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**University of Cape Town**

**Department of Education**

**Colour-Conscious Or Colour-Blind? How A Group Of Minority Xhosa  
Learners Experience And Make Sense Of The 'Colour Of Race' In A  
Predominantly Coloured School In Mitchells Plain, Cape Town.**

**Minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree  
Master of Philosophy in Education**

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**September 2009**

## PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to give thanks firstly to my heavenly Father for His guidance and wisdom bestowed upon me towards completing this study.

I wish to thank my supervisor, Associate Professor Melissa Steyn, for her invaluable expertise and guidance throughout this process.

To the staff and learners at AH who participated in this study, my sincere thanks and appreciation; it is your permission and participation that allowed me to conduct this study. Without you, it would not have been possible.

A special thanks to my children, Nicole and Gerrard, for your unselfish love and inspiration during my studies. Candice, your assistance into the early hours of the morning is acknowledged. To Emile and Nicole thank you for your patience, and sometimes impatience, when assisting me with my computer skills.

To Nuroo Ismail and her team at the UCT Knowledge Commons, your assistance made this thesis come together. Thank you very much.

One of life's greatest blessings is sincere friends. Thank you to all my very special friends and family for your prayers and words of encouragement throughout this amazing journey.

## ABSTRACT

This study represents qualitative research on the experiences of inclusion and exclusion of a group of the minority Xhosa learners at a predominantly Coloured secondary school in Mitchells Plain, in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2004 and 2006.

The South African Schools Act (1996) and the National Curriculum Policy document (2005), both underpinned by the Constitution of South Africa (1996), envision an education system free of any discrimination. This study uses a social justice framework to focus on how racial construction includes and excludes. It also outlines and discusses the three main models that the education ministry has worked with in its endeavour to achieve its transformative agenda.

This research is a longitudinal study conducted in the qualitative paradigm. Data was collected by means of semi-structured individual questionnaires, individual and group informal interviews and participant observation. While the aim of the study was to gain the Xhosa learners' perspectives on the processes of inclusion and exclusion, it includes a response from the principal and five teachers' perspectives, to balance the study and add validity.

Permission to conduct this research was obtained from the Western Cape Education Department. The principal of the site gave consent for the research to take place, and written consent was obtained from the teacher participants and the parents of the learner respondents.

The data was analysed and presented according to the responses of the participants to the research questions, using grounded theory. The findings revealed that the Xhosa learners at the site still experience marginalisation, fourteen years after democracy, with racism being the most prominent form of injustice.

This study recommends that the teachers undergo training in social justice education by the Western Cape Education Department.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Orientation

I have been an educator for twenty-nine years and have experienced the oppressive, discriminatory, unfair and separatist educational practices of the former Apartheid government. I have also been fortunate to witness this evil system being replaced by one with new democratic ideals, which through our Constitution (1996) envisages equality and equal opportunity for all its citizens, irrespective of race,<sup>1</sup> culture, language, ethnicity, gender and class. The aim of this new dispensation is “to eliminate destructive divisions and forge a concrete unity in diversity...the construction of a national identity” (Abebe Zegeye 2001: 344). As an educator, I am in a position to be a role player in this vision for our country.

The school at which I had been an educator for twenty- four years and where I carried out my research, Advance High (a pseudonym) in Mitchells Plain, is a previously classified Coloured school that has enrolled Xhosa mother-tongue learners since 1995. In 2004, there were 53 Xhosa learners enrolled out of a school population of 1200 and in 2006, there were 33. I will explain these demographics when I contextualise my research.

As a teacher, I observed that integration between these learners and the Coloured learners, in most instances, does not take place. The Xhosa-speaking learners congregate in front of the school building in the mornings before school starts and sit together in groups during intervals. In their groups, they speak Xhosa to each other. In the classroom, if given the option, they will form a group on their own, for group work, depending on how many they are in a class. In addition, when the school goes on an outing, most of these learners will aggregate and move around on their own.

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<sup>1</sup> Given that racial categories are all social constructs, I have not used inverted commas around the words race, Coloured and Black, assuming that the reader understands that these are not used in any essentialist manner. I have used the categorisations of Black, African, Coloured, Indian and White, as these are recognised by the post-Apartheid government for the purposes of redress and still, to a large extent, shape people's experiences in post-Apartheid South Africa.

In my teaching experience, I reasoned that because the Xhosa learners were quiet, respectful and in most cases sat passively in the classroom, they were coping academically, socially and emotionally. I thought that because they were enrolled at the school that I needed to accommodate, treat and teach them like I did the Coloured learners. I assumed that because the Xhosa learners had chosen to be at a Coloured school, they were coping and were making the best of the opportunity for their betterment. At the time, I did not question my teaching practice because they had made the conscious choice to attend a school that offered English as their language of learning, Afrikaans as their additional language and did not offer Xhosa at all.

It was only when I did research for a paper in the Intercultural Communication module of my coursework (towards this master's degree) for which I had a few of the Xhosa learners fill in a questionnaire and participate in informal interviews, that I became aware that there were many social, emotional, psychological and educational issues behind their façade of assimilation. The findings of this preliminary research as well as my exposure to the literature in the Intercultural Communication course, together with the other modules in my coursework, conscientised and challenged me as an educator.

## **1.2 My Challenge**

I was confronted with a challenge: Do I ignore the information gathered from my research or do I undertake a more focused and structured research? I decided on the latter. A major motive for this decision was that as an educator, I have an opportunity to be a change agent – to be a role player in ensuring that the principles of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (C2005), which is underpinned by the Constitution (1996) are achieved, namely, that all learners and educators are empowered to become caring, competent and contributing citizens in an inclusive, changing and diverse society, irrespective of race, culture, language, gender or religion.

## **1.3 The Constitution**

The Preamble to the Constitution of South Africa (1996), which underpins the National Education Policy Act (1995) and the South African Schools Act (1996), provides the basis

for transformation and development in the post-Apartheid era. The revised National Curriculum Statement Policy document, stipulates that the aims of the Constitution are to:

- heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and human rights;
- improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person;
- lay the foundation for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law;
- build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

The fundamental values of the Constitution, which must be reflected in the Curriculum are:

- Democracy
- Social justice and equity
- Non racism and non sexism
- Ubuntu (human dignity)
- An open society
- Accountability (Responsibility)
- Respect
- The Rule of Law
- Reconciliation

To help achieve the transformed curricular aims, The White Paper on Education and Training (1995) introduced a new methodological framework called Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in 1995 (de Clerq 1997: 156-159 and Tihanyi 2006: 51). OBE strives to enable all learners to develop to their full potential. It is learner-centred and activity based with the teacher taking up the role of mediator. The critical and developmental outcomes of this methodology envisage learners who are able to, among others:

- 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;
- be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts.

The RNCS adopts an inclusive approach specifying the need to “create awareness of the relationship between social justice, human rights, a healthy environment and inclusivity.” Learners are encouraged to develop knowledge and understanding of the rich diversity of South Africa, including the cultural, religious and ethnic components of this diversity. The Curriculum Statement also aspires to produce learners who act in the interest of society based on respect for democracy, equality and human dignity life and social justice. It acknowledges that all educators are “key contributors to the transformation of education in South Africa.

My research explored to what extent these policies are being experienced on the ground by a group of Xhosa-speaking learners at Advance High by examining their experiences.

## **1.4 Context**

The following section situates Advance High both in the broader and in the narrower socio-historical-political context. This background I believe will provide a better understanding of the ethos of the school at which I carried out my research in South Africa.

### **1.4.1 The broader socio-historical-political context**

In this section, I give a brief outline of the socio-historical-political context. I have divided the discussion around this topic into two time epochs, namely pre-1994 and post-1994. I have done this because 1994 marked our historic first democratic elections.

#### **1.4.1.1 Pre 1994**

Concepts like race, culture and ethnicity, which are relevant to my study, were not perceived in the aboriginal South African social context, but were constructed with the advent of colonial subjugation and Apartheid oppression (Eyber, Dyer and Verfild 1997; Dubow 1995; Omi and Winant 1994; Winant 2000: 181-189; Appiah and Gutman 1996; and Banton 2000: 51-63).

Eyber, Dyer and Versfeld (1997) and Dubow (1995) discuss in detail how colonial powers used the theory of “scientific racism”, with its assumption that distinct races existed and that the capacities and destinies of racial groups were biologically determined. These essentialist

ideas of race were formalised in the Apartheid laws of the ruling White Nationalist Party from 1948, which divided the South African population into a racial hierarchy. The four official race groups were Europeans, Indians, Coloureds and Africans, in this order of privilege (Tihanyi 2006: 36).

Education was one sector where the oppressiveness of this hierarchical structure was evidenced very starkly, especially through the unfair and unequal distribution of education funding which was based on race classification. An example of this unfair practice was in 1953 when the per capita expenditure on White students was seventeen times the amount spent on African students (Tihanyi 2006: 46). In 1988/89, the official amount allocated per learner per annum was as follows: Whites - 2882 rand, Indians – 2077 rand, Coloureds 1221 rand and Black Africans 656 rand. Even though the gap in 1989 between White learners and African learners had narrowed to just over four times and has narrowed more with the new funding policy, gaps continue to exist in terms of qualities of facilities and standards (Tihanyi 2006:47).

The government succeeded in keeping the racial groups apart by creating separate laws to govern each group's education. Education policies such as The Bantu Education Act of 1953, the Coloured Persons Education Act of 1963, The Indian Education Act of 1967 and The National Education Policy Act of 1967 for Whites (Tihanyi 2006: 47) caused division, tension and mistrust amongst these groups.

In 1983, because of political stirrings and violent anti-Apartheid protests, especially from the African population, the Apartheid government endeavoured to gain the acquiescence of the Indian and Coloured groups by introducing the tri-cameral government system. This gave a certain amount of legislative freedom to these groups. It gave Coloured political leaders more control over Coloured education. Coloured education fell under the Department of Education and Culture, House of Representatives. On the other hand, African education fell under the Department of Education and Training but Africans were not given legislative freedom. African education was still controlled by the White oppressive government (Kruss 1997: 92).

By the 1980s, the pillars that upheld Apartheid structures were crumbling because of internal and external (international) pressure. The early 1990s saw anti-Apartheid groups like the African National Congress (ANC) unbanned and the discriminatory laws repealed.



#### **1.4.1.2 Post 1994**

1994 heralded in a new democratic dispensation, which witnessed the collapse of the 19 education departments and their restructuring into one national Ministry of Education and nine provincial departments (Harber 2001; Fataar 1997: 78). In 1997, The Department of Education introduced Curriculum 2005 (C2005)<sup>2</sup> as part of its transformative agenda. This new model, which is envisioned to be liberating, nation building, learner centred and outcomes based, would replace the racist, rote learning, anti-critical model under Apartheid which perpetuated race, class, gender and ethnic divisions (Soudien 2007: 44; Greenstein 1997: 128-132). Many viewed these changes in educational policies as a response to a changing political and economic situation and not a fundamental shift in ideology (Dolby 2001). There are those who are of the opinion that the structure, function and processes of education introduced in the 1990s had been influenced to a large degree by an “emergent international policy discourse” with insufficient local consultation or research (Kallaway 1997: introduction).

There is no doubt that education has become an important focus in building a non-racial South Africa. The new education policies which include equal access, equal opportunity and equal spending on all students is a vision that is evidenced in the tenets of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the South African Schools Act of 1996. However, these changes have brought their own problems and led to new divisions (Eyber, Dyer and Versfeld 1997; Kallaway 1997: 44-46; Fataar 1997: 68-71). I will refer to some of these problems that are being experienced at the site of my research later in this dissertation.

#### **1.4.2 The narrower socio-historical-political context**

Advance High was one of the first Coloured high schools built in Mitchells Plain on the Cape Flats, Cape Town in the Western Cape. This Coloured working-class area was established in the 1970s for thousands of families displaced by the Apartheid Group Areas Act of 1957. Advance High opened in 1977 enrolling learners from the area – all Coloured learners belonging to the Christian and Muslim faiths. The staff was predominantly Coloured,

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<sup>2</sup> The C2005 was revised as a result of a decision by the Council of Education Ministers and Cabinet to strengthen and consolidate it, and became known as the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). It is currently known as the National Curriculum Statement, but since the latest changes were instituted while this study was in progress, the educational reform will still be referred to as the RNCS.

(Christian and Muslim) with a few White teachers who were allowed to teach in non-White schools.

A pertinent point is made by Carrim and Soudien (1999: 162-163), who state that during the Apartheid years most Coloured schools in the Western Cape made little distinction between learners classified as Indian and Coloured. However, the Apartheid government disallowed any African child from enrolling in a non-African school, consistently making Africans vulnerable to marginalisation or “othering”. I explain the concept of “othering” in Chapter 2.

With regard to the parents of many of the learners at Advance High, it may be inferred that many of them would have supported the National Party in the first democratic election in 1994, a vote that contributed to the 65% Coloured vote for the National Party in the Western Cape. Apartheid-indoctrinated fears of Black domination, distrust of African administrative competence, loss of relative status in the racial hierarchy and competition for jobs and housing were in a large part responsible for the Coloured support (Finnegan and Adam 1994) cited in Zeyege (2001: 337). On the other hand, a huge proportion of the support gained by the ANC came from the Black African community. A large percentage of that vote came from the Xhosa group.

This political dichotomy was witnessed again in the 1999 and 2004 general elections, even though the Coloured vote in Mitchells Plain had swung away from the New National Party towards the Democratic Alliance in 2004. This voting pattern was repeated in the local elections in 2006 (Phillip 2006: 1) and in the general elections in 2009 (Moss 2009: 5). It is important to point out that it was the Tafelsig by-election (in Mitchells Plain) that swung the balance of power from the ANC to the Democratic Alliance multiparty on 7 June 2006. I included this information because Advance High currently draws a large learner population from the suburb of Tafelsig. The ramifications of the tension between pro-ANC and anti-ANC support can still be felt at Advance High amongst the learners fourteen years after democracy.

Since 1995, when deracialisation was formally decreed through the National Education Policy Act (1995), Advance High has witnessed the yearly enrolment of a minority of Xhosa mother-tongue learners. Most of these learners come from the Black townships and informal settlements surrounding Mitchells Plain. The informal settlements mushroomed with the dismantling of the Influx Control Laws, thereby allowing rural people to settle in the city of

Cape Town. Many parents in these areas were of the perception that the education in Black township schools was sub-standard. This perception was the result of official neglect and the politicization of education in these areas (Carrim & Soudien 1999: 163). Many parents choose to send their children to non-African schools, like Advance High, to receive what they perceive to be a better education.

However, fourteen years after democracy and the desegregation of schools, it seems that there is no urgency to re-examine institutional structures, priorities, policies and practices at Advance High. Many teachers and management continue as if nothing has changed and as if the Xhosa learners simply have to adjust to the school's practices because they have made the choice to be there. This added to my confusion because many of the (now all Coloured) educators currently teaching at Advance High were teaching at the school during the 1980s, the "struggle" years, the years of boycotts and strikes with the call for "liberation in education". The school became a site of contestation and protest and many of the learners and teachers heeded the call for 'People's Education' (Harber 2001). Why then would educators, who fought for equality, perpetuate the status quo?

Like me, it seems very few teachers actually thought about the implications of the opening of schools to all racial groups. None of the teachers was given training in diversity to make us aware of the challenges that these Xhosa learners faced or of the need for us, the educators, to change our teaching practices. Also, management was not prepared in any way by the education department for this social integration and change in demographics (sourced from my data collection). Kruss (1997: 103) makes the argument that in the Western Cape there was no coherent plan put in place to deal with access to schools and no real commitment to the values of equality and redress. The possibility exists, that like I did not question, many other teachers, schools and even education departments did not pay serious attention to the implications of what it meant to open schools to all racial groups.

The concern of this dissertation is how such a scenario may be affecting the small minority of learners in one educational setting fourteen years into democracy. At this point, I deem it necessary to mention some of the other challenges that the educators of Advance High faced at the time when schools were opened to all racial groups. As part of the government's redistribution process in 1996 and because of a diminishing annual education budget (Kallaway 1997: 44) almost half of the educators at Advance High had been rationalised:

from 62 educators in 1994 to 32 in 2006 even though the learner population has remained around 1200. This has led to class sizes increasing to 1:40(+), clearly showing the irony of the government's 'right-sizing' policy which was set nationally at 1:35 for secondary schools (Harber 2001). This has resulted in an increased workload for educators at schools like AH, because the School Governing Body (SGB)<sup>3</sup> was unable to employ additional teachers. These policies invoked anger and disillusionment in many educators resulting in many (including teachers at Advance High) participating in protest marches and demonstrations (Kallaway 1997: 44-45).

In terms of the new funding policy, the Norms and Standards Policy (2000), the Western Cape Education Department has categorised schools from quintile 1 to quintile 5. The number 1 classifies the poorest schools and 5 the richest. Schools are allocated funds according to these categories with the lowest category receiving the highest government funding. Advance High has been classified a quintile 5 school, which alludes to the premise that its learners come from an affluent area. According to the school's admissions register this is not the case. Almost half of the learner population come from socio-economic disadvantaged areas like Tafelsig and Beacon Valley in Mitchells Plain.

A brief description of the school's physical appearance highlights some of the challenges posed by its context. In the 1990s, the buildings were cordoned off with barbed wire fencing to secure the learners' safety at school. The school experienced an increase in vandalism, break-ins, loitering, assaults on learners on the school's premise and interference from outside criminal elements. When I returned to the school to do follow up data collection in 2006, this was still the situation, but the school had employed a security guard to man the entrances, and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) Safer Schools Project had employed two additional security staff.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In keeping with the democratic ideals of the Constitution (1996), the South African Schools Act (1996) ensured that school governing structures were decentralised. Each school elects its own School Governing Body (SGB), made up of democratically elected parents, teachers and learners, who see to the governance of that school, including the appointment and remuneration of extra teachers over and above the WCED's staff establishment.

<sup>4</sup> The Integrated Quality Management System Directorate: Quality Assurance was established in 2005. It is tasked with implementing systems for the support of educators and institutions. This is done through a process called "whole school evaluation", which had not yet taken place at my site during the time of my data collection. [wced.wcape.gov.za](http://wced.wcape.gov.za)

All the afore-mentioned shapes the environment, which the young Xhosa learners, who are mostly from neighbouring township areas, enter when they come to Advance High.

This led me to ask the questions I asked in this thesis.

The main question being: What are the Xhosa mother tongue learners' experiences of race in a predominantly Coloured high school on the Cape Flats in 2004 and 2006? This main question was further refined into the following sub questions:

- i. What experiences do the Xhosa mother tongue learners have of racial discrimination?
- ii. To what extent do they identify experiences of racial discrimination?
- iii. To what extent do these learners report feeling included and excluded?
- iv. What do these learners themselves say they aspire to in terms of their positioning within the school?
- v. Do teachers reflect consciously on their practice and how discriminatory practices may be present?
- vi. What pedagogical practices and school organisation may contribute to racial marginalisation?

