses. More sustained change may have meant confronting shortcomings in their own teaching, and the uncomfortable gap between practice and intent. As chapter three pointed out, confronting such gaps in one's practice

is risky where teachers' ideologies 'are their lives and to an important extent themselves' (Sharp, 1980:115).

William of course abandoned language for history, about which he was far more enthusiastic, as chapter seven discussed. Joseph felt that the time period had been too short to assess any benefits although he conceded that he had learnt that 'the content must be child centered' and 'the pupils must more especially be able to participate' (interview with L. Nevathalu 27/9/88). John and Oscar emphasised access to resources rather than new ideas about teaching (interviews with L. Nevathalu 29/9/88), while Lumka said she could teach the reading lesson 'without any problems'. She remarked that she was 'improving from what I was before we met' (interview with L. Nevathalu 29/9/88).

At the end of 1988, Zolani spoke at some length about his experiences during the year, highlighting pupil participation in his lessons. Indeed, he had made a real effort to allow space for pupil participation in a reading-comprehension lesson using 'Sophiatown Schooldays'. In this lesson he had pupils reading the text silently and working on answers in their groups. Again, there was evidence of dominant practices, such as having pupils repeatedly chant questions and answers aloud. But as the observer of this lesson, I felt that he was trying very hard to minimise his own interventions (fieldnotes 17/8/88). He told Lufuno Nevathalu in September 1988 that 'Melanie introduced to me that if I teach I must not talk the whole of the thirty

minutes, the pupils must do the talking themselves'. Later he added that 'I found that if I use the group work which was introduced to me, that is, that the pupils must search for themselves the answer to the question', then 'the pupils will participate in the class now, unlike before, I was the teller, was always talking at the class' (interview with L. Nevathalu 28/9/88). What was also interesting was that he and Gladstone had begun helping each other, swapping tape-recordings of their lessons and planning how to work together the following year on ways to integrate history and english teaching (fieldnotes 28/9/88).

Principals of the two schools where teachers had continued their involvement said there had been an improvement. When I interviewed Mr Motisi at Sivuyile school he remarked that english 'has really picked up'. He referred to a lesson given by Alice:

One time when I got into Miss Alice's class, one thing that impressed me very much was the pupils' english which is, you know, a second language with us and the tendency is for the teacher to do the talking and the pupils listen, but with this PREP, the pupils did the talking, they were more involved, trying to discover things for themselves. I was impressed with that. (interview 27/9/89)

Early in 1990, he emphasised to the project evaluator that 'the standard of our kids in language has improved', while 'group teaching - we had not been doing that - now they are applying it' (interview with S. Philcox 16/2/90). Mr Lungiswe, principal of Sizithabathele school, reported a meeting with teachers at his school in 1990 where they had discussed methods of teaching reading. When teachers had

asked him to prepare a reading lesson there was 'a friendly confrontation' about methods and teachers said 'this is what is happening now' in the teaching of reading. He saw this in a positive light, remarking to the project evaluator with respect to the teaching of reading that 'as much as one has a baggage of old methods so we have to destroy them and this project helped destroy them'. He concluded that 'if teachers can challenge one another with regard to methods of teaching then that augurs well for the future of our education' (interview with S. Philcox 9/2/90).

But for all this, I still had an overall sense of limited gains at both schools in terms of my own hope that teachers would acquire both skills and an understanding of practice. Apart from Beatrice and Alice, it was far less clear to me the extent of change in other teachers' practice, both by the end of 1988, as I explained earlier in the chapter, and for Norman, Cynthia and Thandie by the end of 1989. Yet according to Mr Lungiswe, there exists now a new understanding and confidence regarding the teaching of reading among at least some of the teachers at the school, while Mr Motisi was generally positive in his assessment of my work with teachers. Perhaps I have underestimated, then, the change at these schools, and have overemphasised the gap between intention, understanding and actual practice.

Certainly, by the end of 1989, teachers who had continued to work with me were positive in their assessment of the experience, although this was not always matched by

classroom evidence of shifts in their practice. In final interviews with Norman, Beatrice, Cynthia, Thandie, Alice and Ruth in October 1989, all of them emphasised the value of pupil participation, which was closely linked to their experiments with new methods. Ruth explained:

The comment I have to make is about the steps I have taken to the kids - now they are free, they are not feeling stiff, they are very much relaxed than other years. When I was here from 1985 I had very little chat with them in class, they were very much afraid of me. Even if the next teacher asked them to come to my class they won't come. They were so afraid of me. But now they are so relaxed. I think it's because I am also getting free. (interview 4/10/89)

Cynthia liked group work:

I personally do a lot of group work because I find the kids speak more freely when they are in a group and I mean, if a person has to get up and speak, then it's something that the group did. Then they are not much embarrassed if he says something wrong because its the group's work, they speak more freely in a group. (interview 12/10/89)

And Norman also enjoyed 'the group working' and the fact that 'at least some of the children now at least like the way I do the lessons, they like the style' (interview 5/10/89).

By the end of 1988, Ruth had shifted from a very traditional, and as she herself put it 'dull' reading-comprehension lesson in March 1988, to one in August that year where she selected the text, where pupils first talked about an illustration before the teacher read the story aloud right through, and where she helped them reconstruct the story in their own words. There was still evidence of the dominant mode, for example, she still explained the difficult words highlighted in the text. Nonetheless, I

observed this lesson and thought the teacher and the pupils enjoyed it, unlike her earlier lesson. In September 1988, Ruth said this about her own learning:

Yes, I've benefitted a lot. Since I'm new in the field in the first place I gained a lot. I could apply the methods I gained from the [teachers] college and again her methods. You see at times we are just given some method when doing this lesson you can apply this, but when it comes to the practical situation it's difficult and I think you have to be somebody who is flexible to be able to change that method when you see, no, the kids they don't follow you and then quickly change it. And Melanie, she gave me some other methods of teaching, more especially reading lessons without using the textbook that we have, collecting information, magazines and so on, pictures, making stories out of the picture and asking pupils to find questions from the picture and not you to give them the questions. I think that was the great thing because it made them to think, asking questions which they feel they need answers to, not questions that you think they have to answer. (interview with L. Nevathalu 30/9/88)

At the end of 1989, she noted:

I have grown as a teacher. Firstly, it was difficult for me to express myself or make the lesson much clearer to the kids but since I met you and you gave us the resources and other things, it was much easier. Now I can also apply that in other lessons. (interview 4/10/89)

At the end of 1988, Cynthia had felt she had not been helped much with her problem in afrikaans although she did have ideas for tackling english reading (interview with L. Nevathalu 27/9/88). At the end of 1989, however, she was more positive, noting that 'during the year I benefitted a lot' (interview 12/10/89). To the project evaluator she commented that 'when we discussed the lesson, the teachers would see their weak points and their strong points'. She had appreciated access to new ideas because 'we need somebody who could help us in methods'. But she saw herself

as having reshaped those ideas, saying: 'What we did, we would devise our own methods, we the teachers would discuss how we would teach, and generate the spirit of oneness'. Because she was new to teaching she found it difficult to say that she had changed: 'I was a new teacher so I hadn't acquired many methods. The methods I had were those from the college. So I can't say whether I've changed' (interview with S. Philcox 9/2/90). Norman felt his teaching had changed because the project 'has shown that there is not just one way of tackling the work, not in the same monotonous way where you just become frustrated and think of changing jobs' (interview 5/10/89).

Perhaps, in the end, one can argue that such comments contain the possibility of further growth and experimentation. I would still maintain, however, that evidence for understanding of practice and skill in practice, as opposed to claimed intentions, can only be evaluated with any real certainty in the classroom work of Beatrice and Alice.

#### **Two teachers: Beatrice and Alice**

By the end of 1988, Beatrice had already made significant shifts in her teaching, incorporating group work in such a way that pupils were able to help each other make meaning of the text. She still asked them to read aloud but at least now different groups would take turns at reading a short piece, while silent reading was a regular feature of her

lessons as well. She was still learning to judge her timing - she tended not to allow sufficient time for groups to work on the retelling of the story (fieldnotes 16/8/88).

Beatrice thought she had improved her teaching:

Because now I've got a new way of approaching reading, I've got a new way of approaching language lessons previously which I did not do, and now I'm also learning to space my periods. Let's just say trying to train myself what I'm going to do in a reading lesson and then I'm going to use one period - which approach must I use, and then if I'm going to have two periods for reading, which approach must I use, and then that way I complete my lesson. (interview with L. Nevathalu 27/9/88)

She recognised that change is slow:

A change has taken place, and if you have got many ways of teaching the pupils, the pupils become interested you see. If you come to the class then you are going to do reading they know, oh, she's going to do it like this, they are not interested. I'm changing my methods of teaching and the kids are benefitting but it's going to take time. I mean the teachers who join next year they must not expect to have rapid results, it's a long process. First of all the teacher must also try to learn, and then don't expect the kids to be, let's say if you change today, they are also going to follow you today. No, they are going to take time, sometimes the kids don't want to talk and then you become miserable, you must not be confused about that, you must try again, keep on trying you see. But in the long process then the kids learn to do what you are telling them because the first thing they don't want to talk when you are doing a reading lesson, and then you give them those [difficult] words, telling them to try and explain for themselves, they won't talk for the first time, but you must keep on trying to tell them that they must talk. (interview with L. Nevathalu 27/9/88)

By August 1989, Beatrice was choosing appropriate texts and using illustrations from the story as a pre-reading activity. Her pupils read silently and aloud, they rearranged jumbled main ideas written on strips of paper, group members helped each other understand the text, and

they practised in groups for a confident retelling of the story to the class. Beatrice used the language of co-operative work, saying things like 'read the story quietly with a friend', 'help each other with the word meanings', only assisting when she was needed. Thus when pupils practised retelling in groups there was a lot of excited discussion and the teacher's interventions were minimal (fieldnotes 8/8/89). She reflected at the end of the year that:

I've changed. Because before we met you we were just doing the reading lesson and we were emphasising that the children must be able to answer the questions that are in the reading book, after they read the reading lesson. That's what we emphasised. But during the project the pupils were able to work in groups, then they were learning with understanding, retelling the story. So I think that's important. Because you can read a lesson and finish it but you don't understand it, but by retelling you understand. (interview 11/10/89)

She thought that group work was important because 'even the shy ones are going to participate. If you keep on using individuals, the shy ones won't have a chance' (interview 11/10/89). And she encouraged independent work by these groups:

I think the teacher must give the pupils a chance to work for themselves. Then you understand. Lets' say give them group work, maybe to complete an assignment, not working as individuals. (interview 11/10/89)

She felt she 'had something from the project because I'm able to communicate with my class much better than before'. This is not to say that such learning had been smooth and straightforward. Beatrice's pupils had to learn how to work together. For example, earlier that year she had said 'there are some ups and downs but at least they are

participating' and 'they were not working perfectly as groups, I don't know, maybe they are not used to group work' (discussion 9/3/89).

Nor did Beatrice see her learning of new skills and new knowledge as ending with the project:

I've gained new things from when I was coming from the college, because in the college you only gain theory. When you arrive in the field it's different. Then you've got to do it practically. So I've learnt new practical skills. (interview 11/10/89)

She noted later:

As a teacher I think you must not stand at one point, you must change as times change. Education does not stop. That's what I'm discovering. Because if you say, alright I've got all the training, I'm going to teach my class like this, but education is changing every day. (interview 11/10/89)

A significant shift was evident in Alice's practice as well, from her first lesson in March 1988 to another attempt in August 1988 and then further lessons a year later. My sense of this shift was confirmed by Alan Kenyon whom I asked to analyse her teaching video from March 1988 and an audiotaped lesson from July 1989. He noted evidence of her teaching being caught in the dominant mode, evidence of teacher skills and evidence of transformative change in comparing the two lessons.

In 1988 Alice was still keen for me to present a lesson 'because we are not sure if we are right or wrong', but she thought nevertheless that she had learnt 'new methods' and obtained useful resources which 'helped me a lot' (interview

with L. Nevathalu 30/9/88). Alice had missed the reading workshop at the end of 1988 so she and I watched the video of my lesson with her class in April 1989 (fieldnotes 17/4/89). The point of this is that evidence of her being caught in the dominant mode emerges in her lesson of July 1989 only when she allows her own good sense to be overridden, copying ideas from my lesson which do not fit comfortably with her own. Yet the evidence of her practice is that she needs none of these supports at this stage. Thus she tried out a main ideas exercise, although as Alan observed 'she doesn't really see the purpose of the sequencing' and 'it did not seem like she was applying her own common sense'. Apart from this 'aberration' in the lesson, however, he noted significant changes in her practice.

The lesson was based around an extract on his early life from Pele's autobiography (see appendix G), and involved pupils in reading silently, helping each other with the text, retelling, and working out questions to ask Pele. Unlike the earlier lesson, Alice contextualised the story and did this 'quite authoritatively' which Alan thought demonstrated 'changed action'. He thought her language input was now 'much more carefully considered' - 'she's sharpened her practice and I think that's quite remarkable given there's only about a year between the lessons'. She no longer involved the pupils in 'heavy chanting' and repetition or reading aloud, 'skilfully' introducing words like 'autobiography' and 'career'. Alan was struck by the

extent of pupil participation in the groups, noting that 'true discussion was evident' as pupils shifted topics, re-introduced topics, clarified, made jokes, took on the teacher role and so on. As Alan remarked of the group discussions, 'the evidence of pupil freedom and autonomy is really very very exciting'. A colleague of Alice's who had watched this lesson also commented to me at the time on the level of pupil interest and involvement (fieldnotes 16/8/89).

Alan observed that in this lesson the pupils were working with 'a much broader and more meaningful exploration of words' than was evident in the earlier lesson where they had dealt with difficult words as a class. For example, one pupil asked another 'what is the meaning of the word hardships' and a group member responded: 'Hardship means when you have nothing, like you have no job and you have no money'. They made jokes, for example in discussing the meaning of 'love' - 'the meaning of love is when you love somebody, like you, you love Sandile' (lesson 17/7/89). Clearly, he noted, Alice had reduced her teacher-directed input quite skillfully to allow real discussion of meaning to happen, rather than the teacher question - pupil response - teacher evaluation pattern in the earlier lesson. Unlike all the other teachers I worked with, she allowed extended time for such discussions. When the pupils came to retell the story 'they cope exceptionally well', Alan remarked. Alice no longer brought pupils in groups to the front to report to the class as in the March 1988 lesson. When she

asked pupils at the end for comments on the lesson, they said things like 'the story teaches us to rule our life, to not be afraid of what you wanted to do, to fight for what you want to do', while another said 'thank you Pele for this interesting story, we loved it' (lesson 17/7/89).

There is clear evidence of change in this, and in her lesson on 'Sophiatown Schooldays'. In the latter lesson, taught after the Pele lesson, she even abandons the strategy of teaching main ideas. The pupils retelling of the story is as confident and coherent as in the previous lesson, while their group discussions are animated and meaningful (lesson 8/8/89). I would argue, and Alan Kenyon agreed, that these lessons provide unambiguous evidence of the beginnings of transformative change - from the choice of the texts, to the structure of the lessons, the very different roles for teacher and pupils, and the quality of pupil learning. These lessons decisively break the mould of bantu education. But they are the only ones about which I would confidently make such assertions.

Of her own learning Alice said: 'What I learnt from this project, the children must be free'. She added 'I think that if they tried to find what is wanted then they won't forget it'. She thought her pupils had benefitted a great deal:

Because even now they are inspiring other children. They were so stimulated because each and everything we are doing, I tried to do this comprehension, then they answer questions, stimulate to do creative work. Somebody draws what she was reading, telling the

story, and others dramatise. Then they tell other pupils what is happening in their class in that lesson. (interview 4/10/89)

She reflected that 'I'm confident that I'm trying my best to be a good teacher. Then, within those three years [1987-1989], I can say, quite a lot of time I've tried to change my style'. And this extended to developing collegial relations with colleagues: 'Even with others, I tried to encourage them, and even them, they help me a lot with things'. In part, at least, this could be attributed to the project for she said:

Even our school, this PREP project upgraded our school. Even the work with other teachers, even if they were not involved. We always discuss about the project, you know, about this work. We are talking about what we do. (interview 4/10/89)

The higher primary group then was the largest and most diverse of the groups I worked with and this is reflected in their movement along the continuum of curriculum change from the tentative, even reluctant, steps of teachers like David and Oscar, to the confident forward strides of Beatrice and Alice. Others like Cynthia, moved forward to a greater understanding of their practice not always reflected in their classroom work.

