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**What is the question that
group work is the answer to?**

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A minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the award of the degree
Master of Education

Department of Education

University of Cape Town

2003

Declaration

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signed by candidate

Signature

14/02/2003

Date

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Abstract: What is the question that group work is the answer to?

After the introduction of Curriculum 2005 in 1998, various classroom-based research projects were undertaken to monitor the implementation of the new curriculum. The findings of these projects point to the widespread use of a certain type of group work in South African classrooms. The Report of the Review Committee of Curriculum 2005 also point to the popularity of group work as methodology. In both the classroom-based research and the Report of the Review Committee it is stated that the way group work is currently practiced does not enhance learning. The researcher wondered what the question was that group work was the answer to for so many people, and decided to investigate.

Firstly, the historical origins of group work are traced in the literature. Then, recent classroom-based research is used to construct a coherent image of the use and prevalence of group work in real classrooms. The question is asked what this coherent image indicates about the level of understanding of teachers of what group work is and how it should be practiced to effectively enhance learning. It is concluded that group work seems to be, for teachers, the answer to a question about how to satisfy the ideological and physical requirements of a new curriculum.

The two gateways through which group work entered into the field of education in South Africa are examined in Chapter Three, namely the National Qualifications Framework, and progressivism. For each of these gateways, a question is formulated that group work seems to be the answer to. The questions are respectively of a political and economic nature and the contention of this chapter is that considerations other than the immediately educational guided the entrance of group work into the South African field of education.

In Chapter Four the submissions to the Review Committee, made by the general public in 2000, are analysed in a content analysis. Four categories are constructed and the various comments pertaining to group work and sifted from the submissions are

classified into these categories. A mechanism, operating over the categories, is identified as people using synecdoche to make meaning. Group work is identified as the site of interaction between the micro and the macro.

The last chapter consists of a theoretical discussion, based on Bernstein's competence models. The findings of Chapter Four, reflecting the current practice and discourse, are compared to a model where a certain type of group work is proposed (elaborated by Morais and Pires 2002) that contributes towards enhancing learning for *all* learners and thereby closing the gap between socially differentiated learners.

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List of abbreviations

C2005	Curriculum 2005
LTSM	Learning and teaching support materials
OBE	Outcomes-based Education
PEI	President's Education Initiative Research Project
PSP	Primary Science Project
TIMSS	Third International Mathematics and Science Survey

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Chapter One: Introduction to the problem

Celia Jenkins, in her doctoral thesis, traces the social origins of progressivism in her study of the New Education Fellowship (Jenkins 1989). She locates the social origin “in a fraction of the new middle class, namely the caring professions and their academic supports”. The members of the New Education Movement represent a specialised section of professional, middle class occupations: teachers, university lecturers, teacher-training tutors, psychologists, psychiatric workers and educational administrators (*Op. Cit:* 340). The academic supports served as conduits for the theories and practices of progressivism, especially in the schools of education, important sites of influence for the training of teachers. In 1934 South Africa hosted a conference under the auspices of the New Education Fellowship, entitled *Educational Adaptations in a Changing Society*. Some of the most influential educationists of the time, and strongly identified with progressivism, like John Dewey, presented papers and participated in the discussions. Malherbe, the Director of the National Bureau of Educational and Social research in South Africa, edited the proceedings (Malherbe 1937). Thus, the power base of the South African education community at the time espoused the views of the New Education Fellowship and its progressive theories¹. It can be argued that in the late thirties these theories, through the academic supports identified by Jenkins, entered the universities and the South African schools of education (and endured in the English, “open universities”²). One of the main tenets of progressivism is the emancipation of the individual, preparing the way for the advent or solidifying of democracy (Jenkins 1989).

As the twentieth century marched on education was more and more influenced by the political situation in South Africa. The eighties were characterised by school boycotts and the liberation movement was actively searching for alternatives to the state imposed Bantu education. The National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC)

¹ Jenkins concludes that the agents involved in the creation of New Education may have represented the *only* hegemony in the field of education at the time (1989: 356).

² Throughout the almost fifty years of apartheid rule and international isolation the English speaking so-called “open universities” (University of Cape Town, University of Natal, University of the Witwatersrand and Rhodes University) not only opposed the principle of racial segregation (Mphahlele 1978, King 1988, Moodie 1994), but also nurtured relationships with the international university community.

had, at conferences and conventions since 1985, formulated a set of ideas with an underlying transformatory ethos, called People's Education (Davidoff 1993). The aim of the first conference, held under the auspices of the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee, was to end the fifteen months of school boycott against the state run Bantu Education and get children back into schools. The aims of People's Education were to develop a new democratic education policy, democratise the curriculum to serve the needs of all South African children, and to ensure that education is placed in a context of economic, political and ideological campaigns, and not separated from the rest of the struggle. The government eventually banned People's Education in 1987, after initially seeming to engage with the demands.

The main principles of People's Education were non-racialism, democracy, a united South Africa and the absence of any form of oppression and exploitation (Mashamba 1991: 24). Progressivism, fostered in the liberal English universities, provided content that was compatible with the ideological exigencies of the liberation struggle as manifested in People's Education. Thus, on a methodological level the passive absorption and rote learning characterising Bantu Education was rejected in favour of active learning, a redefined role for the teacher and an emphasis on group work, all of which have been characteristics of progressivism since the days of the New Education Fellowship.

In the nineteen nineties, after the first democratic elections, education underwent a radical transformation with the introduction of a new Outcomes-based curriculum for Grades 1-9 in schools called Curriculum 2005 (C2005). This reform initiative was not altogether successful, and in 1999 a committee was appointed to review the curriculum. In the final Report of the Review Committee of Curriculum 2005, the following statement is made: "Group work rather than directive teaching is one of the features of People's Education that was absorbed into contemporary policy"³ (Chisholm 2000: 28).

To monitor the implementation success of the new curriculum, various research projects were initiated, like the President's Education Initiative Research Project

³ We want to emphasise that group work was only part of the alternative model; by no means did it constitute its whole.

(PEI) of 1999. Amongst other findings, the PEI research points to a situation in South African classrooms where group work is used extensively.

The initial “spark” for the research question of this dissertation was therefore found in the fact that both the Report of the Review Committee and the PEI research point to group work as methodology that blossomed into full bloom in South Africa after the advent of democracy. This points to the possibility that the concepts “group work” and “democracy” have a shared origin in the history of the South African field of education. As will be demonstrated by examining submissions to the Review Committee of C2005, group work has become the dominant pedagogic methodology in South African classrooms, but (again based on the findings of the Review Committee) the way it is practised undermines the goal of social equity it was intended to help achieve.

Michael Young’s paper entitled *Educational Reform in South Africa (1990-2000): An International Perspective* is useful to establish the point of departure of this study. He asserts that in the recent South African past in the field of education a conceptual error has been made by thinking that democratic ends will necessarily be reached through democratic means (Young 2001: 6):

It is important to distinguish between a ‘political’ discourse about democracy, participation and integration and an educational discourse in which it cannot be assumed that more ‘participatory’ pedagogies ... will necessarily achieve long term educational goals such as an increasing access and participation.

The question this study will inspect is whether a similar conceptual error underlies the value placed on group work in classrooms after 1994 and especially since the implementation of C2005: the assumption cannot be made that the democratic ideal of equity in education will be reached through what seems to be democratic or more “participatory” pedagogies.

The research question

How did it come about that group work is currently the dominant pedagogy in South African classrooms? When referring to “South African classrooms” Grades 10-12 are excluded from this collective noun, since Outcomes-based Education and C2005 will only be introduced in the Further Education and Training Band (Grade10-12) in 2005 or 2006. The submissions to the Review Committee, the primary source of data for this dissertation, were invited to comment on pedagogic practices associated with C2005, which covers Grades 1-9 only. Our question can be reformulated and expanded on in various ways:

- What leads us to say that group work is the dominant pedagogy?
- What are the historical origins of group work?
- Within which theoretical tradition can group work be situated?
- How did group work enter the South African field of education?
- How does the dominance of group work as methodology translate into classroom practice and how is the achievement of learning outcomes effected?
- What conceptual language is appropriate to talk about the prevalence of group work, its effect and its theoretical implications?
- Are there any practical implications of the findings (e.g. for the training of teachers)?

The thesis therefore starts with a claim that group work is the dominant pedagogical practice in Grade 1-9 classrooms in South Africa. Evidence to support this claim will be presented in Chapter Two with a review of the PEI research, but the main body of evidence is in Chapter Four where the submissions to the Review Committee are analysed. The different chapters and sections of the dissertation are an attempt to answer the questions set out above. The over-arching research question will act as a tree-trunk for the various braches of the more specific research questions. This over-arching question is the same as the title of the dissertation, namely: “What is the question that group work is the answer to?”

The precise kind of group work under investigation will be elaborated later, but a preliminary and broad typology would be: bodies arranged into groups.

Research design

The *purposes* of this study are closely linked to the research questions. It is an inquest into a classroom phenomenon with the aim to describe and explain the phenomenon, to find its historical and intellectual roots and to theorise about its impact on the achievement of the long-term educational goals of the country. The final purpose is to make some recommendations, based on the assessment of the impact, on possible ways in which to alter this impact by pointing to teacher training.

The *conceptual context* within which this study is conducted has several facets. It takes a critical stance towards the role of progressivism and its underlying constructivist epistemology in the positioning of group work as dominant methodology in classrooms. Literature on constructivism and progressivism provides material for this context. The conceptual language developed by Basil Bernstein provides a framework that is used to widen the conversation about the interpretation of the data.

The *methods* used in the study follow an inductive logic, with data gathering used in an exploratory way to construct a theory. Chapters Two and Three pave the way for Chapter Four by using the research questions to present a synthesis of relevant literature and theory, current classroom practice as described in recent research and policy documents. This phase of the dissertation is marked by document research.

In Chapter Four the submissions to the Review Committee of C2005 are analysed and interpreted. These submissions represent the data gathered for this study, and the unit of analysis is therefore each submission made to the Review Committee, and in a later stage of the analysis, the unit of analysis is every explicit reference to group work. The submissions were made by academics in the field of education, by parents, teachers and school principals, by organisations concerned with education and by other concerned individuals. Since the people and institutions making the submissions represent a cross-section of people concerned with education, the submissions

themselves represent a fair sample of educator concern. The methodology followed in the analysis of the data is set out in Chapter Four.

The *validity* of the research is assured by the fact that the data used is documentary – anyone who wishes to can gain access to the documents. The submissions do not change over time and they are independent of any change of opinion that the various submitters may have had. The criteria according to which the documents were analysed and interpreted have been set out as clearly as possible to ensure a repeatable systematic inquest. Having said that, it is undeniable that the type of theorising attempted in this dissertation is heavily dependent on the direction of the particular lines of argument that are pursued. Any argument can be disputed, but the validity of the argument resides in the visibility of the development thereof.

Relevance of background literature

Learning from others while working with them is not a new methodology. The apprenticeship system in the middle ages is a good example of such a method where a novice worked with an experienced and initiated craftsman, learning the trade from the older man (always, in that age, a man). Once the novice satisfied certain requirements, he became a master craftsman himself who could train other novices. There are many remnants of this system still to be found in our society today. A qualified fitter and turner takes in an apprentice, senior advocates take law graduates in as pupils, experienced students tutor first-years at university.

When we refer to group work in the field of education at school level, it is however not this kind of learning while working with a more experienced person that is meant. Group work here refers to cooperative learning, in other words children learning from other children, children learning together with other children, children teaching other children. In this model, the teacher usually assumes a background role when the class is doing group work: once she has given adequate content input and clear directions, she is to monitor the group work and provide scaffolding where necessary. The ultimate aim of group work is for children to achieve more together in a group than they could have achieved individually.

This simplified model of group work of course does not correlate with the complex reality as described, prescribed and theorised about in academic work. One glance at the literature on group work is enough to make this clear. The literature on group work⁴ can be divided into a few categories, each of which will be explored in the sections to follow.

First there is that section of literature where the historical roots of group work can be found, usually not as prime focus of the literature, but as important consequence of the theories expounded in the work. The theories may in fact say very little about group work, but they lay the foundations for a host of later scholars who write in the paradigm of progressivism, activity-based learning, constructivism, learner-centeredness. In all these later theories, group work is a (sometimes *the*) methodology to achieve the aims of the theory. Even though the above-mentioned theories differ vastly in some aspects, they all have this much in common:

"... a preoccupation with foregrounding the role of the learner as actively engaged in the pursuit of information; an associated tendency to see the nature of knowledge as something constructed in activity and a related tendency to dismiss the claims of knowledge in any definitively ordered way; and correspondingly, a tendency to see the teacher's role in terms of 'facilitation' of the process of learning in which students engage as they become, ideally at least, autonomous and independent learners possessed of their 'own' understandings." (Christie, in press)

The work of John Dewey and Lev Vygotsky, to name just two, would fall into this first section of literature, since their work has been widely recruited by later constructivist or progressive educators.

A scholar who focused on students learning from other students while the teacher takes on the 'facilitation' role alluded to by Christie, was Paulo Freire. His work

⁴ The terms *group work* and *cooperative learning* are not distinguished from each other in this dissertation, although *group work* is used more frequently, because it is the term most frequently used in the context of South African education.

influenced one of the main uses of group work in adult education, namely education for emancipation (Coetzee 1995: 122).

Alongside the work of individual scholars that slowly filtered into classrooms there are composite works that arguably had more immediate impact on classroom practice, like the Plowden Report issued in the nineteen sixties in the United Kingdom. This report had the effect that most post-Plowden primary school classrooms in the UK were organised into small groups; group work became the preferred methodology for primary education (Kutnick 1994: 17,18).

In the more contemporary literature there is a large body of work of constructivist educationists where group work or cooperative learning in schools has become the main object of their study. In this body of literature, the position of group work has changed from an almost incidental marginal methodology to the main object of study.

In the sections to follow, a brief review of some of this work, as relevant to group work, will be given. The aim is to establish the probable origins of group work and then track the road it has travelled since then. The review is not exhaustive, and a certain selection (based on relevance to the research question) is inescapable.

Group work and Dewey (USA)

There are certain elements of John Dewey's work that are relevant to trace the development of literature on group work from its origins. Dewey is closely associated with the development of progressive education, which is described in more detail in Chapter Three. In his book *Democracy and Education* (1916) he elaborates the following theories that are relevant to group work: education as a social process, active learning and education and democracy.

He sees no inherent opposition between working with others and working as an individual, and asserts that some capacities of an individual will not be brought out except under the stimulus of associating with others. He describes working cooperatively towards a shared goal as the most important requirement for a society's existence. The only control that he deems necessary is the implicit social control that

enters into the very process of learning. This occurs when control is imposed on the actions of each individual through the working towards a shared goal (*Op. Cit:* 30):

... if each views the consequences of his own acts as having a bearing upon what others are doing and takes into account the consequences of their behaviour upon himself, then there is a common mind; a common intent in behaviour. There is an understanding set up between the different contributors; and this common understanding controls the action of each.

Dewey laments the fact that schools rely so much on telling and on being told and offer children so little opportunity of actively participating in their learning. He advocates that schools will only be fully efficient social institutions when they offer continuous opportunity for conjoint activities in which the children take part to acquire a social sense of the goal of learning (i.e. what effect their actions have on others).

He also reflects on the role of the teacher in traditional education. Passive or rote learning has a negative impact on the teacher, because no new points of view are acquired, and learning ceases to be an educative process for the teacher.

Without working cooperatively, there can be no education for democracy:

A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience (Op. Cit: 87).

The educational model presented by Dewey in *Democracy and Education* is an idealised one, since neither the pull of market forces, nor the divide between social classes are acknowledged as realities that impact profoundly on curriculum and pedagogy. And in the USA in 1916 there surely were different social classes, different cultural groups and economic factors influencing the type of education on offer for the different categories of people profoundly. This focus on the individual implies a certain concept of the supports the individual child is provided with and it resonates with Jenkins (1989) who identifies the emancipation of the individual as primary focus of New Education and establishes the social origins of progressivism squarely in the middle class.

Group work and Vygotsky

The work of Vygotsky in post-revolutionary Russia also impacted on the direction that literature on group work developed into, particularly within the field of educational psychology where the approach to group work is developmental. It is in particular Vygotsky's notion of the *zone of proximal development* that refers. This notion describes the relation between a child's learning and his developmental level. Two developmental levels can be determined: the actual developmental level (referring to things that children can do on their own) and the level of potential development. The classic definition of the zone of proximal development offered in a collection of Vygotsky's papers (Cole 1978: 86) is:

It is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers ... The zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state.

(My emphasis)

Developmental processes do not coincide with learning processes – they lag behind the learning process and the zone of proximal development is the result. It follows that more challenging targets (aimed at more complex cognitive levels and a future stage of development) can be set for groups of children when they work collaboratively than the targets to be set when a child is to work alone. Viewed through the lens of educational psychology group work would thus be a tool to understand the course of cognitive development and not a tool to improve learning outcomes. Vygotsky's theory introduces a particular kind of group work, namely peer tutoring.

Unfortunately, Vygotsky has been recruited in a rather reductionist way by some constructivists who focus on one aspect of his theory of the zone of proximal development only (that children working *collaboratively in groups* work in the zone of proximal development) while not taking account of the various other aspects of the theory (i.e. that a child who is guided by an adult, a child imitating an older child, etc is also working in the zone of proximal development). An example of this is Light and

Littleton (1994: 101) who assert that Vygotsky's theories are particularly helpful in "understanding how and when peer interaction facilitates children's understanding" but that his "purely cognitive approach cannot take us much further" in establishing the benefits of group work. This rather reductionist recruitment resonates with Bernstein's suggestion (Bernstein 2000, cited in Christie, in press: 7) that Vygotsky is often misread and that his ideas do not fit comfortably in a constructivist model, since he accords quite a central position to the role of the teacher.

Group work as emancipatory methodology (Paolo Freire)

Paolo Freire's work is another example of a theory developed in a particular context, to achieve a particular goal, that has been recruited by diverse causes for various reasons in different contexts to achieve different goals from the ones that marked the context within which Freire's theories emerged. For this study it is in particular his thoughts about the role of the teacher and the importance of the group that are relevant, as well as how these concepts were recruited later.

Freire writes about his experiences as adult educator in Brazil before the military coup in 1964. His adult education projects in Brazil had two goals: education for democracy and literacy education. The education for democracy was necessitated by what he perceived to be a growing sectarianism between the (rural) oppressed and (urban) elite – both classes not being used to democracy. He focused his attention on the rural illiterates. His theory is that as the oppressed people are educated for democracy, i.e. as their consciousness is raised, as they are made aware of the historical changes and are led to develop a critical consciousness about their own role and place in these changes, this emerging consciousness provides a meaningful context for the acquisition of literacy.

One of the fundamental tenets of these adult education projects, as described in *Education: The Practice of Freedom* (1973) is the role of the educator. Neither the aim of education for democracy, nor the aim of adult literacy will be achieved if the educator goes into the rural areas as expert, imparting knowledge from a pedestal. If the point of departure is not dialogue, the project will not succeed. Therefore, a new vocabulary was developed to describe the particular kind of dialogue that would

achieve the dual aims of the projects (*Op. Cit: 42*): *cultural circle* instead of school, *coordinator* instead of teacher, *dialogue* instead of lectures, *group participants* instead of pupils.

Thus the educator's role is fundamentally to enter into dialogue with the illiterate about concrete situations and simply to offer him the instruments with which he can teach himself to read and write. This teaching cannot be done from the top down, but only from the inside out, by the illiterate himself, with the collaboration of the educator (Op. Cit: 48).

This changed role of the educator resonates with Dewey's vision of the teacher who also learns from the pedagogic interaction, instead of assuming the position of all-knowing distributor of knowledge.