## **1.5 Aims of my research**

- i. To assess whether Black African learners at Advance High are given the learning environment free of racial disadvantage, so that they can achieve their full potential;
- ii. To assess the extent to which Black African learners feel accepted and included in the school environment;
- iii. To understand why Black African learners self-segregate, a phenomenon I had previously observed as a teacher in the school;
- iv. To assess the extent to which teachers are conscious or not, of potentially exclusionary practices;
- v. To reflect upon how pedagogy and school organisation might be adjusted to create practices that are more inclusive.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

The overarching framework of this chapter is a social justice framework, which looks at inclusion through addressing issues around racism, sexism, classism, ethnicity, language, ableism, religion and other forms of difference. However, this study works with the understanding that social justice is a very broad framework and therefore, guided by the research questions, will focus on how racial construction includes and excludes. Issues around language, sexism and classism, are discussed to a much lesser degree, and only in relation to their impact on the racial dynamics interrogated.

The Department of Education (DoE) has looked at three education models in its attempt to attain its transformative goals. The first section of this chapter will discuss three education models, namely, the assimilationist model, the multiculturalist model and the anti-racist model firstly in the broader overseas context, followed by the South African application. The discussion of these education models will be followed by a discussion of perspectives on the theories of social justice education and the associated concepts of critical pedagogy, developmental theories and culturally responsive teaching. The latter aspects are included to examine the capacity that social justice education has to allow every learner to reach their full potential irrespective of their race and other social identities, that is, to bring about real change. The chapter will end with a discussion of research done on transformation in schools in South Africa with emphasis on previously classified Coloured high schools in the Western Cape.

Former President, Thabo Mbeki, quoted in “Freedom from racism – a fundamental human right”, shows that race is still a key marker, that racism is still prevalent in South Africa and that the Constitutional aim to attain a non-racial and just society, remains a challenge.

[T]he challenge we should debate honestly and fearlessly, is the scourge of racism that permeates so much of the fabric of our society. The favourite words to close down and prohibit any discussion on racism in our country are, “Don’t play the race card.”...racism remains a daily feature of our lives, a demon that must be exorcised, precisely to achieve national reconciliation... if we are to achieve the constitutional imperative of a non-racial society, as we must.

This study looks at how social justice education can assist in achieving the constitutional goal of eliminating social injustice. In social justice education it is imperative that the history of oppression, including racism, be explored not only to understand how the patterns of oppression are construed, and why they are so pervasive, but also to see that oppression is not the inevitable outcome of historical processes but “fragile conditions capable of transformation” (Weil 1998: 235; Bell 1997: 6; Tihanyi 2006: 113; Tatum 1997: 39-42; Adams et al. 1997: 6; Nieto 2008: 5). It is the task of theory to explain how and why concepts such as race and racism and other forms of injustice have come to play such a fundamental role in structuring the social and political worlds (Omi and Winant 1994: 55; Bell 1997: 4). South Africa’s history is deeply implicated in both developing and giving expression to the understanding of race as biologically determined categories that can, and should, determine the status of groups of people relative to each other.

This thesis, however, works with the assumption that race is a social construction with enormous real world effects. A full exposition of the evolution of race thinking is beyond the scope of this thesis, but for the sake of completeness, a brief exposition is included as Appendix 1.

## **2.2 The Western Cape**

The Western Cape carries the weight of the history of race in the configurations of White, Coloured and Black African communities. The demographics in the Western Cape are different to the other eight provinces. According to the 1997 census the general average of the other eight provinces is 79% Black African, 9,5% White, 9% Coloured, 2.5% Indian compared to the Western Cape where the demographic spread is 27% Black African, 18,5% White, 54% Coloured and 1% Indian (Tihanyi 2006:16).

The salient point for this research is the high concentration of Coloureds compared to the lower concentration of Black Africans in the Western Cape. Residential segregation is still a reality in Cape Town. Whites still control most of the wealth. Coloured and Black African workers compete for jobs. In chapter one I discussed the political support of the majority of the Coloureds for opposition parties of the ruling ANC. This can be seen to reflect a lack of

trust in Black African leadership, which is a legacy of Apartheid's divide-and-rule strategy. Conversely, the vote of Black Africans supported the ANC.

Erasmus (2001: 5) states that the colonial and Apartheid positioning of Coloured identities as semi-privileged and complicit in the exclusion and disrespect for Black Africans must be acknowledged. Soudien (2007: 94) agrees that this Apartheid racialised identity gave the Coloured group the room to think they were 'better' than Black African people. This privileged Coloured identity in relation to Black African identity made access to power possible for the Coloured group. These are some of the dynamics that have led to animosity and antagonism between some members of these two groups. Adams et al. (1997: 84) refer to this conflict arising within and among groups of Blacks as "horizontal oppression". These writers aver that this conflict is a by-product of racism (and in this context, Apartheid) in which targeted groups are forced to compete with each other for scarce resources. It is clear that hierarchical arrangements and patterns of segregation are still evident in the Western Cape.

Division and inequality persists in the Western Cape in spite of the April 27, 1994 democratic elections in South Africa that witnessed the nation-based paradigm of race replace the ethnicity perspective and non-racism displace Black consciousness and Apartheid. This new democratic dispensation was meant to usher in a conscious celebration of unity, reconciliation and shared nationhood.

Dubow (1996: 291) and Fredrickson (2001: 23) have the view that the prevailing conception of national character and identity de-emphasises race in favour of a "rainbow" nation with its official acceptance of multiculturalism. The question to be asked then is: what approaches or paradigms will take the country forward in dealing with the legacies of this country's racial past? The general paradigm in which this challenge is being confronted is between the conflicting ideologies of race-consciousness and race-blindness (Steyn and Foster 2008: 25-51).



## **2.3 Contestation of the debate between race- consciousness and race-blindness in the South African context**

Essop Pahad (2004: 10), a former minister in the presidency, included these words in a speech he made: “Race... is still cardinal to our national progress. It is unfinished business in an era when the objectives of revolution have changed from overthrowing an unjust regime to cementing democracy and delivering to the dispossessed”.

Daniel Herwitz (2003: xxi) talks about race in post-Apartheid South Africa as being rethought, re-imagined, re-experienced, relabelled and re-politicised. For him there is no single answer to what race ought to be. He agrees with Alexander (2001: 471-487) that debate and conversation on the subject of race is imperative. Some interesting questions that Herwitz (2003) poses are: what is race today in South Africa? How should racial labels best play themselves out now? Is belonging to a race, after racism has been outlawed, meant to mean nothing more than having a certain skin colour and bone structure, or is it meant to imply the continuation of human racialism – between the Indian, the Coloured, The Black African and the White – on deeper cultural and linguistic grounds, but in a new system based on racial equality? (Herwitz 2003: 105).

An apt place to start this conversation on race is the Constitution (1996) of South Africa. James and Lever (2001: 32) and Herwitz (2003) propound that the Constitution in its mandate to address and eliminate racial inequality, speaks of race purely in terms of historical disadvantage and pressing political realities. Since historical disadvantage is the result of a racist past, Blackness (referring to the Black African, Coloured and Indian groups) is favoured from the perspective of redress. James and Lever (2001: 30-33 and 52- 55) and Powell in Hamilton (2001: 373) agree and point out that by outlawing any “unfair” discrimination based on race, the Constitution has made it possible for the introduction of policies of affirmative action and redress on group grounds.

Former President Nelson Mandela, in his inaugural speech of May 1994 referred to the new South Africa as the “rainbow nation”, which infers unity in diversity. The current racial and ethnic ideologies and conceptions that de-emphasise race in favour of what he sees as a colour-blind democracy are a problem for Frederickson (2001: 23-24). The problem with this

paradigm, he says, is its ambiguity. On the one hand, the idea of nonracialism obscures the reality of ethnic diversity and hinders efforts to accommodate it. On the other hand, there is the danger of accentuating differences to the point where group consciousness and antagonism threaten the unity of our “rainbow” nation. Erasmus (2001: 11) sees the ‘unity in diversity’ metaphor as problematic because it makes it more difficult to name and recognise the importance of talking about and working through antagonisms and conflict.

Evidence of South Africa’s changing political landscape is processes such as affirmative action and Black economic empowerment. For Dr Neville Alexander (2001: 483), the emergence of a relatively small number of Black middle-class individuals in South African society will “certainly not lead to the disappearance of the racial fault line”. He believes that this Black middle class, rather than the urban and rural workers, constitutes the social base of “rainbowism”. However, writers such as Mahmood Mamdani (2001), Naledi Pandor (2001) and Mamphela Ramphele (2001) disagree with Dr Alexander. They see the emerging Black middle class and Black economic empowerment as a necessary part of South Africa’s deracialisation and liberation process.

The Black economic empowerment issue is not only debated on the class level but also on a racial level. Peters (2006) wrote a newspaper article titled, “Coloureds not Black enough – court”, Webb (2006) wrote an article titled “Blacks before Coloureds in equity queue, says ANC” and Esbach (2007) wrote one titled, “Coloureds see Mbeki on ‘being marginalised’”. These articles highlighted the controversy surrounding South Africa’s empowerment initiatives. The Coloured community believe that they were not White enough to benefit from Apartheid, and now they are not Black enough to benefit from South Africa’s empowerment initiatives. This perception has exacerbated the racial tension between the Coloured and Black African groups.

All the afore-mentioned debates are examples that demonstrate that race in South Africa is still a salient and complex matter. Ramphele (2001: 507) sounds a warning by saying, “our failure to resolve our racist past is too ghastly to contemplate”.

Schools reflect the socio-political processes of the broader society and these processes impact on the socialisation processes of learners. The challenge then, for the education authorities, is

to find an educational practice that will help ensure a non-racial, equal and democratic South Africa.

## **2.4 Models for integrating education**

In its endeavour to achieve its constitutional mandate, South Africa's education ministry has looked at overseas education models, mainly from the United States of America and Britain (Carrim 1999; Carrim and Soudien 1999; Sekete et al. 2001). These models include (i) the assimilationist model (ii) the multicultural model and (iii) the anti-racist model. These models have been intensely debated and contested. The following section will discuss the theory that underpins these models.

Theorising is necessary because as Bell (1997: 4) reminds us, "theory has the potential to help us stay conscious of our position as historical subjects, able to learn from the past as we try to meet current conditions in more effective and imaginative ways".

### **2.4.1 The assimilationist model**

This model maintains that integration will take place if racial and cultural differences are de-emphasised. In this way, it was hoped that the minority groups would be integrated into the dominant society and thus bring about unity (Leistyna 2001: 443-444; Bell 1997: 10). In this "melting pot" mindset, Bell (1997: 10) says, individuals and groups are assumed to gain equality by becoming as much like the dominant or privileged group as possible. Those who can never "pass" into the dominant culture by virtue of race, gender or any other difference are automatically marginalized. .

Writers like Sleeter and Grant (1993: 165) criticise the assimilationist model because it overlooks the structural aspect of racism and inequality and thus perpetuates dominant White supremacy in USA society. The assimilationist model ignores the language and thought theories propounded by Vygotsky (1962) and Chomsky (2003) which advocate the need of one's native language to pin down and evolve one's thoughts and therefore emphasise the importance of mother tongue instruction to maximise cognitive development (Klein 1993).

Tatum (1997: 142-143) points to research that suggests five to seven years of mother tongue instruction is needed to develop the level of proficiency in English to succeed academically at school.

#### **2.4.2 Multiculturalism and multicultural education**

Much controversy exists around a specific definition for multiculturalism and multicultural education in the USA and Britain.

Fundamental concepts of multicultural education for McLean Donaldson (1996: 28) are that it must concern many world cultures as part of the core curriculum, it must include all cultures and address diverse perspectives, learning and teaching styles, teaching strategies and pedagogical and sociological issues. Goodman (2001: 3-5) argues that although some types of multiculturalism do allow people to challenge stereotypes, overcome prejudices and develop relationships with different types of people through consciousness-raising, their limitation is that they tend to focus on individuals and interpersonal dynamics in the society.

hooks (1994: 31) propounds that any conservative and liberal ideas of multiculturalism that support the notions of “rainbow coalition” where people with differences are harmoniously grouped together is a “perversion of the progressive vision of cultural diversity”. McLaren (2001: xiv) calls this undisturbed space “social amnesia” McLean Donaldson (1996: vii-ix) criticises what she sees as the trivialisation of differences and a “feel-good” type of pedagogy that she avers only includes “superficial ethnic tidbits and decontextualised contributions of others”. She says that many schools choose to focus only on the celebration of diversity and not on the “uncomfortable” issue of racism.

Weil (1998: 116-119) avers that more information about, and mere exposure to other people will not lead to learners exercising tolerance and empathy, will not decrease prejudicial attitudes and assist learners to abandon ideas and beliefs about racism, sexism and classism. He argues that this “tourist approach” can promote “othering” rather than eradicate it.

When multiculturalism fails to account for power dynamics in schools, workplaces and the socio economic context that shapes them, then specific processes of domination and

subordination of learners as individuals cannot be exposed and transformed (Weil 1998: 21; Steinberg and Kincheloe 2001: 6).

### **2.4.3 Anti-racism model**

Critics of the multicultural model maintain that teaching about racial and cultural differences was just as likely to foster enmity as empathy. They purport that the multicultural model cannot prevent racism and that it causes the marginalized to become politically, socially and culturally compliant and entrenches their economic subordination (Sekete 2001: 9). McLean Donaldson (1996) avers that anti-racist education has the ability to address problems of educational failure and issues of race.

## **2.5 Education for critical consciousness in the South African context**

The deracialisation of schools in South Africa, which was formally decreed in the National Education Act (1995) and enshrined in the Constitution (1996), was meant to forge unity, afford all the peoples of South Africa equal opportunities and outlaw discrimination. The next section of this dissertation will discuss the three predominant models used in deracialising education in South African schools, namely, (i) assimilation (ii) multiculturalism and (iii) anti-racism.

### **2.5.1 Assimilation**

This model de-emphasises racial and cultural differences of learners and stresses common unity. The work of Soudien (1998; 2001; 2007); Carrim and Soudien (1999); Carrim (1999); and Zafar (1999) point out how pervasive and unproblematised this philosophy is when responding to issues of race. The research done by these writers found that a “raceless identity” prevailed in many schools with a colour blind notion of race, which entrenched “othering” of the Black learners and therefore perpetuated racism, rather than expel it. Soudien (2007: 56) found that this “mask” for multiculturalism leaves the dominant cultures in the school untouched, which then maintains the inequities and reinforces “othering”. Sekete et al. (2001: 75) found that many schools in South Africa still needed to shift from the

“business as usual” or assimilation approach and develop strategies, policies and practices to ensure equity for the increasingly diverse learner populations.

(Vally & Dalamba 1999: 32) found that in the schools where the limitations of the assimilation approach have been realised and where diversity is beginning to be acknowledged, attention to cultural difference is given only symbolically through activities like cultural events, fetes and costumes and so on. Carrim and Soudien (1999) believe that failure to take cognisance of people’s differences and cultural diversity prevents people from mixed groups from getting to understand each other better or of fostering better relations among them. Harber (2001: 26) states that in many schools, the key problem is a failure to address change and actively and consciously promote integration. Harber (2001) maintains that the main problem is not overt resistance to deracialisation and that putting learners from different racial backgrounds into the same school is not the same as consciously trying to alter the nature of the relationships between students and between teachers and learners. This writer believes that in a society marked by racism, failure to intervene actively has the effect of reproducing racism by default or omission.

### **2.5.2 The multicultural approach**

As pointed out previously, multiculturalism can take many forms. Tihanyi (2006: 111 – 116) points out that for multiculturalism to bring about transformation in education it must be adapted to the South African context and reflect local conditions and concerns. She distinguishes between four types of multiculturalism practiced in South African schools: (i) teaching the multiculturally different (ii) single group studies (iii) inclusive multicultural education and (iv) education that is multicultural and social constructionist.

- i. Teaching the multiculturally different: In this approach those who are not part of the cultural mainstream are viewed as being at a disadvantage and must “play the game” of the mainstream in order to bring about equality and to succeed in the educational and professional arenas. This writer points out that this approach may hinder reconciliation and integration in South Africa, because here Blacks form the majority, unlike in America, and only a small number of middle- and upper-class non-Whites

are able to attend previously White schools. She is of the opinion that this reality seems to be responsible for the growing class-based divisions in South Africa.

- ii. Single-group studies: This approach proposes that groups need to be educated separately to help individuals to foster a more positive self-image and perception. In South Africa where many youth, especially in the Black communities, need to develop self-confidence, Tihanyi points out that this approach will be viewed with suspicion because this negative self-image is a result of Apartheid's separatist laws in the first place. This single-group approach will also limit interracial contact and hinder racial integration and reconciliation.
- iii. Inclusive multicultural education: This approach with its emphasis on cultural diversity, human rights education and the incorporation of social justice concerns, for Tihanyi, seems much more appropriate for the South African school- context. It lends itself to addressing the historical legacy of inequality, racism and discrimination. However, she warns that for this approach to be successful there must be a willingness to deal with difficult and deep-seated societal problems or else its solutions will be cosmetic.
- iv. Education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist: This approach calls for a more radical transformation, such as the need for material redistribution in order to build an equitable education system.

Other writers like Carrim (1999); Bhana (1999); Zafar (1999); Harber (2001) and Vandeyar (2003) show that multiculturalism assumes that all cultures enjoy equal status in society and that people belonging to a particular cultural group are the same. Critics of this model point out that it is flawed because the history of race in South Africa evidences how race influenced people's lives materially in explicit ways resulting in inequality, disadvantage and discrimination (Carrim and Soudien 1999: 155). Writers like Vandeyar (2003: 195) point out that the "celebratory approach" where parents are invited to a "multicultural day" at school where different cultures are displayed through their styles of dance, dress, dialect and cuisine is ineffective because it does not address the values and the power relationships that shape the culture. This approach does not address discrimination and how some people's differences are looked upon as deficits and disadvantages. Analysts have pointed to the fact that

multicultural education is seen as the solution to ending prejudice and discrimination, which are believed to be caused through ignorance and lack of knowledge. It does not equip learners, educators and parents with the tools necessary to combat deep-seated racism and discrimination (Carrim 1998; Zafar 1999). As long as issues of power, social class, the economy and politics are ignored, (Vandeyar 2003: 196) says, there is little chance of improving the life chances of Black groups in South Africa.