Working with this group, more than with the others, as explained earlier in the chapter, highlighted for me the importance of specialist help. In a paper written towards the end of 1988 (Walker 1988b), I clarified my own understanding of my role:

working in my particular context, I would argue that it is necessary for the facilitator to be

theoretically and practically informed about teaching and learning in those areas which teachers are attempting to change. Without such critical competence I am not sure that one can 'enrich their images of the possible' (Shulman, 1987:10) or support the shift from questioning how one might teach reading, for example, to why teach reading this way rather than that way, and do all this in the context of practice. (1988b:14)

I saw resource materials as providing a 'practical way for the facilitator to share, rather than transmit, her understanding of teaching and learning, especially where teachers reshape materials in the light of their own classroom situation' (Walker, 1988b:15). Clearly this placed pressure on me to develop sufficient expertise to extend teachers' own practical knowledge. At the same time I tried to develop an approach which took seriously the autonomy of classroom teachers as the decision-makers about methods and materials appropriate for their own situation, while also extending their knowledge about the range of possibilities, and the understanding of such practice.

SECTION FIVE: REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS

CHAPTER TEN: REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS AS A PROJECT OF POSSIBILITY

I believe that education for reflective practice, though not a sufficient condition for wise or moral practice, is certainly a necessary one.<sup>1</sup>

The chapter first details my own learning about action research in terms of my work as a teacher-educator, and as a means to change classroom practice. Attempts to encourage teachers to research their own practice are recounted. The chapter goes on to consider what counts as 'research' in the light of the limited research practice by the teachers themselves. My own research and the teachers' reflections are evaluated in terms of the emancipatory interest, and finally analysed as research.

This chapter also explores action research and reflective practice as a project of possibility for educational transformation in South Africa, given that this view of the potential of action research both informed the design of PREP and this study. Through the process of action research, PREP envisaged that teachers would be 'empowered' and their practice 'transformed'. As such this chapter further explores the tension between reform - practical educational knowledge for improved teaching, and transformation - a wider challenge to the education system as a whole. The reflective practitioners are both the

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1. Schon, 1987:xiii

teachers and myself, learning, as this study has tried to document, 'wisdom...by reflection on practice dilemmas' (Schon, 1987:xiii).

The reflective writing of a number of papers (Walker 1988a, 1988b, 1989b, 1989c and 1990) and this thesis, in all of which I have tried to grapple with the limits and potential of action research, have been important in developing my understanding. The understanding I now have is not the same as that with which I began my work with teachers in 1987. Thus deciding how to go about action research in my particular situation has been the source of much of my learning about action research as a project of possibility. My initial interest in action research arose from a belief that it offered an approach to educational research which reflected my own democratic political and educational principles. Firstly, I was concerned to research whether my own practices in working with teachers challenged authoritarian and oppressive education relations, and empowered teachers themselves to change their teaching. As Allman reminds us, until educators undertake this work 'they can hardly pretend to be preparing themselves or others to undertake the larger-scale and more essential changes that are necessary' (1988:98). Secondly, I hoped to contribute to educational knowledge in the sphere of in-service work.

## Understanding the history of action research

As chapter one indicated, from its initial beginnings in North America in the 1940's, action research has taken root in Britain (Stenhouse, 1975, Elliott, 1988b), Europe (Klafki, 1975; Brock-Utne, 1980; Altricher, 1988; Letiche, 1988), North America (Noffke and Zeichner, 1987; Oja and Smulyan, 1989; Beattie, 1989) and Australia (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Grundy, 1987; Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988b). Action research has developed in educational contexts very different from those in South Africa and this particular history of action research needs to be taken into consideration by others attempting it in the considerably more volatile and contested educational space of South African schools.

Stuart, on the basis of her Lesotho experience, asserts that action research is particularly relevant for developing countries precisely because it enables teachers and other educators to develop the most appropriate curriculum practices for their own circumstances:

It is a grassroots, development oriented approach, dialogic rather than didactic, which might encourage the growth of endogenous models rather than uncritical acceptance of imported ones. (1991:130)

Drawing together themes and issues raised at seminars and lectures on teacher education in developing countries, Gardner has argued strongly for 'research that is linked to possible action' (1980:185). Nonetheless, Noah (1983) reminds us that:

the authentic use of comparative study resides not in wholesale appropriation of foreign practices but in careful analysis of the conditions under which certain foreign practices deliver desirable results, followed by a consideration of the ways to adapt those practices to conditions at home. (quoted in Phillips, 1989:268)

Provided then that the lessons and experience of action research conducted in developed countries are not simply transposed to very different contexts elsewhere, it would seem shortsighted to dismiss action research in schools because it has emerged primarily in developed countries. The crucial point is to consider what form action research might best take in the South African educational context.

As chapter one explained, the term 'action research' was first used by Lewin (1946, 1952) to describe a form of research which would address change in practical situations. Lewin's ideas were soon taken up in the United States and came to be especially identified with Stephen Corey of Teachers' College, Columbia University. Corey was interested in the practical possibilities of action research in the field of education and teacher training because the 'action researcher is interested in the improvement of the educational practices in which he is engaging' (1949:63). Corey's championing of action research was significant in establishing it as a tool for curriculum development and school reform in America in the 1950s (McTaggart and Kemmis, 1988b). Nonetheless, from the late 1950s the idea of action research in education lost momentum. Prompted by American alarm over Russia's launch of Sputnik in 1957, curriculum development shifted instead to top-down models of change.

Action research declined in America until it was taken up again in a paper by Sanford (1970). More recently, Atkins (1989) has explained that the renewed interest in action research in North America arose from the realisation that centrally devised curriculum development projects 'were seldom installed with high fidelity at the level of the school site' (quoted in Somekh, 1989:3).

Most influential on the design of PREP, however, was the British tradition of action research in education. It should be emphasised again that the organic basis for this tradition was imperfectly understood in designing PREP and this study, and the account which follows is retrospective to my work in the project. Much of the early work in action research can be traced to the ideas of Lawrence Stenhouse and the team he formed at the Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE) at the University of East Anglia. In his seminal work on curriculum he wrote that 'curriculum research and development ought to belong to the teacher' (Stenhouse, 1975:142). While acknowledging the tension between the role of teacher, and the role of researcher, he concluded nevertheless that 'it is difficult to see how teaching can be improved or how curriculum proposals can be evaluated without self-monitoring on the part of teachers' (1975:165). Underpinning the teachers-as-researchers movement was Stenhouse's view of process-focussed curriculum development which, Elliott explains, gave 'teachers, rather than specialist researchers and theorists, responsibility for generating their own expert knowledge' (1985b:241).

Importantly, Elliott (1988b) argues that, far from being imposed on teachers by academic researchers, action research developed organically from an existing teacher culture receptive to notions of reflective practice. He outlines how teachers were attempting innovative teaching methods and theorising about their work from the 1960s, even though they might not at that time have labelled this process action research. The point is, as Elliott notes, that when the Humanities Curriculum Project began to shift from producing resources into fostering the development of teachers' own capacities for self-reflection, this development was supported by an already existing culture of innovation and theorising about curriculum practice.

These early attempts to encourage teachers to reflect on their own practice influenced Elliott's design of the Ford Teaching Project as a teacher-based action research project in which teaching and research 'were integrated conceptually into a reflective and reflexive practice' (Elliott, 1988b:37). Recognising the need for continuing support for action researchers and the importance of action-researcher networks, Elliott set up the Cambridge Action Research Network (CARN) in 1976 after this project came to an end.

In the Teacher-Student Interaction and the Quality of Learning Project (TIQL) from 1981-1983, Elliott's concern shifted to finding ways to institutionalise action research in the schools - in effect to move from research with teachers to research by teachers. Elliott contends that

this project shifted the balance of power regarding the generation of educational knowledge and research firmly in the direction of the teachers themselves:

It was the project in which I can most honestly claim that the teachers were largely responsible for generating, developing and publicly disseminating understandings of the pedagogical process. They also demonstrated that, given opportunities within their institution for reflection, they were able to articulate and develop pedagogical theories implicit in their practices. (1988b:54-55)

Thus in his own work Elliott has contributed to the development over time of a form of action research in which ownership and control of the research process and the knowledge outcomes have shifted from external researchers to the teachers themselves. Recently, in the Pupil Autonomy and Learning with Microcomputers (PALM) project (1988-1989) directed by Elliott, teachers identified their own research focus, collected and analysed data and wrote their own research reports (Somekh, 1989). According to Somekh (1989), the project co-ordinator, teachers' motivation to carry out such action research turns fundamentally on it being 'a statement of their own professionalism' through which they understand more clearly teaching and learning in their own classrooms. More than this it offers the space for 'professional dialogue' with colleagues and an active role in curriculum development.

## Learning through action research

The point of this extended discussion of the British experience is that action research was rooted both in teachers' view of themselves as autonomous professionals, and a well-established movement for curriculum as process. These factors underpinned the shifts from educational research on teaching to action research by teachers, over a considerable period of time. By contrast, no similar foundation existed in DET primary schools in 1987. As sections two, three and four of this thesis showed, teachers were not only unfamiliar with any notion of themselves as curriculum shapers, at times they actively resisted such a role. Certainly the effects of their own schooling and training were such that they were demanding neither relevant research, nor a role for themselves as producers of research. Indeed, it is possible that they had no concept or understanding of 'research' at all, given the sterility of bantu education. This was further complicated by teachers' limited content knowledge and their restricted exposure to different methods of teaching. Not surprisingly, then, the primary focus of the project shifted into curriculum innovation which in itself made considerable demands on teachers schooled and trained in bantu education. At the same time though, this process of innovation involved teachers in reflecting on and monitoring their own classroom action. Far from action research providing the dynamic to drive curriculum change, curriculum change assumed centre stage as the motor for reflective teaching.

My own writing shows the shifts in my understanding, from a position where action research was seen as a powerful strategy for transformative change in teaching, to one which reveals a more cautious assessment of such possibilities, especially in the face of multiple innovations and a restricted time-scale. And, far from there being an existing culture on which to build such research endeavours, the dominant teaching culture has been shaped by the legacy of bantu education and the authoritarian working relations characteristic of the DET.

Nine months into the project, I wrote a paper on action research in which I argued confidently that action research was an appropriate approach for developing a critical pedagogy because it 'makes possible present improvement in practice and develops the possibility of future educational and social transformation' (Walker, 1988a:147). I noted enthusiastically that:

Such research has the potential to re-insert teacher agency into the struggle within education for the transformative school which aims to transform self and social relations in the school rather than simply reproducing them. (1988a:150)

At that stage I believed that action research would be 'highly political' given prevailing conditions in township schools. In other words, I assumed that practitioner engagement in the action research process would logically (and inevitably) develop into critical reflection on schooling and society - even though there was no evidence to support this argument at that stage. I was ascribing too much to the research process itself by arguing that action

research has 'the potential to equip teachers with a coherent social and political perspective adequate to changing the forms and institutions of contemporary schooling' (Flanagan and Walker, 1988:18).

But over the next two years I modified this position. The elaboration by Grundy (1982 and 1987) and Carr and Kemmis (1986) of three modes of action research, outlined in section two, was important in my understanding and analysing the competing strands within action research. Nonetheless, I underestimated the difficulties both of doing emancipatory action research, and facilitating emancipatory action research. What I came to understand through my work with teachers is that their starting points and their intent, rather than some inherent logic in the research process itself, shape the probability of teachers being able to shift between classroom concerns and a critical understanding of institutional and social constraints.

I would now argue that one needs to be careful, both that far-reaching claims are not made for the research process itself, and that action research as a strategy is not divorced from wider programmes for structural change. In a paper given at the Research on Education in South Africa (RESA) conference in March 1989 (Walker 1989b), I had begun to explore these ideas. This was a conference held in England of activists and academics, some from inside South Africa, others exiles from outside the country. In my paper, I suggested that the enquiry or research process, if

it is to be emancipatory in its effects, should involve a constant dialectic between the teacher-researchers as actors and agents at a local (classroom) level, and the teacher-researchers as part of a wider social formation. While exploring social action in classrooms reveals the complexities of classroom life and the fine-grained texture of interaction and action, to develop counter-hegemonic pedagogical strategies we need to identify the ways in which deeper structural features impact on patterns of interaction in the classroom so that we might 'hear the macro order tick' (Knorr-Cetina, 1981:41). The challenge therefore in developing a progressive form of action research is the need to combine local attempts with broader structural concerns in order to develop progressive pedagogical strategies.

As section four showed, my experience indicates that reflective practice in itself was not enough. Teachers needed to be participants in curriculum development as well. Indeed, reflective practice was powered by curriculum change. But these twin processes of reflective practice and curriculum development did generate empowering moments for teachers, contributing to valued pedagogical knowledge and helping them work towards change in their classrooms. Acquiring practical skills and reflecting on classroom action divorced as it was from critical analysis though, was not sufficient to develop emancipatory education in my study. Gibson, indeed, has expressed scepticism about the emancipatory claims of action research and the attempts to transform action research 'from a cottage industry into a

major vehicle for the criticism and change of social practice' (1986:163). He points out that the political imperative evident in 'emancipation' may well surprise and shock those teachers who turn to action research in order to improve their pupils' learning of number or reading (Gibson, 1985). The tension generated by attempts to move from the micro-local to the macro-structural is neatly captured by Groundwater-Smith who points out that:

It is this very aspiration to influence the structural which impedes, perhaps even prohibits, its [action research's] realisation. And yet it is also this very aspiration which is also truly emancipatory. (1988:261)

My own work suggests that the process of enquiry itself, while it may help develop classroom skills, will not necessarily shift into a critique of the contexts of that practice. This is the greatest limitation of the action research process. Further, it raises the possibility that action research may be stripped of its emancipatory potential in certain contexts and under unfavourable working conditions, for example in the absence of a shared commitment to emancipation and transformation by teachers and the facilitator. Action research might thus be domesticated as improvement rather than transformative change, reducing it to an set of research techniques divorced from a broader democratic approach to social research and reform (McTaggart and Singh, 1986). Grundy, for example, differentiates between a process of deliberate reflection and a process of enlightenment and critical self-reflection:

But while this leading back to shared understandings and values may be empowering for a professional group seeking to re-establish control over their knowledge and practice, it does not deal with the problem of hegemony and the interested construction of a shared meaning of the 'the Good'...Critical self reflection is not atheoretical in the way that deliberative reflection can become. It involves the consideration of critical theorems developed within the discourse of critical social science. (1989:92)

Nevertheless, what has also emerged from my own action research is the important understanding that critical analysis without practical skills is not sufficient to transform classrooms or the practice of teacher education either. As a group of progressive South African academics crisply state:

In naive radical circles emancipatory knowledge is seen as quite divorced from technical and practical understanding of society...Emancipatory knowledge cannot be attained in isolation from technical and practical knowledge or arrived at through slogans and rhetoric. (Bundy et al, 1990:59)

Similarly, educator Jean Pease noted at a recent literacy conference that 'rhetoric and a desire to change social practices are not enough - a viable pedagogical practice has to link radical forms of knowledge with corresponding radical social practices' (quoted in De Klerk, 1990:3). Mezirow (1981), as pointed out in an earlier chapter, argues that perspective transformation engages all three 'learning domains', where the technical involves learning for task-related competence, the practical learning for interpersonal understanding, and the emancipatory learning for perspective transformation. As he notes, in real situations all three learning domains are intertwined. Facilitating learning, whether as teachers or teacher-educators, involves mastering

all three. Thus, in my own practice as documented in sections three and four, a rhetorical commitment to transformation was necessary but not sufficient for emancipatory action. I had to learn the technical and practical skills of facilitation.