It has been suggested (Roodt in Coetzee 1995: 122) that in the search for an alternative to Bantu education, Freire's ideas were recruited into People's Education. In Freire's model, as well as for the liberation movement, the status of education was to change from a separate entity divorced from the rest of people's reality to something fundamental to their lives (in the broad sense of the word then: political).

Group work and the Plowden Report (UK)

In 1967 the *Report on Children and their Primary Schools* – better known as the Plowden Report, named after its chairperson – was published in the UK. This report profoundly influenced not only the curriculum to change from a curriculum driven by the *product* of learning to one driven by the *process* of learning (Christie, in press), but also the pedagogy, with teachers becoming facilitators of learning and children being seen as the agent in their own learning (Plowden Report in Christie, in press). With regard to grouping in classrooms, Plowden recommended the following (Galton in Kutnick and Rogers 1994: 16):

- collaborative groups can help overcome management problems in large classes,
- groups should be arranged and changed according to subject and other needs
- collaborative groups give children the opportunity to explain and teach each other

- shy children may respond well to the positive environment created by small groups
- effective groupings can free teachers up to work with individual children who need extra support.

The report, translating into policy, therefore also impacted on the physical arrangements in classrooms. As Kutnick (1994: 17,18) points out, this change in physical arrangement still endures today, but he questions whether the pedagogy actually changed. He asserts that teachers in primary schools in the UK arrange the children in groups (i.e. the classroom is structured into physical groups) while teaching them in a traditional manner. He suggests that this is a result of the Plowden Report: “At ideological and physical levels, teachers of the post Plowden era have taken up the call for small groups in the classroom.”

Bennett’s controversial *Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress*, published in 1976, came to a similar, but different, conclusion about the Plowden Report. For his study Bennett tested children in the north of England who had been taught according to different pedagogic models (some were taught in a traditional, whole-class way, others were taught in small groups). He found, by using traditional tests to assess content subjects and creative writing to assess language competency, that children who had been taught in a traditional directive whole-class group achieved the highest test scores. His study therefore questioned the effectiveness of small groups in classrooms with regards to achieving learning outcomes. He pointed to the Plowden recommendations as the point of origin of the all-pervasive small groups.

After Bennett’s study there was a host of research in the UK directed at providing evidence of a causal relation between class grouping and effective learning, but most of the studies were inconclusive about the benefits. Some of these studies are the Bassey’s 1978 research, Galton’s study (1980) and Tizard and Mortimore’s studies into Inner-London schools (1988). Kutnick (1994: 17) summarises the main findings of these studies as:

... teachers use a variety of groupings in class. Small groups are the most likely seating arrangement, while whole-class and individualised grouping is the predominant teaching mode.

Bernstein (1996: 70) suggests that it was with the Plowden Report that the liberal progressive mode of the competence model (to be elaborated later) was institutionalised. Christie (in press: 8) sees the collective effect of the Plowden Report's recommendations to have endorsed a constructivist child-centered process model in the United Kingdom.

Group work and constructivism

The first category in the literature consists of educators whose cooperative learning techniques have acronyms for names: STAD, CIRC, JIGSAW, etc. In all these models learners are actively engaged in their learning and rewards for success (in the form of individual or team points) are always present to motivate them. The literature in this category is in the constructivist tradition and more precisely the tradition of psychological constructivism, as can be seen from the definition of this type of constructivism given by Philips (2000: 7):

'Constructivism' refers to a set of views about how individuals learn (and about how those who help them to learn ought to teach) ... learners actively construct their own ... sets of meanings or understandings; knowledge is not a mere copy of the external world, nor is knowledge acquired by passive absorption or by simple transference ... In sum, knowledge is made, not acquired.

Within this constructivist category there are two types of literature; the first (like the work of Kagan: 1994 and Johnson, Johnson and Holubec: 1993) preach cooperative learning and group work as the only conceivable way in which to enhance learning. The authors do not engage with relevant empirical research, but steam ahead uncritically, dismissing all objections to their preachings of the all-encompassing power of group work with a wave of their cooperative arm. The research of these authors is not very interesting, since they tend to present their work as fix-all methodologies for teachers, without presenting the theoretical basis they work from. Their work smacks more of methodological dogma than of critical scholarship and does not consider that factors like the content to be taught, historical environment, cultural conventions, social class, or gender might influence the efficacy of their methodology.

There is a second group of constructivist literature about group work that engages critically with the subject. The authors want to find out whether group work can stand up the claims of its supposed benefits. The main exponents here are Kutnick (1994), Merrett (1994), Sharan and Shaulov (1990) and Slavin (1990).

To support this categorisation of authors, the work of one of them will be reviewed. Slavin's 1990 chapter "Comprehensive Cooperative Learning Models: Embedding Cooperative Learning in the Curriculum and the School" in Sharan's volume *Cooperative Learning*, starts from the position that generic cooperative learning methods, applicable to a wide range of subjects and grade levels, (like the techniques developed by Johnson, Johnson and Holubec), are not sufficient to enhance achievement. He argues that group work could enhance achievement if it were embedded in comprehensive models and adapted to individual subjects and grades. His supports this argument by documenting the work educationists have done on two comprehensive cooperative learning models at Johns Hopkins University. The first model is Team Assisted Individualization (TAI), developed principally for remedial use in mathematics teaching in Grades 3 to 6. The second model is Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), aimed at using group work in primary school literacy classrooms as a vehicle by which to embed good reading and writing practices into routine classroom practice. In both these methods a central role is accorded to the teacher, with an aspect of both models relying on direct instruction given by the teacher, while the group work aspects of the models are based on the assumption that the teacher has prepared particular activities (e.g. for CIRC the children are given questions, developed by the teacher, related to each narrative story they have read).

Slavin records two studies to evaluate the impact of the full CIRC program and seven experiments that have been conducted to evaluate the effects of TAI on learner achievement. For the sake of brevity (and since the findings of both the TAI and CIRC studies are similar), only the TAI studies will be described here. In each of the seven TAI experiments, volunteer teachers were given a three-hour workshop on how to implement TAI and then sent back to their schools. Researchers paid them several follow-up visits to assess how the model was being implemented. The teachers who

had volunteered to use TAI were assigned to use TAI immediately or to serve as a control group and use TAI later. The median period of instruction was 16 weeks. In six of the seven studies, academic outcomes were assessed and in five of these six achievement studies, TAI students significantly exceeded control students.

Kutnick (1994) points to the differences between American and British academic approaches to group work. The Americans, like Slavin, use structured experiments based on models like CIRC or TAI to gather data, while the Brits prefer classroom observation to find out what is actually happening in classrooms. The results of these (British) observations, as we have seen from the studies of post-Plowden classrooms, show “little evidence that teachers structure small groups for reasons other than classroom organisation” (Kutnick 1994: 15).

The ‘secondary’ benefits or “social effects characteristics’ of group work as Slavin calls them loom large in the group work literature. While these benefits are no doubt important, it is questionable if these benefits on their own can assure improved learner achievement⁵. The secondary benefits include improved self-esteem, (Kutnick 1994: 14), motivation to learn (Sharan and Shaulov 1990: 173-202), cross-gender friendship, etc. However, the body of research *not done by the advocates of cooperative learning themselves* that points to measurable improved learner achievement due to group work is small. Knight and Bohlmeier (1990: 17-18) suggest that what they call “the third-generation cooperative learning research” should more directly assess the numerous possible causal mechanisms (i.e. between cooperative learning strategies and improved achievement). They phrase it as follows:

For example, the direct assessment of Slavin’s (1978, 1983b) active role hypothesis would require demonstrating that (1) students in cooperative learning classrooms have higher achievement scores than students in traditional classrooms; (2) students in those same cooperative learning classrooms take a

⁵ There are studies that undermine even the claims of the secondary benefits of group work, like Hodkinson and Bloomer’s longitudinal case study of institutional culture and dispositions to learning in Stockington Sixth Form College where the interviewees continually commented on the positive contribution that being at college had made to their personal (intellectual) development. One of the conclusions of the researchers is that these successes “... appeared to have no obvious connection with particular teaching styles, such as whole-class teaching, group work, student-centred learning or experiential learning. Rather, they were most often reported and are best understood as the effect of a whole college culture.” (2000:196)

more active role in their learning than do students in the traditional classrooms; (3) a more active role in the learning process among those students is related to greater achievement; and (4) the achievement difference between those students in the cooperative learning and traditional classrooms is significantly reduced, or eliminated, when the variance in achievement accounted for by role activity, is removed.

In an effort to expand the body of literature that can prove causal links between group work and improved learner achievement, there are several current debates between these scholars in the constructivist camp addressing the various conditions that are necessary for group work to be effective (i.e. to demonstrate beyond doubt that group work results in improved learner achievement).

The first can be summarised as “yes it works, but **training** is necessary”. This debate insists that teachers should be explicitly trained in group work techniques in order for group work to promote effective learning. Teachers must then in turn train their students in how to work effectively as a group (Alebiosu 2001: 140 and Bennett 1994: 63).

Another condition that some scholars in the field want to add is “yes it works, but only with learners who are **old enough**” where it is claimed (Cantwell & Andrews 2002: 76) that:

... studies of the development of meta-cognitive awareness have indicated that it may not be until mid-adolescence that children have the cognitive maturity to either meaningfully reflect upon their own strategic learning ... or to effectively take the role of instructor.

A third condition is “yes it works, but only with a particular type of **content**”. This condition suggests that not all types of content are equally suited to be acquired by means of group work. Added to a particular type of content is the fact that only certain types of activities, namely problem solving and application activities (Kutnick 1994: 15) seem to be suited to effective group work. Examples of suitable content and type of activity are the practical Chemistry experiments that Alebiosu’s (2001) students did according to the STAD and Jigsaw models. Related to these conditions is

the issue of planning: there is wide consensus that group work activities are only effective when they are well-planned by the (trained) teacher.

Slavin (1990: 260) provides a concise summary to the above debates concerning training, age and content:

... if cooperative learning is to fulfil its potential for enhancing student achievement, it is arguably necessary to design methods that are uniquely designed to teach particular kinds of content to students of particular ages.

This brief overview of a part of the vast body of literature on group work has brought us up to more or less the present day, and ends with a summary of some of the current debates. We can now focus more narrowly and examine group work in South Africa today, to examine the way in which group work is practiced and finally to look at the effect this practice has on the achievement of the country's long-term educational goals. As pointed out earlier, the causal link between cooperative learning and improved achievement has not been proved conclusively. Therefore it will be particularly interesting to theorise about how it has come about that group work is the dominant pedagogy.

How the literature about group work influences the research question

The preoccupation of this study is to find out what the question is that group work is the answer to, in South African classrooms, today. It is interested in the experiences of teachers in the classroom, in the solutions teachers, district officials and curriculum specialists feel they find in group work, in the analysis of educationists of the situation in the classroom where the analyses focus on group work.

Widely held perceptions like the current perceptions about group work are never accidentally widely held; they are products of history, and the range of their acceptance is determined by very particular interrelations of power. The study is therefore interested in the historical roots of group work and in how it entered into the South African field of education.

The study is therefore not primarily interested in the facts about which group work technique is the most efficient for which type of content or about the soundest way to use group work as tool in a child's cognitive development. Rather, after having reviewed the literature, it wonders why South African teachers have adopted it as the dominant pedagogic mode in their classrooms if the causal relationship between group work and improved learner achievement has not been proved conclusively.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Two: Research on group work

Aim of the chapter:

The aim of this chapter is to use recent classroom-based research to construct a coherent image of the use and prevalence of group work in real classrooms. Then, the question will be asked what this coherent image can show us regarding the level of understanding of teachers of what group work is and how it should be practiced.

It will be investigated whether group work is viewed and used as a pedagogical tool, a means to an end, or whether it might have become an end in itself. Throughout, the research question will be kept in mind: "What is the question that group work is the answer to?" The chapter will mainly draw on the research findings of various projects in the President's Education Initiative Research Project (PEI) of 1999.

Mapping the field and defining the problem: how is group work practised in SA?

The findings of the PEI research have been summarised in Chapter 6 of *Getting Learning Right* (Taylor and Vinjevold 1999), but reference will be made to the findings (as they are relevant to group work) of the following individual PEI research projects: Focus on Four (Reeves and Long 1998), Focus on Seven (Reeves and Long 1998), Implementing Good Group Work in ESL Classrooms (Bell 1998), Investigating the Role of Cooperative Groupwork in Learner Achievement in Mathematics (Mkhize 1999), Strategies for the Design and Delivery of Quality Teacher Education at a Distance (SAIDE 1998).

The nature of the PEI research projects

A short summary of the site, sample and scope of each of the research projects named above is given below. This is done in order to show that these projects focused on diverse geographical areas, diverse subject areas (English Second Language or ESL,

Science and Mathematics) but mostly focused on a homogeneous learner and teacher population, namely school populations that were administered by the Department of Education and Training (DET) under apartheid. Although the findings of small-scale studies like the projects referred to cannot be generalized, they do indicate trends, tendencies and attitudes that can be applied (with caution) to larger populations than those sampled.

SAIDE wrote a report of a case study of six ESL teachers at ex-DET schools (in Gauteng and the Northern Province) who had completed the Further Diploma in Education (English Teaching) offered at a distance at the University of the Witwatersrand. These six students had completed the central course - Theory and Practice of English Teaching - and the effects of this course on their teaching could therefore be gauged.

Bell conducted classroom observations in three schools (two ex-DET, one multiracial school previously administered by the House of Assembly) in the Northern Province, followed by interviews with teachers and a pre-test for learners about their perceptions about group work. This was followed by intervention lessons in these three schools and a second round of interviews with the ESL teachers. Finally, a post-test was administered to ascertain whether learner perceptions about group work had changed.

Mkhize administered questionnaires to learners, teachers and trainee teachers in two ex-DET high schools and one ex-DET teacher training college in Gauteng. This was followed by classroom observations and an intervention was then conducted (training teachers on how to teach linear programming using cooperative groupwork). Because of operational difficulties, the intervention was not successful and data collected can only address one of the research questions, namely to understand what the perceptions of mathematics teachers and learners are of “cooperative groupwork” within the context of C2005.

The two projects run by Reeves and Long had slightly bigger samples with *Focus on Four* selecting a relatively homogeneous group of nine primary schools in working class, black urban settings in the Western Cape where learners sat for a pre- and post

test based on the Third International Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMSS). Twelve teachers at these schools were observed and completed survey questionnaires.

The *Focus on Seven* project comprised an intervention by the Primary Science Project (PSP) with 11 grade seven teachers at 11 ex-DET schools around Cape Town, observation of these classrooms, a pre- and post test of the learners at these 11 schools (the test was again based on TIMSS), and a comparison of the results of the post-test with those of the control group that hadn't benefited from the PSP intervention and materials.

The findings of these PEI research projects relevant to group work

Bell's research shows that teachers' understanding of group work does not go beyond the physical arrangement of bodies in groups or pairs (his term for this is "cluster work") and that the dominant interaction during this "cluster work" in the classroom is still the teacher talking to learners with little or no time given for learner-learner discussion. He also finds that good group work can be done effectively in most types of schools but only through a conscious change in teaching approach from "cluster work" to cooperative group work – in this case the result of his intervention. Learners can and should be formally trained in specific turn-taking and peer-tutoring skills, these skills do not "come naturally" (Bell 1998: 44).

These findings seem to have serious implications for teacher training, whether PRESET or INSET, with the most obvious implication that training in group work theory and skills has to be foregrounded. The assumption that this finding is based on is that if teachers are going to continue using group work in their classes because they see it as the answer to a particular question, they have to be trained on how to implement group work effectively. Teachers would have to internalise these skills to such an extent that they could transfer them to the learners in their classes by training them in group work techniques. This measure would help prevent teachers from thinking that they are doing useful constructivist group work in their classes while in fact they are busy with rather useless "cluster work".

The findings of the SAIDE study to a certain extent undermine Bell's findings about the effectiveness of training in group work techniques. SAIDE found that even though the teachers had been exposed to and trained in a variety of ways of creating an environment that is conducive to maximum active learner participation (theoretically and in practise during their contact sessions at Wits), when they themselves were teaching the only method they used was group work (as opposed to an arguably more effective combination of whole class teaching, group work, individual work and pair work). All the teachers saw the rationale for using group work as promoting learner participation. However, the researchers observed that in general the teachers could not accurately diagnose the support the groups needed to develop the ideas logically, they did not support or monitor group work activities and they gave unclear instructions for the group activity. The one teacher who did succeed in giving the appropriate support by providing scaffolding questions, compromised the effect by providing all the answers himself. The teachers were observed to "abdicate" responsibility once the bodies had been arranged into groups and a task set, even though very little was done to provide learners with the conceptual tools that they needed to complete the task. The conclusion reached by Taylor and Vinjevoid (1999: 150) and which is based on this SAIDE report is that "the teachers seem to assume that once learners are in a group, participation and learning will occur automatically."

Focus on Four (Reeves and Long 1998) had 12 different criteria for evaluating the observed teachers' classroom practice. Criterion four was: Does the teacher organise learner-learner discussion about the Mathematics concepts, principles or strategies to be learnt? They found that even though learners in most classes were seated in pairs or groups, there was very little or no constructive learner-learner discussion in any of the classes observed (for example, through learners solving problems together, or explaining their solutions to one another or to the rest of the class). In the few lessons where teachers did provide opportunities for learner-learner discussion, "they did not organise the discussion in ways that learners could benefit from each other's thinking or language." This is the only criterion against which none of the teachers were scored at more than 3 out of a possible 5. This again seems to suggest that teachers have a very superficial understanding of group work and actually run their classes according to what Bell calls "cluster work".

In *Focus on Seven* (Reeves and Long 1998) the teachers that were observed used group work as much as they used whole class teaching. The researchers point out that for group work (and other learner-learner interactions) to be beneficial and useful learners must have meaningful subject content to talk about or work with. This was mostly not the case and a lot of time was wasted in superficial and irrelevant discussion. In some instances where the necessary subject content was given, the teachers in these lessons did not provide learners with assistance to develop the skills they need to work and solve problems collaboratively (e.g. how to share ideas, how to listen to one another, how to negotiate, etc.). Taylor and Vinjevold's conclusion, based on the observations about group work in *Focus on Seven*, is that "group work takes time and where used without very careful planning and guidance from the teacher, is an extremely inefficient pedagogical tool" (1999: 151).

Mkhize shows that group work has become an end in itself, as much by the findings as by the "fix-all" quality of group work assumed by her own research: "Cooperation in this study is viewed in the light of the aimed development and transformation of the country's education. Encouraging critical and independent thought, the capacity to question, enquire, reason, weigh evidence and form judgments in order to achieve understanding in mathematics learning, will formulate the common purpose of cooperative learning for this study." Her report indicates a discrepancy between teachers' perceptions about their classroom practice (they all claimed familiarity with and strong support for cooperative group work), and the reality of the practice (learners were either seated in groups but did not work collaboratively at all, or they did work collaboratively but the task did not require higher cognitive abilities).

Discussion

Thus, the particular manifestation of group work that is viewed as problematic in this dissertation is where a teacher arranges bodies into groups, assigns a task to the groups and makes no further intervention. It is not a purely South African phenomenon, as we have seen in the discussion of the post-Plowden classrooms of the UK. However, it can be argued that this superficial arrangement into groups is more serious for the outcomes of the South African education system, which is already

threatened by our history of imposed educational inequality, and by what the Review Committee of Curriculum 2005 described as the curriculum's under-specification (Chisholm 2000).

It is necessary to examine why teachers believe that by simply dividing children into groups they are doing something that is educationally sound, that is conducive to enhanced learning. The assertion of this chapter is that most South African teachers believe that group work is the answer to following two questions:

- *Question:* How can I ensure that the teaching and learning occurring in my classroom is not of the old, discredited "chalk and talk" variety?