### **2.5.3 Anti-racism education**

This approach aims to raise levels of individual and group consciousness through the development of critical thinking to grasp and question the rationality of power, domination and inequality. Anti-racism education promotes political education and requires a knowledge and understanding of the history of racism, the process of the conquest and the different forms of domination (Vandeyar 2003: 196). The shift, Vandeyar, says is therefore from a preoccupation with cultural difference to an emphasis on the way in which cultural differences are used to entrench inequality. Anti-racism education embraces a dynamic view of culture rather than a static view. Carrim and Soudien (1999: 166) argue that multicultural practices in schools “tend to fix, stereotype and caricature people’s identities”. They are of the point of view that the shift has been from race to ethnicity because people from different ‘racial’ groups are seen as being culturally different and then these cultural differences are also selectively emphasised. These writers therefore advocate a critical anti-racist approach, which they aver, is explicitly alert and sensitive to the multiple expressions of ‘difference’ in identity. They state that an uncritical acceptance of multicultural practices in South Africa could perpetuate, rather than lessen and eventually eradicate racism.

Vally and Dalamba (1999:3) emphasise the urgency for an anti-racist education, citing the reason that many new mutations of racism are surfacing in the South African schooling context. Although the new curriculum in the schools does embrace anti-racism and anti-bias pedagogies, (Carrim 1999; Vally and Dalamba 1999) say that what is pivotal to eliminate racism, is the restructuring of power relationships in the economic, political and cultural institutions and creating new conditions for personal interactions. According to Vally and Dalamba (1999: 37), it is vital to examine the dynamics of power and oppression and how individuals participate in these.



## 2.6 Theories around exclusion and inclusion

There can be no place for racism, abuse and intolerance in any of our schools. As a department we are committed to make sure that the Western Cape is a learning home for all its children.

Cameron Dugmore, Education MEC

*Chalkline*, April 2007:1

This commitment was made by the former Minister of the Executive Council for Education in response to reports of racial attacks at a number of schools around the Western Cape thirteen years into our democracy. It highlighted the need for serious interventions and transformation required in education to address issues around racism as well as broader social diversity issues. South Africa has a constitutional responsibility to provide education that is free of oppression. Carrim (1998) and Vandeyar (2003: 196) point out that the Department of Education does not have structured, co-ordinated, national or provincial programmes to help teachers deal with diversity in a multiracial, multicultural and multilingual classroom or a diversity programme for learners to develop anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-discrimination awareness at school. This is a serious omission because as De Clercq (1997: 158-159) states, research has shown that when teachers, who are the key to education and curricular transformation are not properly consulted and involved, these changes often fail.

The following section of this thesis discusses theories which are holistic, which have the capacity to deal effectively with diversity in a multiracial, multicultural and multilingual school and classroom; theories that can penetrate and have the potential to transform practices right through the education system.

These theories include: (i) theories that underpin social justice education (ii) critical pedagogy (iii) social developmental theory (iv) racial identity development theory and (v) theory involving culturally responsive teaching.

Theorising is necessary because it provides a framework for making choices about what we do, how we do it and for distinguishing between different approaches (Bell 1997: 4).

### **2.6.1 Social justice education**

Nieto and Bode (2008:11) define social justice as a philosophy that embodies treating all people with fairness, respect, dignity and generosity. These writers see social justice as another term associated with equitable education, where “all students must be given the real possibility of an equality of outcomes”. Proponents of social justice education aver that it has the potential to make equitable education a reality. Francis and Hemson (2007: 100) understand social justice education as “education that seeks to reveal how social identities are implicated in power imbalances and to develop commitment and skills in working for justice”. Many writers see social justice education as both a process and a goal (Bell 1997: 3-4; Goodman 2001; Nieto and Bode 2008: 10-12). For these writers, the goal of social justice education is a society in which each member, irrespective of race, sex, class, religion, language, ethnic group, ability and other markers, has full and equal participation; a society in which resources are equitably distributed and its members are safe and secure physically and psychologically so that each member is able to develop to their full potential. Social justice requires members to be aware of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others in society in order to eradicate oppression in all its forms. For Young (1990: 39), the aim of social justice is not the “melting away” of differences, but the institutional promotion of and respect for group differences without oppression.

#### **2.6.1.1 Features of oppression**

Young (1990: 90) explains that in social justice education the term “oppression” is not used in the traditional tyrannical sense, but is used to refer to the deep injustices some groups suffer because of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well meaning people in the processes of everyday life.

Bell (1997: 4-15) and Goodman (2001) postulate that to attain the goals of social justice education, it is necessary to identify both the distinctive characteristics of specific types of oppression as well as the patterns that connect and reinforce them. Young (1990: 36-48) does not believe that there is a common description of oppression, but refers to five distinctive types of oppression namely, marginalisation, exploitation, powerlessness, cultural

imperialism and violence. Bell (1997: 4-7) and Goodman (2001) identify the following features of oppression.

### ***Pervasiveness***

Bell (1997: 4) uses the term “oppression” rather than the term discrimination, bias, prejudice or bigotry to emphasise the pervasiveness of inequality in social institutions and its embeddedness in the individual’s consciousness. Goodman (2001: 16) uses the equation “prejudice + power = oppression” to define what she believes oppression is. These writers believe that oppression occurs on three levels, namely, individually, institutionally and systemically.

### ***Restricting***

Oppression is restrictive on a structural and material level, which limits a person’s life chances and sense of possibility (Young 1990; Bell 1997: 4).

### ***Hierarchical***

Social groups exist within constructed and unequal hierarchies, in which they experience differential access to power and privilege, resulting in an unjust and oppressive system.

Goodman (2001: 1-36) and Adams et al. (1997) explain that they use the terms “dominant” and “subordinate” to name the two sides of the power dynamic, even though they recognise that this categorisation is problematic and can “promote dichotomous thinking”. For them, the dominant group’s values, images and experiences are most representative of the culture whereas the other groups are relegated to subcultures. The dominant group gets the privileges, has greater social power and sets the norms. These groups determine what is acceptable and what is not, what is valued and what is ignored. The dominant group establishes the dominant ideology, namely, a pervasive set of ideas and ways of looking at reality. Young (2000: 45) and Tatum (1997: 21) aver that the subordinate groups’ perspectives are rendered “invisible” and that they are essentialised, stereotyped and marked as “Other”.

Goodman (2001) and Adams et al. (1997) agree that the manner in which identities are socially constructed and valued do change. Also, that we all have multiple identities which, depending on the social category can place us in either a dominant or a subordinate group.

Other descriptors used to refer to the unequal power dynamic are advantaged and disadvantaged, privileged and marginalised, majority and minority, oppressor and oppressed, agent and targeted.

### ***Characteristics of some “isms”***

Bell (1997: 5) believes that each type of oppression has distinctive features as well as patterns that connect and reinforce different forms of oppression. Goodman (2001: 8-10) avers that with racism and sexism one's identity, as well as one's dominant or subordinate status, is fairly fixed. With ageism, one's dominant and subordinate status change. With classism and ableism, they may change. Also, there are different attitudes towards the disadvantaged groups. In racism there is often fear; in ableism, pity; in heterosexism, revulsion; and in ageism, condescension.

### ***Internalised domination and subordination***

Oppression resides within the human psyche as well (Goodman 2001: 15; Bell 1997: 12-13 and 21-22; Hardiman and Jackson 1997: 21-22). These writers explain how oppressive beliefs are internalised by both the victims and the benefactors. The dominant group begins to accept the messages from the dominant culture about its superiority – that their attributes are “better” and the norm. They dismiss the subordinate group as being “inferior” and the subordinate group begins to accept its inferiority. The latter's “internalised oppression” causes its members to accept and incorporate negative, hurtful and limiting images of themselves which undermines their self-esteem, sense of empowerment and intragroup solidarity. This results in submissiveness, dependence, docility, sometimes self-hatred, self-concealment, resignation, isolation and a sense of powerlessness. These writers maintain that people from the subordinate group will not effectively challenge the status quo as long as people continue to believe that they are inferior, deserve their plight and / or consider their treatment for their own benefit. To be successful, the members of the subordinate group believe that they must conform to the norms and expectations of the dominant group. A pivotal tenet of social justice education is that both the oppressor and the oppressed are dehumanised and disadvantaged by the inequity (Freire 1970).

Superiority is not always shown in blatant ways. Racism, for example, can be defined as unconscious internalised values and attitudes that maintain domination, even when people do not support or display overt discrimination or prejudice (hooks 1989: 13). The superior-

inferior paradigm allows members of privileged groups to rationalise their entitlement to power and privilege and mistreatment of members of the disadvantaged groups (hooks 1989: 16-19).

hooks (1989) postulates further that many times people from the privileged groups lack awareness of their dominant position and the oppression suffered by the target group. Some members from the dominant groups may also lack consciousness about the ways in which they perpetuate the oppression. Miller (1976) cited in Goodman (2001: 25) says that this lack of consciousness may be because people from the target group do not make the members of the privileged group aware of their oppressive behaviour for fear of negative repercussions. They feel unsafe to do so. Goodman (2001) adds, however, that many times members of the privileged groups are not interested in, or are afraid of knowing. They maintain their “internalised supremacy” and do not have to think about their social identity. This allows them to see themselves as individuals and not as part of a group that is privileged and has social power. The opposite holds for the disadvantaged groups who become highly aware of and knowledgeable about the dominant group because their survival depends on it (Goodman 2001: 20-26).

Privileges are hidden sometimes, and discrimination is subtle, therefore people from dominant groups do not realise the pervasiveness of oppression. This lack of awareness Goodman (2001: 28-29) says, allows for the unintentional perpetuation of injustice. People do not realise that what they are doing is biased and discriminatory. This is why individuals and institutions are less able to recognise how “business as usual” could still cause injustice. Privileged groups are therefore more likely to deny that injustice and oppression exists and label those who raise issues of mistreatment and discrimination as “oversensitive” or “troublemakers” (ibid.).

## 2.6.2 Critical pedagogy

The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labour for freedom to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.

bell hooks (1994: 207)

The question must be asked: What must happen to bring about a more equitable, participatory and democratic education system? The potentially transformative new curriculum, the RNCS in South Africa, has as some of its key elements the active involvement of the learner, an emphasis on critical thinking, reasoning skills, reflection and action and learner-centredness rather than teacher-centredness. These concepts are all encapsulated in critical theory and critical pedagogy, which are propounded by theorists such as Freire (1970; 1990) and Giroux (1989).

Advocates of social justice education believe critical pedagogical practices must become a normal and acceptable practice (bell hooks 1994; McLean Donaldson 1996; Adams et al. 1997; Tatum 1997; Weil 1998; Goodman 2001; Steinberg 2001; Chomsky 2003; Nieto and Bode 2008).

Critical pedagogy was stifled during the Apartheid regime. Uncritical, rote learning was encouraged as part of Apartheid's suppressive ideology (Kallaway 1997; Soudien 2007: 44). To transform education, educators and learners must acquire the ability to interpret the world critically and to act to change it. This is what Freire (1990) refers to as "conscientization". This involves critical thinking which includes the following concepts: identifying and challenging assumptions, becoming aware of how context shapes what is considered normal and natural ways of thinking and living, and also imagining and exploring alternative ways of thinking and living (Brookfield 1987 cited in Goodman 2001: 43). Conscientization also includes consciousness-raising, which encourages personal awareness, leads to critical self-reflection and analysis, analysis of culture and society and is a continuous process (Chomsky 2003: 389; Adams 1997: 35; Tatum 1997: 46-51).

Critical consciousness involves "dialogue" and "reflection" (Freire 1990). What is important is that dialogue, for Freire, is not just taken as a teaching strategy, but is a requirement in order that people view themselves as an autonomous human being and not as an object.

Individuals have agency (Adams 1997: 34). Dialogue takes place through conversation based on shared practice and openness to the other party, who in turn listens and talks with.

Freire (1990) problematises knowledge. He continually asks the questions, what is knowing? What is knowledge? How do we know? In whose interest and against whose interest do we know? Adams (1997: 38) believes that the goal of problem-posing or dialogical education is to get learners to begin asking questions of themselves and of each other. For Weil (1998: 37) problem-posing plays an important role in developing the learners' reasoning skills. This writer defines effective reasoning as "the ability to draw conclusions based on reason". Weil (1998) identifies nine abilities of the reasoning mind:

- i. Uncovering significant similarities and differences.
- ii. Refining generalisations and oversimplifications.
- iii. Clarifying issues, beliefs and conclusions.
- iv. Developing criteria for evaluation.
- v. Generating and assessing solutions to problems.
- vi. Analysing or evaluating actions or policies.
- vii. Comparing and contrasting ideals with actual practice.
- viii. Transferring insights into new contexts.
- ix. Identifying and exploring concepts, arguments and theories.

Not only is it important to know what reasoning is, but more importantly, the educator should give learners the opportunity and encourage them to practice their critical thinking and reasoning. For this process to be successful, the critical educator needs to learn the art of interrogation to encourage active learner involvement and ask himself/herself the follow questions (Weil 1998: 37):

- i. What do I want my learners to reason about and why?
- ii. How can I help learners to reason more effectively about this or that issue?
- iii. How can I help my learners develop values and dispositions that will aid their reasoning? What might those values and dispositions be?
- iv. How can I help my learners understand the deeper logic of what they are studying?
- v. How can I help my learners identify historical and contemporary assumptions?
- vi. How can I help them interrogate those assumptions Socratically?

- vii. How can I help my learners develop criteria for successful and effective reasoning?
- viii. How can I help my learners develop fair-minded critical thinking within multiple perspectives?

Freire (1970; 1990) believed that active learner participation is vital, that their “voices” must be heard as they talk about their lives and social realities. This theorist was critical of the positivist paradigm in education. He opposed what he called “banking education” which turns learners into passive “objects” whose brains need to be filled or “deposited” with predetermined knowledge that is often far removed from their sensibilities, interests and lived reality. According to Weil (1998: 50), this sedentary passivity can result in information overload and boredom. Transmission of knowledge in the positivist paradigm is normally done in an authoritarian way and failure to repeat and regurgitate what the educator transmits or teaches is reproved.

Teachers must realise that they are the vanguard to meet the challenge of transforming education in South Africa. Giroux’s (1989) concept of “emancipatory authority” views the role of a transformative teacher as a facilitator and not as an authoritarian. Teachers are not concerned only with academic excellence, but are also eager to see the attitudes developed for social transformation (Giroux 1989). To be agents of change, educators must engage in what Freire (1990) refers to as “praxis” which is a conscious reflection on our theory and practice. For Weil (1998: 29) “praxis” helps learners to “live” which means that they must become critically and actively involved in the process of becoming. “Praxis” is imperative because we teach what and how we were taught (Tatum 1997: 7). Only once teachers have dealt with their own assumptions critically, are they ready to assist their learners. Teachers must remember that without critical, democratic thinking, democracy will remain an unattainable fantasy.

One way in which teachers can gain insight into their attitudes and behaviours in an educational context, is by engaging with developmental theories such as social identity development theory (Goodman 2001: 53-56 and 171-175; Hardiman and Jackson 1997: 23 – 29;). Racial identity development theory can be useful for understanding tension and conflict with regard to matters concerning race and racism inside and outside of the classroom (Tatum 1997; Hardiman and Jackson (1992) cited in Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995: 47-52).



### **2.6.3 Developmental theories**

All the afore-mentioned writers aver that developmental theories, which are stage theories, can be useful for educators in understanding and examining their own beliefs, values and behaviours as well as their learners' perspectives. Learners themselves can learn to understand and examine their beliefs, values and behaviours towards their fellow students. These theories describe states of consciousness that are developmental in nature and that can change over time in response to experience and knowledge. People usually move from one stage to another when they recognise that their current worldview is illogical or contradicted by new experience and information, detrimental to their well-being, or no longer serving their self-interest. It also allows educators to anticipate and make sense of the learners' responses and interactions in the classroom and to develop methods to respond so that learning, growth and change can take place. Education is about change, but these writers stress that an educator cannot make someone change. They can provide the context, content and process that allow an individual to grow.

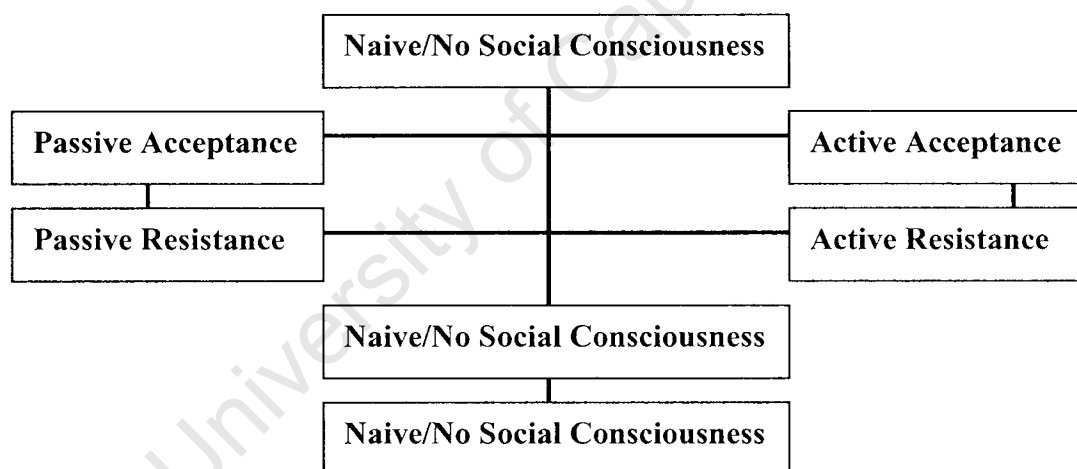
#### **2.6.3.1 Social identity development theory**

Social identity development theory is useful because it describes characteristics that are common to the identity development process for members of all subordinate and dominant groups. This study uses the generic social identity development theory and model of Hardiman and Jackson (1997) which is an adaptation of these theorists' individual work on Black identity development theory and White development theory. Goodman (2001) uses the Hardiman and Jackson (1997) model to discuss the identity development of the privileged groups and the marginalised groups separately. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) include Hardiman and Jackson's (1992) racial identity development theory in their conceptual framework for culturally responsive teaching.

All the writers mentioned above, stress that the concept of identity is complex. They present their models of identity development process in stages for clarity and agree that in life most people experience several stages simultaneously. They also acknowledge that people have multiple social identities that are complex and not binary and that almost everybody can think of themselves in both the dominant group and the subordinate group in social relationships.

### 2.6.3.2 A social identity development model

The following social identity development model provides a developmental profile of subordinates (targets) and dominants (agents) as participants in oppression and liberation. It describes developmental processes by which internalised negative and stereotypic beliefs can be brought to the surface, analysed and changed into an identity that is independent of subordination or domination. This, Tatum (1997: 27-28) avers creates the possibility of building alliances and relationships that may ultimately “free us all”. It also helps to understand the many ways in which feelings such as anger, denial or pain may be expressed by learners and teachers (Adams et al. 1997: 321). Hardiman and Jackson (1997) the creators of this model, emphasise that the “stages” are presented for conceptual clarity. Adams (1997: 40) makes it clear that human beings are never in a “stage”. Stage is a metaphor for change.



Source: Stages of Social Identity Development (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992) in Hardiman and Jackson (1997:23)

The following section outlines each stage in the model and draws on the work of Hardiman and Jackson (1997: 23-29), Goodman (2001: 53-56 and 171-175) and Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995: 47-52).