The need for practitioners to acquire technical and practical knowledge as well as emancipatory knowledge was further clarified for me by Delpit's (1986) article, and I cited her in a paper I wrote in July 1989:

Students need technical skills to open doors, but they need to be able to think critically and creatively to participate in meaningful and potentially liberating work within those doors. Let there be no doubt: a 'skilled' minority person who is also not capable of critical analysis becomes the trainable, low-level functionary of dominant society, simply the grease that keeps the institutions which orchestrate his or her oppression running smoothly. On the other hand a critical thinker who lacks the 'skills' demanded by employers and institutions of higher learning can aspire to financial and social status only within the disenfranchised underworld...we must insist on skills within the context of critical and creative thinking. (author's emphasis, Delpit, 1986:384)

What has often been overlooked in the demand for people's education has been the fact that being politicised is not enough. Because of the overriding need for structural change described in the introduction and section two, deeply conservative classroom practices have been left largely undisturbed. Educators need the skills to translate their democratic political beliefs into effective classroom action. Yet teachers find it difficult to visualise an alternative educational future - even when they are members of progressive teachers' unions. With the educational

discourse shifting since February 1990 to one of policy and reconstruction, I would argue that curriculum, as much as structural issues, such as one education department, should become 'bread and butter' issues in the education struggle. From this standpoint, I would suggest that action research's greatest strength lies in its potential to generate educational knowledge, including learning important practical skills.

Returning to Apple's argument in the introduction to section four that 'only by action on day to day issues can a critical framework be made sensible' (1979:161); and to Mezirow's (1981), Delpit's (1986), Bundy et al's (1990), and Pease's (1990), view of the interconnections between technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge, I would now want to argue for a more nuanced reading of the reform or transformation dilemma. While recognising the political importance of connections with broader organisations - whether of teacher unions, youth or community structures - at the same time the importance of grassroots initiatives to generate improved classroom practice should also not be underplayed. It seems to me that such developments are the building blocks for a teachers' union such as the newly formed South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU).<sup>2</sup> Teachers are centrally concerned with what goes on in their classrooms. Structural changes - such as one education

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2. SADTU was formed in October 1990, comprising all progressive teachers' unions, including DETU and WECTU. It claims a membership of 200,000, is non-racial and potentially central in the reconstruction of education in South Africa.

department, equal education and so on - obviously shape this working context. But arguably an emphasis only on structural change underestimates the power of residual practices which subvert democratic policies. Curriculum - what is taught, how it is taught, and why it is taught - is then an equally important basis for organising and working with teachers at their work place from their very real day to day concerns about what and how they teach. One might even argue that there can be no genuine democratic transformation without democratic reforms at classroom level. It is therefore worth repeating Thompson's comment that changes in formal schooling 'in the end mean changes in what goes on in classrooms or they mean nothing' (1981:159).

At the time PREP operated it was impossible to forge links with organisations. The period of severe repression had already begun, intensifying in February 1988 with the banning of progressive organisations and then again with the banning of progressive teacher unions in December 1988.<sup>3</sup> Such a political climate made it impossible to establish links to banned organisations. I was left little option beyond working at the classroom level. Nonetheless, this work did generate important practical knowledge which shapes

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3. One should not underestimate the determination of the state to crush opposition at that time. For example, when the executive of WECTU tried to meet at a school early in 1989 they were all arrested. The regulations regarding people's education which had been promulgated in January 1987 (see chapter two) still applied. Attempts thus to promote people's education still carried heavy fines and/or jail terms.

a teacher culture which supports, rather than subverts, the aims of democratic structures like SADTU.

On the other hand, for activist-educators in democratic education structures such as PTSAs and teacher unions, action research offers the possibility of reflective inquiry to develop both a critical pedagogy in classrooms, and teacher education for intelligent and constructive participation in a democratic South Africa. Indeed, it seems that only such organisationally located pedagogical interventions can realise the emancipatory potential of action research in education. Only such action research is finally a struggle for reform which is not merely reformist and reproductive, but a contribution to building democratic schools and a democratic society. Whitty, for example, comments that:

whether or not particular aspects of education are ultimately reproductive or transformative in their effects is essentially a political question concerning how they are worked upon pedagogically and politically and how they become articulated with other struggles in and beyond the school. (author's emphasis, 1985:90)

Such action research approximates the participatory form developed by activist-intellectuals in Latin America. For Fals Borda (1979), a participatory form of action research would be part of a 'popular' social science, inspired by the interests of the working classes and the exploited, and where the political and theoretical work of action researchers would be connected to that of popular political organisations. He finally arrives at this description of

the purpose of a progressive and participatory form of action research:

Action research works to ideologically and intellectually arm society's exploited classes in order that they assume their conscious roles as actors in history. This is the ultimate destination of knowledge, that which validates the praxis and fulfills the revolutionary commitment. (1979:303)

Yet a note of caution is also needed. This should not mean privileging structural concerns over classroom action. Rather the need is to find a way to combine such concerns in the interest of transformative change.

#### **Pupils as participants in action research**

Correspondence with the RESA editorial collective after the conference raised the further question of what role pupils would play in action research. For the teachers I worked with, pupils were not active partners in the research process. At a workshop in May 1988, project teachers were asked to think about involving pupils in their research. The response to this idea was largely negative. Most of the teachers present felt that pupils should not be given the opportunity to comment critically on their teaching. One teacher explained:

Once he [the pupil] starts commenting, once you allow the child to comment about what you've been teaching, be sure there is no other teacher who will teach that child, because he [the pupil] will say: 'You blunder', and 'Why can't I comment when you are teaching. Teacher so and so allows us to comment on his lesson'. (Oscar, discussion 4/5/88)

Although Cynthia tried to explain that the pupils would not be criticising the teacher but commenting on what they did

not understand in the lesson in order to help the teacher to change her methods, others felt that pupils should not be allowed to tell them how to teach. And certainly, an outsider should not be allowed to interview their pupils about their teaching methods. While teachers commented on pupils' responses to their lessons in the course of this study, only Alice deliberately sought pupil opinion as a means to improve her classroom work.

Although my study pointed up the difficulties of involving pupils, to ignore pupils' own ability to make sense and meaning of classrooms would be to deny democratic values in one's own practice of education. Pupils should be important partners in an emancipatory form of action research, co-investigating classroom reality, and contributing appropriate and relevant pedagogical knowledge. Similarly, for teacher educators, teachers would be co-partners in the research, a point I take up later in this chapter in terms of my own research. Through reflective pupil participation (Hull, 1985a; Swain and Brechin, 1989) pupils are more likely to be empowered to take responsibility for their own learning, and to participate in shared decision-making. Therefore, pupils, as much as their teachers, should be accorded the right to analyse and comment critically on their classroom experience in a process of shared inquiry (Hull, 1985a). Pupils, after all, will have their own concerns regarding the relevance of the content and the appropriateness of the form of their education. A progressive action research opens up the space for them to

voice these interests and for teachers to develop the means to give them pedagogical expression.

Of course, one should also understand that where authoritarian relations have dominated classrooms for so long, building such research relationships is likely to be slow. Nor should we forget that pupils (and their teachers) have their own entrenched understandings concerning the nature of school and classroom work which may well undermine teachers' (and teacher-educators) attempts to develop new pedagogical forms unless pupils are partners in the process of change (Hull 1985a). Finally, Carnoy argues that creating space for students to articulate their demands about the schooling process makes it more likely that even nonreformist goals might be subverted in the interests of the mass of students:

Even with nonradical community control reforms, if the community really does control a school and maximises its children's possibilities, it will, in some sense, have to respond to students' demands as well, and students will create a much more favourable learning environment for themselves. Since it is now the poor who have least control over schooling, the relative increase of their control would tend to interfere with the reproduction of labour power; that is, with the allocation of labour to different kinds of jobs.<sup>4</sup> (1982:174))

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4. Although it is worth repeating Kemmis's point that negotiating the curriculum means taking pupils' interests into account, but not starting exclusively from their ideas. It may be that pupil concerns are not always progressive, for example, they might reject examinations because this blocks their narrow job prospects, rather than from a progressive concern to problematise the form, content and uses of assessment.

## Teachers as participants in first and second order action research

This brings me to the question of teachers as participants in action research at two levels - my second order action research and their first order action research. As explained in chapter five I first introduced the idea of 'action research' when discussing the project with teachers early in 1988. In the pilot study, the language and practice of action research had not been a key feature of work with teachers, although as chapter four showed, there was some promising teacher reflection on practice. At the first school meetings in 1988, I emphasised the idea of teachers as researchers, saying things like 'through researching your own practice, through investigating what happens in your classroom you can become a better teacher, a more critical and creative teacher' (meeting 27/1/88). The handout I left behind (see appendix C) explained the process of action research, followed by a further handout to all interested teachers in mid-February (see appendix C). This second handout illustrated the action research cycle, with a simple account as to how this might work in action. The workshops and one-to-one meetings were characterised by similar attempts to encourage teachers to collect evidence on their teaching for reflection, and to introduce a research discourse.

But for most of 1988, the focus of our work was much more in the area of changing methods and supporting teachers in

making these changes. Data collection in the end was managed largely by myself, this being exacerbated by the initial reliance on videotape, the equipment and expertise for which was exclusively located at the university. However, even when we shifted to making audio-recordings of lessons using tape-recorders on semi-permanent loan to the schools, data collection was still at my prompting and in a sense perceived as for me, I thought, rather than for the teachers themselves.

In May 1988 I organised a workshop during a working school day for all project teachers, with a focus on the teacher as researcher. No school was able to release all project teachers, and eventually only 14 of the teachers came. The workshop was structured around group discussions. One of the questions teachers were asked to consider was: 'When I think about researching my own practice....' (workshop handout 4/5/88). There was some evidence that teachers were beginning to think about this, as this extract from one group's opening discussion suggests:

Nombulelo: I would like somebody to listen to my teaching. In fact I'm not sure about this researching of my own practice.

Cynthia: When I think about researching my own practice I think about the project we are involved in. Is it helping me? Does watching the video tapes help me? What other way can I research my own practice?

Walter: I thought about researching my own practice since I was involved in this project. I wondered if it will help me.

Joseph: When I think about researching my own practice I think of the success in teaching the child.

David: When I think about researching my own practice I found that faults with regards to methods can be rectified or old methods can be changed and the new ones can be adapted to, and my attitude when presenting the lesson to the pupils, their reaction when they receive the information from me. Is it stimulating or the other way around? And the improved way of teaching.

Oscar: When I think about researching my own practice I am given an opportunity to learn about myself. I may claim that I'm good in only a fraction of what is required of me. (group discussion 4/5/88)

But none of this opened up the 'black-box mystery' of my own action research, nor involved teachers as co-researchers in my second order action research. Thus I would not claim the existence of a 'critical community' of researchers, especially if one differentiates between 'participation' and 'involvement':

Authentic participation in research means sharing in the way research is conceptualised, practised and brought to bear on the life-world. It means ownership - responsible agency in the production of knowledge and the improvement of practice. Mere involvement implies none of this; and creates the risk of co-option and exploitation of people in the realisation of the plans of others. (author's emphasis, McTaggart, 1989a:3)

On this basis, it would seem that teachers were participants in the process of curriculum change, but only involved in the process of my own research. Ideally, teachers should have been part of a critical community but this would be to beg the question of the real power differences detailed in section three of this study. Teachers knew from the start of the project that I was a 'researcher' - that I was researching my own practice, that I would write it up and share it with a wider audience. But differences (not

necessarily negative) of context and skill, job description (teachers defined as teachers, myself defined as a researcher), and real constraints on teachers' time, in the end meant that I worked with them for curriculum change, but I tackled the second order research alone.

This raises the further question, then, as to whether my own research can be considered 'emancipatory' action research. On the one hand there is evidence in my research for a concern with the connections between schooling and wider issues and problems, for improvement in practice and for the involvement of all participants in the process of change. But on the other, emancipatory action research is crucially a collaborative process, and research requiring individual academic effort is in potential conflict with this ideal (Groundwater-Smith, 1988). As noted earlier, the process of changing practice was collaborative, my research on that process was not. In the end, however, Grundy reminds us that 'given the transcendent technical interest in our society' it is unlikely that 'the emancipatory potential of action research will be fully realised in one situation' (1987:159). She adds:

Nevertheless action research offers a programme for strategic action which opens up the possibility of working systematically in ways which foster freedom, equality and justice in learning environments and interactions. (my emphasis, 1987:159)

I would argue, then, that my research was informed by an emancipatory interest imperfectly realised in the practice of the research itself, and only partially realised in my

efforts towards an empowering form of adult pedagogy in the interest of transformative change.

### What counts as action research?

Throughout the project I wrestled with a concern that teachers didn't seem to be doing research. Retrospectively I realise that the teachers were being asked to take on too many innovations simultaneously. And of course the impetus to research their own practice, as pointed out earlier, did not come from the teachers themselves, nor was it rooted in a pre-existing teacher culture supporting reflective and pro-active curriculum development. Thus it was not surprising that we concentrated on curriculum innovation, even though still encouraging a reflective approach to such innovation.

By August 1988, I was beginning to conceptualise a continuum of different levels of 'research', rather than a sharp break between 'research' and 'reflection'. I put it this way to

Alan Kenyon:

I still have questions about whether what the teachers are doing can be labelled research, or whether it doesn't matter, and it's only my problem of definition because I'm too locked into what constitutes an academic view of research. At the same time, I'm aware that teachers are not being very rigorous in looking at classroom evidence because they don't have the time or perhaps the research skills. So I wonder if we shouldn't rather call our approach 'reflection on action' or 'reflective conversation' which would be a step along a continuum from research to reflection. But I think that in our context, research will only happen when there's a climate of support - both institutional and structural. (discussion 3/8/88)

Yet, at the time, I still wanted to facilitate action research, ignoring, or not understanding, that appropriate conditions had not as yet been established for teacher research comparable say to that by Stuart's group in Lesotho (see Stuart et al, 1985). My notes for a general plan for 1989 record that I hoped to shift from a process of emphasising curriculum development to an emphasis now on action research (fieldnotes 4/2/89). I prepared yet another handout for teachers early in 1989 (see appendix C), while the information sheet which I wrote and distributed at the end of February optimistically emphasised that teachers would be researching their teaching:

This term all PREP teachers are researching how their teaching methods work out in practice. You have all agreed to collect evidence by:

- \* keeping a weekly diary in which you describe a lesson and say how it went;
- \* tape recording one lesson and listening to the recording;
- \* asking another teacher to watch you teach and comment on your lesson. (information sheet February 1989)

I also began to encourage teachers to keep a journal. Influenced by an article by Tripp (1988), I hoped to initiate an exchange about their teaching through the journal pages, while placing more control over the research process in the hands of teachers (fieldnotes 9/3/89). In fact this initiative did not take root either, with only Veronica in the end showing real enthusiasm for keeping a journal for herself, as opposed to keeping it only at my request.

When Sue Philcox interviewed project teachers from three of the four schools in November 1989, she asked them whether they had done 'action research'. Responses varied. At Phakamisa and Sivuyile teachers did not understand her question but when she went on to explain what she meant by action research they all thought they had done 'research'. It would seem then that teachers had some sense, albeit rather vague and poorly expressed, of themselves as 'researchers'. Only Cynthia from Sizithabathele school was able to describe more clearly what she understood by action research:

I think what Melanie put across to us was teachers researching their own teaching, with maybe UCT providing us with materials, or the teachers themselves trying to develop the methods that would be helpful to them and help the kids, and the teachers growing in their teaching. (interview with S. Philcox 22/11/89)

Furthermore, teachers did not comment at all on my second order action research.

Yet this still leaves unresolved the question of what counts as 'research'. Stenhouse is clear about what he would define as research: 'systematic enquiry made public' (Stenhouse, 1981:9). But Ashton et al (1989) argue that the concept of research employed in action research remains uncertain. They suggest that Elliott emphasises the need for teachers to publicise their findings in order to be regarded as teacher researchers, while Ebbutt claims that the distinguishing feature of action research is making teachers' reports open to public critique. McNiff (1988) claims that it is teachers making public their claims to

knowledge that defines their classroom enquiries as research. Ashton et al conclude that this 'certainly seems to imply a concept of research far removed from that of teachers simply enquiring more systematically into their practice' (1989:14). Stuart distinguishes between 'reflection in action' and 'action research'. She is clear about the difference:

Through action research teachers are helped to make the process [reflection in action] more conscious, more explicit, and more rigorous to the point where, if made available for public critique and discussion, it can be called research. (1991:149)

Essentially the former would involve individual professional development, the latter a contribution to public knowledge. As Rudduck (1985) notes, 'reflective practitioner' is a 'gentler phrase' than teacher-as-researcher. It is the latter term, she argues, which opens up 'the established research tradition and the democratisation of the research community' (1985:126). Finally, Griffiths has outlined a number of criteria for identifying action research:

1. The intention is to improve a situation rather than to discover universal truths about it. In other words the primary purpose of the research is to work towards change in particular circumstances rather than to contribute to knowledge about educational situations in general.
2. People reflect on, and improve, their own work and their own situations.
3. Reflection and action are tightly interlinked, including both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. This means that the process includes both monitoring and also both short term and longer term reflections.
4. The participants contribute to formulating research questions.
5. The participants gather the data - either themselves or with the help of others. Similarly with evaluation.
6. Reflection includes a wide understanding of relevant theories.