Answer: By using group work and thereby ensuring that my classes are learner-centred, with learners actively participating in the construction of their meaning.

- *Question:* How can I make sure that I comply not only with the letter but also the spirit of the new curriculum?

Answer: By using group work to ensure a democratic classroom.

To give more texture to the above definition, the notion group work as it is used and understood in many South African classrooms can be defined in negative terms, by referring to all aspects where it differs from models and applications that have been examined in the previous chapter in the brief review of some of the literature pertinent to group work.

It is not group work in the purely constructivist sense, where knowledge is seen as being (actively) made and not (passively) acquired, where children construct their own meaning in a particular context through directed interaction with their peers. It is therefore also not group work in the stricter Vygotskian sense where a child, working in collaboration with a peer, with meaningful interventions by the teacher, can perform a function that he or she has not mastered independently. In this sense the result of collaborative work (group work) would be greater than the sum of the parts and the zone of proximal development is a *tool* through which the internal course of development can be understood.

It is not group work in the applied constructivist understanding where highly structured group work models (like STAD, JIGSAW, CIRC, etc) are used as *instruments* to ensure a more time and cost effective way of learning. These models hinge on:

- the learners and the teacher having been trained in the particular model to be used, and
- meaningful intervention by the teacher for the duration of the group work task.

Group work as it is used in many South African classrooms can also be defined in positive terms, by pointing to the affinities between the spirit underlying current classroom practice and the objectives of active learning and education as a social process as formulated by John Dewey (see Chapter 1). The spirit underlying the extensive use of group work in current classroom practice also resonates with the role Paolo Freire envisaged for the teacher, namely that he or she should assume a position of lesser importance than that of the group.

In summary then, there seem to be two sets of group work practice in many South African classrooms:

- *Whole class teaching in group work clothing*: The outward form of classroom organisation conforms to what one would expect from classrooms where group work is used as an effective pedagogical tool: the learners are seated in groups or pairs. (In none of the PEI research projects did teachers indicate that the groups or pairs were constituted according to any sort of criteria, like mixed ability.) However, the seating arrangement and the pedagogical mode often do not fit snugly: learners are seated to work collaboratively, but the actual mode is whole-class teaching with little opportunity for learner-learner discussion. The structure of the activities does not create opportunities for learners to work collaboratively and learn from each other and the classroom is still dominated by teacher talk.
- *Group work at all costs*: For most of the contact time learners work in groups. However, the activities are either not suited to group work (they address only low order skills like recall or yes/no answers) or they are

appropriate for group work but teachers fail to provide adequate content input for learners to have anything useful to work with. Teachers also do not offer support, guidance or facilitation while the groups are working. Learners are left to their own devices and a large portion of the interaction within groups is irrelevant to the task at hand with learners sitting around in groups, rehashing their everyday knowledge. This entrapment in the everyday is debilitating. Structured teacher intervention by modelling how to work together in a group is identified on as a condition for group work to be effective: in *Focus on Seven* group work was found to be effective where teachers used “whole class discussion to model and deliberately teach learners skills and strategies for working together and solving problems collaboratively”.

What is group work the answer to?

Based on the findings of the PEI studies, it seems as if the two responses above are essentially different answers to the same broad question, namely: “How can I achieve a learner-centred classroom and more to the point, how can I promote active participation and thereby conform to not only the letter but also the spirit of the new curriculum?” The first response would then come from those teachers who have an extremely superficial understanding of the methodology, while the second response would be from those teachers whose understanding is less superficial, but still inadequate. In conclusion then, even though it is generally implemented in an ineffective way, one could say that group work seems to be more than a methodology: to many teachers it is not a means to an end, but has become an end in itself. This implies that in the minds of classroom practitioners, group work is not merely one technique of many that can be used where appropriate to the content taught, it is something fundamental to the approach followed in South African education and its curriculum.

What is group work a symptom of?

At the beginning of this chapter it was stated that group work is a symptom of a larger problem. This larger problem is graphically illustrated in the Reeves and Long research (*Focus on Seven* 1998: 106-108) in their description of a lesson observed by

a researcher where one of the teachers used the “Big Bang” activity, provided by the PSP. The lesson will be briefly summarized here. Reeves and Long state that the conceptual goal of that activity is for learners to understand the Big Bang: all matter and energy in the known universe originated from a huge explosion (one event). The key skills to be developed are reading, drawing, and ‘imaging’.

The teacher demonstrated the Big Bang by popping popcorn in a pot of hot oil. However, the oil was not hot enough, and the popcorn ‘exploded’ too slowly. She therefore had to explain how the real ‘Big Bang’ was different from the model they had just seen. She then told the learners that they must “draw what happened, draw the Big Bang.” She pointed to the pot and said: “This is the energy that exploded. Draw and label exactly.” The sketch drawn by all the learners (individually) was essentially the same: it showed the pot on the gas stove, with popcorn popping out. The labels (in English) were usually: *gas stand, gas stove, adjuster, pot, oil and popcorn*. Not a word about the real Big Bang, about energy and matter or the origins of the universe.

The conclusion reached by Reeves and Long based on this lesson is that teachers need help in ensuring that the learners understand the relationship and differences between the representations or models they are working on or with and the concepts they are expected to learn. The problem can thus be summarised as: “The model rather than the concept has become the learning goal.” Underlying the prevalence of ineffective group work is a similar confusion, namely the model or methodology intended to facilitate learning that has become more than a mode or methodology; it has become an end in itself. The real aim of the model or methodology has disappeared from sight.

We have established, from the PEI research, that even though group work as practiced in South African schools is generally ineffective it is a widely-used methodology that has become an end in itself. We have theorized about why this has come about, about what the questions are that group work is the answer to in the minds of the teachers who use it as almost sole methodology. The two questions we constructed were:

- How can I ensure that the teaching and learning occurring in my classroom is not of the old, discredited “chalk and talk” variety?

- How can I make sure that I comply not only with the letter but also the spirit of the new curriculum?

The first question points to creating a classroom that is fundamentally learner-centered, and not teacher centered. Therefore we can compact the two questions into one: “What would enable me to create a learner-centered classroom that satisfies the letter and the spirit of the new curriculum?”

To explore this question further, we must now turn to the trajectory of the concepts *learner-centered* and *new curriculum*. Both these concepts represent the tips of two icebergs in the South African field of education, namely progressivism (learner-centered) and Outcomes-based Education and the NQF (new curriculum).

University of Cape Town

Chapter Three: Group work, constructivism and progressivism

The aim of the chapter

The aim of this chapter is to examine the broader context within which group work became the answer to the question formulated at the end of the previous chapter: “What would enable teachers to create learner-centred classrooms to satisfy the letter and spirit of the new curriculum?” Throughout the chapter, group work will be examined from two different angles, each of which provided the methodology with a gateway into the field of education, namely:

- Group work as method in the constructivist epistemology underlying progressivism.
- Group Work as one of seven Critical Outcomes, providing an over-arching directive for education and training and contained in the South African Qualifications Act (1995) ⁶.

Each of the two constructs behind the gateways (namely progressivism and the NQF) will be briefly described. They will then be examined to find out whether there might be an underlying discourse that partially directs them. In conclusion it will be attempted to say what group work seems to be the answer to in progressivism and in the NQF.

⁶ The motivation for looking at the NQF as gateway instead of at Outcomes-based Education is that the NQF is the over-arching structure and historically it precedes OBE. Before 1996 the National Training Board and COSATU had already progressed considerably in the conceptualising of an integrated qualifications system, based on the accreditation of competencies. Foreign experts from Australia, Scotland and New Zealand shared their experiences with South African counterparts. Outcomes-based education was never referred to during these discussions or in any documents of the time. Then, in 1996, the Department of Education suddenly issued a document, largely based on William Spady's Outcomes-based Education (an American manifestation of progressivism) and from there on OBE dominated policy (Jansen 1999: 6-8).

Group work, constructivism and progressivism

General overview

The term *constructivism* can refer to two distinct poles on the continuum of constructivism. The first pole that constructivism can refer to, is what Philips labels “social constructivism”, or a constructivist epistemology. This refers to the view that bodies of knowledge or disciplines, having been built up during the course of human history, were influenced by “politics, ideologies, values, the exertion of power and the preservation of status, religious beliefs and economic self-interest” (Philips 2000: 6). Constructivism in this sense denies that disciplines are the objective and necessary reflections of an external world. Whereas no-one can dispute the social constructivist view of the social world, it is a controversial one when applied to the natural world. In the field of education those who want to reconstitute school subjects or learning areas to include, for example, indigenous knowledge (which has always been excluded from the formal disciplines because of all the factors listed by Philips), espouse this view.

The second pole that constructivism can refer to, is “psychological constructivism” or constructivism as a theory of learning, as described by Philips (*Op. Cit.*) and cited in Chapter One. This refers to a certain view about how children learn and therefore about how children should be taught: the constructivist view is that knowledge is actively made, not passively acquired. The role of the teacher in a classroom based on the constructivist theory of learning is to develop scaffolding strategies necessary for learners to construct their own meanings (Chenkra 2001: 694).

The term *progressive education* broadly refers to a number of theories conceptualised in the social sciences (e.g. Piaget’s cognitive competence in psychology) and then recontextualised in the field of education (Bernstein 1996: 57). All forms of progressive education share some common elements: they are political in nature, their goal is to achieve social justice (to ensure access and success for working class children disadvantaged by the public schooling system), they are “first and foremost about radical *progress*” (Muller 2000b: 2-3) and the focus is on what Bernstein calls competence rather than performance (Bernstein *Op. Cit.*: 58). Generic skills, outside

of particular bodies of knowledge are emphasised and the vision of teaching and learning is learning as participation (as opposed to passive acquisition) and teaching as facilitation (as opposed to learning as acquisition).

Of the three manifestations of progressive education that Pak (2002: 487-488) filters from the recent scholarship on progressivism, namely administrative progressivism, progressive education (or pedagogical progressivism) and social reconstruction⁷, one in particular has a “child-centred approach” as its central tenet. This is the manifestation labelled *progressive education* or *pedagogical progressivism*, stemming from the tradition that has the work of Dewey and Kilpatrick at its roots. The child-centred approach is also one of the preconditions insisted on by constructivism as a theory of learning (Vermette *et al.*, Passman, Vermette and Foote, Chenkra). Indeed, many of the methods preached by progressives like Kilpatrick (e.g. learning through problem-solving) are standard fare in any constructivist classroom. It seems fair to conclude that progressivism as school reform movement found expression in a constructivist approach to learning and teaching.

In the same vein, there seems to be consensus that constructivism has become the dominant epistemology underlying teacher education in schools of Education in the Anglo-Saxon academic world (Fox 2001:23). This means that teachers are trained according to the basic tenets of constructivism, summarised as follows by Fox (*Op. Cit:* 24):

- learning is an active process
- knowledge is constructed, rather than innate, or passively absorbed
- learning is essentially a process of making sense of the world
- effective learning requires meaningful, open-ended, challenging problems for the learner to solve.

Therefore the constructivist learning process is child-centred in the sense that with the teacher’s help, learners discover for themselves by selecting and transforming information, constructing hypotheses and making decisions about what they learn (Chenkra 2001: 694).

⁷ Tyack, cited in Muller (2000b), adds a fourth manifestation, namely libertarian ‘educational progressives’, radical child-centred activists, mostly based in alternative schools.

There are oppositional voices that comment on the negative effects of constructivism in teachers' classroom practice. They claim that constructivism has become "a kind of intolerant religious order, replete with an accompanying doctrine, a mandate to evangelise and convert (apparently, even the dead⁸) and an interminable list of commandments" (Baines and Stanley 2001: 695). These oppositional voices in general accept the strengths of a constructivist approach to learning, but caution that firstly constructivism only highlights certain aspects of learning but is silent on others (like memory), that secondly it cannot be an appropriate approach in *all* classrooms in *all* subjects for *all* purposes and thirdly that it actually negates the role of the teacher as knowledgeable expert (Fox; Baines & Stanley).

To bring the discussion back to the research question, it should be noted that group work and cooperative learning are techniques that are central to both constructivism and progressive education. "Constructivism ... seems to match up quite nicely with the practices of cooperative learning, and in some quarters is seen as the philosophy in practice" (Vermette and Foote 2001: 28).

Constructivism, progressivism and group work in South Africa

Taylor (1999) argues that the emerging progressive consensus around school reform in both the United States and Britain is also evident in the systemic reforms embarked upon by much of the developing world, under the influence of international donor agencies. In South Africa, the new approach to education (since the advent of democracy) revolves around the principal tenets of the progressive consensus and, as embodied by the Critical Outcomes, represents a tall order indeed (*Op. Cit.*: 109, 111):

... to target higher order learning goals, but to tie the skills components of these goals to the need to understand the knowledge principles underlying these skills, and to relate knowledge and skills to the social, political and economic contexts in which they are acquired and applied.

School reform in the progressive consensus is premised on the goal of schools achieving equity in an increasingly diverse population and consistently achieving basic learning outcomes. To achieve these goals, strong leadership (from teachers -

⁸ A sarcastic aside in response to the claim Chenkra (2001:695) makes that Socrates was a constructivist.

the primary implementers of policy - to principals and district officials) is critical. The weight is shifted towards the second referent in each of the following two pairs of binary opposites: liberty<equality and individualism<cooperation.

As we have established, the epistemology underlying the progressive consensus is constructivist. Amongst other capabilities, this constructivist epistemology requires teachers to be subject experts (in order to construct problem-solving activities requiring high order cognitive skills). Some critics of constructivism (like Baines and Stanley, cited above) argue that in practice teachers are prevented from being subject experts since they are “forbidden” to lecture if they follow a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. However, in the progressive consensus a high degree of professionalism is required from teachers who constantly have to make complex pedagogic and managerial decisions in their classrooms. As we have seen from the PEI reports in the previous chapter, the professionalism and subject knowledge of teachers is an area of concern in South Africa.

This deficit in teacher subject expertise and professionalism impacts, as we have concluded from the PEI research findings, on how effectively teachers use group work, one of the most generally accepted techniques in a constructivist epistemology. Group work and its ineffective contribution to teaching and learning, is therefore a symptom and symbol of the general inability to attain the goals of education in South Africa as represented by the Critical Outcomes (to be examined below).

What is the underlying discourse?

Referring back to Young’s statement in Chapter One that in the South African field of education there has, in the recent past, been a conflation of the political and the pedagogical, the contention of this section is that the effects of the *participatory pedagogies* fundamental to constructivism and progressivism are proof of this conflation (i.e. of a flawed assumption that more participatory pedagogies will necessarily lead to the achievement of democratic aims in education). The underlying

discourse of progressive education⁹, as we have seen, is social and political: to bring about social justice and to achieve equity.

A common criticism against progressivism is that these social and political goals underlying (and directing) the educational goals, cannot be attained by progressive education, simply because the invisible pedagogy assumed by progressivism and its competence models (to be elaborated later), as well as the privileging of everyday knowledge over school knowledge, work to the detriment of working class children who do not have access to the elaborated code necessary for success in competences models. The widening and fossilisation of class distinctions that result from progressive curriculum reform are in diametric opposition to the intended goals of both constructivism and progressivism¹⁰ (Muller 2000b).

Within the progressive consensus (and its underlying constructivist epistemology), group work seems to be the answer to two distinct questions:

- ❑ In the broad goal of achieving social justice, which classroom technique will contribute most to the achievement of equity?
- ❑ Which classroom technique will prove that teachers have the professionalism and subject knowledge required by a constructivist epistemology and by the aims of education in South Africa?

Group work in the NQF

The NQF: a review of its origins

The concept of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) emerged in various policy initiatives in the democratic movement before 1994. The aim was to bring all learning (however achieved) into a single framework of competency-based standards and qualifications. The focus on the vocational aspect of education would place the qualifications framework on the performance side of Bernstein's distinction between competence and performance models (1996). Under the joint sponsorship of the

⁹ Not to be confused with administrative progressivism which, according to Pak (2002: 487), contributed to the development of vocational education, ethnic tracking and scientific racism.

¹⁰ See the discussion of Gramsci's views in 1923 on the emerging progressivism by Muller (2000b: 10-13).

Departments of Education and Labour, the South African Qualifications Authority Act was passed in 1995 and the NQF was established by regulation in 1998 (Department of Education and Department of Labour 2002).

Unterhalter (1998) provides a concise analysis of the history of the NQF and even though she emphasises gender issues within this history, her analysis of the general history is also very useful. She identifies two phases in the history of the NQF. The first (1989 – 1993) was characterised by *divergence*, since all the role players (the state, COSATU, the ANC and large employers) had different goals for an integrated training and education framework. For senior bureaucrats, representatives of corporate interests in civil society, white trade unions and senior managers in very large firms (like Anglo American) the rationale for integrating education and training was economic: to improve economic growth and better coordinate government and business initiatives. On the other end of the pole, the rationale for integrating training and education for the ANC and COSATU was to contribute to the redress of past injustices and to facilitate a general restructuring of the economy to promote social justice, poverty alleviation and job opportunities.

The second phase (1994 – 1996) was characterised by *convergence* and “corporatist” negotiations through which a discourse evolved that linked social and economic development. This was principally brought about by the (ANC dominated) government’s move from the principles of the Redistribution and Development Programme (RDP) with its social justice goals to the principles of GEAR with its emphasis on fiscal discipline and economic growth. COSATU’s position had also changed with more emphasis placed on individual empowerment than on social justice through the integrated training and education system.

Labour, business and the general political jostling that took place around its inception left a visible stamp on the NQF: when the principles and ground rules for an integrated system of training and education were elaborated, considerations other than the immediately educational came into play.

Group work and Critical Outcome 2

The following extract indicates that working collaboratively is one of 7 core competencies required of all learners (and if sequence is anything to go by, group work is the second most important). Note that these Critical Outcomes, first registered in the South African Qualifications Act of 1995, represent the concrete goals the entire education and training sector has to achieve (this means higher education, adult education and schools). They are the non-negotiable directives derived from the Constitution. They were therefore the foundation of C2005.

The critical and developmental outcomes ... describe the kind of citizen the education and training system should try to create. The critical outcomes envisage learners who will be able to:

- *Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking*
- *Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community*
- *Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively*
- *Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.*
- *Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and or language skills in various modes.*
- *Use Science and Technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others.*
- *Demonstrate an understanding as the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.*

(National Department Of Education 2002:11)

Taking the Critical Outcomes (COs) as basis for his analysis, Taylor (1999: 111) concludes that there is a clear political agenda outlined in the COs. The political nature of the COs (as well as their content) indicates that they fall within a progressive/constructivist paradigm.

Three core concepts in the NQF have to be defined and elaborated before the implication of the formulation of group work as an outcome will be discussed. The definition of an *outcome* within the NQF is “... a statement of the required learner capabilities that must be demonstrated.” When we look at the definition of *capabilities* we see that they are “the expression of generic abilities as they relate to specific content areas, context and value frameworks. A capability is the basic enabling component of performance which involves generic abilities acting in relation to defined content areas, contexts and value frameworks” The last core concept is *transfer*: “the application of capabilities in contexts other than those in which initial learning took place” (HSRC 1995: 2, 1, 4)

According to these definitions, effective group work is therefore a generic ability or skill that must be demonstrated in all contexts. Since the Critical Outcomes are derived from the Constitution they broadly represent the generic abilities that an ideal citizen would be able (through successful transfer) to demonstrate in any given context. And since all the Specific Outcomes of C2005 (and recently the Learning Outcomes of the Revised National Curriculum Statement, accepted as policy in 2002) were derived from the Critical Outcomes (Department of Education 2002: 14), the impact of the Critical Outcomes on learning and teaching in South African schools can hardly be exaggerated.