The explanation is included in this dissertation because, as the above-mentioned writers aver it can be helpful in understanding learner perspectives. It can also help educators to plan activities, in their respective learning areas, that will promote discussions, engage learners

and pose challenges that will make sense to their frame of reference and expand their knowledge

### ***Stage 1 Naïve/No social consciousness***

This stage usually applies to young children who have very little awareness of social identities and the codes of appropriate behaviour for members of their social group. Socialisation through parents, peers, the media, the education system, religious organisations and the norms, law, social structures and cultures of the larger community, all impact on children to transform them from the naïve state to a stage of Acceptance of their social dominance or subordination about other social identity groups. They become aware of differences.

### ***Stage 2 Acceptance***

In this stage, there is some degree of internalisation of the dominant culture's ideology, which can be conscious or unconscious. People in this stage "accept" the social arrangement of an unjust society, namely, the superiority of the dominant or agent group and the inferiority of the marginalised or target group. This stage has two manifestations, namely, passive acceptance and active acceptance.

### ***Stage 3 Resistance***

In this stage, there is an increased awareness of the existence of inequality, injustice and oppression and its effect on agents and targets. The transition from acceptance to resistance, which happens over time, can be confusing and painful for both agents and target.

### ***Stage 4 Redefinition***

This is the stage where people find new ways of defining themselves and their social group, which are free from the hierarchical categories of superiority and inferiority.

### ***Stage 5 Internalisation***

When people become comfortable with their new sense of identity, their newly developed consciousness and group pride, they are able to internalise it and apply it to different parts of their lives. People at this stage need support and affirmation by organisations and peers who are like-minded because of the external pressure from the dominant ideology to maintain the status quo.

The afore-mentioned writers state that there is essentially no exit phase for Internalisation because as long as we live in an oppressive world and society, a person will continually uncover unrecognised areas of their social identity that they need to deal with and from which they need to free themselves.

By understanding developmental processes, educators can also learn ways that do not stifle or condemn the behaviour of their students as they grapple with topics that confront their differences. Sharing models of social identity development and racial identity development with learners provides them a useful framework for understanding each other's reactions. This understanding can normalise their experience and reduce their fears, resistance and potential resentment. It makes interaction less inflammatory (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg 1995: 47-52).

#### **2.6.3.3 Racial identity development in adolescence**

The following section is relevant to this study because it offers one possible explanation as to why learners from subordinate racial groups, like the Xhosa learners at the site of this study, cluster or self-segregate in a high school setting. One way of understanding this phenomenon is offered by the research done by Tatum (1997) in a high school in the USA. She uses psychologist William Cross's five-stage model on racial identity development, namely, (i) pre-encounter (ii) encounter (iii) immersion/emersion (iv) internalization and (v) internalization-commitment (Tatum 1997: 54-59). The first two stages are drawn on in this study, because they have relevance for adolescents, the age- group of the participants in this study.

Tatum (1997: 16) refers to racial identity development as the "process of defining for oneself the personal significance and social meaning of belonging to a particular racial group". She avers that it is because we live in a racist society that racial identity has as much meaning as it does.

One contributory factor why African American high school learners self-segregate is that with the onset of puberty and adolescence there is a focus on identity exploration. Black youth who ask the question "Who am I?" include thinking about "Who am I ethnically and/or racially?" (Tatum 1997: 52-56). This writer explains that in a dominant and subordinate set up, researchers have found that the subordinate adolescents are more actively engaged in

exploring their racial or ethnic identity than their dominant peers. Our self-perceptions are shaped by those around us and for the learners in the subordinate group, the racial or ethnic content of those messages intensify during adolescents. These learners encounter experiences or “environmental cues” that trigger an examination of their racial identity. She also found in her work on identity development that the “aspect of identity that is the target of others’ attention, and subsequently of our own, often is that which sets us apart as ‘other’ in their eyes” (Tatum 1997: 21). Another explanation she offers for self-segregation of subordinate groups is their encounter and experience with racism within their high school. They cluster in groups to protect themselves from further negative and hurtful encounters. Tatum (1997) maintains that joining with one’s peers in time of stress is a positive coping strategy.

A third reason that learners group racially, she avers, is that when their feelings are invalidated, most people will disengage and turn to someone who will understand their perspective and be supportive. It is their peer groups, those that they sit with during intervals who hold the answers to their questions about identity, such as “What does it mean to be a Black person? How should I act? What should I do?”

Tatum (1997: 60) also refers to a phenomenon called oppositional social identity, which gives additional insight as to why self-segregation takes place. She says that researchers have observed that adolescents in the subordinate group develop feelings of anger and resentment as they become aware of their exclusion from full participation in society, which would include full participation in their school. This oppositional stance keeps the dominant group at a distance and serves to protect one’s identity from the psychological assault of racism.

Tatum (1997: 62) concludes that racial grouping in a racially mixed setting is a developmental process in response to an environmental stressor, namely, racism. She views this same-race grouping and connecting with one’s peers in the process of identity development as important and suggests that it should be encouraged. She motivates this stance by adding that in the face of racism, it is helpful to share one’s experiences with others who too have experienced it. One can draw support from the group, which she sees as an important coping strategy. Tatum (1997) believes that without this support and an absence of a shared identity, individuals from the subordinate group may experience social isolation.

An interesting phenomenon that Tatum (1997: 63) talks about is the strategy that learners from subordinate racial groups sometimes employ and what is referred to as “racelessness”.

Here academically sound students de-emphasise those characteristics that are associated with their racial group to find acceptance among their classmates from the dominant group.

### ***Learners' (mis)understanding of racism***

The research done by Karen McLean Donaldson (1996) in a high school in the US informs this study because she, like the researcher of this study, researched and assessed views and experiences of the students' themselves. This is critically important, McLean Donaldson states because students' experiences and perceptions dictate their actions. McLean Donaldson (1996: 13-14) states that research findings (in the US) show that many learners have a simplistic, superficial understanding of racism. They see racism simply as prejudice or hating someone because of race, rather than fully understanding the role that power plays in racism. She therefore stresses the importance of recognising when racism is being enacted.

### ***Aspects of racism common in schools***

According to Murray and Clark (1990) cited in McLean Donaldson (1996: 18) there are eight aspects of racism common in schools at all grade levels.

- i. Hostile and insensitive acts
- ii. Bias in the use of harsh sanctions
- iii. Bias in giving active attention to students
- iv. Bias in selection of curriculum materials
- v. Inequality in the amount of instruction time
- vi. Biased attitudes toward students
- vii. Failure to hire racial minority teachers and other personnel at all levels
- viii. Denial of racist actions

McLean Donaldson (1996: 19-22) propounds that these racial attitudes often impinge on the self-esteem of the subordinate learners who begin to feel inferior and believe that they are not good enough. This is why she states that it is imperative that teachers are able to analyse critically their own assumptions and cultural baggage first before they are able to effect change in their classrooms.

McLean Donaldson (1996) maintains that if racism in schools is to be combated, then there needs to be a critical assessment of the staff make-up.

### ***Why the need to employ more teachers from minority groups***

The research done by Pine and Hilliard (1990: 597) cited in McLean Donaldson (1996: 20) gives four reasons to employ teachers from minority groups. These are:

- i. It is an equity lesson for students, who must be taught respect for people from groups other than their own
- ii. Children of all ethnic groups must have access to diverse role models
- iii. When a teaching staff is strongly skewed toward members of the majority group, the evaluation of performance is consistently (if subtly) biased against minority teachers
- iv. Members of the majority group often misunderstand affirmative action and assume that those who benefit from it are less competent and less deserving.

### **2.6.4 From the what? To the how?**

The next question to ask is what type of teacher and what kind of classroom is necessary for social justice education?

Tatum (1997: 49) warns that providing learners with information about how systems of injustice and oppression work can be counter productive if they are not also provided with tools or learning strategies that they can use in their everyday life encounters with inequity. She avers that a teacher who is innovative, motivated and committed to effect change in a classroom is the most appropriate person to give the learners the necessary tools for social justice education.

#### **2.6.4.1 The transformative classroom**

Goodman (2001: 180; Tatum (1997); bell hooks (1994); McLean Donaldson 1996; Adams et al. 1997) make us aware that teaching about social justice can be stimulating and rewarding as well as frustrating, challenging and disappointing at times. These writers stress that social justice education should involve both cognitive as well as the affective aspects and that it can create discomfort, tension, dissonance and it involves conflict. Bell (1997: 306) acknowledges that dealing with anger, tension and conflict is difficult, but avoiding the feelings that are stimulated by oppression ignores how deeply it is embedded in our psyches and reinforces silence and discounting which support oppression. The goal of justice education, which is to have “real democracy” (Goodman 2001: 123) and “full and equal

participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs” (Bell 1997: 3) should be the inspiration to persevere in the face of difficulties. Tatum (1997) in the introduction gives this motivation: “Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced”.

The transformative teacher should create a classroom atmosphere in which the learners are able to not only recognise unfairness, but also feel safe to speak up against it. The transformative classroom should be a space where people are non-judgemental, respectful, respect diversity, caring, fair, empathetic, compassionate, authentic, inclusive and affirming (Goodman 2001: 179-188; Wlodkowski and Ginsberg 1995: 19; Weil 1998; bell hooks 1994). These writers stress that it is the absence of a feeling of safety that often promotes prolonged silence or lack of learner engagement.

#### **2.6.4.2 Theory around culturally responsive teaching**

A climate of safety is part of Bell hook’s (1994) notion of “engaged pedagogy”. There is a mutual sharing of “confessional narratives” between learner and teacher in this holistic pedagogical approach. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995: 21-26) refer to this concept as culturally responsive teaching because it accommodates cultural diversity and allows for teaching practices that are open to the “voices” of all the learners. Culturally responsive or culturally relevant teaching for Adams (1997: 34) and McLean Donaldson (1996: 19) is also a reciprocal teacher-learner relationship. A very important tenet of culturally responsive teaching is learner motivation.

#### ***Intrinsic motivation***

Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995: 18-19) believe that for a child to be motivated to learn there must be equal respect for the backgrounds and circumstances of all learners. This must happen regardless of individual status and power. The design of learning processes must cater for, and embrace the range of needs, interests, and orientations to be found among all the learners. This will motivate learners internally which means they will experience pleasure doing a task, have a feeling of satisfaction and passion for the task and persevere until the task is completed. Conversely, the more cultural isolation that learners feel, the less motivated they will be to learn (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg 1995: 61). However, through mutual sharing between learners and teacher, the opposite happens and a learning environment is created that is more inclusive and community- centred, but with the teacher



taking the leadership role (Goodman 2001: 197; bell hooks 1994; Wlodkowski and Ginsberg 1995: 62-63).

### ***Community - a place to belong***

The word community has its roots in two Latin words: *communitas* the association of people on mutually equal and friendly terms, and *communis*, belonging to all (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg 1995: 62). These writers aver, just as do bell hooks (1994) and Adams (1997: 34) that a sense of “community” in a classroom establishes the foundation for inclusion. It is in communities that people find security, identity, shared values, mutual caring and where ideals of justice and compassion are nurtured. It is in this environment that learners and teachers know they are included because they are respected and there is a connectedness. Respect is an imperative in a social justice classroom because when respect is present then the integrity of each person is valued. This then allows freedom of expression or the authentic voice to be heard without the fear of threat or blame. Each learner’s thoughts, feelings, interests and needs are listened to, acted upon and honoured. This promotes self-confidence, as each person feels safe, capable and accepted. People participate spontaneously and accept full responsibility for their actions.

This sense of community engenders a spirit of tolerance, trust and loyalty, which are vital for those times, when there is dissent and uncertainty in the learning environment. When these values and elements are in place then there is genuine empowerment and agency. In the community-centred classroom learners come to realise that there are multiple viewpoints on issues and come to appreciate how others are also in the process of the construction of their own learning and their own grasp of knowledge and truth. Teaching strategies that can be used to assist with this agency in the classroom are collaborative and cooperative learning (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg 1995: 70-107).

### ***Group work***

Mere contact with people who are different from themselves is not enough to promote genuine interracial or intercultural appreciation. It is the nature of the contact that engenders mutual respect and appreciation for diversity (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg 1995: 79-87). They maintain that most human beings favour learning experiences that are collaborative and participatory. This innate need can be used to good effect in the social justice classroom through collaborative and cooperative learning.

### ***Collaborative learning***

This pedagogical practice is defined as an educational approach that involves joint intellectual endeavour between learners and learners and teachers and learners. Learners work in groups to construct mutually understandings, solutions, meanings, applications, or products, which fosters a bonding or connectedness as well as skills (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg 1995: 79). In collaborative learning, teachers see themselves as facilitators in the learning process and less as authoritarian transmitters of knowledge. The teacher becomes an observer and adviser. This type of learning encourages learners to be active, to participate, to offer their perspectives, to listen to other learners' perspectives sensitively, to challenge and question, discuss and to build consensus. Through collaborative learning, those involved begin to view community and cooperation as important as academic achievement.

### ***Cooperative learning***

This is one type of collaborative learning, which has been found to promote greater individual achievement than do individualistic and competitive efforts (Johnson and Johnson 1993: 17-18). Vital components of cooperative learning are positive interdependence and individual accountability. Supporters of this type of learning, Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995: 81-98), stress the point that cooperative learning is more than just placing learners in groups and telling them to work together. Successful cooperative learning strategies promote intrinsic motivation, new learning and interpersonal cohesion through positive and supportive relationships across different ethnic, language, social class and gender groups (ibid). These writers support the research that maintains that heterogeneous groups are more effective than homogeneous groups because diversity should be encouraged to the extent possible (ibid: 87). The advice given by (Weil 1998: 150) is that teachers should employ both heterogeneous and homogeneous groupings depending on the task and other pertinent considerations.

For intrinsic motivation and learning to be operable in a classroom (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg 1995: 101-102), suggest that ground rules must be formulated collaboratively between learners and teacher.

#### **2.6.4.3 Ground rules**

Advocates of social justice education explain that ground rules are the guidelines that establish the boundaries of the behaviour and operations in the class. The ground rules are an important requisite in creating an environment in which everyone feels safe, secure, reassured

and respected. When everyone in the class agrees on the ground rules, there is a sense of ownership and fewer feelings of awkwardness, embarrassment, shame and being threatened (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995: 102).

## **2.7 Research done to investigate (non)transformation in post-Apartheid South African Schools**

This section discusses research done around the issue of transformation in South African schools after democracy. Special focus is given to schools in the Western Cape because the site of this research is in this province.

Flanagan, Sayed and Soudien (1992) looked at the notion of 'authority' within the schooling context. They contest the authoritative position of teachers and advocate working towards a critical pedagogy. Teachers need have to construct a pedagogy of relevance, which they maintain will help to dismantle the deep prejudices of Apartheid. Teachers need to create the space to allow dialogue on topics such as learners' identities, their ideas, their fears and anxieties. In so doing, they say, learners will become aware of their commonalities and differences.

Soudien (1998) investigated identity formation in Black African learners enrolled at a previously classified Coloured high school in a working class area in Cape Town. He stated that they experience ambivalent feelings of alienation and solidarity as they were invited inside the social order of the school and then shut out. This continual repositioning of these learners constituted identities of 'self' or 'other'. Soudien found that these learners remained subordinate, despite what (Giroux 1989 in Soudien 1998: 8) avers the project of modernity is, namely, to homogenise all the learners at their school. These learners were constantly reminded of their inferior status because of them being Black (Soudien 2001: 324). They learnt to live with the racism around them (not accept it) because they saw their attendance at a Coloured school as a way out of their impoverished, disadvantaged township life and as a gateway into middle class modernity (Soudien 1998: 25). The situation remained unchanged at this school when this researcher returned in 2000 to do follow up research.

Kapp (2000) found in her research conducted in a Black African township school in Cape Town, that the learners would prefer to take English rather than their mother tongue. As inhabitants of an ever-changing and globalised world, they want to learn English because they see it as a language of empowerment that will give them entry into this globalised world.

Soudien (2001) refers to research done during the early 1990s in a formerly classified Coloured school in a middle class area in Cape Town. The learners at this school were politically motivated and protested against Apartheid's racial labelling. However, when Soudien returned to this school in 2000, the position had changed – the learners were no longer politically motivated to have a strong non-racial stance. In fact, there was a tendency for these learners to stress their Colouredness.

The research carried out by Sekete et al. (2001) for the Human Sciences Research Council on the process of deracialisation shows that in spite of legislation and policies that were instituted to accelerate change and support schools, schools display a limited capacity to deal with change. These researches are of the opinion that there seems to be a “change overload” or fatigue in the schools, despite the seeming nobility of the causes (Sekete et al. 2001: 74). They recommend that the Department of Education should introduce official policies, practices and strategies to empower schools, particularly management structures, to shift from “the business as usual” approach that many schools follow and that would cater for the increasingly diverse learner populations.

One of the eight schools where Tihanyi (2006) investigated integration was a Coloured Afrikaans-medium secondary school in Cape Town with a 70-30% Coloured to Black learner population. She described this school as “internally segregated” and not “integrated” because the Xhosa learners experienced division socially, curricularly and physically. They were taught in separate classes because they had very little Afrikaans proficiency and spoke only English besides their African mother tongue. The school did not offer an African language (because of financial constraints). Language was a source of conflict, suspicion, accusations and fights. During intervals, the learners segregated into their racial groupings. This researcher found that the divisions, negative stereotyping and prejudices experienced in the surrounding community between the Black and Coloured members made their way into the school classroom. Many of the Coloured learners were overtly racist and in many cases, it was because they saw staff members expressing racism towards the Black learners. She too

found that an “othering” takes place and that the Black African learners are aware of their “othered” status. Coloured learners and staff members at the school focus on the differences that set the Black African learners apart in order to maintain legitimacy over what they see as “their” school.

Soudien’s (2007) shows that even though there are some schools where learners’ identities reflected “deep continuities” of the Apartheid era there are others where the more privileged learners are developing a “cross-racial identity” together with a sense of possibility and moral well-being for South Africa. However, the concept of race remains in the way they see themselves and in their relationships.

## **2.8 The missing link?**

The afore-mentioned studies are some of the many that have been carried out to ascertain the state of transformation in schools. My study hones in on a particular dynamic that has not been studied in depth in a post Apartheid South African context, namely, the experience of Black African learners in a predominantly Coloured school environment on the Cape Flats. In doing this, I am trying to flesh out the need identified by Hemson (2006: 35), who argues that research needs to address not simply Black-White racial dynamics, but intra-Black racial dynamics in social justice research.

To achieve the research goals, the following main question was posed: what are the Xhosa mother tongue learners’ experiences of race in a predominantly Coloured school in Mitchells Plain, Cape Town, in 2004 and 2006?

This led to the following sub questions.