7. The research is made public: to other participants, and also to other persons interested in and concerned about the research.

8. Going public means that the participants work with others: questions and methodologies are formulated in a 'critical community'.

9. The 'critical community' is a community of equals in respect to power, autonomous, responsible persons. (author's emphasis, 1990:42-43)

Using the criteria of Stenhouse, Stuart and others I would claim that my own second order research qualifies as action research. With regard to Griffiths more specific criteria, all but the last two are fulfilled in my own research. I have some problems with her first criteria though, where I would argue for a more nuanced and dialectical connection between changes in practice and contributing more generally to educational knowledge. I would argue that action research should be not conceived of as either changes in practice or contributing more generally to educational knowledge. Furthermore, I have found that making my work public in written form has in itself been an essential part of the process of reflection. According to Holly (1989), and the experience of teachers in the PALM project (see for example Palmleaves No 5, February 1990), reflective writing contains the possibility of being as important for teachers. Action research studies are important contributions to a shared body of knowledge about practice and might inform and guide (but not direct) other practitioner-researchers. I would at this point hesitate then to privilege action in particular circumstances over the production of publicly available knowledge about educational situations in general.

Regarding criteria eight, the publication of my research has been both for an academic audience and a teacher audience. In the former case I have done so through papers and a thesis, while in the latter case I have produced three draft manuscripts on teachers and their work in history and reading, and three project newsletters. These newsletters (see appendix C) were produced between December 1988 and October 1989. Called PREP NEWS, they were intended to share work in PREP with teachers in DET primary schools. The first newsletter, for example, said that:

A teacher researcher is:  
an observer;  
a questioner;  
a learner;  
a more effective teacher.  
(PREP NEWS No 1:1)

The second newsletter introduced teachers to the process of planning, acting and reflecting, with comments by two teachers about the process of reflecting on their teaching. Thus Gladstone was quoted as having said that:

You know it's very important to hear your voice over a tape recorder and you can easily identify the mistakes that you've done in that particular lesson and then you tape record another lesson and pinpoint your problems, and you define those mistakes. I mean I think that is very important. (PREP NEWS 2:2)

The final newsletter provided straightforward suggestions for doing one's own research - deciding which aspect of teaching to investigate, collecting evidence in the form of notes, teacher-observer comments or a tape recording, and pupil opinions. The balance of each newsletter was made up of descriptions of lessons, lesson materials and comments by teachers and pupils in an attempt to model for readers how the action research process might look in practice. The

three draft manuscripts similarly attempted to capture the process of teachers identifying problems in their teaching, trying out new ideas, reflecting on such experiments, and improving their work. They were subsequently edited, published by the project, and given to all the teachers concerned.<sup>5</sup>

More problematic are criteria eight and nine. At one level my participation in conferences and seminars at which the work-in-process was shared with colleagues contributed to the shaping of new questions, and the sharper focussing of others. The RESA conference mentioned in this chapter was one such occasion. Reflective conversations and analysis of data with Rob Sieborger, Alan Kenyon and Karen Morrison further contributed to the research, as did the comments by two 'critical friends' on draft chapters of this thesis. But no structure such as a post-graduate action research seminar or educational research unit existed through which the developing work could be shared on a more regular basis with interested peers. Indeed, after my presentation to the Education Faculty in June 1988, I noted that as a faculty we seemed to have no language with which to discuss action research (fieldnotes 20/6/88). A three month visit to England early in 1990 enabled me to engage with experienced

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5. Edited by Wendy Flanagan, these have been published as: The Primary Education Project (1990), Teachers and Their Work: History; the Primary Education Project (1990), Teachers and Their Work: Junior Primary Reading; The Primary Education Project (1990), Teachers and Their work: Higher Primary Reading. While they describe teachers and their work in the project in an accessible form, drawing from my fieldnotes and data, they were neither written by the teachers themselves nor edited in consultation with them.

action researchers, at CARE in particular. Visits to Deakin University and the University of New England in Australia in April 1990 further helped in clarifying my thinking about the epistemology and methodology of action research.

If one emphasises 'public scrutiny' of written reports, it is difficult to argue that teachers in PREP did 'action research'. Nonetheless, I would claim that teachers were beginning to engage with teacher-research in their engagement in a research process, attempting to develop methods and materials appropriate to their own situation, collecting evidence with my help on these attempts, and individually and collectively discussing this evidence. I have found it strategic to refer to their enquiries as 'research' in an attempt to develop a discourse about teaching which counters the dominant view of the teacher as a technician, and to begin recasting teaching as intellectual work. Reflective curriculum practitioners would be centrally involved in the production of valuable educational knowledge, crucially helping shape policy from an informed position. This seems especially important in the light of the statement by Ihron Rensburg of the NECC that teachers will be the implementers, i.e. not the producers, of people's education (Rensburg, 1986). In other words, teachers, even in progressive circles, are not being seen, and arguably do not see themselves, as producers of knowledge about educational contexts. Furthermore, the experiential learning and personal knowledge production integral to teachers' learning in this project was the

direct antithesis of imposed knowledge and hierarchical relationships whether within schools, between schools and education authorities or between schools and universities:

Knowing, whatever its level, is not the act by which a subject, transformed into an object, docilely and passively accepts the contents others give or impose on him or her. Knowledge, on the contrary, necessitates the curious presence of subjects confronted with the world. It requires their transforming action on reality. It demands a constant searching. It implies invention and re-invention...in the learning process the only person who really learns is s/he who appropriates what is learned, who apprehends and thereby reinvents that learning; s/he who is able to apply the appropriated learning to concrete existential situations (Paulo Freire quoted in McTaggart, 1989b:6).

One should also not overlook the political possibilities as teachers progress along the continuum from reflection to research. Evans (1989) points to the domination by whites of intellectual production and their monopoly of research skills in South Africa. Although his paper specifically addresses the role of academic university-based researchers, his arguments can justifiably be extended to include action research when he makes statement like:

blacks have not been trained in techniques and processes of serious research...  
One does not acquire research skills without engaging in research projects...  
the research environment in South Africa has been systematically confined to white academics...(1989:4)

Faced with the effects of an intellectually sterile education system and historically unequal access to intellectual training for black<sup>6</sup> students, one of the appropriate places to start intellectual training is in

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6. Evans means african, indian and coloured when he uses the term 'black'

classrooms, exposing pupils and their teachers to a research-based view of teaching. This seems especially important given the often powerful shaping effects - negative and positive - of one's intellectual experiences at school. Equally, of course, teachers should be participants in second order research as well.

In the end, more rigorous and sustained research efforts, including the writing of reports, need to be supported by changed working conditions, formal awards, and a teaching culture in which teachers are confident enough to take on board a view of themselves as practitioner-researchers. At best my work with teachers has probably been able to initiate the discourse, but not yet to develop it beyond relatively limited classroom enquiries.

Action research has been important for my own 'knowing'. Through it, I have been able to generate 'practical wisdom' (Elliott, 1989) of how to work with teachers. I have questioned my practice, deliberated on the dilemmas of my practice, documented, analysed and written about those 'indeterminate zones of practice - uncertainty, uniqueness and value conflict' (Schon, 1987:6) which cannot be solved technically or by only applying theory to practice. On this basis I claim to know my own educational development. And, as Schon maintains, it is just these 'indeterminate zones of practice...that practitioners and critical observers of the professions have come to see with increasing clarity over the past two decades as central to professional practice'

(1987:6.). With respect to teachers' reflection on practice, this, as previous chapters showed, ranged from the technical to the practical. Even accepting that such shifts for many of them are towards new ideas and not yet new frameworks of understanding their practice, nonetheless, different social relations in their classrooms, the introduction of relevant texts, collegial working relationships, and greater confidence in their own pedagogical knowledge, are both signposts to a project of practical possibility and starting points for a more hopeful educational future.

## CONCLUSION

Assume that no amount of knowledge will ever make it totally clear what action should be taken. Action decisions are a combination of valid knowledge, political considerations, on-the-spot decisions, and intuition. Better knowledge of the change process will improve the mix of resources on which we draw, but it will never and should never represent the sole basis for decisions.<sup>1</sup>

This study engaged with the reality of a group of DET teachers in primary schools - the overcrowded and underresourced classrooms, the haphazard rhythms of the schoolday, the repressive and unpredictable political climate. This reality comprised the backdrop for the complexity of change.

Section two of this thesis argued that change is context bound. Action researchers unquestionably need to undertake sociological and historical research into wider social and educational conditions to understand the limits and possibilities of change in schools. One cannot ignore the 'conspiracy of contextual constraints' (Brookfield, 1986:296). Chapters two and three explained why things are the way they are in bantu education primary schools, and described the devastating intellectual effects on teachers and pupils alike of decades of gutter education. The thesis pointed to the gap between 'actual life and preferred narratives' of teachers.<sup>2</sup> I learnt how teachers

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1. Fullan, 1982:92

2. The phrase is used by Joan Didion in her account of New York to refer to a city 'rapidly vanishing into the chasm between its actual life and preferred narratives', New York Review of Books 17 January 1991.

accommodated the prevailing education system at the level of their practice by implementing the official syllabus, mostly unquestioningly, by accepting bureaucratic controls, and by acting out transmission teaching and rote learning. At the same time teachers I worked with resisted 'rotten' bantu education at a rhetorical level, and through their attempts to change their practice, however limited. This aspect of my research arose out of, and helped me make sense of, the dilemma of reform and transformation detailed in section four.

Writing the study was complicated, dealing as it had to with two levels of research - second order action research on my own interventions, and teachers' first order reflection on their classroom practice, with each level of research shaping and being shaped by the other. Teachers' responses to my interventions led me to develop appropriate strategies so that teachers in turn began to experiment in their teaching. Such teacher action further shaped the way in which I understood my own role, engaged with the literature around issues thrown up by my practice, and acted further. Change and development at both levels of reflective practice were therefore dialectically related, with both the teachers and myself acting as reflective practitioners. Although prevailing conditions in the schools arguably made it difficult, nonetheless, a gap in this study was my failure to try and involve teachers in my own second order research.

The study engaged with action research literature, in particular the concepts of technical, practical and emancipatory research exemplified by Carr and Kemmis (1986) and by Grundy (1987). The work of Elliott in the area of action research over the last twenty years informed the study methodologically and epistemologically. In particular, Elliott's (1988b) account of the pre-existing culture which provided the necessary conditions for action research to take root in Britain proved useful in understanding the limits on teachers' action research discussed in this thesis. While this study points to the problems of establishing action research in DET primary schools under present conditions, it also shows how the development of reflective teaching did contribute to change in classrooms. Similarly, my own action research has contributed to my personal and intellectual growth, enabling me to 'slow down the process of reflection to make my steps more conscious, deliberate and explicit' (Stuart, 1988:123).

Stuart (1988) suggests there is no one way to be a facilitator. Sections three and four bear this out, while emphasising that facilitation is more than a set of techniques. Nor is it possible to be a non-interventionist facilitator - even the decision not to intervene reveals a value position. Thus, while there may be more than one way of working with teachers, such work should be underpinned by guiding principles, even if, as this study shows, such principles may be only partially realised in practice.

My own educational development and that of the teachers was refracted through two key dilemmas arising from my concern to act democratically, and my interest in transformation. These dilemmas emerged from my action with teachers but were crucially shaped by the wider context as well. For me action research was a means of researching the possible realisation of certain educational values. Working as a white university-based researcher, action research held out the promise of monitoring the development of a 'power with' way of working alongside teachers. But section three detailed how teachers expected techniques - recipes - for teaching because this had been their dominant educational experience. Unlike the experience of British projects, this study showed that a recessive role for the facilitator simply did not work. Instead, I came to understand what it meant to act democratically in the context of these DET primary schools. Thus it was not helpful to leave teachers to their own devices, but nor was it appropriate to give in to teacher demands for recipes. While the latter may have been a quick and relatively easy way to resolve the dilemma, it would also have reaffirmed those patterns of dependency preventing teachers from becoming empowered, responsible and self-directed learners, and would also have contradicted and undermined my own educational values. Acting democratically turned on how ideas and expertise were shared with teachers whose professional knowledge had been severely limited by bantu education.

The issue of the facilitator taking on the role of classroom teacher was raised by teachers in this study. The thesis has suggested that this role needs to be handled sensitively so that it is not seen as simply providing methods for teachers to 'copy', but rather as a 'visual argument' for change. This demands of teachers that they are active watchers and listeners. Working alongside teachers in classrooms, demonstrating where appropriate, co-operative planning and discussion, were all tried successfully in this study. This in turn necessitated establishing a good working relationship with teachers. Thus facilitation requires the development of interpersonal skills, including respect for and trust in teachers.

This study has also shown that a facilitator working with teachers burdened by the legacy of bantu education needed to become the mediator of curriculum change. Reflective teaching and action research had to be situated within a wider process of curriculum analysis and change. What emerged was the importance of specialist help in exposing teachers to alternatives where curriculum development provided the dynamic for reflective teaching. The view of specialist help that emerged from this study was similar to what Verduin (1967) describes as a 'co-operative' approach to change. While specialists may offer suggestions, the teachers themselves 'weigh the various ideas and select those which are appropriate for the particular curriculum' (Verduin, 1967:32). Verduin distinguishes between specialist help and the 'expert':

If the educator does not have an active part in effecting change and does not know the rationale behind it, it will have less meaning and interest for him[sic]...Thus curriculum changes handed down by experts are not likely to be implemented. (1967:32)

The need for specialist help revealed the limits of the assistance I was able to provide as a non-primary specialist. In particular I was unable to help those teachers who expressed an interest in investigating maths, given the difficulty of arranging specialist help for the project in this area. Consequently I would maintain that facilitators should be both specialists in the relevant subject area and have experience of facilitating reflective practice - or provision should be made for specialist consultants. I found it difficult and demanding having to learn about primary schools, the primary school curriculum and action research simultaneously. Thus, teacher-educators might want to first conduct a small-scale action research study on their own practice before facilitating action research with others. However, even under more favourable conditions than those in which this project was researched, I would argue too, that reflective practice should not be divorced from questions of the transformation of the form and content of the curriculum. Otherwise one risks reducing action research to a series of research techniques, and facilitators to only trainers in research methods. I found that the reflective process in itself was not enough, and could be profoundly conservative.

Sections three and four showed that emancipatory knowledge was not sufficient for emancipatory practice. I found in my own work that I needed technical, practical and emancipatory knowledge. I would argue that such knowledge should not be equated with having a technical, practical or emancipatory interest. Both the teachers and I had to learn technical skills, but this is not necessarily the same as supporting a technocratic view of society and education, or elevating efficiency in a skill to efficiency as a value. Nor should attempts to be efficient and effective necessarily be seen as evidence of a technical interest (see for example, Grundy, 1990). In the context of the inefficiency and ineffectiveness that permeates the DET at all levels, it seems that such conditions subvert an interest in freedom, truth and justice so that pupils suffer, while concerned teachers experience frustration and a disastrous loss of morale. The currently chaotic state of DET schools makes it difficult to argue a case that efficient and effective practice are unimportant in reconstructing education.<sup>3</sup> The point is, that acquiring skills, including skills of acting efficiently, should be contextualised in terms of the longer term goals and principles informing the work, rather than being simply read off as demonstrating a technical interest.