Critical Outcome 2: a response to globalisation

Critical Outcome 2 can also be seen as part of South Africa’s response to globalisation. The NQF is the framework within which all courses, curricula and qualifications have to be validated and registered. The Outcomes-based curriculum for Grade 1-9 (C2005) is therefore directed by the values and principles of the NQF as crystallised in the Critical Outcomes.

C2005 was a response to what was perceived to be the two most important challenges faced by the new South African education system (Chisholm 2000: 38):

- *the post-apartheid challenge where the role of the curriculum is to overcome the legacy of apartheid education by ensuring a deeper knowledge, values*

and skills base for South Africa's citizens, providing the conditions for social justice, equity and development,

- *the global competitiveness challenge where the role of the curriculum is to provide the platform for developing knowledge, skills and competences for innovation, social development and economic growth for the 21st century.*

In a nutshell then the goals of C2005 are to promote social equity and to prepare South Africa for globalisation. If these two goals were reached, it would presuppose that the legacy of apartheid education had been overcome and equity achieved and it would mean that all learners are equipped to face the challenges of the 21st century successfully.

The type of skills and knowledge envisaged by C2005 to face the globalisation challenge is premised on the basis of a changed world of work. To succeed in this new world of work, the following key attributes are essential for anyone (or any economy) to succeed: continuous innovation and high skills (Muller 2000a: 28). When examining C2005 and the report of the Review Committee on C2005, it is clear that these requirements filtered through to the field of education and were interpreted in the Critical Outcomes and therefore also in aspects of the over arching vision of C2005. The aspect of this over arching vision that is pertinent to our argument is the pre-supposition that per-project teamwork will replace the traditional organisation of labour with its linear and hierarchical characteristics. This pre-supposition is neatly framed in Critical Outcome 2.

Sennet (1998) examines the personal consequences of this new world of work, brought on by an increasingly competitive, globalised world. It is a world where teamwork is the distinguishing feature and teams are formed per project, where short termism is the norm and where the focus is on the immediate. Workers cannot construct their identities around what they do (it changes constantly) or around whom they work with (the people also change constantly). Although there are differences between Sennet's teamwork, described as the epitome of the modern worker's moral and ethical dilemma, and group work as it is practised in many South African schools, there also seems to be one striking similarity, namely the fact that: "power is present in the superficial scenes of teamwork, but authority is absent ... An authority figure is

someone who takes responsibility for the power he or she wields” (Sennet 1998: 114). When thinking about group work in schools as reported in the PEI research in Chapter Two, the implication is that teachers, who are expected to be *facilitators* (à la Freire, à la constructivism) rather than authoritarian directors of the learning taking place in their classrooms, have also had their authority (and accompanying responsibility) amputated. The SAIDE study referred to in the previous chapter pointed to the negative consequences for learning when teachers abdicate their authority or responsibility when they organise their classes to do group work.

However, general consensus has not been reached on the reality of the changed world of work assumed by C2005 and the NQF. Consensus seems to be that it has certainly not become the norm everywhere and that the shift towards the post-fordist, flexi-specialisation paradigm (the new mode of production in the new world of work) has actually been quite localised with some scholars citing “Scandinavia, West-Germany and Japan” (Mathews 1989: 72) as the sites where the post-fordist strategy has principally taken shape, and others pin-pointing it to even more localised sites, like “the Third Italy and Los Angeles” (Sayer and Walker 1992: 192).

Some even argue that there are no fundamental differences between the “old” and the “new” and that the binary oppositions of Fordism and post-Fordism, mass production and flexible specialisation are illusory (Sayer and Walker 1992: 222). Even though the superficial arrangements may have been altered, the fundamental nature of the production system has not changed and the basic organisation of power structures has not been threatened (Appelbaum and Batt cited in Sennet 1998: 113).

These debates, however interesting they may be, are not of premier importance for us to understand group work in C2005, because whether the premise on which the Critical Outcome dictating group work was formulated was flawed or not, the Outcome was formulated and it has filtered down into the classroom to direct the way in which teachers organise the teaching and learning in their classrooms. It has been determined by an interpretation of the skills needed for the changing world of work (notwithstanding whether the South African world of work is actually changing or not or whether a change in the world of work would necessarily be beneficial or not) and the challenges of globalisation.

What is the underlying discourse?

Bernstein argues that the way in which identities were constructed has been disturbed in the “new period of transitional capitalism”¹¹ (1996: 77). This has brought about the possibility of new identity constructions. The result is that official pedagogic identities are shifting from an introjected (self-referential) mode to a projected mode (*Op. Cit:* 76-77):

We have proposed that this process [the new insertion into work and life], with the exception of elite institutions, is shifting official pedagogic identities where the codes have been acquired from introjected modes to projected modes ... the new forms of projected modes erode a collective base and replace inner commitments and dedications by short-term instrumentalities. (Original emphasis)

At the risk of over-simplifying, this points to the situation where educational institutions have an economic base: they look to the market for direction. The identities formed by them are thereby reshaped (they are no longer formed around disciplines, for example). In South Africa this new identity formation is outlined in Critical Outcome 2, a response to the challenges of economic globalisation. Of the seven new ways of identity formation Bernstein describes, the one that applies is the instrumental or market identity that is constructed out of market signifiers. Of the generic mode (which, as we have seen, is the mode we have embarked upon with Outcomes-based Education) Bernstein formulates the connection with the market as follows: “Thus generic modes and the performances to which they give rise are directly linked to instrumentalities of the market, to the construction of what are considered to be flexible performances” (*Op. Cit:* 69).

It seems possible that group work was the answer to the question asked by those with an *economic rationale* in both phases of NQF’s history (as identified by Unterhalter): “What is the core skill that any worker needs most in today’s changed world of work?” The answer, as described by Sennet, seems to be teamwork. Once this has

¹¹ What we have termed “globalisation”.

been recontextualised into the field of education, this means that the most appropriate methodology in the formation of this type of projected market identity is group work.

To hook this to the question we formulated at the end of the previous chapter, the *spirit of the new curriculum* has been determined by assumptions about the changed world of work and not by educational concerns. The spirit of the new curriculum is therefore one of learning to work in teams and groups at school, because of the assumption that the ability to work in this way is one of the most important prerequisites to land a job in today and tomorrow's marketplace.

Concluding comments

The underlying discourses to both angles that provided group work with a gateway into the South African field of education indicate that in both instances considerations other than the purely educational directed its entrance and entrenchment. In the case of progressive education and its constructivist epistemology group work, as a central concretisation of this approach, was the answer to the *political* question: "what is the best way to bring about social justice and democracy?" When examined from the NQF angle, team work (group work) is the answer to the *economic* question: "what is a fundamental skill that children need to acquire to become workers that will help South Africa succeed in the global economy?"

When looking back on the first part of the dissertation, it is clear that there is no shortage of theories about the various possible questions that group work would be the answer to. The time has come to anchor these theories in the reality of classroom practice as described by the general public in their submissions to the Review Committee, to test the theoretical questions and to try and see if other questions might not emerge that group work is the answer to.

Chapter Four: Analysis of submissions

Aim of the chapter

The implementation of South Africa's first national curriculum, Curriculum 2005, officially commenced in 1998 with Grade 1 (in all schools, countrywide). This was followed in 1999 with Grade 2 and in the year 2000 the grades implemented were Grade 3 and Grade 7 (the last year of the Foundation Phase and the first year of the Senior Phase). The country also experienced its second democratic elections in 1999, with a new cabinet appointed to serve under a new president. Rumbblings about problems with C2005 became louder and in 2000 the new education minister appointed a Review Committee who was tasked to review C2005, with the aim of strengthening it.

As part of the review, public comment on C2005 was invited. Individuals and organisations made written submissions to the Review Committee. It follows that all the written submissions were authored by people or organisations involved in or affected by education in some way or another (teachers, parents, teacher trainers, NGOs, academics). The aim of this chapter is therefore to work with the written submissions and "mine" them for references to group work, to analyse the references to group work, classify them in constructed categories and finally to theorise about the significance of these categories.

Why the submissions?

The rationale for choosing the submissions to the Review Committee as the main source of data in this dissertation is that this set of documents provides the reader with a fair sample of educator concern. What is particularly interesting about the written submissions is that people of different social classes, professional levels, geographic locations and political agendas made these submissions on a voluntary basis. There was no coercion, no pressure and no advantages to be gained by making a submission other than the privilege of making oneself heard about a particular question and

sharing one's experience and concerns with a captive audience wielding a considerable amount of power.

The findings of the PEI research as discussed in Chapter Two point to the possibility that group work, in the minds of teachers, is the answer to the question: "What would enable me to create a learner-centered classroom that satisfies the letter and the spirit of the new curriculum?" The discussion in Chapter Three pointed to group work being the answer to two questions: a political question, namely "What is the best way to bring about social justice and democracy?" and an economic question, namely "What is a fundamental skill that children need to acquire to become workers that will help South Africa succeed in the global economy?" By analysing the comments submitted to the Review Committee these questions can be explored further by delving into a written record of the practical consciousness.

Although the submissions were summarised in the final Report of the Review Committee, it was necessary to consult the original documents in order to get the full picture of the practical consciousness about C2005/ OBE¹² and hopefully group work practice in South Africa today.

Description of the sample

The Report of the Review Committee was published on the website of the National Department of Education (Chisholm 2000). The list of written submissions is given as an appendix to Chapter 9 on the website. The appendix is entitled "Sources used" and includes the list of people or focus groups interviewed, newspaper articles, books and other publications consulted by the Review Committee.

¹² In Chapter 1 of the Report of the Review Committee, the following finding is reported:

"In the public domain, outcomes-based education and Curriculum 2005 are often conflated and seen as interchangeable. There is seldom a discussion of Curriculum 2005 without a discussion on outcomes-based education and there is rarely a debate on outcomes-based education without reference to Curriculum 2005." (Chisholm 2000)

This finding is taken as the basis for the following analyses because when reading the submissions it is obvious that the people who made the submissions used the terms C2005 and OBE interchangeably. To conserve this characteristic of the general understanding, in the discussions to follow, the two terms will also be used together (OBE/C2005).

The list of written submissions consists of the names of 258 people, institutions and organisations that made submissions. The original submissions are kept at the National Department of Education's building in Schoeman Street, Pretoria. The documents had to be consulted *in situ* and photocopying any part of any document was prohibited. A Confidentiality and Anonymity clause had to be signed before the documents were made available for consultation.

In the three neatly stacked piles of documents (roughly organised according to the province where the submission originated) made available for consultation, only 169 of 258 submissions of those listed on the website, were present. There were also 17 written submissions that do not appear on the list of submissions posted on the website. These 17 documents were added to the 169 submissions in the pile to bring the written submissions that were available for consultation to a total of 186.

Of the submissions that were listed on the website but that were missing from the three piles, the following 11 are referred to explicitly in the final Report of the Review Committee. These references indicate that the Review Committee studied and consulted at least these 11 submissions:

Name of person/organisation submitting	Chapter in Report where the submission is referred to
1. Bronkhorst Primary School	Chap.3 (Structure and Design of the Curriculum)
2. COUNT Teacher Trainers	Chap. 1 (Background and Overview) and 4 (Teacher Orientation, Training and Support Processes)
3. Gauteng Education and Training Council	Chap. 4 (Teacher Orientation, Training and Support Processes) and 5 (Learning Support Materials)
4. Mokgoko, Martha, The Teacher Trust	Chap. 1 (Background and Overview)
5. Mokoena, S, Mafatsana	Chap. 7 (National, Provincial and District-level Support)
6. Motala, S, Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg	Chap. 7 (National, Provincial and District-level Support)
7. North West Province, Directorate: Professional Development and Subject Advisory Services	Chap. 5 (Learning Support Materials)

8. Publishers' Association of South Africa (PASA)	Chap. 5 (Learning Support Materials) and 8 (What is to be done?)
9. Rand Afrikaans University, History Department	Chap. 3 (Structure and Design of the Curriculum) and 5 (Learning Support Materials)
10. South African Historical Society	Chapter 5 (Learning Support Materials)
11. University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education	Chap. 3 (Structure and Design of the Curriculum) and 4 (Teacher Orientation, Training and Support Processes)

Two conclusions can be drawn from the number of documents made available for consultation:

- (i) The list on the website is not complete, as can be seen from the presence of 17 submissions made available for consultation but absent from list on the website.
- (ii) Some of the submissions (those listed on the website, but not in the three piles of documents made available for consultation) are probably still with the various members of the Review Committee who referred to them while writing their final report.

The 186 submissions (169 + 17) that were made available for consultation ranged from simple one page hand-written letters to neatly typed longer letters on the letterheads of schools, to much longer and theoretically more complex submissions by university Education Departments. The shorter submissions often contain no reference to how the person making the submission is involved in education. The shorter submissions that do contain contextualising references were authored by teachers, parents and even a few learners. The 186 submissions that were made available were mostly in English, with a small percentage in Afrikaans.

Some organisations made several submissions, since individual members submitted their comments as separate submissions, with the name of the organisation however always mentioned. In this way, there are many submissions made by academics at for example the University of the Witwatersrand. The public had been requested to structure their comments by using various headings. References to group work were almost exclusively found under the heading "Levels of understanding" (of C2005).

The wording of the Confidentiality and Anonymity clause that had to be signed before the documents were released for consultation expressly prohibits the use of people's names. This clause therefore required the list of submissions to be sanitised of all individuals' names and any personal detail, but the names of institutions, schools, associations, universities, etc were conserved, since this is not expressly prohibited in the clause.

The data is presented in Appendix A.

Methodology

Methodological precursor: C. Jenkins and the New Education Fellowship

The methodology in this chapter draws on Celia Jenkins' research on thirty years worth of *New Era*, the journal of the New Education Fellowship (Jenkins 1989). Both the Jenkins study and this dissertation draw on documentary (or archival) data, both studies want to classify written material in order to analyse it. A brief overview of Jenkins' methodology will be given. This will be followed by a comparison showing how the nature and scope of this dissertation differ from her study. The adaptations to her methodology necessitated by these differences will be elaborated.

Jenkins' empirical analysis consists of two stages: a first thematic analysis to provide a general overview and a second more specific investigation realised through a content analysis. The purpose of these analyses is "to provide a substantive base for constructing the changing discourse of New Education..." (Jenkins 1989: 215).

Jenkins uses the thematic analysis to identify the major focal points of the journal, thereby gaining a preliminary overview of the content of New Education discourse. The articles in *New Era* are organised around themes and the thematic analysis consists of classifying the themes in six categories, constructed by her. The categories are not mutually exclusive and she classifies some themes under more than one heading. After thus establishing the dominant interests of New Education as

represented in the themes of *New Era*, Jenkins proceeds to a content analysis, documenting the subject matter of the journals by classifying every article in every issue of the journal over a thirty year period. The content analysis provides a more systematic base for inferences and elicits the theoretical perspectives of the journal. Each article is classified only once.

Differences in nature and scope

The following comparison between the Jenkins study and this dissertation should make it clear why the Jenkins methodology could not be adopted unaltered.

- **Amount of material:** The amount of submissions to be consulted is small with only 186 submissions to analyse, compared to the 1500 articles Jenkins analysed.
- **Density:** The submissions are often short and hurried. Many of them start with a disclaimer that the author of the submission had very little time in which to write his or her submission. In contrast, the authors of the articles in *New Era* were writing for a formal publication and therefore conceivably took time to develop their ideas and polish their writings.
- **Method of analysis:** Only after having read an entire article with some attention could Jenkins decide on how to classify the article. In this dissertation only references to a very particular type of classroom methodology were of interest and not the entire submission.
- **Unit of analysis:** In the content analysis Jenkins analysed each separate article, i.e. about 1500 written texts usually ranging from one to three pages (Jenkins 1989: 210). The unit of analysis in this dissertation is the particular section, paragraph or sentence referring directly to group work.
- **Time:** Jenkins could track changes and shifts in themes over thirty years (1920-1950). In contrast, the submissions are a snapshot of a particular moment.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of the two levels of empirical analysis for Jenkins was to construct a *changing discourse*. This is possible because the period under investigation spans thirty years. This dissertation cannot do that. The purpose is rather to construct the *current discourse* in education as represented by the snapshot of a particular moment provided by the submissions. Furthermore,

the purpose of this dissertation is to try and find from the submissions possible questions that people see group work as the answer to.

The effect of these differences is that for the purpose of this dissertation the methodology had to be streamlined. Since we are only interested in one theme, namely group work, the data was analysed in a content analysis, and no thematic analysis was done since the theme was predetermined. Only those statements relating to this one theme are considered as part of the data set. The two stages of analysis used by Jenkins to construct a changing discourse were therefore reduced to one. The current discourse, constructed from the content analysis, is presented below in the findings.

Methodology followed in this dissertation

Since the theme under investigation is pre-determined, the first step in the analysis was to decide on key words that would probably be mentioned in a submission where someone was commenting on group work. The key terms that served as triggers are concepts usually associated with group work and were gleaned from the literature on group work discussed in Chapter One:

- group work
- cooperative learning
- small groups
- learner-centered

By carefully skimming the 186 documents made available for consultation and looking out for the key terms as set out above, a general overview was achieved. Whenever one of these key terms appear, this served as a trigger for that section of the submission to be read more carefully. The decision then had to be made whether the section, paragraph or sentence should be classified. The criterion for this decision was whether the mention of group work as one of the key features of OBE/C2005 assumed an important position in the submission. *Important* must here not be understood as meaning that group work is the exclusive theme of that submission; however, it should be one theme of only a few and it should not merely get a peripheral mention in the submission.

Once the decision was taken to include the mention of group work in the data to be classified, the section was written down as a direct quote, or summarised if it was very long. The Afrikaans submissions were translated and therefore never appear as direct quotes in the data in Appendix A.

Before the second stage of analysis could be embarked on, it was necessary to construct categories within which the data could be classified. After having read through the data a few times, it was clear that most of the comments about group work have some elements in common – these common elements were useful in the construction of the categories. After considering and rejecting various other options, the following categories were decided on:

- (i) Comments about the **ideology** underlying group work.
- (ii) Comments pointing to the difficulties of **implementing** group work
- (iii) Comments pointing to deficient **training** of teachers in group work
- (iv) A fourth category (“Other”) is created for comments that do not fall into any of the above three categories.

There is considerable overlap between these categories and the areas of debate about OBE in South Africa as identified by Jansen (1999:11). The range of issues he identifies are:

- (i) ideological and philosophical assumptions governing OBE
- (ii) the implementation contexts of OBE
- (iii) the equity consequences of OBE

The first two issues he identified are similar to the first two categories constructed for the content analysis. This points to the validity of the data set as a fair sample of educator concern.

The second stage of analysis was to classify the data in these categories (please see Appendix A), and analyse the content of each reference. This is now followed by a discussion of the trends and findings of the analysis.

Findings of the analysis

Of the 186 submissions that were analysed, there were 56 instances where the explicit mentions of group work as one of the key features of OBE/C2005 (this amounts to 30.1%) assumed an important position in the submission. In two of these cases (namely the submission by the School of Education of the University of the Witwatersrand, as well as the “Synthesis” document), a submission consists of the submissions of several people or institutions presented together, where each separate person or institution that contained mentions to group work as centrally important was counted separately.

Summary of analysis

The categories of analysis look like this when summarised:

Type of comment	Frequency	Expressed as percentage
Comments about the ideology underlying group work	15/56	being 26.8% of 100%
Comments pointing to the difficulties of implementing group work	20/56	being 35.7% of 100%
Comments pointing to deficient training of teachers in group work	20/56	being 35.7% of 100%
Other (comments not classifiable) ¹³	1/56	being 1.8% of 100%
Total	56/56	100%

Ideological comments

Thirteen of the 56 comments (or 28.6% of the data) explicitly referring to group work were classified as being of a predominantly ideological nature.