- i. What experiences do the Xhosa mother tongue learners have of racial discrimination?
- ii. To what extent do they identify experiences of racial discrimination?
- iii. To what extent do they report feeling included or excluded?
- iv. What do these learners themselves say they aspire to in terms of their positioning within the school?
- v. To what extent do the teachers reflect consciously on their practice?
- vi. To what extent do teachers reflect on how discriminatory practice/s may be present in their teaching?
- vii. What pedagogical practices and school organisation may contribute to racial marginalisation?

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

This is an empirical study which attempts to investigate what the experience and perceptions of the minority Xhosa learners is – the extent of exclusion or inclusion – in a majority Coloured high school and how they make sense of it. My research design is a longitudinal assessment divided into three phases: (i) August 2003 (ii) June – July 2004 (iii) April and August 2006.

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 93) explain that longitudinal studies are designed to permit observations over an extended period. They allow the researcher to describe a process occurring over time and will enable the researcher to make observations at different points in the process. Panel studies, one method employed in a longitudinal assessment, examines the same set of people each time. This allows for comprehensive data on changes or patterns over time. These writers point out that the problem with this type of study is that some of the respondents studied in the first wave of the survey may not participate in later waves. Despite this drawback, they aver that approximate conclusions can be drawn about processes that take place over time, even when cross-sectional data is available on the basis of simple logic, inference and asking people to recall their pasts (ibid : 95-96).

As a teacher researcher, I was in a position to carry out a longitudinal study, which enabled me to follow up my research group, the Xhosa learners in grade 8 to grade 12, over time, noting changes in the phenomenon of interest with time (Terre Blanche 1999: 561).

The reasons for the three discrete phases (as mentioned in the first paragraph) and not a continuous ethnographic account were varied:

- i. Firstly, the initial study, which took place in my classroom and took the form of a semi-structured questionnaire and informal interviews with a sample of Xhosa learners from grade 8 to grade 12, raised my awareness to the need for a more in-depth research.

- ii. The second phase took place in the middle of 2004 once I had decided on my research problem for my dissertation. The participant observation took place in my classroom mostly, but also included observation during intervals on the playground and at events and outings that included the entire school population. Hitcock and Hughes (1989: 55) aver that what the ethnographer does in the field is for the most part dictated by the nature of the social organisation of the field itself, and the nature of the composition of the group being studied. An important reason for restricting most of my observation to my own classroom was that I did not want to put my respondents in a precarious situation or subject them to what Mouton (2001: 106) refers to as “oversurveying”.
- iii. The last snap shot was done in April and August in 2006, when I returned to the site, not as a participant observer but as an observer, having left the staff of my site at the end of the 2004 academic year. In terms of my research, this can be viewed as an advantage, because as (Hitcock and Hughes 1989: 55) point out, an element of strangeness or distance is an important dimension of ethnography.

## **3.2 Research Approach**

This study drew on a qualitative approach.

### **3.2.1 Qualitative Approach**

The word qualitative implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are not rigorously examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 4). Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasise the value-laden nature of enquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 270) aver that the primary goal of studies using this approach is describing and understanding rather than explaining human behaviour.



The purpose of qualitative research is to investigate the behaviour and perceptions of participants in a natural situation where there is no manipulation of conditions or experience. Much of qualitative research describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. Qualitative researchers collect data by interacting with selected persons in their settings and by obtaining relevant documents and attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: 2).

Understanding is acquired by analysing the many contexts of the participants' perspectives and by narrating their meanings. Participants' meanings include their feelings, beliefs, ideals, thoughts and actions. Qualitative researchers prefer to use categories and concepts used by the participants themselves as a further attempt to stay true to the meanings of the participants themselves (Babbie and Mouton 2001: 271-273).

Qualitative methods also allowed the researcher to engage in open-ended, inductive exploration in situations where it is difficult to say what the variables are, which ones are important, or how to measure them (Terre Blanche et al. 1999: 272). They allow for categories, themes and patterns to come from the data (Jannesick cited in Denzin & Lincoln 1994). The data is not grouped into predetermined categories, but rather "what becomes important to analyse emerges from the data itself, out of the process of inductive reasoning" (Maykut and Morehouse 1994: 127).

A final reason for choosing mainly a qualitative approach is echoed in the viewpoint of Bolster (1983) cited in (Maxwell 1996: 21). Bolster (1983) makes the argument that one of the reasons for the lack of impact of educational research is that it has largely been quantitative, which he avers does not connect with a teacher's experience of every day classroom realities. He argues for a qualitative approach that emphasises the perspective of teachers and the understanding of particular settings, as having far more potential for informing educational practitioners.

### 3.3 Data Collection

#### 3.3.1 Site selection

The site for my research was the high school at which I had been an educator for twenty-six years. As a teacher, I had fallen prey to what Weil (1998: 27) calls a “form of pedagogical alienation” as I had uncritically accepted, or normalised my role as an agent of social conformity. However, I had been conscientised to interrogate my own teaching practices through an earlier minor investigation I did with some of the Xhosa learners in 2003. I was made aware, for the first time, of their experiences of exclusion. This came as a shock to me as it was a discourse that was not engaged in overtly or covertly, both by learners and educators, in the classroom or in the institution as a whole.

Weil (1998: 35) says that at a certain stage in education, the prevailing ideology and the larger social agenda become antagonistic and that the possibility for a paradigm shift within the individual can arise at this point. This was my experience. I became critical of my own pedagogy and started on my “new pedagogy of liberation” (ibid). My personal transformation had begun. However, to be a successful teacher I had to be conscious of what Weil (1998: 36) observed, namely that students can recognise and benefit by their teachers’ struggles, and can themselves begin to see the possibility of social change.

Critical pedagogues argue that school confers privilege and status on specific students from the dominant culture and, by doing so, “relegates to a subtle murmur the histories, aspirations, and goals of subordinate groups within society” (Weil 1998: 27). I was challenged to conduct a deeper research to find out to what extent (if any) issues of domination and subordination, marginalisation, inclusion and exclusion occur at the school in relation to all the minority Xhosa learners and how they experience and perceive it – how they make sense of this and how their understandings influence their behaviour (Maxwell 1996: 17).

### 3.3.2 Sample

The total learner population at my site numbered about one thousand one hundred learners and thirty-five educators. This number was impossible and impractical to work with. In selecting my sample, I was guided by my research problem. I chose, as my “key informants” (Hitchcock & Hughes 1989: 62), all the Xhosa mother tongue learners because the research centred around their perceptions and experiences. In addition, they averaged around fifty learners during my research period – a manageable sample. These learners were young adolescents distributed across grades from grade 8 to grade 12 and consisted of both male and female learners. For the research to be unbiased and balanced, I also interviewed five teachers and the principal of the institution. None of the teacher respondents were Xhosa mother tongue speakers; they were English or Afrikaans mother tongue speakers. Hitchcock & Hughes (1989: 61) alert teacher researchers against developing a too mechanistic view of the selection of informants and make them aware of the importance of recognising the existence of many voices in order to give the study validity.

The following table indicates the profile of the Xhosa learner participants:

Table 1: 2004 - Profile of the Participants according to Grade and Gender

Grade	Completed Questionnaires		Interviewed		Both Questionnaires and Interviews	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
8	1	1	3	1		
9	2	0	1	2		
10	6	5	7	4		
11	2	0	2	1		
12	0	1	1	0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Total Participants</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>22</b>		<b>10</b>	
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>34%</b>		<b>44%</b>		<b>20%</b>	

Table 2: 2006 - Profile of the Participants according to Grade and Gender

Grade	Completed Questionnaires		Interviewed		Both Questionnaires and Interviews	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
8	3	2	3	3		
9	3	2	1	5		
10	11	4	1	5		
11	4	5	2	2		
12	2	0	2	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total Participants</b>	<b>36</b>		<b>24</b>		<b>16</b>	
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>84%</b>		<b>56%</b>		<b>37%</b>	

Table 3: 2004 - Demographic Composition of the Advance High Learner Population

Grade	Xhosa	Coloured	Total
8	10	195	205
9	10	304	314
10	22	26	228
11	8	183	191
12	3	120	123
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1008</b>	<b>1061</b>

Table 4: 2006 - Demographic Composition of the Advance High Learner Population

Grade	Xhosa	Coloured	Total
8	7	211	218
9	7	245	252
10	19	253	272
11	6	221	227
12	4	100	104
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>1030</b>	<b>1073</b>

Table 5: 2006 - Profile of Participants Residential Areas and Primary Schooling

Black Township or Informal Settlement	Mitchell's Plain	Coloured School Only	Xhosa School Only	Xhosa School Foundation Phase; Coloured School Intermediate Phase
69.4%	30,6%	66.6%	19.4%	13.8%

### 3.3.3 Access

- i. All social research is governed by questions of access to people, information, and settings (Hitchcock & Hughes 1989: 58). Even though I had been an educator at my site for many years, I could not start my data collection without permission. However, being a long-standing member of staff was an advantage to my gaining access. My credibility and reputation for being fair in my dealings with my peers and the learners had been established. I had already built a degree of confidence, trust and rapport with my participants. However, I still had to approach management and explain what it was I intended to research, why and how I intended to do this. This I did, not only to gain permission, but more importantly, to gain support – to facilitate and foster good

field relations (Hitchcock & Hughes 1989: 59). The principal informed the educators about my research during an interval.

- ii. My site is a public educational institution and therefore I had to obtain permission from the head of the research department in the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). I was requested to write an abridged proposal before I was granted permission to carry out my research.
- iii. I called a meeting in my classroom during an interval, inviting all the Xhosa mother tongue learners to attend. Here I explained what my research was about and asked them for their co-operation and consent to use them as my research participants. However, being minors, I explained the necessity to secure permission from their parents or guardians as well. I handed them each a typed letter addressed to their parents or guardians in which I requested their written permission to use their children as participants. I explained to the learners that I would only be able to use the learners whose permission slips were signed by their parents and returned to me, which is what I did.

#### **3.3.4 The scope of this thesis**

This dissertation is limited to the study of the small group of Xhosa speaking children at one Coloured school on the Cape Flats. The intention is not to generalise to all sites of desegregated education, but to understand one thoroughly.

### **3.4 Data Collection Techniques**

Data was obtained from five sources:

- i. participant observation
- ii. interviews with learners
- iii. interviews with principal and educators
- iv. semi-structured questionnaires
- v. diaries of a few learners

“Triangulation” is defined by Denzin (1989: 236) as follows:

Triangulation, or the use of multiple methods, is a plan of action that will raise sociologists (and other social science researchers) above the personal biases that stem from single methodologies. By combining methods an investigators in the same study, observers can partially overcome the deficiencies that flow from one investigator or method.

(Babbie and Mouton 2001: 295)

These writers acknowledge that the best way to elicit the various and divergent constructions of reality that exist within the context of a study, is to collect information about different events and relationships from different points of view. This, they say, means asking different questions, seeking different sources, and using different methods (Babbie, Mouton et al. 2001: 277).

### **3.4.1 Participant Observer**

As a teacher researcher or participant observer, I recorded and described events and behaviours involving the respondents inside and outside the classroom, that is, made field notes. This was overt observation. I did experience an element of difficulty with this method of collecting data. Most of my observation took place in my own classroom. One of the main reasons for this was that because of the education department’s rationalisation process, the staff complement at my site was considerably reduced. This resulted in my very full time table. The school was not in the financial position to employ additional educators in governing body posts. It was logical for me to concentrate on observing the grade 10 Xhosa learners as I taught all the grade 10 English Primary Language classes. With regards to observation outside of my classroom, I was conscious not to subject my respondents to any unnecessary precarious situations and scrutiny by “over surveying” as I mentioned earlier in my dissertation. The possibility for this did exist because the school buildings have been cordoned off from the playing fields, with barbed wire fencing and gates, to protect the learners from outside influences. This limited the playground facilities and confined the large learner population to a very small, demarcated area.

Participant observation informed my understanding of the context and assisted in the analysis of the interview material, but I do not make specific references to this material in the dissertation.

### 3.4.2 Interviews

O'Connell Davidson and Layder (1994) aver that the interview can be seen as an opportunity to delve and explore with the goal to obtaining full and sincere responses to relatively open-ended enquiries. The interviewee is viewed as a reasoning, conscious human being to be engaged with and each interviewee and interview is accepted as different and individual. Charmaz (2006: 28) views interviewing as "open-ended yet directed, shaped yet emergent and paced yet unrestricted".

I chose this method because I had established a good rapport and a trusting relationship with the interviewees and was confident that they would disclose the truth. I was always aware of what O'Connell Davidson and Layder (1994) and Charmaz (2006) stress about the importance of establishing a comfortable atmosphere between interviewee and the interviewer. This allowed the dialogue between the interviewee and myself to flow, and created the space for my respondents to disclose their experiences and perceptions without feeling as if they were being interrogated. There were times when I was aware of the respondent's anguish when relating a painful experience. In such instances, I refrained from probing and asked if I could come back to that particular issue later. I was careful to round off these interviews with questions that elicited positive responses to foreground positive feelings in my respondent.

For qualitative researchers, control is an ambiguous issue. Glesne and Peshkin (1992: 82) cited in O'Connell Davidson & Layder (1994: 124 - 125) propound that even though the researcher maintains a dominant role that reflects his or her definition of the enquiry purpose, he or she is simultaneously submissive in this interviewer – interviewee relationship. Getting access, eliciting continued co-operation, how long the interview lasts, what is and is not discussed, are all crucial factors within the hands of the interviewee, and thus outside the control of the interviewer. These writers say that interviewers are not losing their objectivity, becoming partial or imposing a particular worldview on a respondent, rather they are using the interview as an opportunity to explore the subjective values, beliefs and thoughts of the individual respondent.



I conducted individual interviews as well as group interview with the learners. With the group interviews, I tried to ensure that they were not friends so that they would not influence each other's responses. I also conducted individual interviews with four of the educators and the principal of the school. The educators I chose represent different learning areas, age groups and vary in the number of years they have been teaching at my site. Some have been at the school for over twenty years whilst others have been there for six years.

### **3.4.3 Textual Analysis**

Charmaz (2006: 35-40) avers that all qualitative research entails analysing texts. This writer refers to elicited texts and extant texts.

#### **3.4.3.1 Elicited texts**

These involve research participants in producing written data in response to a researcher's request and thus allowing a means of generating data. I was able to obtain such data in three ways:

- i. semi-structured, open-ended questionnaires
- ii. diaries
- iii. by asking the staff at my site to fill in their responses to two questions I had written down on a staff list. (A staff list is an A4 size sheet on which the names of the teaching staff are listed alphabetically in a column against the left hand margin).

#### ***Semi-structured, open-ended questionnaires***

It was because of the answers that I received to semi-structured, open-ended questionnaires from some of the Xhosa speaking learners at my site in 2003 and again in 2004, and the coding and analysis that I did on these questionnaires that I decided to do a more in-depth study on the Xhosa learners' experiences and perceptions of inclusion and exclusion.

In a semi-structured questionnaire, questions are structured in such a manner to obtain open-ended responses to elicit respondents' ideas, thoughts and beliefs. This gives it validity.

For the data collection period in 2006, I had my volunteer respondents complete their open-ended questionnaires in the same classroom at the same time and in my presence. While there

is always the danger in researching that as the researcher you have authority, I feel it had minimal, if any, effect on the validity of this study. In terms of the way that I presented the study and the data handling, I was fairly certain that the respondents did not feel coerced to take a particular line. They sat in single desks, one behind the other and there was no communication allowed. This way, there would be no likelihood of them influencing each other's answers. The respondents' answers to the semi-structured questionnaires allowed me to see where I needed to focus my interview questions. They would also allow me to see the contrasts between my direct observation and my respondents' answers on what Charmaz (2006: 36) calls "the social psychological level". I asked the participants to write their name on the questionnaire, but assured them of anonymity. I will therefore also be able to compare the responses of the same learner who filled in two or all three questionnaires, besides being able to compare all the learners' answers. I allocated each respondent a unique number.

An advantage of participants filling in semi-structured questionnaires is that they allow for frank disclosures that they may not wish to make face-to-face with the interviewer. Participants can tell as much or as little about themselves as they wish. Another reason for me to use this type of data is confirmed by Charmaz (2006: 37) when she points out that "elicited texts work best when participants have a stake in the addressed topics, experience in the relevant areas, and view the questions as significant".

### ***Respondents' Diaries***

I handed out exercise books, which were to be used as diaries to fifteen respondents in grade ten during my 2004 data collection period. I explained to these volunteer participants that they needed to record their thoughts, feelings and ideas about events at school for a period of four months. I did ask them at regular intervals if they were doing their recordings consistently and they assured me they were. However, when I requested that the diaries be handed in, only eight were given to me. Although I made further appeals, the diaries were not forthcoming and so I decided not to pursue the issue.

### ***Staff Questionnaire***

I requested a typed staff list from the office at my site and was given one. On it, I wrote two questions and asked the teachers to respond to each by ticking "Yes" or "No" in the two columns provided for each of the questions. Question (i) Have you had any training, in-service or pre-service, at a teacher training college, university or university of technology in

any of the following areas: multicultural education, social justice education, intercultural education, anti-racism education ,diversity studies. Question (ii) If you have had no training in these areas, would you be willing to have training?

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Grounded theory was employed to analyse the data collected in this research. Strauss and Corbin (1990: 23) give their definition of grounded theory as follows:

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon.

Therefore, for these writers, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, and then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area of study is allowed to emerge.

Maxwell (1996: 33) agrees that this theory is grounded in the actual data collected, in contrast to the theory that is developed conceptually and then tested against empirical data. The purpose of grounded theory method, Strauss and Corbin (1990: 24) believe, is to build theory that is faithful to and illuminates the area under study and provides the hope for researchers that the theory's implications will have useful applications. Grounded theory is a scientific method for Strauss & Corbin (1990: 27) who vouch that if its procedures are employed carefully, the criteria for doing "good" science will be met. These criteria are: significance, theory-observation compatibility, generalizability, reproducibility, precision, rigor, and verification.

For Charmaz (2006: 2) grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves. For this writer, the guidelines offer a set of general principles and heuristic devices rather than formulaic rules. It is the data that forms the foundation of our theory and our analysis of these data generates the concepts we construct. Grounded theory provided me with the principles and guidelines that I could apply to learn what occurs in my research setting and what my participants' lives are like by studying how they explain their statements and actions, and asking what analytic sense I can make of them.

### 3.5.1 The analytical procedures/principles

#### *Step 1:listening and transcribing*

I listened to all the taped interviews before I had them all entirely transcribed. It was important to do so especially with those interviews done earlier in my research process because they alerted me to the types of in-depth questions I needed to ask in my follow up interviews. I listened to the taped interviews again before I started the coding process, following the advice of (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 31) who advise “listening as well as transcribing is essential for full and varied analysis”.

#### *Step 2:Close reading*

The second step involved me, the researcher, in close and repeated readings of the transcripts. This is a practice that Miles and Huberman (1994) see as an important step in the systematic procedure of qualitative data analysis. Reading gave me a sense of the issues arising from the data.