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3. To underscore this point one example will suffice. Recently New Nation reported that schools in Soweto had received insufficient textbooks so that at least three pupils would have to share each textbook. In addition, some schools were supplied with the wrong textbooks. Thus one school has been sent Zulu textbooks every year, although this subject is not offered at the school, and no mathematics textbooks have been received for three years. Even though the school intends returning the Zulu textbooks, they expect to receive maths textbooks only at the end of the year (New Nation 25/1/91).

As this study shows, liberating education requires both techniques and a critical perspective on teaching and learning.

Learning to be a good teacher is hard work, risky and multi-layered, for example history teachers had to deal with issues of content, methods, language, and contextual constraints. While some teachers took few risks with their practice, there is also evidence of other teachers changing their methods, developing new materials, and beginning to understand the rationale for their practice. Often the change process was frustrating, exacerbated by working constraints. At the very least facilitators need stamina and considerable reserves of patience! Since it is equally risky and challenging for a facilitator to change and develop, universities need to consider structures to support action research by teacher-educators.

In talking about changes in their teaching, many of the teachers I worked with began to articulate their own theories about effective teaching and to contribute useful knowledge for curriculum development in reading and history. The positive effect on pupil learning of co-operative group work, the importance of reading texts relevant to pupils' lives, pupil learning of english and history arising out of the use of visual material, and the importance of collegial relations for their own development, are some examples of their developing theories. At the same time, this thesis also showed that trying new ideas (technical knowledge) is

not the same as developing understanding (practical knowledge), although the former would be essential for the latter. Developing an understanding of why one method is better than another and thus moving beyond fossilized situation specific techniques is a slow and continuing process. But it is precisely this process which underpins further growth as teachers make wise decisions about practice.

This thesis has demonstrated that for teachers to change their practice they need content knowledge and teaching skill knowledge. The problems that emerged in history showed not only the gaps in teachers' own content knowledge, but also their lack of any philosophy or theory of history. However, I would argue that INSET should not divorce learning content from learning new methods. Rather content should be mediated by practice.

Nor should one underestimate the importance of resources if teachers are to change their methods of teaching. In this study I tried to keep resources as simple and inexpensive as possible but some outlay on paper, and photocopying, access to library facilities and skill in designing worksheets was still required. Without resources, at the very least, paper and basic design skills, teachers cannot be expected to successfully try new methods. Improved textbooks, preferably emerging from some level of consultation with teachers, should also be seriously considered, given the way

textbooks still significantly shape practice in under-resourced schools.

This study shows that where teachers participated in planning materials, trying them, adapting ideas and so on, this was an empowering experience for them, not least to see the motivation of their pupils. While teachers were willing to try new ideas, they became convinced of these methods only after they saw them working successfully in their own classrooms. The teachers' growth in confidence emerging from dialogical and supportive ways of working seems to have been important in their taking risks in their classrooms. A sense of personal efficacy - that they make a difference to children's learning - is likely to encourage further growth.

Section four highlighted too the persistence of residual practices. Change is not linear but can involve reversion to dominant practices, or dominant practices running alongside new ideas. The point here was that even where new methods could not be consistently implemented, teachers were nonetheless exposed to different models of practice. As Campbell notes:

to demonstrate by empirical research that classroom reality does not match ideal images is to miss the point about such images, which are designed to represent values not reality. Images of 'good practice' are offered as concentrated ideas to a profession whose vision is often obscured by the hectic, draining and pragmatic demands of their everyday contexts. (1985:150)

In chapter ten I supported Stuart's argument for conceptualising a research continuum where the 'experiment for practice has a more limited function than the experiment for research' (1988:122), but one would be a step on the way to the other. At the same time I underestimated the need for research training and later in this conclusion I suggest ways to incorporate different levels of such training in INSET. Nonetheless, change has to start somewhere, and if less was achieved than was hoped for, this is not to say that the envisaged change should be rejected, rather that it should be reformulated in the light of local conditions. Indeed, one might argue that if teachers can change their practice even under very difficult conditions, how much more might be achieved given a climate which supports, rather than opposes change, and where the reconstruction of education is viewed as urgent and essential rather than subversive. Reflective teaching, as this study shows, makes sense if one supports a view of educational practice as more than the display of a battery of technical skills, and rather as a purposeful, flexible and value-laden activity.

My research challenged the argument that the development of new ideas and materials could only be narrowly reformist (Unterhalter and Wolpe, 1989). The reforms detailed in this study contributed to a sense of how practically teaching and learning might be different. Teachers developed confidence in asserting their own voices about curriculum, implicitly redefining a view of professionalism as different from that of obedience to authority. This is important if teachers

are to participate and not only be involved, as McTaggart (1989a) defines the difference, in reconstructing education in South Africa. In concentrating on broad structural changes, and in challenging the idea that equal education would in itself bring about a more egalitarian society, many of us have overlooked the fact that teachers and principals do make a difference to what goes on in schools and classrooms. As Jencks et al (1972) observe:

Some schools are dull, depressing, even terrifying places, while others are lively, comfortable and reassuring. If we think of school life as an end in itself rather than a means to some other end, such differences are enormously important. Eliminating these differences would not do much to make adults more equal, but it would do a great deal to make the quality of children's (and teachers') lives more equal. Since children are in school for a fifth of their lives, this would be a significant accomplishment (quoted in Fullan, 1982:296).

Nonetheless, the combination of prevailing repressive conditions, the unfamiliar form of the project for teachers, and the need to build strong interpersonal relations between a white researcher and african teachers meant that my own engagement with teachers lacked a wider critical focus on the same educational context which was so important in my own educational development. Even though alternative reading texts and history content, and new collaborative methods undermined the social and educational relations of fundamental pedagogics, my work was in some ways, at least, more akin to solidarity than critical practice.

A problem in this study, too, was teachers' reluctance to involve pupils in their enquiries. A real shift in power

should be not only in the direction of teachers, but to the mass of pupils as well. Given that teachers occupy a contradictory class location, as argued in chapter three, one cannot assume that african teachers will align themselves with progressive social forces. But nor should one subscribe to a reproductive view of teaching. Rather one should try to articulate the professional and the political in strategies for change in a now more open political climate. A difficulty in this study, given the repressive conditions at the time, was in doing this. Future INSET projects should consider how they might intersect with the political task of building a strong non-racial and democratic teachers' union, as well as SRCs and PTSAs.

#### **Towards a policy and practice for INSET**

Like many other studies of change (see for example, Fullan, 1982), my research demonstrates that change is neither certain, nor guaranteed, nor predictable. As Grundy (1990) notes, it is precisely such uncertainty that leads us to want to control human action and guarantee outcomes. But we cannot understand human action, she argues, as technical practices - 'a matter of bringing about by acting upon other objectified beings' (1990:5). This is not to deny that in the face of the need for the mass upgrading and re-education of thousands and thousands of teachers trained and schooled in bantu education that action research and reflective practice might appear premature, and not the most

appropriate means to rapidly skill masses of teachers. Yet the temptation is precisely to 'act upon others as objectified beings', telling teachers how they should teach, and equipping them only with technical skills, important though such skills are. This study, however, showed that teachers do indeed make their own meaning of the change process, as Fullan (1982) argues. This reveals the limits of only telling teachers what and how they should do things, or simply imposing a new curriculum. The ideas which follow suggest how reflective practice might underpin INSET programmes, while smaller numbers of teachers engage with action research. These ideas arise out of my experience in this study. As with the dialectical shaping of the two levels of reflective practice in my own work, INSET projects undertaken by university based teacher-educators would both shape practice within the university and within the schools.

The aims of a university based INSET initiative might include:

- 1/ To pursue research into in-service teacher education for a democratic South Africa, including both action research on university interventions, and policy and comparative research informed by such action research.
- 2/ To develop a critical community of teacher-researchers who would share their insights with a wider community of teachers, and also parents and students, through creative and participatory programmes and accessible materials.

3/ To provide a service for democratic teacher organisations, such as SADTU, by developing resources and encouraging action research into an appropriate pedagogy for democratic transformation.

4/ To bring the ideas and experience gained through the process of working with teachers and teacher organisations into the environment of the Education Faculty to inform pre-service teaching and postgraduate courses. Thus teachers would be partners in second order, as well as first order, action research.

Broad hypotheses, supported by the findings of this study, for developing of an INSET policy, might include the following:

1/ Teachers are central in reconstructing quality primary education, and teachers can and do make a difference in classrooms.

2/ Teachers should develop rather than be developed, and change should be negotiated not imposed.

3/ Reflective teaching contributes to change in classrooms by developing teachers' wise judgement for intelligent action.

4/ Reflective teaching should be part of a wider process of democratic curriculum analysis and change.

5/ INSET activities should focus on school problems, whether of classroom practice, school administration, or whatever, as defined in consultation with teachers,

principals, democratic teacher unions, and university based facilitators as well.

6/ Curriculum development requires support for teachers, including resources, access to specialist help and classroom support as teachers try ideas.

7/ Support for teachers should build teachers' personal and professional confidence.

8/ Where teachers develop collaborative and collegial working relationships this strengthens change.

9/ Teachers can share ideas at different levels, and are keen to do so once their confidence has developed.

10/ The university-teacher partnership contributes to professional growth of teachers and teacher-educators.

INSET programmes raise the issue of the relationship between a university Faculty of Education and practising teachers, and the connections between college qualifications and further degree study at universities. Where possible universities, colleges of education and the education authorities together need to develop more innovative and flexible approaches to awarding credit for INSET participation. At present only further course work at colleges and universities is recognised. The possibility of teachers completing INSET modules, such as a small scale action research study, might be considered so that, over time, involvement in INSET enables teachers to attain 'qualified' status. This is not to emphasise the importance of product or certification as ends in themselves, but

rather to recognise that in developing countries qualified status is an issue for teachers and the wider educationally disadvantaged community.

University initiated INSET could operate on a number levels. At one level, courses could be run by primary specialists in subject specific areas, underpinned by a commitment to reflective practice. Informal consultation with democratic organisations would help locate INSET politically as well as educationally. Teachers would be released, say, for two full day workshops in each of the first three school terms. Teachers would attend on the understanding that they try the suggested ideas and keep a journal of their experiments-in-action. Thus some training would be needed in journal writing as a research tool. The second workshop of each term would be devoted to teacher report backs and sharing of experiences, using their journals, examples of work by pupils, even photographs and audiotape extracts where the university team has worked alongside teachers in their classrooms. In this way a network of teachers experimenting and reflecting on practice could be developed. In time an INSET newsletter written by teachers and edited by university staff could circulate more widely to primary school teachers.

At a second level, the university might consider a more flexible policy of entry to the B.Ed<sup>4</sup> for a manageable

4. In South Africa the Bachelor of Education is a post-graduate degree. Entrants to the degree must have completed a first degree, for example a B.A., and a one-year teachers'

number of teachers with matric and a college diploma. At present teachers must complete an entire undergraduate degree, which they often perceive as having little relevance to their day to day work, before entering postgraduate study. Through interviews and an essay, a teachers could be admitted to a two year part-time 'Foundation B.Ed' based around curriculum theory and practice and classroom research. The latter would include training in research methods, especially data collection and analysis and report writing. After completing the Foundation B.Ed they would proceed directly to the B.Ed. In this way, a core of teacher-facilitators, themselves able to facilitate and lead in-service work in primary schools, would slowly grow. Course work in the Foundation B.Ed should be linked to democratic teacher organisations, for example, by encouraging teacher participants to present workshops, write short papers, produce a newsletter and so on for members of democratic teacher unions.

This study suggests that principals play an important role as gatekeepers, at least in controlling initial access to a school. Without their support I would never have been able to work in schools without DET permission. The potential influence of principals in the change process as well raises the possibility of principals doing action research themselves, either with teachers or other colleagues. This

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diploma. After two years teaching experience they can register to study for the B.Ed part time over two years, or full-time for one year. Teachers studying part-time would take about six years to complete a first degree.

was not a feature of this study but might be considered by others concerned to develop more democratic forms of leadership and administration in schools.

In this study change was adopted and implemented but not institutionalised - the third stage in Fullan's (1982) definition of the change process as comprising adoption-implementation-institutionalisation. Arguably, conditions for institutionalisation simply did not exist. Nonetheless, how to institutionalise change should be raised as a question for future INSET projects, given that whole school involvement is more likely to support and maintain the momentum of change.

Finally, then, the reconstruction of education in South Africa is an urgent and difficult task. Structural change is vital so that resources are equitably redistributed, in particular to primary education for disadvantaged communities. One education department, community participation in education and official support for new forms of INSET will all flow out of changes in the control of education. But, as this thesis has suggested, structural change alone will not be enough to redress the damage inflicted over decades by bantu education. We will need to find ways to reeducate teachers, whose role in developing quality democratic education is critical. We need to develop appropriate INSET programmes now for the political and professional education of teachers struggling with the legacy of bantu education in their classrooms. Such INSET

should be an integral part of teachers professional lives, not an occasional intervention. This research is a contribution to developing democratic and empowering INSET towards the former end.

APPENDIX A

A list of the teachers with whom I worked between 1987-1989:

Sivuyile:

1987: Mavis, Muriel, Alice, Ruth, Miriam, Gloria, Gertrude, Naomi, Jennifer

1988: Alice, Ruth, Mike, Walter, Alfred

1989: Alice, Ruth, Mike (resources to Reginald and Barbara)

Phakamisa:

1988: Josephine, Nzwakie, Bulelwa, Veronica, Leah, Elizabeth, Johnson, Lumka, Oscar, John

1989: Bulelwa, Veronica, Leah, Elizabeth, Lumka (history resources to Douglas)

Sizithabathele:

1988: Beatrice, David, William, Norman, Joseph, Stanley, Cynthia

1989: Beatrice, William, Cynthia, Thandie, Norman

Khanyisiwe:

1988: Zolani, Gladstone, Adelaide, Nomonde, Nombulelo

1989: for a few weeks only with Adelaide, Gladstone and Zolani (resources thereafter to Nomonde and Nombulelo)

APPENDIX B

**1/ Questions for interviews conducted by Lufuno Nevatalu with all project teachers in September 1988:**

1. Why did you decide to join the project?
2. If you had to tell another teacher about the project what would you say the aims are?
3. What do you know about action research?
4. What about Melanie's role in the project - how has she helped you?
5. In your view, what could she done to help that she did not do?
6. What about the fact that she's classified white? Did this make any difference to you?
7. And the fact that she's a woman? Did that make a difference?
8. What advice would you give Melanie before she approaches other teachers to join the project?
9. Do you think that you have benefitted from taking part in the project? Why/why not?
10. Will you continue with the project next year? Why/why not?
11. What advice would you give to teachers who decide to join the project next year?
12. How do you feel about the present system of schooling?
13. How do you think it should be different?
14. What role is there for you as a teacher to help change the present schooling system?

**2/ Questions for interviews conducted with all project teachers by Lufuno Nevathalu and Tozi Mgobozi in July, August and September 1989:**

1. What was your schooling like?
2. Did you have good teachers? Tell me about the good teachers? Did you have bad teachers?
3. When did you leave school and why?
4. Why did you decide to be a teacher?
5. Where did you train? Can you tell me about the college?
6. What did you learn there about teaching? Can you tell me about pedagogics? What about methods? Do you use any of these methods in your classroom now?
7. When did you start teaching?

8. What have you learnt about teaching since you started work in a school?
9. What do you think one needs to know to teach well?
10. What is a good teacher, in your view?
11. Have you been to any in-service courses? Can you tell me about them? What sort of in-service education would interest you?
12. How long have you been teaching? At one school only, or a number of schools?
13. Are you studying further? If so, what are you studying and why?
14. Do you think you're a good teacher? Why/why not?

## APPENDIX C

1/ Handout on action research to the staff at Khanyisiwe, Sivuyile, Sizithabathele and Phakamisa, January and February 1988:

### THE PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT

#### Introduction

The Primary Education Project (PREP) began in April 1987 working with a group of teachers in one township primary school. The project was initiated partly in response to the concern expressed by some township teachers that they wanted to develop more effective teaching in their classrooms. PREP is also trying to look carefully at the link between UCT and the township primary schools so that the educational research that UCT engages in is what the school community wants. In 1988 PREP is hoping to extend the project to four more primary schools and to continue working with teachers in those schools until the project ends in mid 1990.