The definition of ideology as used in this sense is a set of beliefs; especially one held by a particular group, that influences the way people behave. The comments in this

¹³ The reference to group work in Submission 86 is so short that it is difficult to classify it. (“... (C2005) has some positive aspects, e.g. ... group work.”) The context from which it was taken did not help the understanding of the gist of the reference, since the entire submission read like a telegram. Therefore although the reference explicitly mentioned group work and although the reference to group work was an important aspect of the short submission, it was classified as “Other”.

category are therefore an observable behaviour of the people or organisations making the submission. The set of beliefs that underlies the observable behaviours is not the same in all the submissions, but they all have in common the fact that they are chiefly concerned with the ideology underlying group work, and not by the logistical difficulties of the implementation thereof. Important to note is that these comments seem to regard group work as more than just a methodology; they see group work as an embodiment or a symbol of OBE/C2005.

Within this broad category of comments of an ideological nature, there are five different types of comments. (The numbers of the particular submissions referred to in the various sub-categories is given in the discussion of that sub-category.)

Ideological comments: Type One (Submissions 2, 9, 244, B1)

Firstly, there are those comments that object to a perceived agenda of the new curriculum, personified by group work: the undermining of individualism. OBE/C2005 as gauged by group work (the “prescribed” pedagogical method), is seen to be anti-individualist and pro-collectivist¹⁴. In the minds of these commentators, the competence model that is OBE/C2005 can probably not lead to individual achievement and individual excellence. Perhaps the best example of this type of comment can be seen in submission number 9, made by the principal of Arcadia School, Pretoria. The submission’s comment about group work has been summarised as the following:

The over emphasis on group work is negative for high achievers and those who struggle – children are rarely given the opportunity to take pride in their own achievements reflecting their individuality. Others “ride on the backs” of group members and discipline in groups is problematic. (2)

¹⁴ This fear stands in a deeply contradictory relation to John Dewey’s optimistic view that: *Individuals are certainly interested, at times, in having their own way, and their own way may go contrary to the ways of others. But they are also interested, and chiefly interested upon the whole, in entering into the activities of others and taking part in conjoint and cooperative doings.* (1916: 24)

Another good example of this first type of ideological objections can be found in the first submission that was included in the pile of documents, but which wasn't listed on the website (numbered B1 in the data tables). Like other comments of this type, this submission objects to the principle of progressive education and competence models that sees all children as capable of learning. This submission objects to the principle of OBE/C2005 where all learners are seen as equal and where there is no differentiation between gifted and ordinary, higher grade and standard grade learners. In this view, working in groups is a manifestation of an egalitarian discourse dangerous to the gifted individual and by extension to society as a whole, since it would lead to a lowering of standards:

It (group work) infringes on the rights of brilliant learners who are held back by less brilliant learners because they work in groups and because OBE sees all learners as equal. (47)

For the people and institutions making this first type of ideological comment, group work seems to be the answer to the question: How can individuality best be undermined to the benefit of the collective? The fear of the disappearance of individual excellence that underlies this type of comment is a manifestation of a broader mistrust of the new political (democratic) dispensation that uses education as a powerful tool to promote equity and redress the inequalities of the past.

Submission 244 is premised on the perceived lack of fairness in assessment where all the members of a group gets the same mark, regardless of their contribution to the process or to the final product. The design principle or structural feature of OBE/C2005 that informs this type of ideological comment is the type of assessment required by C2005, namely criterion-referenced assessment (where the performance of a child is assessed against the outcome) which replaces the previous norm-referenced assessment (where a child is assessed against the other children in the class). Submission 244, made by an Afrikaans teacher, refers:

Those who never used to work before still don't work, but they get the average mark of the group – which they don't deserve. (44)

The set of beliefs that underlies a comment like 244 is similar to the set of beliefs underlying the individualist discourse of the first comments in that OBE/C2005, as

embodied or symbolised by group work, is seen as dangerous to the progress of the gifted, deserving child. These comments suggest that group work is detrimental to those who deserve to get good marks for a good performance, made possible by natural talent and hard work. They reflect what could be termed as a pro-performance (elitist), anti-competence stance on the part of the commentators.

Teachers or principals at ex model C-schools made all four of the 15 submissions in this first sub-category of ideological comments. This suggests that privileged schools feel threatened by the new curriculum as symbolised by group work. This perceived threat resonates with Bernstein's elaboration (1996) of identities arising from different educational models. The specialised, projected identity arising from the selective specialisation of performance models is not deemed possible in competence models like OBE/C2005, described as a "therapeutic" mode and based on an introjected identity construction. It could be argued that teachers at ex-model C-schools see the only pedagogic model of any value to be a performance model, exactly because of their own specialised identities that they would have constructed through years of increasing specialisation in singulars. OBE/C2005 asks them to not only abandon their own specialised identities (by teaching "learning areas" instead of "subjects") but also to abandon a specialised identity project for their students.

Ideological comments: Type Two
(Submissions 72, 80, 255)

Submissions 80 (Hamilton Primary School) and 72 (Glenstantia Primary School) both object to group work on the same ideological grounds: weaker children (those who struggle academically or are shy) "disappear" when group work is done. These submissions can also be read against the rapid and imposed change from one model to another. Submission 255 points out that OBE seems to be most beneficial to children from middle class homes.

One of the seemingly positive aspects of competence models is the therapeutic or empowering nature of the model (Bernstein 1996: 67-70), stemming firstly from the fact that the acquirers have more control over space and time and secondly from the fact that the focus is on what is present in what the acquirer produces and not what is

absent. However, these submissions object on the basis of their experience with group work: not all children benefit from the so-called therapeutic model. On the basis of experiences with a methodology, the model itself is rejected.

Ideological comments: Type Three
(Submissions 110, 200, 239, B4)

The next type of comment in the ideological category is different from the first two in that it does not object to group work, but firstly accepts it as a key element of OBE/C2005 and secondly attaches a positive value to it. These comments reflect an agenda opposite to the pro-performance (elitist) agenda of the first two types of ideological comment with the people or organisations making them embracing OBE/C2005 and its embodiment in group work. By extension this type of comment does not reflect a desire to return to the previous curriculum model, but accepts and appreciates the model of OBE/C2005. This appreciation resonates with the finding of the Review Committee of “extraordinary and widespread enthusiasm and commitment to the new Curriculum” (Chisholm 2000: Chapter Six).

Submission 110, made by the principal at Lamile Primary School in Bethal (from its name probably an ex-DET school and therefore quite possible also under-resourced) is overwhelmingly positive about the effects of group work and C2005: “It is a winner”.

Another example of type four is submission 200, the SADTU submission (the majority of unionised teachers belongs to SADTU). The political roots of group work are traced back to People’s Education for people’s power which: “had to instil certain democratic values such as cooperative work.” It is only in this submission where the link between political democracy and democratic classroom practices (like group work) is overtly made, although there is an implicit link in the first three types of ideological comments.

Ideological comments: Type Four
(Submissions 42, 54, 144, 233)

The submissions in this sub-category object to C2005/OBE on pedagogic grounds. The people making the submissions claim that the pedagogic emphasis of the new curriculum is wrong. One of the examples they cite is that too much importance is attached to group work and that group work is (mistakenly) seen as the answer to many problems. The submission by Durban College of Education (submission 54) refers:

The life skills which are gained from group dynamics are important, but should not be allowed to overshadow teacher input, as seems to happen in many cases.
(11)

Submission 144 by NAPTOSA also refers:

... the perception must not be created that large classes are not a problem in the OBE classroom and that the problem can be solved by groupwork and peer teaching ... Groupwork is a useful strategy but it is not the only or full answer for transforming education ... and group work (depending on what the learners are doing) does not necessarily make it OBE.” (25)

Submission 42, made by the Delta Foundation¹⁵, objects against the particular form of OBE embodied in C2005. It claims that the way in which teachers are implementing South African OBE is very far removed from what was originally intended by OBE. The emphasis is wrong, and one example of this erroneous emphasis is the importance attached to group work which according to this submission, is not a defining aspect of OBE.

Submission 233, made by an educationist at the University of the Western Cape, is characterised by the meta-language spoken by academics engaged in the current debates in education circles. This educationist is saying that the emphasis in the new curriculum is wrong, that the enormous swing of the pedagogic pendulum represented by OBE/C2005 is pedagogically wrong. He pleads for a more balanced curriculum than the one offered by OBE/C2005. He identifies group work as one of the pillars of the new curriculum that he objects to:

¹⁵ This comment should be read against the background of William Spady's active involvement in the Delta Foundation.

OBE has led to the valorisation of everyday or indigenous knowledge over formal or school knowledge, of oral work over written and reading work, of group work over individual work and of activity learning over expository learning. There is an urgent need to instil a balance of teaching styles and to think of learning-centred education instead of learner-centred vs teacher-centred. (39)

The comments in this fourth category flow from the changes in control over framing and classification. They object to the weak classification and framing of C2005 and plead for the curriculum to restore some control over framing and classification to the teacher.

Comments on implementation

(Submissions 20, 70, 73, 83, 92, 109, 138, 148, 152, 170, 189, 194, 215, 218, 254, B7, B8, B11, B12, B13)

Together with the comments on deficits in teacher training, the biggest percentage of comments explicitly mentioning group work has been classified as objections to the difficulties associated with implementation of group work as key pillar of C2005/OBE; namely 20 of the 56 comments. This represents 35.7% of the total of 56.

The category of comments objecting to the difficulty of implementation stands in a “similar to” relationship to the third type of ideological comment in that these submissions accept as a given that group work is a fundamental and undisputed element of C2005/OBE. The comments in this category object to the fact that the implementation of group work is impractical and not useful, for various reasons. Of the 20 submissions in this broad category, there are 12 (or 60%) that have the same objection at the core: overcrowded classrooms prohibit the effective implementation of group work and therefore of C2005/OBE. Submission 194, made by an individual, states that “group work is hard to implement where there is no seating space” and submission 92 states that “it is impossible to do OBE and group work in big classes”.

The individuals or organisations making these objections thus work with the assumption that C2005/OBE means group work, that if it is not possible to implement group work, then it is equally impossible to implement C2005/OBE. More than a third of the 54 submissions with comments directly relating to group work have been classified in this category. This supports the finding of the Review Committee (Chisholm 2000: Chapter One) that even though the majority of teachers were willing and ready to embark on a new curriculum, the successful implementation of the new curriculum (however flawed the design of that curriculum might be) was hampered by logistical problems: poor training of teachers, by learning support materials of varying quality and availability and by insufficient departmental support.

At first glance it seems as if the 20 implementation comments are not on the same conceptual level as the submissions commenting on the ideological nature of objections. The objections to implementation state that it is inconvenient to try to implement group work in large classes, but they do not question the principles or assumptions (or ideology or pedagogic model) that underlie group work as manifestation of OBE/C2005. Dismissing this category of comments as less important because they seem to be talking on a practical level only would be to forget the rationale for choosing the submissions as source of data, namely that the submissions present a sample of the practical consciousness - thoughts, opinions and experiences of citizens from all backgrounds - and not only academics or recognised intellectuals.

The comments pointing to difficulties in implementation are interesting in two distinct ways. In the first instance they can be read as the practical manifestation of the ideological objections or, to recruit Gramsci here, as example of the “organic unity between theory and practice, between intellectual strata and popular masses,” (Hoare and Smith 1971: 192). The people commenting only on the practical problems of implementation are not necessarily uncritical of the principles underpinning C2005/OBE. It might mean that the only way in which they can express their concern about the principles is by commenting on practicalities. As Gramsci puts it (*Op. Cit.*: 332): “The active man-in-the-mass has a practical activity, but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity, which nonetheless involves understanding the world in so far as it transforms it.”

Unfortunately, the scant biographical information about those making submissions contained in the submissions (often just a name or school's name) closes the possibility of theorising about whether those expressing their concern in logistical, practical terms generally have lower levels of education than those objecting on ideological grounds and it is probably an over-simplification to see the divide between praxis and theory along educational lines¹⁶.

Therefore, the second way in which the comments pointing to difficulties in implementation are interesting is because academics share these objections. Pam Christie (1999) constructs an argument that the approach followed by the National Education Department in formulating decontextualised policy documents that C2005 consists of (instead of a proper curriculum) without paying attention to the contexts of implementation, points to the implicit assumption that the formulation of policy can be separated from its implementation. The policy is thus handed down from the top and it becomes the problem of provincial and regional education official, as well as principals and teachers (dubbed "street level bureaucrats" by Elmore 1980: 609) to make the policy work. There is therefore what Christie (following Greenstein) terms a structural disjuncture between power and accountability.

Christie summarises two different approaches to policy: the first is a rationalist approach where policy is seen as a linear system starting with policy formulation and adoption, followed by implementation, followed by an assessment process and possibly by policy reform. The rationalist approach is diametrically opposed by an approach based on contingency where policy is seen as a fundamentally political activity which is fluid, racked with compromises, trade-offs and settlements and profoundly influenced by practices on the ground.

From Christie's review (and others, like Jansen 1999) it seems that the process of the formulation of the policy leading to C2005 can be placed within the rationalist approach.

¹⁶ Gramsci reminds us that all men can be philosophers, reflecting on "problems posed by reality, which are quite specific and 'original' in their immediate relevance." (Hoare and Smith 1971: 324).

It is clear from the 20 submissions objecting to the logistical difficulties of implementing C2005/OBE that contingencies, like real problems in real classrooms (big classes in cramped, under resourced classrooms), are prohibiting the successful implementing of the policy. For many teachers, this policy is symbolised by group work (a perception that will be discussed later) and the impossibility of implementing group work is therefore symbolic of the impossibility of implementing C2005/OBE. The fact that policy makers neglected the contexts of implementation is a fundamental flaw and the result is that the change envisaged by the policy is not effected.

Comments focusing on training

(Submissions 14, 27, 36, 44, 46, 50, 57, 113, 129, 161, 166, 208, 211, 231, 237 (x3), B11 (x2), B17)

This broad category of comments (where 20 of the 56 comments, representing 35.7%, have been classified) has strong links to the previous and can be placed on the same level of conceptual complexity: the comments that focus on training to implement group work have the base assumption that the failure of OBE/C2005 is due to lack of resources – in this context resources to train teachers adequately to implement group work - and not because of any structural problems with group work (as symbol of OBE/C2005) as the ideological comments argue.

The comments in this category usually object to the quality of training that teachers received before they had to implement C2005 – they do not blame the PRE-SET, but the IN-SET as provided by the National Department of Education, necessitated by the radical change in pedagogy and curriculum. One of the aspects of the teacher training that these submissions object to in particular, is the fact that teachers did not receive adequate training to empower them to do group work effectively. The objections are not against group work in principle (they are again often marked by the acceptance that group work is a key element of OBE and C2005) but against the perception that teachers are expected to use group work as primary means to attain the end of learner-centred education without them having been trained to do this. The gist of most of these submissions is therefore that the training that teachers received before the implementation of C2005 was lacking in as far as new methodologies were

concerned. Submission 211, written by the *Suid Afrikaanse Onderwys Unie*, cites six aspects that should receive attention when teachers, principals, etc are trained. One of the six is group work and cooperative learning.

Moving away from the general conclusions about the comments in the training category, we will now look at the different types of comments in this category. Firstly there are those comments that are of a retrospective nature: people making submissions state that the training teachers received before the implementation of C2005 was deficient and that this is the reason why some teachers have difficulty implementing group work (and C2005/OBE) effectively, and why other teachers think that group work constitutes C2005/OBE. See submission 113 for an example of this type of comment.

The flipside of the retrospective comments are those that are of a prospective nature: the statement is made that only by training teachers better in future will C2005/OBE and group work as its main methodology, be successful. These comments, like submission 166, or submission 36 made by the Deputy directors of the Gauteng Institute for Curriculum development, point to the role that training will have to play in future to remedy the partial understanding that teachers have of OBE:

Many teachers have equated OBE with group work and activity based learning, and lack the knowledge and skill to scaffold and mediate learning ... The reality is that good teaching is difficult and teachers who were perhaps not teaching well before cannot be expected to teach well because the curriculum has changed. (6)

An example of a further type of comment in the training category can be seen in submission 108 where the point is made that for many teachers, due to deficient training, the form of C2005/OBE is more important than the content. Teachers know the rhetoric but they don't know how to put the ideas into practice. This is an echo of one of the findings of the PEI research (discussed in Chapter Two), namely that the model or methodology intended to facilitate learning has become more than a model or methodology; it has become an end in itself. The real aim of the model of methodology disappears from sight. Closely linked to this is submission 44 where it is

claimed that inadequate training is the reason why teachers think that group work constitutes C2005/OBE:

Inadequate training has led to the formation of misconceptions in teachers such as the notion that OBE equals group work and that as long as group work is done in every lesson, the goal has been achieved. (8)

Many comments in the training category stand in a “similar to” relation to the ideological comments and the implementation comments in assigning a more important role to group work than simply one methodology of many or a means to achieve an end. The following two extracts are examples:

Submission 161 (Principal of Outeniqua Primary School, George): *It has to be remembered that not all educators have received training on how to implement group work. (28)*

Submission 166 (Individual): *Teachers need a lot more follow-up training sessions in implementing group work, especially handling it in bigger classes. (29)*

These two submissions clearly attach a status to group work that elevates it to a higher status than merely one methodology amongst many. This elevated status of group work leads now us to the discussion of a mechanism that seems to be at work in all three categories that the submission have been classified in, namely the tendency to take a part of the whole and substitute the part for the whole.

Synecdoche as mechanism in making meaning

From the preceding discussions it has become clear that across the three categories there is a tendency in the submissions to see group work as more than a mere methodological device associated with learner-centred education and therefore OBE/C2005. Many of the submissions point out that teachers seem to be taking a part of the whole (group work within OBE/C2005 and learner-centred education) and

elevating it to a position where it actually supersedes the whole to become the new whole. An example of this is submission 14 (Individual):

An alarming number of teachers think that if you do group work, you are busy with OBE ... (3)

Synecdoche is the rhetorical substitution of a part for the whole (e.g. “lend me your ears”) and it seems an appropriate description of the mechanism that teachers seem to be using to make meaning of the intricacies of C2005/OBE. There are submissions in all three categories that introduce a cautionary note about this mechanism that seems to be at work. These warning lights are mostly flashed by academics in Departments of Education at higher education institutions who by virtue of the classroom observations that form part of the teaching practice module, have more of a bird’s eye view on contemporary classroom practice than individual teachers do.

Submission 237 consists of the comments of three academics working in the School of Education of the University of the Witwatersrand. The three had grouped their comments together for the Review Committee. Educationist 3 comments on how the mechanism of synecdoche seems to be at work:

*During interviews with teachers some of them stated that the use of group work was one of the key features of C2005 which they had heard about. The effectiveness of group work varied ... but one of the most prevalent features was that while learners did actively participate in groups, most of the lesson focus was directed to group interaction. This resulted ... in less of the actual science concepts being engaged with by either the teacher or the learners. **Instead, the ‘form’ of group work became the focus of the lesson, learners wrote little or nothing down, and the teacher took a backseat when the learners reported back on their discussions. The overall result of such group interactions was that while learner-learner discussions were promoted, the crucial mediation role of the teachers was lacking.** (42) (My emphasis)*

This submission in particular points to the reality of classroom practice where teachers have embraced the rhetoric of the new approach without firstly understanding the theoretical base (constructivism, learner-centred education, progressivism, competence models) underlying it and without secondly having been

sufficiently trained in techniques that would enable them to implement the principles of the curriculum. Hence, in the process of making meaning of the policy documents and the IN-SET training, they embrace the form, the rhetoric, the outward manifestation of the underlying theory that is most easily understood, namely group work.