#### *Step 3:Coding*

Strauss & Corbin (1990) propose three types of coding when doing analysis in grounded theory. These are (i) open coding (ii) axial coding and (iii) selective coding.

What was important was that these different types of coding did not necessarily take place in stages. Therefore in a single coding session I could move between one form of coding and another. This allowed me to make use of my “creative capacities”(Strauss & Corbin 1990: 58) and to build my analysis “step-by-step from the ground up” (Charmaz 2006: 51).

#### *i. Open-coding:*

Strauss & Corbin (1990: 61) define this as “the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data”. This type of coding allowed me to take my “raw” data, read it and take apart each line, sentence, paragraph or observation and give each incident, idea, or event a name or label. In this way concepts were generated and developed in terms of their properties and dimensions. This was achieved by asking questions about my data and comparing the data for similarities and differences. Similar ideas, events and incidents were labelled and grouped to form categories (Strauss & Corbin 1990; Charmaz

2006). Charmaz (2006: 48-57) refers to this procedure as “initial coding”. Advocates of grounded theory assure the researcher that these techniques, thoroughly executed, will prevent or rectify any personal biases, assumptions and patterns of thinking.

## ***ii. Axial coding***

This type of coding is defined by Strauss & Corbin (1990: 96) as “a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories”. Here I was able to make connections between a category and its related subcategory by involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies and consequences in terms of the paradigm model (ibid: 114). That is, I developed each category (phenomenon) in terms of the conditions that gave rise to it, the specific dimensional location of this phenomenon in terms of its properties, the context, the action/interactional strategies used to handle, manage, respond to this phenomenon in light of that context, and the consequences of any action/interaction that was taken. Strauss & Corbin (1990) use conditions to answer the ‘why’, ‘where’, ‘how come’, and ‘when’ questions. In addition they use actions/interactions to answer ‘by whom’ and ‘how’ questions, and consequences answer questions of ‘what happens’ because of these actions/interactions. Axial coding also allowed me to look for additional properties of each category, and to note the dimensional location of each incident, happening, or event (Strauss & Corbin 1990).

## **3.5.2 Numbering and indexing of the respondents’ questionnaires and interviews**

The profile of the Xhosa learner respondents is shown in Tables 1-5. Each learner respondent was allocated a unique number. Each learner’s questionnaire was coded with their unique number followed by the letter “Q” (the symbol for questionnaire) and then the page number of their questionnaire. I coded each learner’s interview with the letter “I” which followed after their unique number and then the page of their transcribed interview. This made citing their responses easier to identify. Each teacher was also given a unique reference code, namely, teacher A,B,C,D,E followed by the page of their transcribed interview.

### **3.6 Limitations of the study**

This is a qualitative study. Only the Xhosa learners were used as respondents and no Coloured learners were included. In addition, six teachers were interviewed out of a staff complement of 35.

Although this dissertation recognises the interlocking nature of forms of oppression (Young 1990; 2000), namely, racism, sexism, gender, language, religion, culture and others, I have chosen in this thesis to focus on racism as being the key influence in the lives of learners I have studied. Reference to other axes of injustice or oppression is mentioned only when it seems pertinent to do so.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION: LEARNERS’ PERSPECTIVES**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The design of this study is longitudinal. This chapter presents the findings from the Xhosa learners’ questionnaires and interviews in 2004 and the follow up in 2006. Where themes came up as unchanged in both years they have been combined. If new categories emerged in 2006, they will be included at the end of the chapter.

To differentiate between the findings from the two sources of data collection, in this chapter, the term “respondents” is used to refer to those learners who filled in the questionnaire, the term “interviewee” is used for those who were interviewed and “sample” is used when referring to both. When quoting extracts from the participants’ data, the letter “I” refers to an interviewee and “Q” refers to a respondent.

Guided by the main question of this dissertation, this chapter focuses on four main themes. These are (4.1) processes of exclusion (4.2) processes of inclusion (4.3) aggregation and (4.4) aspiration of the Xhosa learners. Each main theme is grouped and discussed under sub themes.

#### **4.2 Processes of Exclusion**

The majority of the respondents, 67% in 2004 and 75% in 2006 indicated that they felt out of place at AH, “sometimes”. Their written responses to the related questions concerning their experiences of exclusion can be discussed under two sub themes:

- i. Discrimination
- ii. Languages.

### 4.2.1 Discrimination

In 2004, there were 44% of the respondents and several of the interviewees who reported that they were subjected to some type of discrimination. In 2006, the majority of the respondents and many of the interviewees reported similar experiences. The types of discrimination can be divided into the following categories:

#### *Name calling/labelling*

In 2004 and 2006 interviewees and respondents reported that they had been called derogatory names. The predominant label was “kaffir” (a term that took on a derogatory, racist connotation with reference to Black Africans during the Apartheid era). Other names that were used included “darkie”, “monkey” and “black mamba”. This name calling is substantiated by a learner who said:

They call us names like kaffir, [a derogatory, offensive term carried over from the racist Apartheid era] just because I’m a Black [Black African] which is not right (learner 3: page 18: 2004 I).

The victims, who were mostly females, responded in most instances by “ignoring” their perpetrators, other times by not taking the incident “seriously” or by retorting in “anger”. The females maintained that the culprits were mainly some of the older Coloured male learners who were often in groups. The victims feel insulted and offended and even though the majority choose to “just walk away”, there is an underlying sense of antagonism as seen in this learner’s reaction:

because I don’t like the name so I try to give them the name that I know they don’t like Okay let’s be honest, sometimes I also say, when they say kaffir, I say hotnot [ a derogatory name for Coloureds carried over from the Apartheid era](learner 19: page 19: 2004 I).

Many of these learners “feel bad” yet minimise or suppress the gravity of the incident by taking on the blame or rationalising it away in a similar way to this interviewee who recalled:

They call me kaffir, but I didn’t take it seriously because I know what kind of environment I was coming to in the first place (learner 57: page 2: 2004 I).



## *Prejudice*

Many respondents and interviewees in 2004 and in 2006 mentioned that they felt judged because of the colour of their skin and the texture of their hair. One learner had this to say:

Well we have experienced bad things at the school, being called bad names such as kaffar [kaffir], dakie [darkie] that we have cruase [kinky] hair. I mean it's very hurting our feelings. It makes us regret coming to school everyday. If only they [the Coloured learners] could learn to know us then things would be better (learner9: Q 12: 2006).

Another respondent recorded :

Some of them judge you by the colour of your skin and your culture and make fun of you (learner 4: Q 1 : 2004).

The more outspoken learners were more specific and stated that they believed they are prejudiced because they are "Blacks". Some of these learners' first experience of their high school was discriminatory.

My first experience at AH was not as fun as I thought it would be, because the first day a boy approached me and said we Blacks don't belong in their schools. We need to go to Khayelitsha because AH is for Coloureds only (learner 2: Q 10: 2004 ).

## *Classroom relationships*

Other types of prejudices and experiences of exclusion pertaining to classroom dynamics that were reported about included the following: "the other people ignore me", "they don't want to sit next to me", "they won't share things with me" and "they don't talk to me when I tried to be heard". Another way in which some learners experience prejudice in the classroom is:

When the teacher asks a question and you get it wrong, they will call you names and laugh at you (learner 9: Q 12: 2006).

So, for many of the Xhosa learners the classroom environment is unfriendly and unwelcoming. Many feel that they do not belong and as one learner said:

It makes me feel like I'm not part of the class.

### ***Ridicule and humiliation***

Many of the learners in 2004 and 2006 reported that they, as individuals, their language, and/or culture were being made fun of. This phenomenon which takes various forms, takes place mostly in the classroom, but it also happens outside of the classroom. Many times their Xhosa accent is mimicked, as this grade 11 learner experienced:

No-one really respects our language. People make fun of us, of how we speak. They just go mndngn (clicks) like the only way we sound when we speak to them  
(learner 28: page 38: 2006 I).

These and other demeaning experiences make these learners feel marginalised and unwanted. This comes through clearly in this reply:

Students make fun of you, showing you that you don't belong here (learner 57: Q 17: 2004).

### ***Stereotyping***

Some of the Xhosa learners believe that stereotyping and bias occur at school as a result of socialisation. One grade twelve respondent quite astutely stated:

They [the Coloured learners] act like this maybe because of what they heard from their friends, family and whoever (learner 55: Q 18: 2004).

Other Xhosa learners were of the opinion that negative stereotyping in the media contributes to prejudice and suspicion of them at school. Others thought that it was the Coloured learners' ignorance about Xhosa culture, together with limited intercultural activities and cross racial interaction at school that intensified this stereotyping:

They [the Coloured learners] only know the negative side, they do not know the positive side of our culture. They only know about the Sangomas and the witches (learner 18: page 24: 2004 I).

### ***Intimidation***

The majority of male Xhosa learners experience and interpret marginalisation in a different way to most of the females. Their feelings of anxiety and fear are a result of intimidation by, and anti-social behaviour of some of the Coloured male learners. One male mentioned:

I was scared because they said there were a lot of gangsters here [at AH]. You don't know if they're going to attack you or take your money . . . and make [play] jokes to [on] you (learner 53: page 2: 2004 I).

Some male learners were subjected to mistreatment, but refer to it as "bullying". What seems to happen is that as the males grow in physical stature, are promoted to senior grades and become better known at school, these episodes of "bullying" diminish. This is shown in the following remark:

So from grade 8 there are people who are bullies, so we are scared of them, so in the years, maybe last year, we had no problem at the school because almost everybody we know (learner 20: page 3: 2004 I).

There are some boys, usually senior males who are in denial. At first they could not recall any humiliating or offensive experience, but further into the interview, they would relate an incident, but with the attitude that it was not an issue for them.

Like sometimes my [Coloured] friends do sometime go to racist remarks but we play, you see, so if they should say something, I will retaliate some other time.

When asked if he was not offended, he replied:

No, I don't take it personally (learner 9: page 33: 2006 I).

### *Cliquishness*

94% and 90% of the respondents in 2004 and 2006 respectively, indicated that they have friends from other cultures at school. However, in both years of data collection the research observed that the Xhosa learners sat together in same-race groups during intervals, in class and stood around in groups before school. Many of them travel home together after school using public transport or private taxis. There is little evidence of cross racial friendships on the school campus.

In the interviews many interviewees acknowledged that they do not sit or play with learners from other cultures but said "we sit in groups but as Blacks". When asked by the researcher if they had Coloured friends at school they replied that they did. When probed further they acknowledged that they did not visit each other at home or socialise outside of school. When

asked why this was the case, some of the learners articulated about our country's racialised past and because of socialisation. One Grade 11 learner made the following remark:

We can try to think that we can live with that [integrated], but it will never happen. In their minds they will always say she is Black, or she is Coloured or she is White (learner 28: page 9: 2006 I).

### *Silencing*

More than half in the sample in both years said they participate only "sometimes" in the lessons in class. Among the reasons given for their non-participation was that they were afraid of being ridiculed and mocked:

When a teacher asks a question and you get it wrong, they [the Coloured learners] will laugh at you and call you names (learner 9: Q 12: 2006).

Other learners mentioned that their accent was mimicked. They used expressions like "they talk after me" to explain this. They therefore did not feel free to take part in lessons because they felt self-conscious. This self-consciousness is evidenced in this reply:

Because I am Black and I'm normally sitting back and I feel that if I answer wrong I will be the laughing stock. So I just keep quiet (learner 57: page 11: 2004 I).

### *No place of refuge*

In 2004, there were 44% of the respondents and in 2006 there were 30% who indicated that they spoke to "nobody" from the official structures of AH about any problems they experience there. Some interviewees viewed the Representative Council of Learners (RCL), the student representative organisation, as unhelpful because "they don't do their work . . . there's no role that they play" (learner 15: page 14: 2006 I). Others choose not to report any nasty incidents or discuss their problems with teachers because they feel that some teachers treat the incidents very lightly and therefore these learners feel that it is a fruitless exercise.

An interviewee recalled a teacher's dealing with a perpetrator as follows:

Don't do it again. So I thought it was useless to just go and tell someone (learner 28: page 39: 2006 I).

A few learners spoke about a time when they had reported an incident to an educator but the educator said “she had nothing to do about it” (learner 40: page 5: 2006 I).

### ***Exclusion of Xhosa cultural activities***

The majority in the sample felt that there was not enough exposure of their Xhosa culture at AH. They feel alienated and overlooked when they are not given the opportunity to participate in functions at school.

At assembly you only see Coloured children in front doing their thing and I want African children and Coloured children to do their thing together – like dancing, singing and acting together (learner 26: Q 3: 2004).

Many in the sample also felt that the Coloured learners’ ignorance of their Xhosa culture leads to ridiculing and stereotyping.

## **4.2.2 Languages**

Afrikaans and Xhosa were the languages that presented the most problems for the Xhosa learners in 2004 and 2006.

### **4.2.2.1 Afrikaans**

Afrikaans was a major problem for 39% of respondents in 2004 and 70% in 2006. The main reason they give is that “Afrikaans is too difficult”. Many say they cannot speak or write the language because the only time they come into contact with the language is in the Afrikaans class. They have a problem with some of the Afrikaans educators who “only talk Afrikaans”, who “do not translate in English” and insist “you must talk Afrikaans [only throughout the lesson] and I can’t talk Afrikaans”. Many learners are made to feel self-conscious and embarrassed when the teacher insists on such practices.

When we Xhosa’s talk Afrikaans, they turn to laugh at you instead of helping you (learner 25: Q 10: 2004).

### **4.2.2.2 Xhosa as mother tongue instruction**

Most of the learners in the sample (61% in 2006) prefer not to be taught in their mother tongue. One of the main reasons given was that most of them had attended Coloured primary schools from Grade 1 where their language of instruction was English, Afrikaans was their

additional language and Xhosa was not offered. They view Xhosa as “difficult” and “complicated”. They are able “to speak Xhosa but not read and write it.” The general view was similar to this learner’s who commented:

They [the parents] couldn’t take me back to a Black school because I would fail all my subjects. I could talk Xhosa but I couldn’t write or read it (learner 57: page 29: 2004 I).

28% of the respondents in 2006 believed that having Xhosa as their language of learning and teaching would limit their job opportunities.

You don’t get a lot of opportunities in Xhosa language. Everywhere you have to speak English and Afrikaans (learner 15: Q 15: 2006).

#### **4.2.2.3 Xhosa as a learning area**

52% of the respondents in 2004 and 55% in 2006 felt that Xhosa should be offered as a learning area for the entire learner population at AH. Many felt that if the Coloured learners could speak and understand Xhosa they would be less suspicious of them. They would stop thinking that the Xhosa learners are “gossiping” about them and would be more respectful of the Xhosa language and culture.

### **4.3 Processes of Inclusion**

The participants’ experiences of inclusion can be discussed under the following categories:

- i. educators
- ii. group work
- iii. extra mural activities
- iv. choice of school.

#### **4.3.1 Educators**

The same percentage, 39% of the respondents in 2004 and 2006, indicated that they “never” find it difficult to understand lessons taught in class. Teachers are described as helpful, caring and encouraging. One respondent said:

Some teachers they try to make it better for us and [make us] feel that we are part of the AH family (learner 22: Q 14).

Many Xhosa learners compliment some of their teachers who they say:

Explain the work and if you don't understand the work then you are free to ask so that the teacher can explain it again (learner 34: Q 17: 2006).

Some praised teachers for "having a high rate of passing with students" whilst others said "teachers are trying their best to make us achieve our goals".

#### **4.3.2 Group work**

94% of the respondents in 2004 and 82% in 2006 said they would join other cultures for group work in class. In this forum they could "mix with other cultures", "get to know more about each others culture, and "make friends with other children." They also view this pedagogical practice as an academic opportunity to share "knowledge", "opinions", "ideas", "perspectives", "different skills". They also feel that they could be free to express their ideas and "listen to others' points of view".

One respondent reported as follows:

I prefer joining learners from [different] cultures. It's much more fun and enjoyable than to be in a culture you are from because you won't ever concentrate, you will be talking about other things (learner 24: Q 12: 2004).

#### **4.3.3 Extramural activities**

Especially the males view sport as a unifying factor. Many chose to attend AH because of its good reputation in the different sports codes. Playing soccer for the school team is seen as an opportunity to be included and accepted, as this learner shows:

When we started there was a lot of Coloureds there [trying out for the team]. There was only two Xhosa people there so I wasn't free, . . . but at the end of the season, it was just we together, chommies, chommies [friends] we play (learner 21: page 10: 2004 I).

Not many Xhosa learners participate in sports codes at AH. One reason given is that they have a problem with transport.

The grade 12 learners speak positively about their experiences at the matric camp. These camps are organised by the school annually and are held in the first term. One interviewee remarked:

I went to the matric camp and I didn't feel like I was Black. I don't look at myself as Black. I just see everybody as people. So they treat me the same. We played games together, we did everything together (learner 22: page 12: 2004 I).

Those Xhosa learners who can afford the camp view it as enjoyable because interaction and integration between the racial groups takes place, barriers are broken down and they feel free to be themselves. One learner suggested that the school should organise camps for the rest of the school as well.

#### **4.3.4 Choice of high school**

This category is included in this section because the Xhosa learners view choosing AH as being advantageous for them. Two main reasons were given in 2004 and 2006 for the parents or the learners themselves choosing AH as their preferred high school. The most prominent reason was that AH offered English as the language of learning and teaching. The other reason was the opinion that AH could offer them a good standard of education. Thirty one percent of the respondents in 2006 recorded that with English they can "go far" and "have a job". Many enrolled at AH to "have more education", "get a better life" and "better education". The quality of teaching and teachers' ability were rated higher at AH than those in the township schools.

This is what one interviewee said:

Here at AH we are more fortunate. Because the type of education I get here, it's better compared to those there [in the township]. The teachers, I am not criticising other schools now, but I am saying this, the school I am now at, it's better when I compare like the education, they get there (learner 91: page 32: 2006 I).



## **4.4 Aspirations of the Xhosa learners**

There is a sincere desire in the majority of the Xhosa learners to feel included in every aspect of the institutional culture at their school. Their aspirations can be divided into the following categories (i) community (ii) cultural activities (iii) extramural activities (iv) dialogue.

### **4.4.1 Community/family**

Many want to get to know the Coloured learners on a more intimate level and not just around “school related work”. A recurring theme is the desire to “belong as members” of the school community:

I want to be friends and be a part of family, not fighting. To make us good learners in Advance High good family (learner 35: Q 18: 2006).

Having “respect” for one another and for one another’s language and culture was a priority for many. Some wanted more opportunities to share commonalities. A grade 11 learner recorded his desire to:

Spend more time together and get to know each other more better for example what our likes and dislikes, our favourite sports and maybe we will share something in common and have a special bond and become best friend (learner 30: Q 39: 2006).