#### Classroom Action Research

The broad aim of the project is to encourage and support interested teachers in investigating the teaching and learning situations that exist in their own classrooms with the intention of improving their practice. Teachers are in charge of classrooms so for changes in classroom practice to be effective it is important to place teachers at centre stage in the research process. Teachers carry out the research themselves, with support from each other and/or an outside facilitator. This is what two teachers in Australia had to say about the effect of their experiences in an action research project:

Using action research in your teaching gives you a different outlook on teaching and on yourself. You move beyond thinking about the content to be taught, to how children learn.

And a researcher in Australia claims:

These teacher-researchers know more about what is happening in their classrooms and schools because they have begun to observe in an organised way the action they have taken, the effects it has produced, and the circumstances in which these occur.

The knowledge and experience of teachers is taken seriously and it is the people in the classroom who benefit.

## The Process of Action Research

Classroom action research is much easier when done in pairs or as a group rather than when done on one's own. One needs the support of a colleague both to talk things over and for practical reasons like carrying out observations and interviews. When the teacher has decided on a problem she/he wishes to investigate she/he will need to collect data (evidence) which may include tape or video recordings of lessons, fieldnotes written up after the lesson, questionnaires, examples of student work, and student interviews. The university researcher acts as a facilitator/consultant to support and help the teacher. She can offer ideas through literature and discussion, make suggestions, give advice, etc, but the teacher has the final say. She can help the teacher by observing, interviewing and analysing, thus feeding back to the teachers further data. While it may be important at the start of their research to have someone to support and guide, with practice teachers could form their own groups to act as consultants for each other.

Teachers should not feel they have to wait to be 'trained' to do action research in their classrooms. They should go ahead and try it out, using any method they can think of. There is no one 'correct' way: almost all methods will yield some benefit, and teachers will be able to refine their techniques until they find those that prove most fruitful for them. Classroom action research began with ordinary classroom teachers, and it is still being developed by them. Everyone is invited to contribute to the process.

## Teachers as Researchers

PREP believes that teachers can become their own action researchers; they can develop skills of analysis and self evaluation. In the process, teachers will become much more aware of what is going on in the classroom and can act, themselves, to improve it. The greatest demands are on the teachers themselves: they need courage and commitment, and the readiness to give generously of their time and effort as they search for the best possible answers to problems of classroom practice and educational change.

2/ Handout to all project teachers February and March 1988

## THE PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT

- \*What is a teacher-researcher?
- \*How does a teacher researcher investigate her own practice?
- \*What is action research?

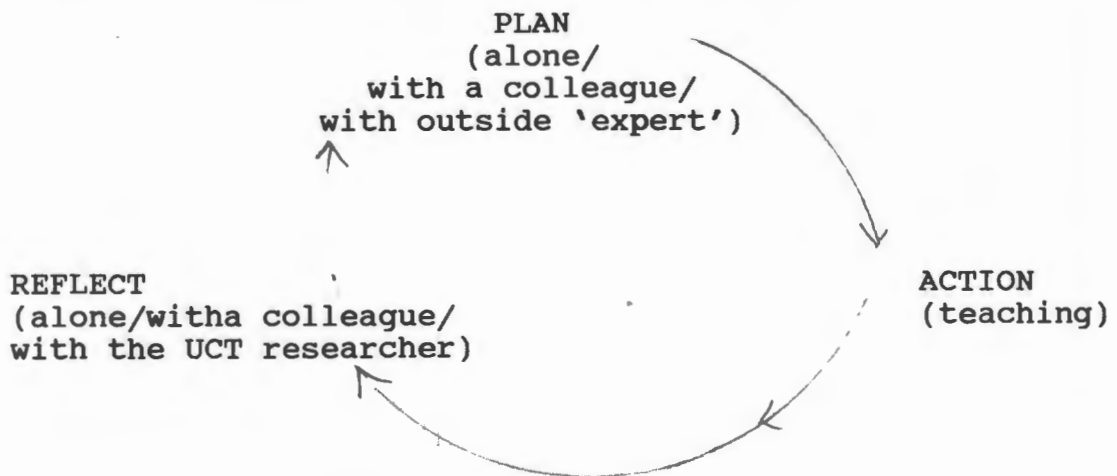
A teacher researcher investigates/researches what is happening in her classroom. She looks again and again at

what is happening so that she can really get to know the children and how they learn, and to learn along with them. A teacher-researcher is prepared to question her own methods in order to become a better teacher. New approaches to teaching are not risks but opportunities for learning. A teacher-researcher learns through doing.

A teacher-researcher investigates what is happening in her classroom by:

- [1] Planning a lesson that deals with a problem of teaching/learning in her classroom;
- [2] recording this lesson on videotape;
- [3] using this recording to help think about and comment on her teaching;
- [4] from this thinking and commenting (reflection) further lessons are developed to improve her teaching;
- [5] and these lessons are videotaped....commented on.....  
...and on the process of investigation continues.....

We call this process of investigation **ACTION RESEARCH**



3/ Handout to all project teachers January 1989

**PREP 1989: ACTION RESEARCH**

Teacher's name:

- [1] This year I am teaching:  
Std.....  
Subjects.....

[2] The aspect of my teaching that I want to improve/change is (for example, english reading, teaching the Khoisan to std 3.....)

[3] This is the question/s I am asking about this aspect of my teaching (for example: How can I teach pupils to retell a story in their own words; How can I teach pupils to identify the main ideas in a story; How can I teach pupils to work in groups; I want pupils to ask questions in history - how can I do this.....etc)

[4] I will collect evidence (data) about my teaching by:  
keeping a diary  
tape recording part or all of a lesson/s  
video taping part or all of a lesson/s  
asking somebody to observe a lesson  
writing descriptive notes at the end of the lesson  
keeping samples of pupil work  
testing the pupils  
interviewing the pupils

[5] I will research my teaching with std....once a week/  
month/term

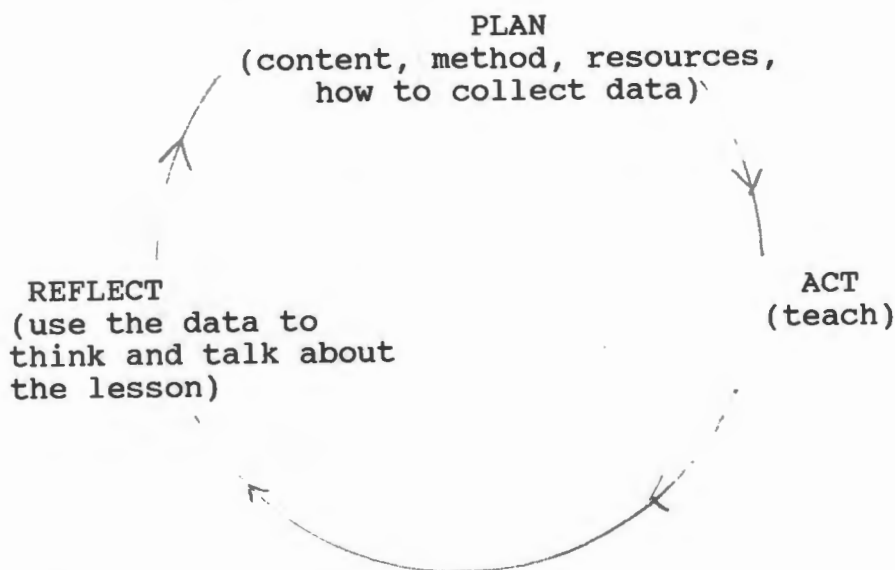
[6] After collecting data on my teaching I will make time to reflect on it, to think and talk about it, to understand what happened and to plan further changes. Reflection is important in learning because:

Reflection is an important human activity in which people capture their experience, think about it, mull it over, and evaluate it. It is this working with experience that is important in learning (Boud, Keogh and Walker).

So the aim of reflection is to make one ready for new action in the classroom.

This process of planning-teaching-reflecting-planning again is called ACTION RESEACH, i.e. research by practitioners into their own practice:

Decide what I want to research



4/ Extracts from PREP NEWS

No 1 1988

WHAT IS PREP?

PREP is the Primary Education Project which is based at the School of Education, UCT. Two field workers from UCT have been working with 28 teachers from 4 schools in Guguletu and New Crossroads.

WHAT ARE THE TEACHERS DOING?

The teachers involved in PREP are researching their own teaching so that they can improve. These teachers have chosen to investigate other ways of teaching reading in the lower and higher primary classes, and teaching history in std 3 & 4. Next year a few teachers will also research their teaching of maths.

WHAT IS A TEACHER RESEARCHER?

A teacher researcher is:  
an observer;  
a questioner;  
a learner;  
a more effective teacher.

She/he tries out different methods by planning a lesson, recording this lesson on video or audio tape, and then using this recording to think and talk critically about the lesson. From this thinking and talking further lessons are developed to improve her/his teaching. So for a teacher-researcher new approaches are opportunities for learning about teaching.

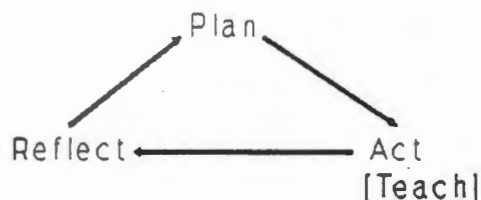
WHAT DO TEACHERS SAY ABOUT THEIR TEACHING NOW?

- \* *I found that the children do understand much better than the time I was using my old method of teaching reading.*
- \* *I've seen my faults. I've identified them.*
- \* *I'm changing my methods of teaching.*
- \* *This project helped the children to learn english.*
- \* *If you take new methods then afterwards you can evaluate them ... you improve those methods by your own thinking.*

No 2 1989

ACTION RESEARCH II

PREP teachers are learning to research their classroom work. They first plan a lesson (s) using methods and materials which will help pupils understand their schoolwork. They teach the lesson and either make a video recording, a tape recording, or write down their own notes after the lesson. They use this evidence to reflect on how the lesson went. Then they plan another lesson, teach, reflect ..... and so on. We call this the Action Research Cycle:



This is what one project teacher wrote in her journal after a Std 1 reading lesson using a story "The Hungry Giant":

I have learnt that pupils enjoy reading - if you the teacher prepare thoroughly - bring pictures - they become curious and always want to know "what next?" The most important thing, the book you choose should be suitable for that class. This lesson was very effective - pupils really enjoyed the lesson. They even said they want to dramatise. That means they read with understanding. The pupils selected the actors themselves - I just helped there and there.

For the PREP teachers, teaching is RE-search - looking and looking again and becoming a better teacher. One teacher puts it this way:

you know, it's better to hear your voice over a tape recorder and you can easily identify the mistakes that you've done in that particular lesson and then you tape record another lesson and pinpoint your problems, and you define those mistakes, I mean I think that is very very important.

No 3 1989

TEACHER - RESEARCHERS

Teachers in PREP have continued to monitor and evaluate their teaching. If you RE-search your teaching you look and look again at what you do and why you do it. If you want to begin researching your own teaching you might:

- \* Decide which aspect of your teaching you want to investigate, for example, the weekly reading lesson.
- \* Collect evidence about your teaching:-
  - write notes each week about your lesson describing what you did and how you think the lesson went;
  - ask another teacher to watch a lesson and comment;
  - tape record a lesson and listen to the recording afterwards to help you evaluate what learning was taking place;
  - ask pupils what they think about the lesson.
- \* After a few weeks write a report on your research for other teachers to read.

## APPENDIX D

Lesson observation notes for Ruth 19 August 1988

### Std 4 Reading: The Sugar Cane Fire

Number in class: about 50

Pupils grouped at desks, about 6 in a group

This lesson tape recorded and observed by Melanie

#### What the teacher did:

She hands out the extract to the pupils.

She asks the pupils what they can see in the picture. She tries to get them to extend their answers by building further questions on their responses, for example:

P: Three men.

T: What are they holding?

P: They are holding fire. (Teacher says that one cannot hold fire. Calls on other pupils to help)

P: They are holding branches.

P: They hold the branch of a tree.

T: What else can you see?

Lots of pupils respond. They are keen to say what they can see in the picture. Teacher does not accept answers which she regards as incorrect, for example 'road' for 'footpath'. This part of the lesson takes about 5 minutes.

The teacher tells the pupils to put the pictures aside and she hands out the story. She says that she will read the story. Afterwards they will have to answer some questions. She tells pupils to listen to her pronunciation of the words in the story. The teacher reads while the pupils follow the text. All the pupils seem to be concentrating. The reading takes about 4 minutes.

She tells the pupils that she will write the words in bold type on the board. She takes a minute to do this:

biggest worry

to get rid of

sparks

in case

grumbling

spoil his fun

beat the dust

She asks them to try and explain what these words mean. She reads the sentence in the text. She provides further clues by using the phrase in a sentence of her own. Then she asks the pupils to use the phrase in a sentence, for example:

P: My biggest worry is my dog.

T: My biggest worry is for you to pass at the end of the year.

P: My biggest worry is that I have no money to come to school.

P: My biggest worry is to look after my little brother.

P: My mother's biggest worry is to look after me.  
She writes the last sentence on the board.

She moves on to the next phrase. She reads the sentence. Nobody responds so she provides further clues by using the phrase in a sentence. Then pupils try:

P: My mother says I must get rid of playing in the street.

P: My father says I must get rid of my friends and read my book.

Teacher praises the answers. She writes the second response on the board.

She moves on to 'sparks'. She begins to explain, then gives the xhosa word - 'intlantsi'. She writes this on the board. She goes on to 'in case'. She reads the sentence from the story. A pupils responds but thinks it means a suitcase. The teacher makes up a sentence using 'in case'. She asks the pupils to explain in xhosa. The third pupil contribution is correct. She again asks them to make up a sentence:

P: Will you take this jacket in case it gets cold on your way home.

Teachers praises the pupil and writes this sentence on the board.

She decides to stop there as she feels that she is running out of time. This part of the lesson has taken 8 minutes. The class reads the story aloud. The teacher does not read aloud first. Reading is mostly fluent although they do stumble in some parts. They take 4 minutes to read the story. The teacher praises their reading. She corrects the pronunciation of 'flames' and 'as'.

She asks the class to try and retell the story. Jeffrey tries. He mixes his own words and phrases from the story. He manages to retell the first part of the story. Another pupil tries. He manages a few sentences. He gets as far as the children going off to watch the fire.

The teacher tries to help the pupils by asking what happens next. A pupil says: 'The children run down to the field'. The teachers asks 'What happened to Siphos?' The pupil who responds uses the phrase 'beat the dust'. She asks him what this means but he does not know. Another pupil starts to read from the story. She stops him, saying they must try to use their own words, and moves on to another pupil who finishes retelling the story. This part of the lesson takes 5 minutes.

The teacher asks the pupils to spend 5 minutes reading the story silently while she writes some questions on the board. The questions are:

1. Where does Thandi live?

2. Where do Thandi's parents work?
3. What is Thandi's biggest worry?
4. What comes out of the fields when there is a cane fire?
5. Why is the cane burnt?
6. What do the words 'to beat the dust' mean?

After writing up the questions she walks between the desks. After about 5 minutes she tells pupils to finish up. She tells them to turn over the story and to answer the questions without looking at it. Question 1 - lots of hands go up:

P: Thandi live near the sea in Natal.

The teacher corrects the grammar. The pupil repeats the answer, this time using the verb correctly. The whole class repeats the answer aloud. (They do this for the answer to each question). Question 2 - lots of hands go up:

P: Thandi's parents work in farm, sugar farm.

Question 3 - lots of hands go up:

P: Thandi's biggest worry she must look after Sipho.

T: Thandi's biggest worry is to look after Sipho.

Question 4 - about 10 hands go up:

P: The rats came out of the field.

Question 5 - two hands go up:

P: The cane is being burnt to get rid of the leaves so that it can cut more easily.

Teacher repeats the answer. Class does not repeat this answer. Question 6 - about half the class put up their hands:

P: To beat the dust mean to run fast.

This part of the lesson takes about 6 minutes.

The last part of the lesson is spent on a spelling game using a few words from the story: 'naughty', 'children', 'snatches', 'suddenly'. First individual pupils are asked to try and spell the word. Then the whole class spells the word. The final step is spelling around the class, one pupil gives the first letter, the next pupil continues and so on.