Submission 113 (Link Community Development) drives home the same point:

In Foundation Phase classrooms, furniture was arranged in groups ... however, the seating arrangements rarely lead to real group work – most teachers lack the skill and training to use group work effectively. (22)

The mechanism is present in all three categories, albeit in different forms:

1. The comments that have an ideological underpinning say that (the competence model of) OBE/C2005 wants to change the previous performance model that resulted in elitist, non-egalitarian identity formations. Types one and two are opposed to this change while comments of type three value this change positively. Type four objects to the pedagogy underlying the new curriculum model. For all four types of ideological comment, group work is the gauge by which this change in models is measured.
2. Most submissions making logistical objections pointing to the difficulties in implementation use a rhetorical substitution of the part for the whole: it is impossible to implement group work in under-resourced, large classes and therefore it follows that it is impossible to implement OBE/C2005. Seen from a different angle: because one of the key elements of C2005/OBE is group work, it is only by 'doing' group work that one can be 'doing' C2005/OBE. If therefore it is impossible to 'do' group work because of large classes, it is also impossible to implement C2005/OBE.
3. Some submissions commenting on the lack of training take the rhetorical device one step back: it is because teachers have not received adequate training that they cannot implement group work and therefore cannot implement OBE/C2005. Other submissions state the situation differently by laying the cause of the partial understanding of C2005/OBE (as manifested

in the perception that OBE is group work) at the door of the deficiencies in the IN-SET training offered by the National Department of Education.

As stated before, one of the purposes of the analysis of the submissions is to use the submissions as snapshot from where to construct the current discourse in education. What has emerged from classifying and analysing the submissions is that the tendency to use synecdoche as a mechanism to make meaning typifies the current discourse in the field of education about C2005/OBE.

Discussion: interaction between the macro and the micro

As established above, the mechanism used by classroom practitioners to make meaning of the new curriculum is taking that part of the whole (group work) that they understand and see as crucial of the whole and expanding it to constitute the whole (OBE/C2005). The tendency was in effect introduced in Chapter Two when the Big Bang experiment was observed for the PEI research. In that instance, it was concluded that the model rather than the concept had become the learning goal. This has been described above as “using synecdoche as mechanism in making meaning”. The use of synecdoche in this particular way leads to the realisation that there is a very interesting interaction between the macro and the micro occurring in South African classrooms today.

For the purposes of this discussion, the macro can be described at two levels. The first level of the macro is the bigger political and social context within which the second level of the macro, namely that of the new curriculum, could emerge. This broader social context has changed radically over the past decade. One of the major changes is that the discourse of liberation as far as it pertains to education, that had the subversion of the hegemonic discourse as its objective, has now in its turn become the new hegemonic discourse. The discourse itself has remained mostly unaltered after the first democratic elections, but the status of the discourse has changed completely. It has changed from a discourse of the oppressed destined to bring about liberation to the discourse of those in power destined to run a civil service. This change was brought about by individuals who were immersed in the discourse of liberation

through participation in the broad democratic movement (and initiatives like People's Education). They moved into the field of official governance after the democratic elections of 1994.

The radical change on the first level of the macro is reflected and echoed in the second level of the macro where the (school) educational system saw an extremely rapid and imposed move from a performance model to a competence model in the form of OBE/C2005. This can be tied to the change in status of the discourse: education for democracy (e.g. People's Education) which had many of the hallmarks of progressive education and of competence models (McKay 1990) had political liberation as its objective. After 1994, the same discourse was then recontextualised to become the official educational discourse. The submission by the Education Policy Unit of Natal (submission 56), bears no direct relation to group work, but it is of relevance to this discussion:

Our view of post-1994 OBE curriculum is that curriculum development was informed by two traditions that involved adult education in one way or another. One was located in the progressive trade union sector and this has contributed to an integrated education and training curriculum and qualifications framework, and the other tradition was informed by a Freirian emancipatory education theory.

Not only did the pre-1994 liberation discourse have liberation, emancipation or integration as its objective, but it was also a discourse mainly located in the sector of adult education. After the recontextualisation, both the *objective* of the discourse and the *sector* to which it is applied have changed, but not the discourse itself. The new objective is now to achieve equity through education while at the same time providing the country with enough high-level skills to become globally competitive (see the introduction to C2005). The sector that now has to achieve this aim (as set out in C2005) comprises all children of school-going age in the General Education and Training band.

In summary we have a macro situation in education in which a new education model (competence) with radically different rules of classification and framing from those of the previous system has been brought into all classrooms. Added to this, the official

pedagogic discourse has absorbed the features of emancipatory discourses that were initially destined to conscientise adults, even though both the objective and the sector have changed.

The classroom is the micro, of course, and it is the zone of interaction between the two levels of the macro with the micro that produces the tendency to use synecdoche as mechanism to make meaning of the new curriculum model, as was seen from the submissions.

Many of the people or institutions making the comments that have been classified as type one and type two in the ideological category prefer the characteristics of the pre-C2005 curriculum model (that was closer to a performance model than to a competence model), particularly with regard to:

- ❑ control over spaces, which is weakly classified in a competence model, but strongly classified with strong boundary maintenance in performance models,
- ❑ evaluation criteria which are implicit in a competence model and explicit in performance models.

Since competence and performance models will often be referred to in this chapter, some of the differences between these models have been summarised from Bernstein (1996) in the following table (the different elements in the table will feature in the discussion to follow):

	Competence	Performance
1. Categories	Weakly classified	Strongly classified
a) space	Control lies with acquirers	Strong boundaries
b) time	Present tense	
c) discourse	Control lies with acquirers Implicit rules	Acquirers have less control Explicit rules
2. Evaluation	Implicit criteria Focus on presence	Explicit criteria Focus on absence
3. Control	Personalised	Explicit: order
4. Pedagogic text	Text reveals competence	The text is the performance

	(present)	(past)
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Bernstein (1996: 56) argued that competence models (of which C2005 has many characteristics):

abstract the individual from the analysis of distributions of power and principles of control which selectively specialize modes of acquisition and realizations. Thus the announcement of competence points away from such selective specializations and so points away from the macro blot on the micro context.

The macro blot here refers to the unequal social class structure. Recruitment into the class structure is uneven and differential. One of the main aims of progressivism, as discussed in Chapter Three, is to achieve social justice by ensuring access and success for disadvantaged working class children. In progressivism, the focus is on competence rather than performance. Paradoxically, since competence models focus on the individual (abstracted from the distribution of power and principles of control), the unequal class structure is reproduced and the goal of social justice is not achieved. This unintended reproduction of the unequal class structure through the focus on the individual is what Bernstein refers to as the macro blot on the micro context (of the individual and the classroom).

The advent of competence in South Africa with OBE/C2005 announces this abstraction of the individual from the distributions of power and control. The *time* of competence models is the present, *control* is personalised and internal and the adjective that most readily describes competence models is *implicit*: control is implicit, evaluation rules are implicit, discursive rules are implicit. Taylor (2001) warns that very weak boundaries between everyday and school knowledge (weak framing, as found in competence models like C2005) will increase the difficulties that working class children have in trying to acquire the formal discourse. These children must be given the epistemological tools to escape their everyday lives; in other words, the framing must be stronger than that proposed by most competence models. It is the *implicit-ness* of competence models that Bernstein refers to when he says that competence points away from selective specialisation: competence models mean that *some children* will be able to construct specialised identities, but *all children* will not be able to this does. It does not mean less blot, but invisible blot.

When this abstraction is looked at from another angle, it is possible to describe Bernstein's "blot" as the "voice" in "voice discourse" (Moore & Muller 1999) where knowledge is reduced to knowing or experience¹⁷. The principle issue for voice discourses is that " ... social differentiation in education and the reproduction of social inequalities are associated with principles of exclusion structured in and through educational knowledge" (*Op. Cit.*: 190). The objective of the "voice discourse" is therefore to make heard the voice of oppressed groups, to have their *forms of knowing* (as opposed to *knowledge*) emerge. In this view, the voice of reason (epistemologically-based knowledge) is reduced to one of many, and must take its place next to next to the oppressed voices (female, black, gay, etc).

Progressive education and by extension competence models are associated with voice discourse, and in the recent post-modern intellectual landscape, this has established:

... the political default settings whereby epistemologically grounded, knowledge-based forms of education are [seen as] politically conservative, while 'integrated' or 'hybrid' knowledge codes are [seen as] progressive.

(Moore & Muller 1999: 191)

The concept "voice" is relevant for group work when we consider that in the therapeutic mode of competence models and as a progressive methodology group work is meant to give an opportunity to the hitherto oppressed (children, oppressed by talk and chalk and dominated by teachers) to make their voice heard, to share their experience and ways of knowing in a space that is less strongly classified, less strongly framed than before. They learn from each other's experiences when they do group work, the teacher is merely one knower among many knowers, acting as facilitator of the transmission of different ways of knowing in the group. They can take control of the pace of their learning and they can bring knowledge from their worlds to the group, since boundaries between the classroom's school knowledge and everyday knowledge from "real life" are weakly classified. This facilitates a positive

¹⁷ This ties in with Taylor's warning that if the curriculum model over-emphasises exploring the everyday lives of working class children as source of knowledge, i.e. their own experience or ways of knowing, they will not gain access to the elaborated code. By providing them with epistemologically-based knowledge, they have a better chance of accessing the elaborated code and succeeding.

valuation of their ways of knowing even though these might be far removed from the epistemologically-grounded school knowledge.

To come back to Bernstein's macro blot on the micro context, the first level of the macro (the political and social changes after democracy) interacts with the micro (the classroom) in the following way: on a conceptual level group work can be construed as a democratic pedagogy, befitting a new democracy. Group work thereby becomes iconic of a methodology that carries the changed distributions of power of the larger society.

The second level of the macro (the rapid switch from performance to competence models through C2005) interacts with the classroom (the micro) in that many teachers understand very little of the complex theories, terminologies and jargon of C2005, and therefore, through the mechanism of making meaning through synecdoche, grab hold of group work, which is a relatively familiar term. They grab hold of the term denoting the methodology and they understand it to constitute the entire new pedagogy (and curriculum) required of them. They believe that the new curriculum requires them to weaken boundaries, to give airtime to all different and possibly oppressed voices and this means group work. They have not been trained to implement group work optimally, but it is a concept that is less foreign to them than the other concepts in the C2005 policy documents (e.g. "Performance indicators", "Expected levels of Performance" or "Outcomes-based Assessment").

Described as such, we could say that group work has become a carrier of the macro blot in the micro context of the classroom, on two levels:

- a) unintentionally, it serves to reproduce the unequal class structure by carrying the now invisible classification and framing relations characteristic of pedagogic competence models
- b) it carries the changed principles of the distribution of power that characterise our (new) democracy,

The external developments in both the political macrostructure and the pedagogic macrostructure are thus projected into a mirror, reflected back into the classroom and viewed with a slight distortion. In this sense, group work would be the answer to the

abstract question: "How can the changed distribution of power and principles of control of 'the new South Africa' be devolved into the classroom?"

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Chapter Five: Theoretical discussion

Aim of the chapter

In the previous chapter it was concluded from the data that group work is the answer to the following question: “How can the changed distribution of power and principles of control of ‘the new South Africa’ (including the *ways of knowing* of voice discourse as opposed to epistemologically-based *knowledge*) be devolved into the classroom?” The question is abstract; the answer (i.e. group work) is tangible. In this chapter the question and answer will be further explored by viewing them through firstly the theoretical lens of Bernstein’s different modes of competence models and secondly by looking at them through Bourdieu and Passeron’s lens of symbolic violence.

These theoretical concepts will allow us to examine the empirical research done by Morais and Pires in which they establish the classroom conditions that are necessary to close the gap between socially differentiated Portuguese learners. Once these conditions have been established, the actual situation in South African classrooms (as described in the PEI research and the submissions to the Review Committee) will be compared to the theoretical ideal that Morais and Pires (2002) elaborated. The last question asked in this chapter is then: “To what extent does the praxis of education in South Africa today (as symbolised by group work) overlap with the theoretical ideal to close the gap (as elaborated by Morais and Pires)?”

Theoretical backdrop

Bernstein’s three modes of competence models

One of the keys to the argument of this chapter is found in Bernstein’s description of the three modes of competence models (1996). He distinguishes the *liberal/progressive* mode as the first (historically). This mode, developed by the new

middle class, was opposed to what it considered were repressive forms of authority in school, family and industry. It legitimised a new science of child development.

Bernstein calls the second mode the *populist* mode, where a silencing of a local group's pedagogic practices and contexts by a dominating official pedagogic practice is supposed.

The third mode, which he calls the *radical* mode "focuses on inter-class group opportunities ... to redress its objective dominated positioning. The pedagogic practice and contexts created by this mode presuppose an emancipatory potential common to all members of the group. This can be actualised by the members' own exploration of the source of their imposed powerlessness under conditions of pedagogic renewal."

When the trajectory of curriculum policy in South Africa is traced (Jansen: 1999), it becomes clear that it was not a linear process that saw OBE and C2005 arrive at the top of the policy pile and imposed nationally in 1998. In the early nineties the influences ranged from:

- the National Education Co-ordinating Committee: "a nominal alliance of progressive education and labour stakeholders" (*Op. Cit: 4*),
- to the hotchpotch of approaches espoused in programmes delivered by NGOs "from radical, progressive approaches, to mainstream, delivery programmes" (*Op. Cit: 5*),
- to the apartheid government's own curriculum reform: CUMSA, with learning areas and an orientation towards the market with its emphasis on vocational education (*Op. Cit: 5*),
- to COSATU's proposals for a qualifications framework that would be competency-based and integrated between labour and training (*Op. Cit: 6*),
- to Spady's transformational Outcomes-based Education (*Op. Cit: 9*).

The different influences have been listed here to illustrate that any curriculum that has such a multiplicity of roots would be hard-pressed to conform to only one mode in Bernstein's competence model! It should be clear from the influences above that

group work could or would have had various points of entries: as a methodology of progressive education promulgated by certain NGOs and elements in the NECC, through the team-work ethos in CUMSA to prepare learners for a post-fordist workplace, through COSATU.

Strands of all three modes of Bernstein's competence models could therefore be traced in the curriculum policy that was finally delivered to teachers to implement. It would be possible to see teacher training in English universities according to progressive education as an example of the liberal mode, adult education as an example of the populist mode and People's Education as an example of the radical mode. In all three traditions (progressive education, adult education, People's Education), group work is a methodology.

After 1994, the group work methodology (in which the teacher is but one knower amongst many knowers) was recruited by the state into the official pedagogic discourse and became one of the cornerstones of the new education. As we have seen, the skill of working together successfully with others in a group is one of the seven Critical Outcomes were adopted by the NQF. The Critical Outcomes provide the over-arching vision for education in post-apartheid South Africa. Group work is a methodological technique and is therefore part of the micro; in fact it has become a powerful marker of the macro, of the new distribution of power and principles of control.

Group work as symbolic violence

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) suggest that *symbolic violence* is exerted when meanings are imposed and imposed as legitimate by concealing the power relations that are the basis of its force. Cultural violence is in its turn the result of pedagogic action:

"All pedagogic action is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" (Op. Cit: 5).

Group work in South Africa stands in a complex relationship to the concept of cultural violence. First of all, it can be stated that the historical roots of group work

seem to have been forgotten; it is therefore not seen as a product of history, but as an absolute requirement of the present. A methodological device rooted in the struggle for liberation and used by the oppressed, or propagated by progressive teacher trainers, has now been elevated to the only true way to achieve learner centeredness, the cornerstone of the new vision of education in South Africa. Secondly, the meaning of group work is imposed as legitimate by concealing the power relations that are the basis of its force (the education discourse that has remained the same even though its status, its objective and the sector it is applied to have changed). The mechanism of synecdoche described in Chapter Four is evidence of the fact that a cultural arbitrary (group work as *the* new methodology) has been imposed by an arbitrary power, and that in itself constitutes symbolic violence. (In this case the arbitrary power is the official pedagogic discourse of the state as embodied in C2005.)

The question that has to be asked at this point in the argument is: so what? What if a methodology that belongs to the micro has become a carrier of the macro; what if the dominance of group work over other methodologies suggests symbolic violence, what if the curriculum suffers from genesis amnesia regarding group work, what if teachers practice synecdoche? If the result of group work being thus elevated were the improved achievement of learning outcomes by all South African children, the answer would be (to quote submission 110): "we have a winner." However, this is not the case. The PEI research reports and the submissions to the Review Committee indicate clearly enough that the way in which group work is practised in most classrooms works to the detriment of all children achieving the learning outcomes and in the final instance in attaining the long-term goals of education.

We would ourselves be guilty of synecdoche if we were to hang all educational ills around the neck of group work, but as we have seen, group work is more than merely one methodology of many. It is the answer to the abstract question: "How can the changed distribution of power and principles of control of 'the new South Africa' be devolved into the classroom?" Therefore, as long as we remember that group work is a carrier of the macro (and does not in itself constitute the macro) we *can* symbolically hang all educational ills around the neck of group work without succumbing to synecdoche.

It is in its failure to contribute to the levelling of the playing field (to use a favourite new-South Africanism) that the true symbolic violence of group work can be found. We have seen from the submissions to the Review Committee that the coping mechanism for making meaning which is used by many teachers is synecdoche, taking that part of the whole which seems less foreign than the rest and reconfiguring it to constitute the new whole. Teachers fervently believe that if they are 'doing' group work, they are 'doing' OBE. These teachers are not aware of the origins and original purpose of group work, nor are they necessarily aware of the fact that they are trying to devolve the changed distribution of power into the classroom. By unquestioningly accepting group work as constituting OBE/C2005 they legitimise its position as dominant methodology, even though it does not in effect contribute to the closing of the gap between socially differentiated learners in the classroom.

The empirical foreground

To further this strand of the argument, we can look at two bodies of work:

- a. the reality of classroom practice in South Africa today as described in the PEI research,
- b. the research done by Morais and Pires (2002).

Morais and Pires: conditions for closing the gap

Since the PEI research has already been described in some detail earlier (Chapter Two), only the Morais and Pires research will be briefly described here. The research uses the conceptual language elaborated by Bernstein. It is particularly his concepts of classification, frame and boundary strength (Bernstein 1975) that are relevant to the Morais and Pires research. *Frame* refers to the degree of control that teacher and child have over the selection, organisation, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received; *classification* refers to the degree of boundary maintenance between contents; *boundary strength* underlies both classification and frame.

The broad research project that the project of Morais and Pires fits into, focuses on "the modalities of pedagogic practice more favourable to the acquisition of scientific knowledge and competences by socially differentiated students" (Morais and

Pires 2002: 1). Since the 2002 study is part of a larger research project, it starts from the results of previous research findings, indicating that a mixed pedagogy, with weak classification and framing at the level of pacing, hierarchical rules, knowledge relations and relations between spaces, but stronger classification and framing at the level of (macro) selection and evaluation criteria, results in a closing of the gap between socially differentiated students. Pedagogy, if designed according to this model, can overcome the effect of children's socio-economic background.

The 2002 Morais and Pires paper aims to establish the "relative importance of each one of the various characteristics of pedagogic practice and the interplay of those characteristics for effective learning." The study is premised on the findings of previous research that families' socio-economic background is a variable that influences children's achievement at school. The study lasted two years and it followed an action-research methodology. The sample consisted of four female teachers, teaching fourth grade science at four different primary schools in two country towns in Portugal. Ninety-one children, from families of distinct socio-economic levels (as determined by the parents' academic qualifications and occupations), also formed part of the sample.