Many desired to have at least one Xhosa teacher on the staff. A few maintained that “there are many [Coloured learners] in our school who would like to know our language”. They therefore suggested that Xhosa should be introduced as a subject as well.

### **4.4.2 Dialogue**

Many of the learners felt the need to “sit down and debate about all these things”, referring to issues which caused their exclusion. One learner wrote:

I would like us Blacks and Coloureds to be more friendly. We must fight this racism and live a happy life (learner 33: Q 16: 2006).

There is a need expressed for forums where issues around marginalisation and other types of injustices can be discussed and explained. This learner made the following plea:

They can tell me what did Blacks do to them (learner 25: Q4: 2004).

#### **4.4.3 Extramural activities**

Many of the respondents believed that going on more excursions, field trips, camps and attending relevant workshops would foster better intercultural and cross-racial relationships. A grade 11 learner claimed that the reason why many of the Coloured learners act badly towards the Xhosa learners was because they do not explore the world outside of their immediate geographical location and therefore have narrow mindsets.

Because you find some people who are always here in Mitchell's Plain. They don't go anywhere, so they don't explore the outside world. They don't mix, they just stay with Coloured people, and they don't get out to something new (learner 22: page 12: 2004 I).

#### **4.4.4 Cultural activities**

There is a definite desire to see the status of their Xhosa culture improved at AH. Many are waiting for opportunities to showcase their talent, through traditional dancing, songs, art, dramas and cuisine. They want to have an "intercultural day" at least once a month where learners would be given the opportunity to interact and learn about each others' cultures. This learner desired:

Interacting through practising other cultures, e.g. having a learning session where a learner introduces and explains his/her culture, language (learner 22: page 12: 2004 I).

All their aspirations can be summed in the words of this learner.

I just want what is best for all of us (learner 12: Q 1: 2004 I).

## **4.5 New categories that emerged in 2006**

Two categories that emerged in 2006 under the theme of exclusion were (i) educators and (ii) intragroup fighting.

### **4.5.1 Educators**

In 2004 the Xhosa learners had mainly praise and admiration for most of their educators. There was no overt criticism against their teachers. In 2006 learners were more verbal about those teachers who contributed to their experience of exclusion. A few interviewees related how they were told not to attend certain teachers' classes. Attempts to resolve issues through the office proved fruitless. Many times these learners seem to think they are being prejudiced because of their race as this learner recorded:

Teachers not understanding you because you are a Xhosa (learner 15: Q 15: 2006).

In other instances some teachers are overtly racist.

Some teachers when we don't understand the lesson in the class, they say why can't we go in Xhosa school. That makes me feel angry. (learner 35: Q 18: 2006).

Two senior learners made reference to the change in staff members that was taking place at AH. A grade 11 respondent's concern was that new staff members were not acquainted with some of their "problems". The other grade 12 learner remarked that she would not choose AH again if she had the choice.

Just that now school, I must say that most of the good teachers are gone, so I wouldn't come back (learner 23: page 26: 2006 I).

### **4.5.2 Intragroup fighting – tension between Xhosa learners**

One focus group of female learners brought up the issue around conflict and tension among the Xhosa learners themselves.

Interviewee: It's not just the Coloureds, even our colour.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Interviewee: Some Xhosa learners, they are very rude you see. Lolly and all of us sit together and then they say we hold ourselves better . . . We think we're better than them. We call ourselves first class and they are second class. And because we have Coloured friends . . It's like Oooo just because you speak English now you think you're Coloured (learner 2 : page 20 : 2006 I).

This group of females also recalled being “attacked by them [their Xhosa intimidators] in [at] the bus stop, for nothing”.

## **4.6 Discussion of Xhosa Learners' Perspectives**

### **4.6.1 Marginalisation**

The majority of the Xhosa participants feel marginalised or excluded at some stage of their stay at AH. Their responses to the questionnaires and/or interviews reflect experiences of marginalisation and exclusion, not merely perceptions of these occurrences. According to Young (1990; 2000) these learners are being oppressed.

The examples stated by these learners seem to show that many are subjected to subtle, “covert” acts of racial and other types of discrimination to varying degrees. This confirms what Goodman (2001) observed, namely, that the degree of oppressive actions and experiences can vary. These acts that the Xhosa learners are subjected to can be described as “covert” because so few incidents have been reported and taken up officially by the institution. However, this does not mean that they do not take place openly.

A few of the participants were outspoken enough to view and name some of these acts as “racist” acts, but many more tend to downplay the incidents and almost make excuses for the behaviour enacted against them. They seem to blame themselves unconsciously, for knowing about or anticipating the situation, and the kind of (mis)treatment they could be subjected to, yet still chose to attend a Coloured high school. The majority of the Xhosa learners choose to walk away from or ignore the hurtful incidents enacted against them. Their acceptance of mistreatment, according to Goodman (2001: 51) and Adams et al. (1997: 12-13 and 21-22) is a result of “internalised oppression”. This is what Tatum (1999: 25) says subordinates do in

an oppressive environment as means of survival and to avoid physical harm. The failure to challenge the dominants' mistreatment is what Hardiman and Jackson (1997: 22) refer to "subordinate collusion". This however, does not mean that the Xhosa learners are not affected by, or accede to the mistreatment.

In the 2006 findings many more learners gave voice to their feelings of hurt, pain, embarrassment and disapproval of the discriminatory acts perpetrated against them. Also some learners not only voiced their anger, but intimated that if they were to be subjected to continual or repeated discrimination, they would retaliate physically.

Why are these incidents not reported to the official structures at the school so that they can be dealt with? One other possible reason why they do not report their mistreatment is what the data revealed, namely, that the Xhosa learners have no confidence in the official structures. None of the respondents make use of school management, educators or RCL members to talk about problems that they encounter at school. Adams et al. (1997: 12-13 and 21-22) and Bell (2001: 15) explain that members of a subordinate group's "internalised oppression" will not effectively challenge the status quo because of a sense of resignation, isolation and powerlessness.

The findings also reveal that it is only "some" of the Coloured learners who are the perpetrators of hurtful behaviour towards the Xhosa learners and it is "mostly boys" who carry them out. These boys may act alone, but in most instances they act in groups. Also, their victims are the Xhosa female learners in the majority of incidents.<sup>5</sup> Many of the participants agree that most of the Coloured learners "are fine" with them, meaning that the Xhosa learners feel that they are treated adequately fairly by the Coloured learners. One interviewee quantified this treatment with the remark, "I would say 23% of the children from our school are still racism [racist] and the 75% are right".

The way in which the male and female participants perceive and experience discrimination is for the most part different. Most of the males in the sample said they had not been subjected to acts of hurtful discrimination, racial or other. However, during their interviews, it came to the fore that they had been, but they down play these occurrences and tend to turn them into

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<sup>5</sup> This study did not do an in depth analysis of the impact of sexism on the participants, but acknowledges the need for such a study.

something that boys do when they are fooling around. It is taken more like teasing rather than serious exchanges. It would seem that their masculinity in some way does not allow them to acknowledge their hurt or inner pain – a kind of macho way of dealing with the incidents. These can be described as types of self-protective mechanisms in which they deflect the hurtful behaviours that they encounter from some of the Coloured boys. Discrimination is less blatant or less overt with the male Xhosa learners than with their female counterparts. The males seem to be more aware of and therefore more afraid of what they view as anti-social behaviour of the learners around them – behaviour like fighting, stealing, smoking, drug-taking, vandalism and intimidation. Also, there are fewer Xhosa males than females at the school and these males are very conscious that they are very much in the minority compared to the large number of Coloured males.

The female participants internalise their experiences of discrimination. They tend to suppress their hurt, pain, embarrassment and ridicule. They feel the pain and hurt but in most instances ignore or walk away. In some instances, when they tried to rationalise with their perpetrator or perpetrators, they were scoffed at or laughed at, and consequently gave up the effort.

#### **4.6.2 Educators**

There are educators at AH who, when confronted with a racial incident in the classroom or approached with one by a Xhosa learner, brushed it off. These reactions and the respective educators' attitudes contribute to these learners' loss of faith and confidence in the educators' ability as a whole to resolve problems they experience at school. There could be many reasons for the educators' lack of responsiveness. One possible explanation can be deduced from the educator survey done in 2006. This survey found that 74% of the educators at the school had not received any pre-service or in-service training in diversity studies, multicultural education, social justice education, anti-racism studies and intercultural communication, neither had they attended any workshops dealing with any of these issues. This could indicate that many educators do not know how to deal with controversial issues of a racial nature, human rights issues or incidents involving diversity. They therefore brush such occurrences off. Goodman (2001) and bell hooks (1989) give another possible explanation for teachers' inaction. These writers maintain that because there is denial amongst privileged groups that injustice and oppression exist, they are unable to recognise

that their inaction perpetuates the injustices. However, the survey also revealed that ninety one percent of the staff desired to undergo training in one or more of the above-mentioned courses to obtain the necessary skills which they view as being of benefit to their pedagogy.

### **4.6.3 Languages**

#### **4.6.3.1 Afrikaans**

An increasing number of learners experience Afrikaans as a barrier and a major contributor to their experience of exclusion. It is their additional language, yet they only engage with it in their Afrikaans class and not at home. They find it difficult linguistically. When their Afrikaans educator conducts the lesson speaking in Afrikaans only, these learners feel even more excluded. They cannot understand what is being said and therefore what is being taught. They are subject to humiliation and ridicule when an educator is unaware of, or insensitive to, their dilemma and insists that they also converse in Afrikaans only. This educator may be of the opinion that this pedagogical practice is helpful and will improve the Xhosa learners' proficiency. However, for many of these learners, it makes them more self-conscious of their inability to handle the language in comparison to the Coloured learners in the class. Many of the Xhosa learners therefore do not participate in the lesson which sometimes leads to confrontation with the educator, because the educator may interpret this as lack of interest in Afrikaans.

Many of the Xhosa learners therefore choose not to attend their Afrikaans classes. This can be described as a type of "resistance" according to Tatum (1997: 26), who explains that it is one way in which targeted students rebel against "othering".

When the Afrikaans educator is sensitive to these learners' struggle with the language and is more sympathetic and patient and gives them individual attention during the lesson and remediation during intervals, then these learners respond more positively. The motivation factor of the educator seems to have a more positive effect on the Xhosa learners. They feel more included in the Afrikaans class. These teachers show that for a learner to be motivated, there must be respect and understanding for the backgrounds and circumstances of all learners. This verifies the importance of culturally responsive teaching, that Wlodkowski and

Ginsberg (1995: 18-19) maintain must happen for effective teaching and learning to take place.

#### **4.6.3.2 Xhosa**

Despite Afrikaans being a problem for many of the participants, many are of the opinion that Afrikaans will get them further in life than Xhosa, their mother tongue, will. They are of the view that learning in Xhosa would be disadvantageous because they perceive Xhosa to be less valued or less important in terms of life opportunities and the job market in comparison to Afrikaans and English. They, however, do value their mother tongue. Despite the fact that the majority have not received any mother tongue instruction at school level, they want to keep Xhosa alive as part of their daily lives and want it included in their scholastic life. They are of the opinion that it can be used as a unifier and as a communication tool to bring about their desired integration with the Coloured learners at school. This for them would be one way of elevating the status of their mother tongue. They believe that if Xhosa is introduced at even the conversational level, then the Coloured learners will learn to value, appreciate and respect the Xhosa language. Many participants believe that if the Coloured learners are able to understand Xhosa, this will help to eradicate the suspicion caused when the Xhosa learners speak to each other in their mother tongue.

#### **4.6.4 Choice of school**

The main reasons given for choosing AH as their high school were that AH offered English as the language of learning and teaching, and that this school could offer them what they believed was a good standard of education, in relation to what they believed they would receive in a Black township high school. These factors, they felt, would offer them a better chance of obtaining employment, which many felt would give them a better chance of succeeding in life. This research finding is similar to Kapp's (2000) research done in a Black African township school in Cape Town, that found that the Black learners would prefer to take English rather than their mother tongue, because they see it as a language that will bring them advancement and success in a globalised world.



#### **4.6.5 Aggregation**

There is a need for the participants to aggregate in their same-race groups during interval, in the classroom and on school outings. One of their main needs is to keep in touch with their mother tongue. They only speak Xhosa to one another when they are together. Grouping together seems to be one way in which they themselves can validate and value their mother tongue and affirm each other. It is something that they can claim is theirs. It gives them a feeling of ownership and empowerment. Speaking their mother tongue is important for their identity.

This self-segregation and unconscious decision to speak in their mother tongue can be interpreted in terms of what Tatum (1997: 60) calls “oppositional social identity”. This oppositional stance, she says, keeps the dominant group at a distance and also serves to protect the subordinate group’s identity from the psychological attack of racism. Young (2000:45) avers that subordinate group members self-segregate because in their groups they are visible to each other and their perspectives are appreciated. Outside of their groups they are made to feel invisible by the dominant group and marked as “Other”.

Aggregating into their same-race groups, the participants say, keeps them connected and provides a support structure for them. This verifies Tatum’s (1997: 62) conclusion that racial grouping is an important coping strategy because in the absence of a shared identity, individuals from a subordinate group may experience social isolation.

#### **4.6.6 Aspirations of the Xhosa learners**

There is a strong desire by the majority of the participants to be included, integrated, accepted and respected in what many of the Xhosa learners refer to as, “the AH family”. In this school community they want to be treated justly and have a sense of belonging, which for many is not their reality. These aspirations will be met, if the school develops a social justice ethos with a community-centred classroom paradigm because this type of classroom serves as the foundation for inclusion (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg 1995; Adams et al.1997; Goodman 2001; Nieto and Bode 2008).

# **CHAPTER 5**

## **STAFF PERSPECTIVES OF XHOSA LEARNER PARTICIPATION**

### **5.1 Inclusion and Exclusion: Principal's Perspective**

This section of the dissertation discusses the interview with the principal of the site of this research.

#### **5.1.1 School Policy**

The principal stated that the school had not been issued with any official policy or guidelines from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) regarding deracialisation when Xhosa learners first enrolled at AH in the 1990s, nor did the school formulate any of their own policies regarding this issue. The School Governing Body did not change any policies, including the language policy of the school which offered English as the language of learning and teaching, Afrikaans as the additional language and no Xhosa. It was the principal's opinion that the Xhosa learners "don't want to do Xhosa. They want to do English". The Xhosa learners had "no choice" but to "slot in" with the existing policies of the school.

#### **5.1.2 The involvement of the WCED**

The lack of guidelines and support from the WCED led to feelings of disempowerment, incompetence and inadequacy in the principal in relation to the Xhosa learners. The principal remarked, "They [the WCED] just assume that we will know how to handle it". The principal felt that the inability to communicate with the Xhosa learners in their mother tongue, either personally or through a Xhosa teacher, created a distance with these learners and that they felt discriminated against because of the absence of their home language.

WCED has made changes regarding language requirements for learner progression. The principal stated that learners are currently allowed to fail one of their languages whereas previously it was compulsory for learners to pass both English and Afrikaans.

### **5.1.3 Choice of high school**

The Xhosa learners find themselves in a somewhat precarious position regarding their choice of school and choice of language because, as the principal remarked, they “want to do English and want to slot in with our school as it is, because I think it is some kind of status for them to move away [from the township schools]”. These learners and their parents feel that if they attend a Coloured school “they will be better off”, but “sometimes it’s more problematic” because many have financial problems and transport difficulties. They arrive late for school or stay absent and this has an adverse effect on their academic progress. These Xhosa learners fall into two categories: those who have attended a Coloured primary school and cope better academically and “some of them (who) have never been at a Coloured school and now for grade 8 they actually struggle”.

### **5.1.4 Parental involvement**

Very few of the Xhosa parents get involved in the functioning of the school. However, there was one Xhosa father who served on the School Governing Body for a term of three years since the SGB has been established.

### **5.1.5 Integration**

There is acknowledgement from the principal that the formal structures of the school “may be failing them because they are in the minority” which makes it easier for the Xhosa learners to be overlooked and excluded from school activities. There is also an admission to this oversight and a desire to change these practices so that the Xhosa learners can participate in mainstream activities. The principal pointed out that in many instances the only inter-racial contact that the learners experience is in the classroom, and that the official time allocated for their exposure to relevant issues concerning diversity, that should be dealt with in the two learning areas, Life Orientation, and Arts and Culture, is not enough to bring about integration.

### **5.1.6 Racial incidents**

In reply to the question as to whether there are many reports on racial incidents at school, the reply was “No, not much”. An incident was recalled where a few Xhosa female learners who were described as “the more stronger” “cheeky kids” and who had the attitude of “we also have rights” challenged a situation involving an educator, but when given the chance to state their case and when shown respect, the situation was resolved. Generally though, the Xhosa learners “don’t speak up, maybe it’s because they are so few in class or they might not take it serious enough to come and complain about it.” Another possible reason offered for their silence was that “some of the others are a bit scared to come to the fore. If they are in a mass they will come but not on their own”. Because of the Xhosa learners’ silence, there is the perception that these learners have nothing to complain about, “So I don’t think the school setup gives them reason to complain”. The opinion of the principal regarding integration was, “it is part of their [the Xhosa] learners’ culture to stick with one another” but that there was definitely more integration happening at school. A few senior learners were mentioned as examples of being integrated.

### **5.1.7 Staff diversity training**

The principal was of the opinion that the entire school, staff and learners, should be involved in workshops on diversity, including anti-racism and that these workshops should not be only for “the circuit managers or for selected people from school”. There was also the opinion that if these diversity workshops and training were to be weighed up against all the other educational issues that need attention, then these workshops “become less important”.

### **5.1.8 Change overload**

An important observation is that the WCED is introducing “too much change” and “they [WCED] are tackling a host of things and nothing is done properly”. An area that needs serious attention at this school is the physical disrepair of the building as a result of recurrent burglaries, theft and vandalism. The principal had much praise and admiration for the educators who endeavour to give quality education to the learners at AH despite the depressing and dire circumstances and without much assistance from the WCED. The

principal pointed out that much of the day is taken up by having to deal with social issues involving the learners' anti-social behaviour inside and outside of the school. There is limited assistance provided by professional structures within the DoE because of shortage of staff and work-case overload.

## **5.2 Discussion of the principal's perspectives**

It would seem that the failure of the DoE to introduce official policy guidelines when deracialisation took place was an oversight with far-reaching consequences for the principal, staff and learners. This finding substantiates Kruss' (1997: 103) argument, that in the Western Cape there was no coherent plan put in place to deal with access to schools. The assumption by the DoE that the principal would know how to handle the process without guidelines or training, and that transformation and transition would take place automatically, placed the principal in a precarious position which fostered feelings of disempowerment, incompetence and inadequacy. This verifies what Carrim (1998) and Vandeyar (2003: 196) point out, namely, that without structured, national or provincial programmes to help teachers deal with diversity issues, the desired transformation will not take place. Furthermore, the principal commented on change overload, which verifies the findings of Sekete (2001: 74).