**Teachers comments:**

What I liked about this lesson.....

What I would change if I taught this lesson again.....

Why I would make these changes.....

## APPENDIX E: HISTORY

For further examples of teachers' work see Teachers and Their Work: History, published by PREP

### 1/ Std 3 History: Young Shaka and the Lion April 1989

From the Sesotho story by Thomas Mofolo of  
the life of the great Zulu leader:

Suddenly some of the men heard the lion roaring quite close to them, and by the sound of its roar they knew it was about to spring. It roared once only and then it was on them. They scattered in all directions, most of them running towards the village; they never even saw the lion, but merely heard its roaring. Some went uphill, some downhill, some crossways, and some made straight for home; and the same man who had been encouraging others was the first to run away, though not by very much, for they all rushed away together.

As the lion sprang it caught one man, brought him to the ground and lay upon him. Chaka came running up, and first of all tried to stop one of the men and get him to join in the rescue, but the man could neither speak nor fight; he only wanted to run away. Chaka ran on shouting so that the lion might hear that someone was coming and thus be stopped from killing his victim at once. It roared once more, making the fugitives quicken their speed, and then at the next roar it sprang at Chaka, sprang with its mane sticking up, its eyes blazing, its tail stretched right out, and its claws bared ready to kill the man.

Chaka was completely unafraid. He simply waited for the lion to jump, and while it was in the air, he moved to one side. The lion could not stop and just before it reached the ground Chaka stabbed it behind the shoulder with his spear. It fell and while it was dying its roars were terrible to hear. Chaka looked at it without fear: it did not seem as if he was looking at a deadly beast which had just attacked him.

The crowd of men had just reached the village when Chaka stabbed the lion and its last terrible roars made them all rush into the huts without looking behind. Chaka went up to see the man whom the lion had attacked, but found that he was already dead. He was surprised because he had come to the man's rescue quickly but the lion had broken the man's neck with its paw when it leapt on him. The women saw what was happening for they did not run away but watched from a distance. When they saw that Chaka had killed the lion, they told the men in the huts and called to them to come out and help him carry the dead lion. Then the men felt ashamed, especially as the lion had been killed by a young boy with a smooth chin who had not yet gone to war.

## 2/ Std 3 history: The 1820 Settlers

- \* Work with your partner. Read the extract and tell your partner in english about the 1820 Settlers.

In 1820 about 4000 British settlers came to the Cape to settle in the Zuurveld ("sour country"), the area west of the Great Fish river. They left Britain because times were hard and jobs were difficult to get. They hoped to start a better life at the Cape. The governor at the Cape described the area they were going to as "most beautiful and fertile".

The settlers landed at Algoa Bay (now Port Elizabeth). They were given farms in the Zuurveld area between the Fish and Bushmans rivers. Life was very hard. The farms were too small. They had to face wild animals, crop diseases, lack of food and clothes, and poor housing.

In 1834 there was a war with the xhosa and many settlers were killed. Remember, both the black and white farmers needed land and sometimes fought one another for it.

Within four years of their arrival 60% of the settlers had moved to other parts of the country. Some settlers left their farms to work in the new towns such as Grahamstown, But others stayed on their farms, bought more land and did well after the introduction of merino sheep farming.

## 3/ Std 4 history: Early Mining

- \* Work with a partner or in a group.
- \* Read the paragraphs below. Then match each paragraph to one of the pictures on early mining in South Africa.

1. The spear and hoe makers fix wooden handles to the spears and hoes. Now they can be used as tools. The spears and hoes can also be swapped with other tribes for cattle, sheep and other goods.

2. Sometimes the copper miners had to make deep shafts to get to the rock below. They broke up the rock, carried it to the surface and crushed it. They melted copper ore to make jewellery.

3. The blacksmith beats the iron into the shapes of spears and hoes.

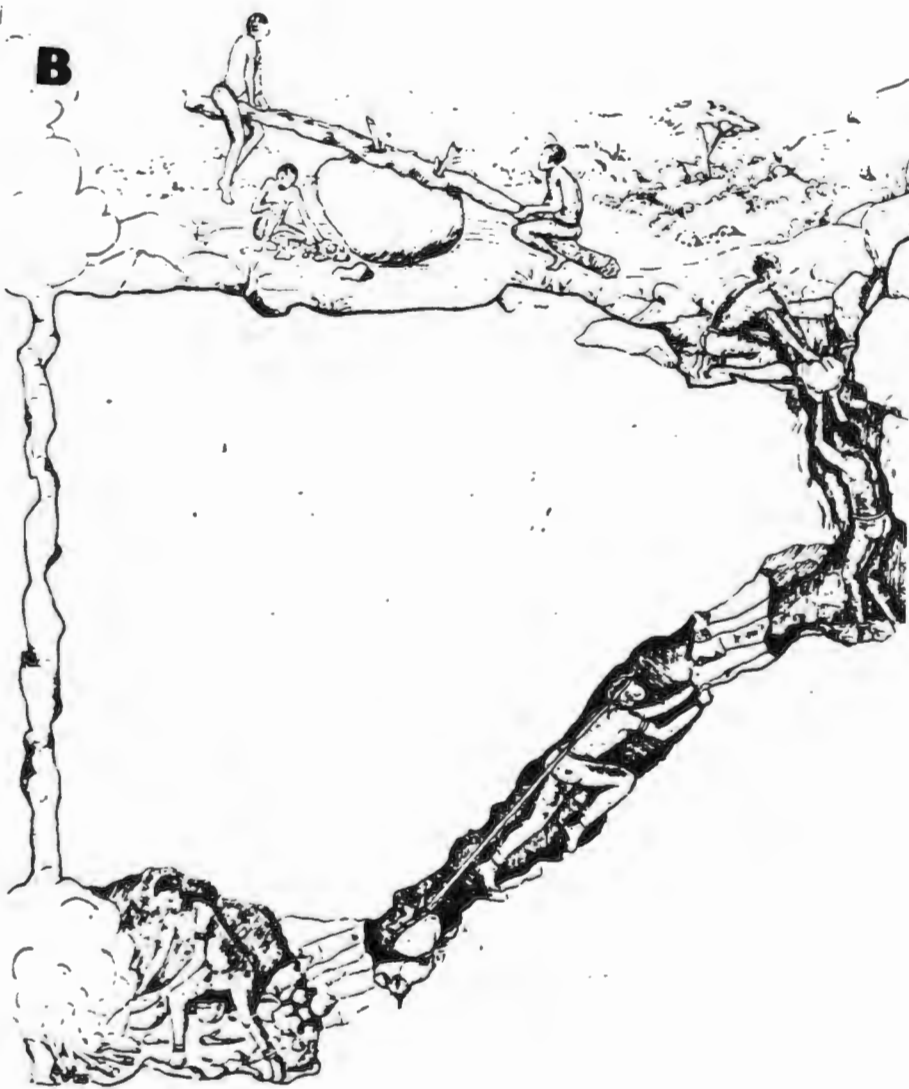
4. Women dig out the dark brown ore from the ground. They take the iron to the iron makers.

5. The iron maker puts the lumps of iron into his forge, he blows air through a clay pipe to heat the charcoal in his forge. The hot charcoal melts the iron.

**A**



**B**



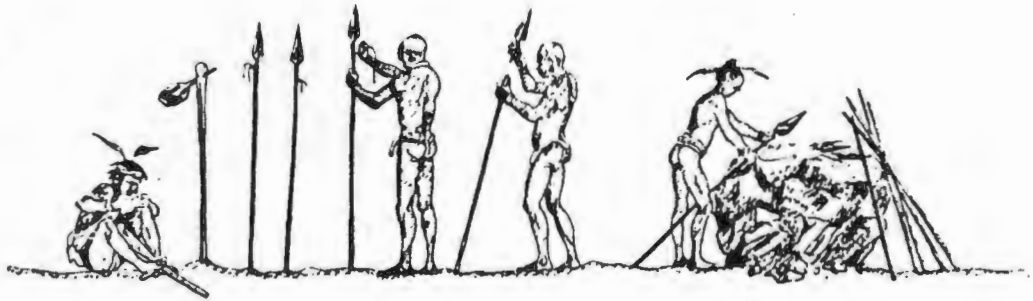
**C**



**D**



**E**



## APPENDIX F: JUNIOR PRIMARY READING

For further examples of teachers' work see Teachers and Their Work: Junior Primary Reading, published by PREP

### 1/ Wendy Flanagan's ideas for a series of reading lessons:

1. Read the book to the children, showing the illustrations page by page. Choose books where the text (story) matches the illustrations or try drawing your own. Try not to translate. Let the illustrations help the children understand the story. We do this because children learn to read by reading and so must try on their own from the start to understand what they are reading, without anyone explaining all the time.

2. Put your enlarged illustration on the chalkboard and your enlarged strip of text (story) for that page underneath the drawing. Have the children read the strip aloud, altogether. Read with the children, stress natural rhythm. Do not read word for word or point at each word. Rather let your hand move smoothly along the text, in phrases, indicating the rhythm. We do this because reading one word at a time does not help us to comprehend what we are reading. Do this for each drawing and accompanying strip.

3. Read the whole story through together still making sure that the children read with a rhythm that helps make sense of the story. This helps them to learn to read the story.

4. Remove the strips and hand them out randomly to the class, i.e. muddle up the story. Ask the class to put the story back on the chalkboard in the right order. Do not interfere, let the children sort out the story for themselves. Again we do this to teach the children to make sense of what they read, by having to put the strip in sequence they need to understand the story. As a strip is put up let the children read it aloud. If the child does not want to, then let the class read the strip.

5. When all the strips are back on the chalkboard, have the class read them through together. We do this so that children can gain confidence in their reading.

6. Ask the class for volunteers to read the story aloud on their own. This is a way for the teacher to see how well the children are managing but also for the children to try out their growing ability and to enjoy the reading process.

7. Cut up the strips, sentence by sentence (or write out the story again with one sentence on each strip). Muddle up the sentences. Have the children read out the sentences in the order of the story. Let the children read each sentence aloud. Then read the whole story when all the sentences are up on the chalkboard. We should do this because children must learn to read in meaningful chunks such as sentences. This also helps children to learn to tell the difference

between sentences. Part of learning to read is learning significant differences between sentences.

8. Cut the sentences up into phrases. Muddle up the ends of the sentences. Put the start of the sentence on the chalkboard. Have the children hunt for the correct ending. Let the children read the completed sentence. This exercise helps teach the children to recognise differences and to read to make sense.

9. Cut the sentences up into separate words. Muddle the words of two or three sentences together. Have the children build the sentences up again. Let the children read the sentences aloud to see if they make sense. Let them help each other. Try not to interfere.

10. Ask the children to retell the story without looking at the text. In this way they learn to talk in English but they also learn that we read to comprehend not just to repeat.

## 2/ Jan Davidson's ideas for a double period reading lesson

Part One : about 15 minutes:

Reading a new book - The teacher draws the children's attention to the title of the story and discusses some of the illustrations with them. In this way the children have an oral interpretation that will help them to understand the written text. The teacher has the words of the story written in large print on computer paper so that everybody in the class can read the story.

Reading a story aloud to the class.

Reading books the children enjoy again.

Part two: about 30 minutes

In this part of the lesson the children are divided into about six groups to work on different activities. Each group works on two different activities during this session (15 minutes each):

1. the teacher group - reading the prescribed reader with the teacher;
2. two groups read library books or any other books that are available;
3. two groups do worksheets based on one of the stories read in the first part of the lesson (see examples below);
4. the sixth group listens and follows the text of a tape recording of the prescribed reader.

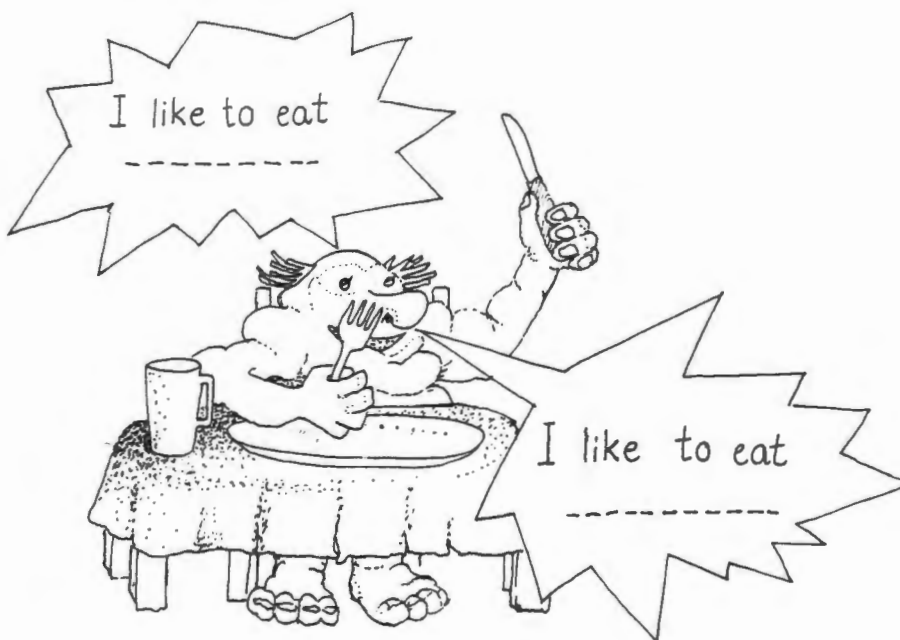
Part three: about 15 minutes

In the last part of the lesson children first tidy up. A few children read their work to the class. The session ends with reading a favourite story or learning and reading a rhyme.

a. Drawing and writing.



b. Building sentences.



**3/ Ideas for using the prescribed reader:**

1. First the teacher asks the pupils to look at the illustrations in their books and to say what they can see. Then she tells the story orally, putting up main ideas of the story (which she has written in large print on strips of computer paper) on the chalkboard. This part of the lesson only takes a few minutes.

2. The teacher reads the story aloud - right through.

3. The pupils read the story silently.

4. The teacher helps explain the words the pupils do not understand. She encourages them also to guess the meaning from the context. Groups also help each other understand.

5. The teacher muddles the main ideas on the board. The class rearranges them.

6. The teacher asks volunteers, or the class, to read a part of the story.

7. Pupils end by doing a group activity based on the story. If there is not enough time in the reading lesson, the book education period can be used.

Possible group activities (see examples below):

- a. sequencing main ideas
- b. matching sentences and pictures.
- c. completing an extract or summary based on the story.
- d. building sentences
- e. working with the teacher.

a. Sequencing main ideas

Write these in large print on strips of paper or on the chalkboard.

An old man and his wife had no children.

This made them very unhappy.

One day the woman heard a voice in the pool.

The voice told her to go home to her child.

The woman found a beautiful baby girl in her hut.

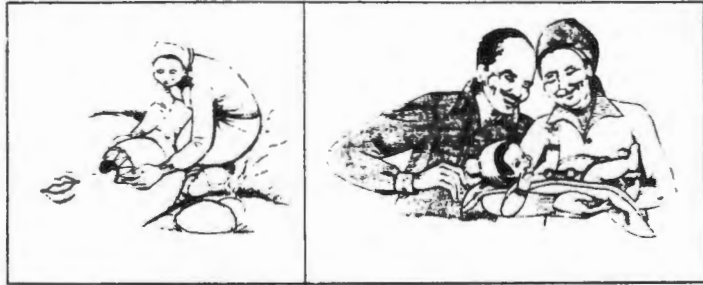
They named the baby Nonhlanhla.

She grew up to be a beautiful girl.

b. Matching sentences and pictures

Match one sentence to each picture:

1. The old man and his wife were very proud of their beautiful daughter.
2. The old woman heard a voice in the pool telling her to go home to her baby.



c. Completing a summary

Work with your partner/group. Complete the summary so that it makes sense:

An old man and ..... wife were very unhappy  
..... they did not have ..... One  
day a voice ..... the pool told the .....  
to go home to ..... baby. At her ..... the  
woman found a beautiful ..... girl.

d. Building sentences

Write your own sentence about the story.  
Read your sentence to your partner.

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## APPENDIX G: HIGHER PRIMARY READING

For further examples of the teachers' work see Teachers and Their Work: Higher Primary Reading, published by PREP

1/ Wendy Flanagans' ideas for a reading lesson using the prescribed reader:

1. The teacher asks the pupils to read the passage silently. Before they start reading she asks them to remember the words they don't understand.