For the first year of the study, the four teachers received intensive training, which included both scientific and pedagogical content. During the first year the researchers also constructed instruments to characterise teacher's practice. Using the instruments, the actual pedagogic practice of teachers could be measured and compared to the theoretical profile of the practice to be implemented by teachers (the theoretical profile was constructed using characteristics suggested by former studies). These instruments (and other indicators) were used to situate the practice of each of the four teachers according to the *how* of learning and the *what* of learning (scientific contents), at two distinct moments.

The children's degree of scientific learning was assessed through tests and their achievement was related to the teachers' pedagogic practice as a whole. The main findings of this two-year study were that "the primary condition for children's success in complex cognitive competences is the *scientific competence of teachers*, that is

their proficiency in scientific knowledge and investigative competences” (my emphasis).

However, this is not the only condition (even if it is the most important) that contributes to closing the gap: Morais and Pires continue with the crucial importance of the following:

- ❑ the evaluation criteria must be explicit
- ❑ boundaries between distinct scientific contents must be blurred (i.e. links between different scientific concepts must be pointed out)
- ❑ the classification of teacher-child space must be weak
- ❑ the classification of child-child space must be weak to facilitate open and intense communication between children.

The last two conditions are especially relevant to this dissertation because they allude to effective group work where children work together in the zone of proximal development, guided by the teacher. And when read together with the most important condition (teachers’ scientific knowledge), a clear picture emerges of what kind of group work is necessary to weaken the differences in achievement between socially differentiated children in South Africa. This would be group work managed by well-trained teachers (proficient in the required scientific knowledge and investigative competencies) where the children can communicate intensely in their groups about the new school knowledge, with the teacher intervening and guiding (weak classification of teacher-child space).

Are we closing the gap?

From the above the position taken in this dissertation is that the question that group work *should* be the answer to is: “Which methodology, if optimally used, can contribute to the closing of the gap between socially differentiated children?”

The findings of Morais and Pires are important in the context of the goals of post-apartheid South Africa: their research suggests tangible solutions, at the level of the classroom, for education to work for all children. The researchers further point out that “the fact that pedagogic practice may blur differences between socially differentiated children shows that there is no need to lower the level of conceptual

demand in the teaching-learning process in order that *all* children can succeed in school.” This resonates deeply with the dual goal of Outcomes-based Education and C2005:

- ❑ to overcome the legacy of apartheid education by ensuring a deeper knowledge, values and skills base for South Africa’s citizens, providing the conditions for social justice, equity and development
- ❑ to provide the platform for developing knowledge, skills and competences for innovation, social development and economic growth for the 21st century (Chisholm 2000: 38).

Since the affinities between the findings of Morais and Pires and the aims of education in South Africa are so clear, their findings will, for the purposes of the argument, be applied to learning in all fields in all phases, not only learning in primary school science that their study focuses on.

When the three ideal conditions (namely high scientific knowledge of teachers, weak classification of child-child space and weak classification of teacher-child space) that encompass group work are compared to the reality of praxis in South Africa, a rather bleak picture emerges. Pedagogic practice is far removed from the theoretical profile, with only one of the three conditions adequately satisfied, namely weak boundaries between classroom spaces (child-child). This is clear from both the PEI research where most classrooms were physically organised into groups as well as from the submissions to the Review Committee that the efficacy of group work, even though identified as the dominant methodology and elevated through synecdoche to represent the entire new approach to teaching, can be questioned.

The second condition, namely the weakening of boundaries between classroom spaces (teacher-child) is not satisfactorily met in classroom practice. Several reports (e.g. the SAIDE report) indicate that teachers organised the children into groups and then abdicated responsibility, not providing any scaffolding or giving adequate content input to enable children to complete the task at hand. The recurrent plea for better training in group work techniques that rises from the submissions to the Review Committee, emphasise that teachers do not know how to manage group work. The boundary between teacher space and child space remains strongly classified.

The primary condition, namely a high level of scientific knowledge in the teacher, is often not present in reality. The various PEI research projects described in Chapter Two clearly indicated that teachers whose classroom practice was observed by the PEI researchers, were not sufficiently proficient in scientific knowledge to satisfy this condition for closing the gap. There is a relation between the failure to meet this condition and the strongly classified boundaries between teacher-child space: if a teacher does not possess high levels of scientific knowledge, it will be more difficult for him or her to direct the child-child interaction by inputting adequate content and by scaffolding the activity. The result is that he or she strongly maintains the boundaries between his or her own space, and the children's space¹⁸.

The following graphic representations are illustrations of the distance that exists between the ideal of pedagogic practice (as extracted from the Morais and Pires research) in as far as group work is concerned (Figure 1) and the reality of practice, based on the PEI research and on the submissions to the Review Committee (Figure 2). These representations possibly over-simplify the situation, but they are useful in presenting the main strands of the argument in a visual way.

¹⁸ The *what* of learning and teaching, namely scientific contents, (*scientific* here used in a very broad way to refer to school knowledge as opposed to everyday knowledge) is strongly guided by the curriculum that stipulates the bodies of knowledge that are valued, that will be taught and that will be assessed. The main finding of the Review Committee was that C2005 was under-specified - almost no content was written into the curriculum. The under-specification of content in C2005 therefore further undermined teachers' ability to input scientific knowledge into the classrooms. To teachers' already full constructivist basket of designing learning programmes appropriate to the needs of their particular students, designing activities that will scaffold learners' construction of meaning and managing continuous assessment, the curriculum added the weighty responsibility of choosing what content to teach.

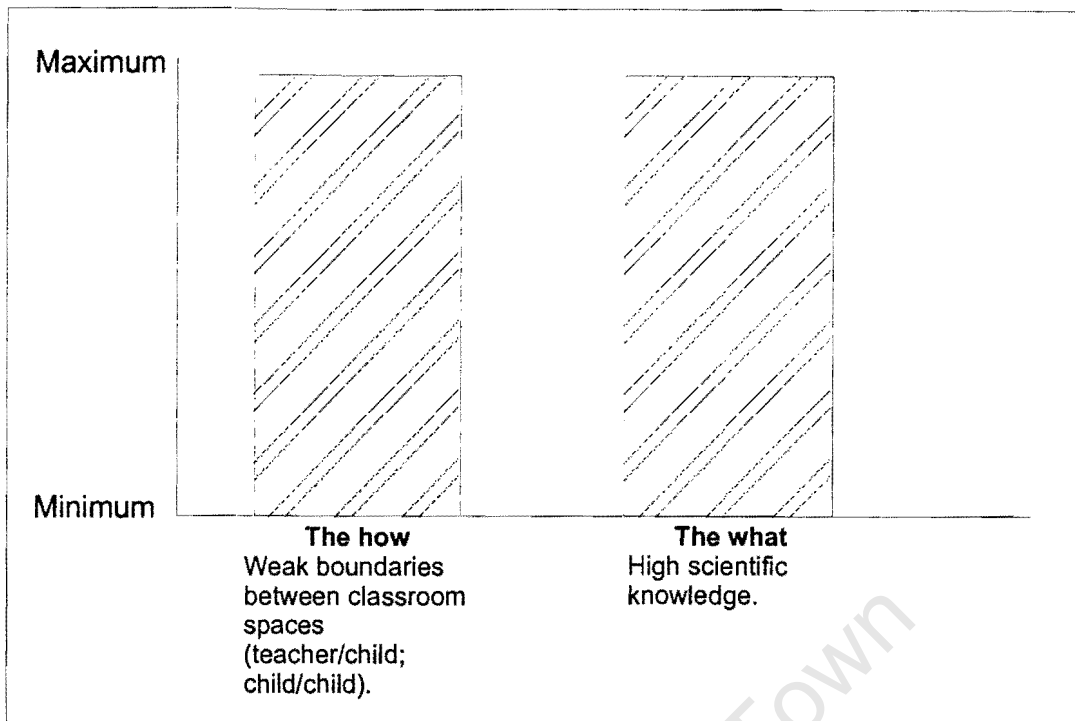


Figure 2. The ideal relation between the main conditions for closing the gap in achievement between socially differentiated children (based on Morais and Pires, 2002).

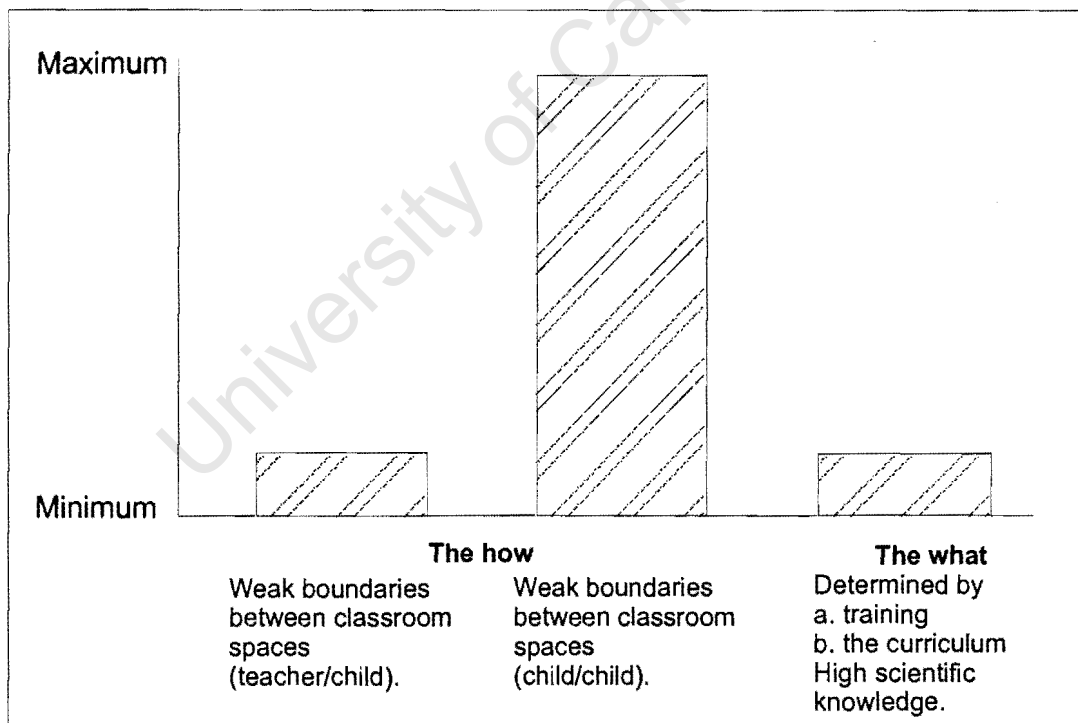


Figure 3. The reality of the relation between the main conditions for closing the gap in achievement between socially differentiated children (based on the PEI research and the submissions to the Review Committee).

Concluding comments

In the preceding discussion, it has been suggested that group work is the tangible answer to the abstract question: “How can the new principles of power and control be devolved into classrooms?” There is overwhelming support for the new curriculum.¹⁹ Teachers make meaning of this new curriculum through synecdoche, and thereby elevate group work to constitute the new curriculum. A correct assumption would therefore probably be that teachers will continue to do group work (the new principles of power and control are not likely to change soon). However, as we have seen, the pedagogic practice in classrooms with regards to group work is far removed from the theoretical ideal as developed by Morais and Pires. In their model there is an important place for a particular kind of group work, guided by teachers with high levels of scientific knowledge. Thus, it is not the methodology *per se* (i.e. the *content* of group work) that is problematic, but the way it is currently practised (i.e. the *form*) and what it has come to mean for teachers through the mechanism of synecdoche.

Therefore, the conditions identified by Morais and Pires for closing the gap between socially differentiated learners have to be addressed in a tangible way in three areas: pre-service training of teachers, in-service training of teachers and learning and teaching support materials (LTSM). Furthermore, the mechanism of synecdoche that is at work has to be acknowledged and used.

The first and most important condition relates to the *what* of teaching: the high scientific competence of teachers. The implications for training are immediate: there has to be a strong focus on inputting and developing the epistemologically-based knowledge and investigative skills of teachers²⁰. This leads on to the role of LTSM: in the absence of high scientific knowledge, text books and other resources must provide teachers with the epistemologically-based knowledge they need to teach a subject or learning area effectively. The specificity of the knowledge structure must be

¹⁹ Whether C2005 or the new streamlined and strengthened version of it to be implemented from 2004 and called the Revised National Curriculum Statement.

²⁰ This is a challenge for South African teacher training institutions: the inequalities due to the previous fragmented school education system are still being reproduced and the school education received by prospective teachers often does not sufficiently prepare them for tertiary education

acknowledged and pointed out to teachers: whether it is vertical and hierarchical like Natural Science, or horizontal like Life Orientation will influence the way in which they themselves acquire the knowledge and the way in which they teach it.

Now for the conditions relating to the *how* of teaching: the evaluation criteria must be explicit. For both pre-service and in-service training this points to a requirement for the training courses to also have explicit evaluation criteria, in other words, those being trained must *live* the explicitness of evaluation criteria. For LSM this means that the material should be structured in such a way that not only for the teacher, but also for the children, the evaluation criteria of an assessment activity must from the outset be clear and explicit.

For the third condition, namely the blurring of boundaries between distinct scientific contents (i.e. the links between different scientific concepts pointed out), these links have to be explicitly pointed out during training and in LSM, so that teachers can in turn point them out to the learners.

The last two conditions are particularly important for group work: the classification of teacher-child space must be weak and the classification of child-child space must be weak to facilitate open and intense communication between children. Teachers have to be trained to realise why this will result in effective group work (and the closing of the gap), as well as in techniques and methods on how to realise this in the big classrooms that characterise South Africa. Related methodologies conforming to these same conditions must be part of the prospective teacher's armour (e.g. to know that whole class teaching of new content, followed by an application activity done in pairs with the teacher roaming and intervening where necessary, can be equally effective). However, the findings of the SAIDE study (Chapter Two) have to be taken on board: even though the teachers in their sample had been exposed to a variety of methods to create an environment conducive to active learning, when they themselves were teaching they only used group work, and not very successfully at that. If group work is to take its rightful place as one methodology of many, and efficiently used to enhance learning, teachers have to be trained for this over a long time. The approach to teacher training must be chronic, not acute.

As we have seen, the mechanism of synecdoche operates because of a partial understanding of the new curriculum. To counter this, an important part of training would be to give student teachers a theoretical base on which they can build an understanding of the curriculum they have to implement. Such a theoretical base would include a brief history of progressivism and constructivism and an attempt to situate Outcomes-based education and C2005 within this framework.

It is only when the above conditions are met that group work will become part of the whole again, will return to the micro and will no longer unintentionally contribute to the reproduction of an unequal class structure. The true carrier of the changed principles of the distribution of power *should be* the well-trained teacher with high levels of scientific knowledge, skilfully manipulating her way through the pitfalls of a competence model while building on the strengths.

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APPENDIX A: Data: The written submissions to the Review Committee of C2005

Several devices have been used to condense the data into the tables below.

- The numbers 1-258 in the left hand column of the first table follow the order of the submissions as listed on the website.
- In the second table the numbers B1-B17 in the left hand column indicate the submissions that were made available for consultation but that were not listed on the website.
- In the second column of both tables an X has been added when a submission listed on the website was indeed present in the three stacks of documents that were made available for consultation.
- The third column from the left on both tables contains the quote, extract or summary where group work is explicitly mentioned and stands centrally. Each of the 56 texts in this column has been numbered in brackets after the text (1-56).
- The last column contains the categories that the 56 texts have been classified in for the purposes of analysis. The numbers in brackets after the name of the category refers to the amount of texts in a particular category. Thus “Implementation (3)” will refer to the third text that comments on the logistical difficulties in implementing group work.
- The comments in the Ideological category have been sub-classified as Type 1, 2, 3, or 4. This has also been indicated in the last column

Submissions listed on the website

Name of person or institution	Submission present?	Extract or summaries of opinions regarding group work	Category
1. President of the Academy of Science of South Africa	X		
2. Afrikaanse Hoërskool, Kroonstad	X	OBE attaches more importance to working in groups than on individual initiative. (1)	Ideological (1) Type One
3. Individual: University of the Witwatersrand			
4. Individual: University of Cape Town	X		
5. Alberview Primary School			
6. Alphabet for Africa, Foundation Phase Literacy Programme			
7. Individual	X		
8. APEK Geography Association	X		
9. Individual: Arcadia School, Pretoria	X	The over emphasis on group work is negative for high achievers and those who struggle – children are rarely given the opportunity to take pride in their own achievements reflecting their individuality. Others “ride n the backs” of group members and discipline in groups is problematic. (2)	Ideological (2) Type One

10.	Individual	X		
11.	Individual	X		
12.	Individual	X		
13.	Individual; Balfour Primary School	X		
14.	Individual	X	“An alarming number of teachers think that if you do group work, you are busy with OBE ... The worst problem we as teachers encountered was how to work together as a team at all times ... we decided to train ourselves in the same way as the training learners received from us in cooperative teaching and learning.” (3)	Training (1)
15.	Individual: Brakvlei Farm School	X		
16.	Individual	X		
17.	Individual			
18.	Bronkhortspruit Primary School			
19.	Individual: University of the Witwatersrand			
20.	Individual	X	Large classes make it impossible to implement group work and OBE. (4)	Implementation (1)
21.	Brownlee Pre-School	X		
22.	Bryandale Primary School	X		
23.	Bryanston Primary School	X		
24.	Individual: University of the Witwatersrand	X		
25.	Individual: Cape Technikon	X		
26.	Director of Catholic	X		

Institute of Education, Kokstad			
27. Cedar College of Education	X	“Most teachers and even educationists seem to believe that pupil involvement means participation in class discussion, group work or ‘discovery learning’ (5)	Training (2)
28. Centre for Education Policy Development, Evaluation and Monitoring (CEPD) with Wits EPU and SAHRC			
29. Director of Centre for Education Policy Development, Evaluation and Management	X		
30. Centre for Educational Research, Evaluation and Policy, University of Durban-Westville			
31. Individual: Ministerial Committee on Religious Education, University of Cape Town	X		
32. Individual: Cliffdale Primary School, Hammarsdale	X		
33. Individual	X		
34. Individual	X		
35. Individual.			
36. Deputy Directors of the Gauteng Institute for Curriculum Development	X	“Many teachers have equated OBE with group work and activity based learning, and lack the knowledge and skill to scaffold and mediate learning ... The reality is that good teaching is difficult and teachers who were perhaps	Training (3)

		not teaching well before cannot be expected to teach well because the curriculum has changed.” (6)	
37. Collegiate High School for Girls, Port Elizabeth	X		
38. Individual	X		
39. Constantia Primary School, Cape Town			
40. COUNT Teacher Trainers			
41. Director: Curriculum Development Project for Arts and Culture, Education and Training			
42. Delta Foundation	X	“ ... what will ultimately emerge under the label of Curriculum 2005, may be so far removed from what was originally conceived under the label of OBE that Curriculum 2005 or “the South African OBE model” would not equate at all with the true OBE ... This is already becoming evident in many of the former Model C secondary schools. Although they may be implementing new concepts such as co-operative learning, continuous testing and projects ... none of these is a defining aspect of OBE, and none requires them to transform any of their traditional ways of operating. The end result will therefore not be OBE.” (7)	Ideological (3) Type Four
43. Department of Education, Free State	X		
44. Department of Education, Pretoria	X	“Inadequate training has led to the formation of misconceptions in teachers such as the notion that OBE equals group work and that as long as group work is done	Training (4)

		in every lesson, the goal has been achieved.” The submissions further states that a result of this emphasis on group work is that very little written work is being done. (8)	
45. Department of Education, Northern Province			
46. Department of Education, North West Province, Curriculum Development and Examinations	X	“The classroom size is not OBE friendly. Group work is a major problem in such situations and continuous assessment in class groups of 45+ learners is an experience alien to educators.” (9)	Training (5)
47. Individual: Department of Education, Sports and Culture, Kokstad	X		
48. Individual: Department of Health, Eastern Cape	X		
49. Individual	X		
50. Des Collier Consulting (in Association with Individual) for the Delta Foundation	X	“The perception created in a top ex-model C school was that, if one was practising group work under the label of cooperative learning ... then one was ‘doing OBE’.” (10)	Training (6)
51. District Training Team, Gauteng	X		
52. Individual: University of the Witwatersrand	X		
53. Individual: The Right to Hope Trust			
54. Durban College of Education	X	“The life skills which are gained from group dynamics are important, but should not be allowed to overshadow teacher input, as seems to happen in many cases.” (11)	Ideological (4) Type Four