2. The teacher asks the pupils which words they did not understand. She writes all these words on the chalkboard. In other words the teacher writes down the words the pupils don't understand, not the words that the writers of the textbook have decided the children won't understand.

3. The teacher reads the story aloud while the pupils follow in their books.

4. The teacher asks the pupils to try and guess the meanings of the words they did not understand from the story. That is, the words are placed in context.

5. The teacher asks if the pupils want to remove any of the words on the board. This will leave only the words which are not understood on the board. These are then explained as they appear in the story. The teacher might say something like: Can anybody in the class explain the meaning of this word? If necessary the children can explain in xhosa. The teacher should then ask: Can anybody translate this into english? How do we say that in english?

6. The children read the whole story again with a view to retelling the story, if possible without looking at the book. The pupils help each other and together the class reconstructs the story. By retelling the story in english they will be using language not copying language. They, and not the teacher, will be the active readers

7. Once the story has been retold, then the teacher should help the class to begin looking critically at the story, asking for example: Why did this story make us laugh? Is this person typical? and so on. Finally pupils should be asked if they have any questions they would like to ask about the story.

2/ Pele the Soccer Player

I was born in Tres Coracoes in the state of Minas Gerais on 23 October 1940. My parents named me Edson Arantes do Nascimento, but everyone in the family called me Dico. My mother wanted me to be doctor. The last thing she wanted me to do was to follow my father and become a professional footballer.

My father has never been lucky...or rich. He didn't earn enough money as a footballer to look after the whole family. He knew about football and that was the thing he most enjoyed doing. So he took no notice when my mother told him again and again to find a proper job.

Then the club in Bauru asked my father to play for them. They knew that he needed extra money and they thought they might be able to find him an additional job as well. My mother was very pleased. So the whole family moved to Bauru. There was Dondinho, my father, Dona Celeste my mother, her brother Jorge, my grandmother Dona Ambrisina and the three children: my bother Zoca, my sister Maria Lucia, and myself.

But my father's bad luck continued. The management of the club changed and made no promises about the additional job. You can guess what my mother thought about that!

For a while, Uncle Jorge cut and sold wood in the new town. Then he found a good job in a large store. My aunt Maria, who worked for a wealthy family in Sao Paulo, sent us food and clothes whenever she could. So we survived.

But as I grew up I knew what it meant to be poor. It is not only doing without shoes on your feet, or wood for the fire, or enough food in your stomach. Nor is it only living in a house where rain comes in through the roof at night. To be poor is to be afraid. Afraid of life. There was more than enough love in that house. Love that has lasted and helped us through our hardships.

But I also remember terrible arguments between my parents. They were always about the same thing: the fact that Dondinho couldn't earn enough money as a professional footballer.

### **3/ Sophiatown Schooldays by Dinah Makgoke**

I was born in Sophiatown being the eldest child in the family of six. Twenty families were staying in one yard. There were more than fifty children in that yard and one of them was my friend.

The name of my friend was Mary. We grew up together, from the age of three to ten. Our friendship was so close that nobody could part us. Most of the people thought we were twin sisters. We used to wear the same colour pattern of dresses and shoes, which were bought by our parents.

We started schooling at the age of seven. Life turned a bit sour for us, as we had to travel from Sophiatown to Newclare, using school buses. As we were young we experienced terrible torture from the senior pupils. We were forced to carry their loads of books from the bus stop to the school. We had to brush their shoes every day when

we entered the school premises. Sometimes we had to stay hungry for the whole day as our money was taken by the bullies. Life was not a bed of roses.

I used to help my mother at home every afternoon. When I reached home from school, my first task was to chop wood and make a fire. After making the fire, Mary and I had to go and draw water 1km away from home, with buckets on our heads. That is the place which made Mary and I very tough, as we had to fight our arch-rivals, who did not want us to draw water. We used to throw stones at each other and used knobkerries for our own protection. I do not remember in my youth ever having no scars on my body. Bandages and plasters were my daily bread.

I was used to faction fights - and what caused those fights was just a tap. Children who lived near that tap claimed it and said it belonged to them, and no other child was supposed to draw water from it. Those bullies used to chase us, pour our water out of the buckets and throw our buckets far away. It was struggle for the survival of the fittest.

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#### 1/Fieldnotes

Fieldnotes were kept:

from 4 March-10 June 1987; 12 July-10 September 1987;  
from 12 January-30 March 1988; 12 April-25 May 1988; 7  
July-12 September 1988; 28 September-20 October;  
from 18 January 1989-22 March 1989; 11 April-1 June  
1989; 7 July-17 August 1989.

#### 2/Audiotapes of meetings with teachers 1987-1989:

1987:

workshop/discussion with Sivuyile teachers 15 July  
discussion with std 3 teachers Sivuyile 22 July  
discussion with Std 3 teachers Sivuyile 3 September 1987 -  
(std 3 history)

1988:

introducing the project at Sizithabathele 27 January  
introducing the project at Khanyisiwe 27 January  
introducing the project at Phakamisa 11 February  
introducing the project at Sivuyile 17 February  
meeting with interested teachers at Khanyisiwe 11 February  
meeting with interested teachers at Phakamisa 18 February  
discussion with Lufuno about introductory meetings 17  
February  
discussion with Zolani 7 March/std 4 english reading  
discussion with Walter 10 March/std 4 xhosa reading  
discussion with Ruth 10 March/std 4 english reading  
discussion with Joseph 16 March/std 4 english reading  
discussion with Beatrice 30 March/std 5 english reading  
discussion with Stanley 14 April/std 3 english reading  
discussion with David 15 April/std 5 afrikaans reading  
discussion with Cynthia 19 April/std 3 afrikaans reading  
discussion with Norman 23 April/std 4 english language  
discussion with Joseph 29 April/std 4 english reading  
discussion with Alice 2 May/std 4 english reading  
discussion with Alfred 2 May/std 4 afrikaans reading  
discussion with William 5 May/std 4 afrikaans reading  
discussion with Nzwakie 5 May/sub B english reading  
discussion with Veronica 5 May/std 1 english reading  
discussion with Josephine 16 May/sub B english reading  
discussion with Elizabeth 16 May/std 2 english reading  
discussion with Leah 17 May/std 2 english reading  
discussion with Zolani 23 May/std 4 english theme  
discussion with Mike 23 May/std 4 history  
meeting with project teachers from Sivuyile 8 July  
meeting with std 3 teachers from Khanyisiwe 19 July/history  
discussion with William 20 July/std 4 history  
discussion with Joseph 10 August/std 4 english reading

discussion with Alice 23 August/std 4 english reading  
discussion with William 13 August/std 4 history  
workshop with Jan at Phakamisa 20 July/junior primary  
reading  
discussion with Mike 15 August/std 4 history  
discussion with Gladstone 18 August/std 4 history  
discussion with William 19 August/std 4 history  
discussion with Beatrice 22 August/std 5 english reading  
discussion with junior primary teachers 2 August/english  
reading  
discussion with junior primary teachers 28 August/english  
reading  
discussion with junior primary teachers 30 August/english  
reading  
discussion with Gladstone 29 August/std 4 history  
discussion with Lumka September/std 3 xhosa reading

1989:

meeting with Phakamisa group 18 January  
discussion with Leah and Elizabeth 23 January/std 2 english  
reading  
discussion with Veronica and Bulelwa 27 January/std 1  
english reading  
meeting with Nzwakie 27 January/sub b english reading  
discussion with Zolani 24 January 1989/std 5 english  
discussion with Cynthia and Thandie 25 January/std 3 reading  
discussion with Beatrice 26 January/std 5 english reading  
discussion with Lumka 8 February/std 3 history  
discussion with Norman 9 February/std 4 english oral and  
reading  
discussion with Norman 21 February/std 4 english  
discussion with William 21 February/std 4 history  
discussion with Lumka 27 February/std 3 history  
discussion with Cynthia and Thandie 9 March/std 3 reading  
discussion with Beatrice 9 March/std 5 reading  
discussion with William 11 April/std 4 history  
discussion with Lumka 14 April/std 3 history  
discussion with Cynthia and Thandie 20 April/std 3 reading  
and writing  
discussion with Lumka 3 May/std 3 history  
discussion with four junior primary teachers 1 June  
planning workshop with Veronica and Bulelwa 7 July/std 1  
reading  
planning workshop with Leah and Elizabeth 7 July/std 2  
english reading  
discussion with William 18 July/std 4 history  
discussion with Lumka 14 July/std 3 history  
discussion with Beatrice 24 July/std 5 english reading  
discussion with Norman 25 July/std 4 english oral/reading  
discussion with Lumka 4 August/std 3 history  
discussion with William 8 August/std 4 history

### 3/Lesson observations

The following were lessons in which I was the participant observer in the classroom. Not included here are the lessons I watched on videotape or listened to on audiotape:

#### Sizithabathele:

Beatrice - std 5 reading 'The Twelve Months', March 1988; 'David and Goliath', August 1988; 'Grass', February 1989; 'Not So Fast Songololo', August 1989  
Cynthia - std 3 afrikaans reading April 1988  
Joseph - std 4 english reading: 'Joseph's Car', April 1988; 'The Bushmen', May 1988; 'Sophiatown Schooldays', August 1988  
William - std 4 afrikaans May 1988; std 4 history 'Early mining', August 1988  
Stanley - std 3 english April 1988  
John - std 4 afrikaans August 1988

#### Sivuyile:

Alice - std 4 english reading 'Alfred at the harbour', April 1988; 'The Sugar Cane Fire', August 1988  
Ruth - std 4 english reading 'The Donkey and the Cart', March 1988; 'The Sugar Cane Fire', August 1988  
Walter - std 4 xhosa reading March 1988  
Alfred - std 4 afrikaans reading 'Katrien die Kunstenaar', April 1988  
Mike - std 4 history: 'The Uitlanders', April 1988; 'The settlement of Natal', May 1988

#### Khanyisiwe:

Zolani - std 4 english reading: 'Sophiatown Schooldays', August 1988  
Adelaide - std 3 geography 'The Weather', February 1989

#### Phakamisa:

Josephine - sub b english reading 'I Want an Ice-Cream' May 1988  
Nzwakie - sub B reading 'Flying' May 1988  
Veronica - std 1 english reading 'Don't Be Silly' May 1988; 'Finny the Fish' July 1989  
Bulelwa - std 1 english reading 'Finny the Fish' July 1989; 'Grandmother's Story' August 1989  
Leah - std 2 reading 'The Hungry Monster' May 1989; 'The Jackal and the Tortoise' July 1989; 'The Proud Monkey' August 1989  
Elizabeth - std 2 reading 'Willy the Champ' May 1988; 'The Old Lady and the Sour Milk' July 1989; 'Isabel and Bongani Part 1' August 1989; 'The Veld Fire' October 1989

### 4/Interviews with teachers and principals:

#### 1. Interviews by Lufuno Nevathalu:

Sizithabathele on 27 September 1988: Beatrice, William, Joseph, Stanley, David, Thandie, and Norman  
Kanyisiwe on 28 September 1988: Adelaide, Nomonde, Nombuleleo, Zolani and Gladstone

Phakamisa on 29 September 1988: Lumka, Douglas, John, Oscar, Josephine, Leah, Elizabeth, Veronica, Bulelwa and Nzwakie

Sivuyile on 30 September 1988: Ruth, Alice, Walter, Alfred and Mike

Interview with Mr Lungiswe 29 May 1988

Sizithabathele 20 and 21 July 1989: Beatrice, William, David, Stanley, Joseph, Norman, Cynthia, Thandie

2. Interviews by Tozi Mgobozi

Sivuyile: Interview with five english teachers and deputy principal 9 June 1987

Phakamisa: Josephine 8 August, John; 24 August Veronica, Oscar, Douglas, Lumka; 25 August Leah, Elizabeth, Nzwakie, Bulelwa

Sivuyile: 29 August Ruth, Alice, Walter, Mike; 11 September Alfred

3. Interviews by Sue Philcox 1989-90

Group interviews: Phakamisa 21/11/89; Sivuyile; and Sizithabathele 22/11/89

Individual interviews: Douglas 8/2/90; Mr Lungiswe, Cynthia, William and Beatrice 9/2/90; Mr Motisi 16/2/90

4. Interviews by myself

1987:

Gloria 8 September

Jennifer 8 September

Gertrude 9 September

Naomi 10 September

deputy principal of Sivuyile 10 September

1988:

Leah and Elizabeth 17 October

Nzwakie and Josephine 18 October

1989:

John 13 March

Adelaide 20 April

Nomobolelo 20 April

Gladstone 26 April

Nomonde 27 April

Mr Motisi 27 September

Mr Lungiswe 27 September

Mr Magona 12 October

Alice 4 October

Ruth 4 October

William 5 October

Norman 5 October

Beatrice 11 October

Cynthia and Thandie 12 October

Leah 16 October

Elizabeth 16 October  
Veronica 17 October  
Bulelwa 20 October  
Lumka 27 November

Interviews with teacher educators:

Lufuno Nevathalu 24 July 1989  
Alan and Viv Kenyon 20 September 1989 and 26 July 1990  
Ruth Versveld 20 July 1990  
Bukeka Bikwani 23 July 1990  
Brian O Connell 25 July 1990  
College lecturer 26 July 1990  
Marlene Rousseau 31 July 1990  
Wendy Colyn 31 July 1990  
Soraya Abass and the staff of Molo Songololo 14 August

With peers:

Alan Kenyon 3 August 1988; 13 December 1990  
Karen Morrison 12 September 1988  
Rob Sieborger 23 November 1989; 28 November 1990

**5/Audiotapes of teachers' lessons**

Adelaide: 'The weather' February 1989  
Beatrice: 'David and Goliath' August 1988; 'Moslems'  
February 1989; 'Not So Fast Songololo' August 1989  
Alice: 'The Sugar Cane Fire' August 1988; 'Pele' July  
1989; 'Sophiatown Schooldays' August 1989  
Ruth: 'The Sugar Cane Fire' August 1988; 'Mammals' April  
1989  
Lumka: 'The Khoisan' February 1989; 'Shaka' April 1989;  
'The Dutch Settlers' July 1989  
William: 'Sir George Grey' April 1989  
Gladstone: 'Early mining' and 'Discovery of Gold August  
1988; english reading-comprehension February 1989  
Norman: 'Housing' February 1989, 'Not So fast Songolo'  
May 1989  
Mike: 'The powers of the tribal councils' August 1988;  
'Rivers of the World' April 1989

**6/Audiotapes of workshops**

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Higher primary reading 5 October 1988  
History 13 October 1988

**7/Videotapes of teachers lessons:**

Nzwakie: sub B Reading 'Flying'  
Josephine: sub B reading 'I Want an Ice-Cream'  
Leah: std 2 reading 'The Hungry Monster', 'The Hungry  
Monster and other stories', 'The Proud Monkey'  
Elizabeth: std 2 reading 'Willy the Champ', 'The Hungry  
Monster and other stories', 'The Veld Fire'

Veronica: std 1 reading 'Don't Be Silly', 'Mrs Wishy-Washy and other stories'  
Bulelwa: std 1 reading 'Grandpa, grandpa and other stories', 'Grandmother's Story'  
Beatrice: std 5 english reading 'The Twelve Months'  
Joseph: std 4 english reading 'Joseph's Car, 'The Bushmen'  
William: std 4 afrikaans reading; std 4 history 'Sir George Grey' and 'Early mining'  
David: std 5 afrikaans reading  
Cynthia: std 3 afrikaans reading  
Stanley: std 3 english reading  
Johnson: std 3 history 'The way of life of the early farmers'  
Nomonde: std 3 english reading  
Zolani: std 4 writing  
Walter: std 4 xhosa  
Alfred: std 4 afrikaans 'Katrien die Kunstenaar'  
Mike: std 4 history 'The Uitlanders', 'The Settlement of Natal'  
Alice: std 4 english reading 'Alfred at the harbour'  
Ruth: std 4 english reading 'The Donkey and the Cart'  
Norman: std 4 english language 'Some Are Leopards Some Are Lions'  
Lumka: std 3 history 'The 1820 Settlers'

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