55.	Edgewood College of Education	X		
56.	Director: Education Policy Unit, Natal	X		
57.	Education Policy Unit (Wits) with SAHRC and CEPD	X	<p>“We heartily agree with the comments ... about how badly group work is often managed ... and how often it is thought to constitute OBE in and of itself, simply because the outward form resembles ‘learner-centred’ education. Comments were made in our group that the overemphasis of group work ... might derive in part from the task team culture. It may amount to perpetually deferring decision making ... Also... teachers need proper training and support to be facilitators of learning. Learning to group work requires specific instruction in social roles and how these fit into different group-type structures.” (12)</p>	Training (7)
58.	Ekgangala School Governing Bodies Association	X		
59.	Individual: Epworth Primary School	X		
60.	Individual: Environmental Education Association for Southern Africa			
61.	Individual: ESST, Cape Town	X		
62.	Individual	X		
63.	Individual			
64.	Free State Provincial Government, Education	X		

Department			
65. Gauteng Department of Education, Examinations and Assessment			
66. Gauteng Department of Education, District Central 1 (C2)	X		
67. Gauteng Education and Training Council			
68. Individual: University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg			
69. Individual: Centre for Higher Education Studies, Rand Afrikaans University			
70. Giyani College of Education	X	School visits: "classroom populations and attitude of learners would impact negatively on plans to implement co-operative learning strategies." (13)	Implementation (2)
71. Giyani Science Centre			
72. Glenstantia Primary School	X	"The over-emphasis on group work has a negative effect on both the high achiever and the child who struggles academically, or is shy." (14)	Ideological (5) Type Two
73. Individual: Falcon Park Primary School, Chatsworth	X	Group work is an integral part of OBE, but large classes are problematic. (15)	Implementation (3)
74. Individual: University of the Witwatersrand	X		
75. Individual: RADMASTE Centre, University of the Witwatersrand			

76.	Individual: University of Cape Town			
77.	Individual: Futura School	X		
78.	Grove Primary School, Cape Town	X		
79.	Individual			
80.	Individual: Hamilton Primary School, Cape Town	X	Group work is being over-emphasised – weaker children “disappear” in the group. (16)	Ideological (6) Type Two
81.	Individual			
82.	Individual: Independent Schools Association	X		
83.	Individual: Hurlyvale Primary School	X	Disadvantages to OBE in the Foundation Phase: “Noise levels in group work affect those who are not self-disciplined and who are academically challenged ... Learners need to be taught self-discipline before they can work in groups. Grade 1’ still want to play at the beginning of the year and need to learn to work quietly first before they can work in groups* ... Group work does not lend itself to every learning area.” Disadvantages to OBE in Grade 7: “Weak learners are not being challenged to work out problems as they rely on the more accomplished learners. They copy from others.” (17)	Implementation (4)
84.	Independent Examinations Board (IEB)	X		
85.	Inter-departmental Task Team on Human Movement and School Sport			

86.	Irene Primary School	X	“(C2005) has some positive aspects, e.g. ... group work.” (18)	Other
87.	Individual: ISASA, Houghton	X		
88.	Individual: Jeppe High School for Boys, Kensington	X		
89.	Individual: Johannesburg College of Education	X		
90.	Johannesburg College of Education, History Department	X		
91.	Individual	X		
92.	Individual	X	It is impossible to do OBE and group work in big classes. (19)	Implementation (5)
93.	Individual: Johannesburg Technical College	X		
94.	Individual			
95.	Individual: Ministerial Adviser			
96.	Individual			
97.	Individual: St Catherine’s School			
98.	Individual: University of the Witwatersrand	X		
99.	Individual: Fort Hare Distance Education Project			
100.	Individual: Kleinste Primere Skool, Vrystaat	X		
101.	Individual: Harlequin Tutorial College	X		

102. Individual: Vivlia Publishers and Booksellers			
103. Individual: KwaZulu Natal Department of Education and Culture			
104. Laddsworth Primary School	X		
105. Laerskool Gustav Preller	X		
106. Laerskool Helderkruijn, Music Teachers			
107. Laerskool Kenmare	X		
108. Laerskool Randhart	X		
109. Laerskool Rapportryer, Randgate	X	Group work in the Foundation Phase is impractical and impossible. (20)	Implementation (6)
110. Individual: Lamlile Primary School, Bethal	X	The submission is positive about the effects of C2005: learners are taught in teams, engage in group discussions, learn to share knowledge and answers, therefore, C2005 "is a winner". (21)	Ideological (7) Type Three
111. Learning for Sustainability Programme	X		
112. Individual: The Teacher Trust			
113. Link Community Development	X	"Educators are ... predominantly positive towards OBE and C2005 in terms of methodological change – hence you witness group work ..." "In Foundation Phase classrooms, furniture was arranged in groups. ... however, the seating arrangements rarely lead to real group work – most teachers lack the skill and training to use group work effectively." (22)	Training (8)
114. Individual: Living Waters	X		

Private School, Groblersdal			
115. Individual	X		
116. Individual: Vista, Bloemfontein			
117. Individual: Human Sciences Research Council			
118. Marekolodi Primary School			
119. Mashemong Primary School	X		
120. MASTEC (Mathematics, Science and Technology Education College, Diane Grayson, Academic Vice-Rector	X		
121. Individual: University of the North			
122. Individual	X		
123. Individual	X		
124. Individual			
125. Individual: University of the Witwatersrand	X		
126. Individual: University of the Witwatersrand,	X		
127. Individual	X		
128. Individual	X		
129. Individual: University of the Witwatersrand	X	“Since OBE places a great deal of emphasis on cooperative learning strategies, it is crucial that facilitators and educators acquire the knowledge, skills, and values implicit in cooperative learning.” The	Training (9)

		<p>recommendation is made that teachers should work and teach in groups or teams to learn from each other, and use cooperative strategies in staff meetings before applying them in class.</p> <p>“Educators ... fail to understand the significance of group work in an outcomes-based system. They attempt to restructure their teaching and learning situations to accommodate group work but unfortunately use it in ways that are inappropriate to learner development ...” (23)</p>	
130. Individual			
131. Individual: The Teacher Trust			
132. Individual			
133. Individual			
134. Individual: University of Natal, Durban			
135. Molteno Project	X		
136. Individual: Department of Environmental Affairs	X		
137. Individual: Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand			
138. Individual	X	<p>“Many schools are still overcrowded. C2005 requires small groupings to make discussion conducive to participation. Why should we pressurise implementation of C2005 when we know that we are not yet having small and manageable schools?” (24)</p>	Implementation (7)
139. Individual	X		

140. Individual			
141. Individual			
142. Individual			
143. N5 District, 'Some Farm School Teachers'	X		
144. National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA)	X	"... the perception must not be created that large classes are not a problem in the OBE classroom and that the problem can be solved by groupwork and peer teaching. It would be essential to re-examine and be critical of these kinds of assumptions. One of the important ways in which OBE is different from the present system is that in the past 'equity' meant treating everyone the same and that the class was a group. To make OBE real, equity now needs to be seen as treating everybody differently. The focus is now on ensuring that the individual performs the best he/she can. Groupwork is a useful strategy but it is not the only or full answer for transforming education ... and group work (depending on what the learners are doing) does not necessarily make it OBE." (25)	Ideological (8) Type Four
145. National Environmental Education Programme of the Department of Education and the Environmental Education Association of South Africa	X		
146. National Union of Music Educators	X		
147. Individual: University of the Witwatersrand	X		

148.	Northdale Primary School	X	Learner centred education is impossible in large (35+) classes. (26)	Implementation (8)
149.	North West Province, Directorate: Professional Development and Subject Advisory Services			
150.	Northern Cape Education Development Trust			
151.	Northern Province Department of Education	X		
152.	National Union of Educators	X	Group work and the assessment of group work are problematic in large classes. (27)	Implementation (9)
153.	Individual: Northdale Primary School			
154.	Director of Ntataise Trust, Viljoenskroon	X		
155.	Individual: Odendaalsrus Education District Office			
156.	Individual			
157.	Individual			
158.	Individual:			
159.	Individual: University of the Witwatersrand			
160.	CEO of ORT-STEP Institute, Wendywood	X		
161.	Individual: Outeniqua Primary School, George	X	It has to be remembered that not all educators have received training on how to implement group work. (28)	Training (10)
162.	Individual: IEB			
163.	Individual: SAILI (NGO),			

Mowbray			
164. Pestalozzi Trust, Queenswood	X		
165. Individual: University of the Witwatersrand	X		
166. Individual	X	“Teachers need a lot more follow-up training sessions in implementing group work, especially handling it in bigger classes.” (29)	Training (11)
167. Individual: Pinehurst Primary School			
168. Individual: Johannesburg College of Education	X		
169. Project for Research into Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA)	X		
170. Prospectus Novus Skool, Wonderboompoort	X	ELSEN learners cannot do group work. (30)	Implementation (10)
171. PROTEC (Programme for Technological Careers)	X		
172. Publishers’ Association of South Africa (PASA)			
173. Individual: Gauteng Legislature			
174. Individual: RADMASTE Centre, University of the Witwatersrand	X		
175. Individual: Rand Afrikaans University,			
176. Rand Afrikaans University,			

History Department			
177. Individual: Rand Afrikaans University, Department of Geology	X		
178. Individual	X		
179. Individual			
180. Individual: JJ Primary School			
181. Individual: Rhodes University, Department of Geography,	X		
182. Rhodes University, MED English Second Language Class	X		
183. Rhodes University Language and Education Research Group and Institute for the Study of English in Africa	X		
184. Individual: Rondebosch Boys' High School			
185. Individual			
186. Individual: SANTS, Menlo Park, Pretoria	X		
187. Schools Development Unit, University of Cape Town			
188. Science Curriculum Trust, Wits			
189. Scientific and Industrial Leadership Initiative (SAILI)	X	Over crowded classrooms are not a conducive environment for co-operative learning "and other	Implementation (11)

		strategies to be employed for effective OBE teaching.” (31)	
190. Individual: Sentrale Volksskool	X		
191. Individual	X		
192. Individual: Setlhare Science Curriculum Trust, Wits University	X		
193. Individual: School of Education, University of Cape Town			
194. Individual 1	X	Classrooms are over crowded and “group work is hard to implement where there is no seating space.” (32)	Implementation (12)
195. Individual	X		
196. Individual: Department of Culture, Bisho			
197. Sol Plaatje Primary School, Mmabatho, North West	X		
198. Individual: South African College of Teacher Education (SACTE)	X		
199. Individual: South African College of Teacher Education (SACTE)	X		
200. South African Democratic Teachers’ Union	X	This submission traces the roots of group work in OBE back to People’s Education for People’s Power that “had to instil certain democratic values such as co-operative work and active participation.” The submission also consists of a training manual that	Ideological (9) Type Three

		the union used to train its members. In the manual, the OBE-approach to teaching and learning is described as consisting of teamwork, problem solving, socio-drama, role-play, simulation, etc, because these techniques enhance human rights and democracy. (33)	
201. South African Historical Society			
202. South African Human Rights Commission with Wits EPU and CEPD	X		
203. Director: South African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE)	X		
204. Individual: South African National Council for the Blind	X		
205. Director: South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)			
206. Individual	X		
207. Springvale Primary School			
208. Individual: St Andrew's Language Project.	X	Black teachers have bought into the spirit of cooperative teaching, but they lack the training to move beyond a superficial group work model. (34)	Training (12)
209. Stakeholders' Workshop Project, Gauteng Institute for Curriculum Development			
210. Chairman: Stirling High School Governing Body	X		
211. Suid Afrikaanse Onderwys	X	The submission mentions six aspects that should receive	Training (13)

Unie		attention in the training of educators, principals, etc. One of the six is group work and cooperative learning. (35)	
212. Individual: SWEP Project, Doornfontein	X		
213. Individual: Joint Education Trust, Johannesburg	X		
214. Technology Association, Western Province Prep School	X		
215. The Teacher Trust	X	In the four schools described to analyse the variations of implementation of C2005, one of the five main criteria to establish if a school or teacher is pursuing an appropriate implementation of C2005, is whether the class is organised into groups, followed by a description of how group work is practised. (36)	Implementation (13)
216. Individual	X		
217. Toyota Teach Primary School Project			
218. Individual: Toyota Teach	X	Group work is problematic with large classes. (37)	Implementation (14)
219. Individual: Truida Kestel Primary School, Bethlehem	X		
220. Individual			
221. Individual	X		
222. Individual: UBU College, Witbank			
223. University of Cape Town	X		
224. Individual: University of Cape Town, History Department	X		

225. University of the Free State, Faculty of Humanities			
226. University of Natal, Durban, School of Education			
227. University of Pretoria, Department of Music, South African Critical Friends	X		
228. University of Pretoria, Faculty of Education			
229. University of Pretoria, Faculty of Science	X		
230. Individual: University of Pretoria			
231. Individual: University of Stellenbosch	X	Teachers have to be trained over time to teach History in a learner-centred way, instead of the Big Bang approach (reflecting on the efficacy of the training before C2005 was implemented). (38)	Training (14)
232. University of Stellenbosch, Education Faculty	X		
233. Individual: University of the Western Cape	X	“OBE has led to the valorisation of everyday or indigenous knowledge over formal or school knowledge, of oral work over written and reading work, of group work over individual work and of activity learning over expository learning. There is an urgent need to instil a balance of teaching styles an to think of learning-centred education instead of learner-centred vs teacher-centred.” (39)	Ideological (10) Type Four
234. Individual: University of the Western Cape	X		

		<p>learning style to a cooperative learning style before much of the rest of the new curriculum can be even considered.” (41)</p> <p>Educationist 3 “During interviews with teachers (class observations 1996-1998) some of them stated that the use of group work was one of the key features of C2005 which they had heard about. The effectiveness of group work varied ... but one of the most prevalent features was that while learners did actively participate in groups, most of the lesson focus was directed to group interaction. This resulted ... in less of the actual science concepts being engaged with by either the teacher or the learners. Instead, the ‘form’ of group work became the focus of the lesson, learners wrote little or nothing down, and the teacher took a backseat when the learners reported back on their discussions. The overall result of such group interactions was that while learner-learner discussions were promoted, the crucial mediation role of the teachers was lacking.” (42)</p>	Training (17)
238. University of the Witwatersrand, History Department	X		
239. Individual: University of South Africa (UNISA), Faculty of Education	X	The OBE course for teachers is structured around the seven Critical Outcomes (CO2 deals with working effectively in groups). (43)	Ideological (11) Type Three
240. Individual	X		

241. Individual	X		
242. Individual: University of Pretoria	X		
243. Individual			
244. Individual	X	She comments on the fact that children work more in groups now. Those who never used to work before still don't work, but they get the average mark of the group – which they don't deserve. (44)	Ideological (12) Type One
245. Individual	X		
246. Victoria West High School	X		
247. Individual: Vista University, Bloemfontein			
248. Individual: Vista University, Bloemfontein	X		
249. Individual: Joint Education Trust			
250. Individual	X		
251. Individual: Westerford High School	X		
252. Western Cape Education Department			
253. Western Cape Primary Science Programme (PSP)	X		
254. Westfields Primary School, Carletonville	X	The submission mentions “group work” as an example of terminology that was simple and worked well in Model C schools. (45)	Implementation (15)
255. Individual: Learning Outcomes Facilitator, Lyndrust	X	Classes are noisy because different groups are working at a different pace or at different pieces of an overall task. . . “... and OBE approach to learning is most beneficial to	Ideological (13) Type Two

		learners who come from a well-ordered home environment or one in which the learner has ... support.” (46)	
256. Individual: University of the Witwatersrand	X		
257. Individual			
258. Individual: Rhodes University			

University of Cape Town

Submissions not listed on the website, but made available to consult

Person or institution, represented by a short code	Submission present?	Extract or summaries of opinions regarding group work	Category
B.1 Individual (Anonymous)	X	It infringes on the rights of brilliant learners who are held back by less brilliant learners because they work in groups and because OBE sees all learners as equal. (47)	Ideological (14) Type One
B.2 Benoni Principal's Association	X		
B.3 Delta Park School	X		
B.4 Individual: National Department of Education	X	<p>“Discussion documents which were generated in the period prior to the general election of 27 April 1004 emphasised the notion of a curriculum which is based on the principles of cooperation, critical thinking and social responsibility, and which empowers individuals to participate in all aspects of society. This could best be achieved by a national curriculum that provides a general education based on integrating academic and vocational skills ... Of the models available, Transformational outcomes-based education was considered the most appropriate for the South African situation, because it is a collaborative, flexible, transdisciplinary, outcomes-based, open-system with an empowerment-oriented approach to learning ... <u>In transformational outcomes-based education the focus is on learning by doing, learning how to learn, learning through experiential group processes and using critical, contextual givens for analysis.</u>” (48)</p>	Ideological (15) Type Three

B.5 Hillcrest Primêr	X		
B.6 Individual	X		
B.7 Laerskool Jim Fouché	X	Group work is problematic for two reasons: space and discipline. (49)	Implementation (16)
B.8 Individual	X	Group work is happening everywhere, but it is not effective. Even though it might be more appropriate in some cases, teachers are scared to use similar-ability groups because of the DOE's emphasis on mixed-ability groups. (50)	Implementation (17)
B.9 Individual	X		
B.10 Individual	X		
B.11 Document in pile of submissions entitled: "Synthesis of written submissions on C2005", containing references to documents that were not in the pile.	X	<p>"The evaluation report (Dutch Embassy, 1999:30) found two forms of 'group work'; one which advocates 'large groups that are kept quietly busy' and another which views it as 'cooperative learning and supportive exercise'. The schools visited appeared to have misunderstood the concept of teacher as 'facilitator'. Facilitation seemed to have meant less work for the teachers and more talking by learners." (51)</p> <p>In the chapter entitled "Emerging trends" 17 trends are identified. The eleventh trend is: "The understanding of crucial C2005 concepts and processes (like integration, group work, continuous assessment, performance standards) differ from person to person and these individual interpretations affect practice in terms of what is regarded as appropriate and adequate." (52)</p>	<p>Implementation (18)</p> <p>Training (18)</p> <p>Training (19)</p>

		<p>“In the group interviews we got teachers to answer the question: ‘What has changed in your classrooms since you have implemented OBE/C2005?’. Generally, the responses point to changes in classroom arrangements such as group work and learner-centred activities. However, it is often the case that the implementation of these concepts show evidence of an embrace of the form rather than the content of the ideas.” (53)</p>	
B.12 Individual	X	<p>Reflecting on what she has seen during classroom observations: Every lesson taught has group discussions, but it is chaotic. Learners are not fairly assessed, because teachers sit at their tables in the front of the class and let the pupils work on their own. (54)</p>	Implementation (19)
B.13 Individual	X	<p>“... educators in poor rural schools are expected to do group work ...” (55)</p>	Implementation (20)
B.14 Individual	X		
B.15 Individual	X		
B.16 Individual	X		
B.17 Individual, working at the Western Cape education department	X	<p>“A pattern is emerging about aspects that are confusing educators: ... There has been an over emphasis on oral and group work which has led to a possible neglect of written and individual work ... Effective facilitation of group work needs attention.” (56)</p>	Training (20)