There is the admission from the principal of overlooking or failing the Xhosa learners, and the possible reason being that they are in the minority. The school is still viewed as a "Coloured" school and these Xhosa learners have to fit into the ethos of the school. Very little scope is given to these minority learners to participate in mainstream activities. Only a few matriculants, who were singled out as examples of learners who are more integrated, seem to be given an opportunity to participate. There is, however, an admission and recognition that the Xhosa learner population should be included more, that they too have an important contribution to make and that their cultural capital needs to be valued.

The situation at AH is similar to what Soudien (1998; 2001; 2007) found in his research at two Coloured high schools in the mid 1990s, namely, that assimilation, masked as multiculturalism, is practised. The dominant culture at AH is left untouched as the school community continues with its "business as usual" policies and practices (Goodman 2001; Adams et al.1997). Although there is the perception that the Xhosa learners have little to

complain about, indicating the obliviousness to and ignorance of social justice issues at AH, there is a desire to move away from a “colour-blind notion” and to see transformation at AH.

### **5.3 Inclusion and Exclusion: Teachers’ Perspectives**

This section discusses the findings from the interviews conducted with five educators who teach different learning areas and who teach learners from grade eight to grade twelve. In order to establish the corroboration or contradiction between the teachers’ perspectives and that of the learners, this section discusses the teachers’ responses under the same two main themes used to discuss the learners’ responses, namely, (i) Exclusion and (ii) Inclusion

The five teacher participants’ interviews are coded as follows: “T” represents a teacher followed by their unique letter, A to E, and the page number of their specific transcribed interview.

#### **5.3.1 Processes of Exclusion**

##### **5.3.1.1 Isolation**

All the teachers observed that the Xhosa learners are “isolated” in their school setting. They remarked that in the classroom the Xhosa learners sat grouped together, one behind the other or they sat alone if there was only one Xhosa learner in the class. During intervals they sat in cliques.

I have seen many instances where Black learners are completely isolated. They sit four in the corner and everybody else is sitting elsewhere (TC1).

##### **5.3.1.2 Passivity and invisibility**

Four of the teachers described the Xhosa learners as being quiet, not misbehaved and not participating much in the lessons.

They’re quieter. They don’t really misbehave. They tend to keep a low profile, most of them. They sort of try not to be noticed as much by teachers (TA2).

#### **5.3.1.3 Coloured learners' attitude**

Four of the teachers remarked that some of the Coloured learners displayed a condescending attitude at times. One teacher commented that when she tried to draw the Xhosa learners into the lesson, the Coloured learners would pass remarks similar to the following one:

Miss, they don't understand. They don't speak English (TC1).

This teacher continued to say this:

The attitude of the Coloured learners and some teachers, really puts a damper on their [the Xhosa learners'] self-esteem. So they don't want to say anything, even though they are capable (TC1).

#### **5.3.1.4 Stereotyping and prejudice**

Two teachers recalled the Coloured learners' responses when affirmative action and black economic empowerment was discussed. In the one instance the teacher commented that the Coloured learners had the following opinion:

Black people are now getting all the privileges. The African learners although they want to say something, they're outnumbered. They're scared to speak, because these others might shout them down. So they say nothing, but you can see they are not happy with what is being said (TA 2).

Another teacher commented that many of the Coloured learners in his matric class felt that the Coloureds are not part of the new South Africa. They have the following (mis)perceptions:

It is Black Africans who are now in power, empowered and in power, and they [the Coloureds] are left out of the political equation in the new South Africa. They are of the belief that they are apart from the struggle [against Apartheid]. They feel that it wasn't their struggle (TB1).

This teacher felt that even after the matric learners research, debate and discuss controversial topics in class and are exposed to others' points of view and historical facts, many of these learners "go back to their emotional perceptions". This outcome is cause for concern for this teacher. This mindset, this teacher thought:

Comes mainly from the home environment and the racist perceptions within the Coloured community (TB1).

#### **5.3.1.5 Racism**

Teachers recalled incidents of colleagues' racist behaviour. One incident recalled (TB 5) involved racist remarks made to a grade 11 Xhosa learner in front of his classmates, namely, that Black people are favoured in the new South Africa. The Coloured learners in the class also identified this remark as racist.

One teacher reported that another way in which some teachers display racist attitudes is when they say things like:

The darkie kids never hand in their work (TC 2).

One teacher interviewee displayed overtly racist thinking. It was this teacher's opinion that it was the Xhosa learners themselves who are to blame for the self-segregation. The following comment was made:

Normally it comes from the Black children because they are the incomers (TE 1).

This teacher was of the opinion that this might still be a mindset that these learners have "carried over from Apartheid". Other derogatory remarks that this teacher made was that "the typical township child of today is very lazy and that they justify their laziness with their colour". Here this educator was referring to the Black African learners.

The majority of the teachers interviewed commented that the racist mindsets of some teachers at AH had to change because it reinforced negative stereotypes.

It strengthens the [Coloured] learners who are negative towards the Xhosa learners (TD3).

#### **5.3.1.6 Languages**

##### ***English***

The Xhosa learners' proficiency in English varies. There are those who are very weak, who "can barely speak the language" to those who "perform very well". Those learners who are more proficient and whose "English is on par with any one else that's really good in the class. They have a lot of Coloured friends" (TA 1). The learners who struggle with English seem to be marginalised the most. Many Xhosa learners, the teachers say, "speak English but when



they have their little private chats they will speak their own language, and no-one else can understand what they are saying”(TA 3).

### *Afrikaans*

Many Xhosa learners “hate Afrikaans”, because they find it so “exceptionally difficult.” (TC 4). Another teacher (TE2) remarked that many of the Xhosa learners do not attend the Afrikaans classes or if they do, they sit passively and do not participate in the lesson.

### *Xhosa*

Many of the Xhosa learners say that “Xhosa is very difficult”. One teacher felt the need to investigate if these learners would like to have Xhosa offered as an additional language rather than Afrikaans.

Another teacher corroborated the principal’s statement concerning the need for a Xhosa teacher or teachers. This teacher believed that Xhosa learners “want somebody who can stand up for them, who can be representative of them . . . who understands their culture and their lifestyle” (TC 3).

#### **5.3.1.7 Group work**

The teachers all remarked that when the Xhosa learners were given an option they form a group on their own. One teacher (TD 2), reported that at times these learners produce excellent work when they work together in a same race group which might not be the case if they worked in mixed groups because they might feel “uncomfortable” there.

#### **5.3.1.8 Mainstream activities**

According to some teachers many of the Xhosa learners do not participate in mainstream activities because “they feel so isolated”. They then “form their own little clicks and they are just happy to stay there and get through the day, each day” (TC 3).

#### **5.3.1.9 Intergroup fighting**

Teacher interviewees reported on violence. The one teacher (TC2) said that although a Xhosa learner, who had been attacked, could not verify that her being “beaten by other Coloured kids” was racially motivated, the teacher felt that it was. Another teacher (TD 1) witnessed

“lots of in-fighting between the races” but could not say what the cause of these situations was.

#### **5.3.1.10 No-one to talk to/No place of refuge**

Most of the teachers remarked that the Xhosa learners do not report any incidents of marginalisation, discrimination or violence to them or the principal because of fear of victimisation from the perpetrators and because of fear of isolation.

They are too scared to go to the office. It's not that they don't trust us, but they feel that we don't have power to help them because when they leave school they are alone and that is when they will be attacked (TD 3).

#### **5.3.1.11 Xhosa parental (non) participation**

Most of the teachers commented that there is very little Xhosa parent participation not because of lack of interest, but because of “limitations”. One of the main setbacks is the lack of transport.

#### **5.3.1.12 Intragroup Tension**

Two teachers noticed that some Xhosa learners were bullying and intimidating other Xhosa learners:

What I noticed, especially this year, within the group of Xhosa children we have at school, there's also a structure where there would be two or three learners, everybody else is scared of them. It's Xhosa learners who are intimidating other Xhosa learners (TD 1).

### **5.3.2 Processes of Inclusion**

#### **5.3.2.1 Multicultural practices in the classroom**

Some teachers mentioned occasions when Xhosa learners participated in their lessons more freely and with confidence. These were when topics centred on multicultural issues. One example was when the class discussed the way in which different cultures celebrate marriage. One Xhosa learner felt comfortable to share how marriage is approached in Xhosa culture. The teacher observed how the Coloured learners “found it quite interesting to learn from her” and “seemed to have a lot of respect for her”. This teacher believed that it is:

Ignorance of someone's culture that leads to stereotyping, that leads to tension between different racial groups (TA 2).

Another teacher believed that "history is probably the subject that can play the most important role to get learners "to get the sense that the new South Africa belongs to all." This teacher includes local history to help break down the stereotypical and prejudicial thinking of some Coloured learners who feel they are "apart from the struggle [against Apartheid]. . . It was Black people that fought and are now in power, empowered and in power, and they are left out of the political equation in the new South Africa." Learners are given the opportunity to research, debate, discuss and critically engage with controversial topics. The concern for this teacher, however, is that many still "go back to their emotional perceptions". Much of this relapse, this teacher felt, was because of "the home environment and the racist perceptions within the Coloured community" (TB1).

Another practice that promotes inclusion is when the Xhosa males who return to school after their "initiation" (a rite-of-passage Xhosa custom for young males in which they are circumcised) are allowed to dress according to their custom. Some teachers take this opportunity to foster integration. One teacher recalled the instance when:

One learner came with his new clothes and we had a discussion on the role of initiation and he could articulate his culture to them, and there was appreciation of it (TB 2).

#### **5.3.2.2 Extramural activities**

Generally not many Xhosa learners participate in extramural activities, but those who do seem to be more included. A teacher (TC 3) mentioned one Xhosa learner "who is a very good dancer and he won a dance competition on behalf of AH . . . But, he's one of the few". Other occasions where these learners seem to be more integration is when the grades go out on excursions.

#### **5.3.2.3 Choice of school**

Xhosa learners are of the perception that by choosing and attending a Coloured school they will receive a higher standard of education and therefore have a better chance in life. The one teacher remarked that they say:

The Xhosa schools, the township schools are worse than AH. At least here we can get a better education. At least here the teachers are better quality (TC 3).

#### **5.3.2.4 Social interaction**

Two teachers observed that when the Xhosa learners reach the senior grades it seems that they are more integrated. Both mentioned that they thought it was because these learners had reached a level of “maturity” to interact better socially. The one teacher made the following remark:

When Black learners get to grade 11 and especially in matric, I just have a feeling that they are integrated. At that stage Xhosa learners are not seen as the other. In matric they become more part of the broader group [of Coloured learners] and I don't see that in the lower grades (TB 3).

#### **5.3.2.5 Status of Xhosa**

Some teachers felt that the status of Xhosa should be improved at AH. One teacher was of the opinion that the school should look at policy around the language issue. Another teacher felt that Xhosa should be taught at every school in South Africa.

#### **5.3.2.6 Changes in pass requirements**

The WCED has changed the requirements regarding Afrikaans pass requirements. The matriculants are allowed to take Afrikaans as second additional language and do their Afrikaans oral examination on the lower grade. The school has adopted these changes from grade 8 to grade 12. This has been done especially for the Xhosa learners who find Afrikaans difficult even though it means that teachers have to set more examination papers.

### **5.3.3 Discussion of Teachers' Perspectives**

#### **5.3.3.1 Alienation**

All the teachers interviewed acknowledged that in most instances the Xhosa learners are alienated, isolated, “invisible” and “voiceless” at school and clustered in same race groupings. According to bell hooks (1994) this happens when learners do not feel valued and their self-esteem is impinged upon. These learners do not feel as if they belong in this school “community” which hooks (1994) and Weil (1997) aver is imperative for learners to feel safe to participate freely and to achieve optimally. Tatum (1997: 59) offers the explanation that

when feelings, rational or irrational are invalidated, most people disengage. McLean Donaldson (1996: 72) says that learners from subordinate racial groups internalise their mistreatment either by withdrawing their interest in class/or feel that they are not good enough. Some teachers believe that this disconnectedness prevents the majority of the Xhosa learners from wanting to participate in the mainstream activities of AH as well. However, as this study has shown, this does not mean that they are averse to participation or refuse to participate. There is a strong desire to be “a member of the AH family”. They want to feel and be included in all activities of their school.

### **5.3.3.2 Stereotypical and racist attitudes**

Three teachers spoke openly, candidly and disapprovingly about some colleagues’ racist behaviour. These teachers realise that teaching is not neutral (Freire 1990) and that teachers’ negative mindsets have an impact on learners because it “reinforces false perceptions” and decelerates racial integration. Two teachers saw the need for a Xhosa teacher or teachers which they felt would be advantageous for the Xhosa and Coloured learners alike. Their reasons are similar to those in the research done by Pine & Hilliard (1990) cited in McLean Donaldson (1996: 20). What was “good” for a teacher to see, was that some senior Coloured learners were beginning to voice their disapproval of some of their teachers’ racist attitudes. This is evidence that learners at AH will benefit from a learner programme in anti-racism, which is included in social justice education, like the programme discussed in Adams et al. (1997).

The perception that some of the Coloured learners have, that Coloureds have been left out of the political equation in terms of affirmative action and Black economic empowerment (which they believe only empowers Black Africans) can cause tension and conflict that Goodman (2001: 8-10) says can play out in acts of racism. This can lead to Coloured and Xhosa learners avoiding close relationships with each other. A possible solution is what one teacher suggested, namely, that teachers must persevere in their endeavours to change learners’ faulty paradigms in order to promote integration. Another teacher (TB 6) commented that “the role of the teacher is crucial” and that racist attitudes “can’t be tolerated”, showing that there is the will to identify and deal with injustices.

### **5.3.3.3 Group work**

All the teachers commented that Xhosa learners self-segregated in class and clustered in same race groups for group work if given the option. What this study has revealed is that this is not what the Xhosa learners want. Most desire to be part of a multiracial group when doing group work. Many of the reasons why they cluster in groups are the same as why they isolate themselves. They feel less embarrassed, especially if they have a poor proficiency in English and Afrikaans and look to each other for support. There are writers like (Wlodkowski and Ginsberg 1995: 81) who argue that mixed groups are best to foster integration whereas (Weil 1998: 150) advises that depending on the task, teachers should employ both heterogeneous and homogeneous groups. Tihanyi (2006) says that in the South African context homogeneous groupings will be seen to be encouraging non-integration. From this study it is apparent that the teachers interviewed and observed have not reflected on how this pedagogical practise can be used to foster integration.

## **5.4 Teaching Staff's Responses to the Staff Questionnaire**

In 2006 the researcher asked the teaching staff at AH to fill in their responses to two questions which were written on a staff list. Twenty-seven out of thirty five staff members filled in the two questions asked. These questions were:

- i. Have you had any pre-service, in-service training at tertiary level or attended any workshops in: intercultural communication, multicultural education, diversity in education and/or anti-racism in schools.

Of the twenty-seven teachers who responded, twenty (74%) had not had any training in any of these areas and only seven teachers (26%) had.

- ii. Would it be beneficial for you to have training in any of these areas?

The majority of the teachers, (85%) responded in the affirmative and only four (15%) did not think it would benefit them.

### **5.4.1 Discussion of the staff's response to the questionnaire on diversity training**

The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (2001) and The South African Schools Act (1996) which reflect the fundamental values and ideals of the Constitution (1996), namely, democracy, social justice, multiculturalism, equity, non-racism, non-sexism and

reconciliation, requires educators to implement these values and ideals, yet many of the teachers at Advance High have never been trained to carry out their mandate. These findings substantiate what Francine de Clerq (1997: 158-159) states, namely, that research has shown “how curricular changes have failed because they did not properly target educators, the key agents who should be centrally involved and participate in the development of new pedagogy”. It also verifies the observation of Carrim (1998) and Vandeyar (2003: 196) that the policy documents of the DoE promote transformation, but do not stipulate how transformation is to be achieved.

The findings of this study indicate that 85% of the staff is in favour of social justice training which includes anti-racism and other diversity issues. This verifies the observation made by Harber (2001: 26) that the main problem with (non) transformation in schools in South Africa, is not overt teacher resistance.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The focus of this research has been to establish the experiences of inclusion and exclusion of the minority number of Xhosa learners in a predominantly Coloured school in Mitchells Plain in the Western Cape in 2004 and 2006. The following were the main findings of this study:

#### 6.1 Marginalisation

There is clear evidence of marginalisation and exclusion (Young 1990; 2000) to varying degrees, for many of the Xhosa learners at Advance High fourteen years after democracy. The proposed transformation in education, with its goal of equal education for all learners irrespective of race, culture, language, ethnicity, gender and class, envisaged by the South African Schools Act (1996) and the (2005) National Curriculum Statement Policy document both which are underpinned by The Constitution (1996), is not a reality for many of these learners.

Tatum (1997) maintains that people are “othered” when an aspect or aspects of their identity become the target of others’ attention, and subsequently of their own. There is clear evidence from this research that the Xhosa learners experience racism as a result of their race being a target area. They are targets of racial slurs, name-calling and racial prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination which research done Murray and Clark (1990) cited in McLean Donaldson (1996) found happens when race is salient. The Xhosa learners’ experience of “othering” in this research concurs with what Black African learners experienced in similar contexts, in the research carried out by Soudien (1998) and Tihanyi (2006). These researchers found that “othering” plays itself out in the pervasive power dynamic of Apartheid where the Coloured learners at this site in the Western Cape can still be seen to be privileged (dominant) and the Xhosa learners subordinate.

A major concern for me, the researcher, was to understand why the Xhosa learners aggregate into same-race groupings. One way of unconsciously opposing this process of “othering” and experiences with racism, according to Tatum (1997), is to cluster into same-race groups even though the main reason given by the Xhosa learners for self-segregating was because they



shared a common language and a common culture, and therefore had a greater understanding for each other. Tatum (1997) encourages same-race groupings because it acts as a support mechanism in the face of racism. Tihanyi (2006), however, argues against self-segregation because in any school setting in South Africa it would be difficult not to see it as a perpetuation of Apartheid's racist ideology and therefore counter-productive to better interracial harmony.

## **6.2 Desire to belong**

The Xhosa learners want to be included and desire to be a member of their high school family. Researchers such as bell hooks (1994) stress the importance of a sense of belonging in the classroom and school "community" for a learner to achieve optimally at school. The Xhosa learners' desire is for equality, fairness, respect, harmony, integration and no discrimination in a caring and safe environment. Their aspiration is for social justice.

One of the strategies advocated in Outcomes Based Education to bring about the ideals of multiculturalism as laid out in the (2005) National Revised Curriculum Statement is cooperative learning or group work. The majority of the Xhosa learners in this study want to be part of a multiracial group for group work. They maintain that it can break down barriers and foster interracial communication. However, it would seem from the research that many of the teachers are unaware of this, and think that these learners prefer to work in a same-race group or on their own.

## **6.3 The educators**

At Advance High the teachers' ability to create an inclusive space for the Xhosa learners varies. There is evidence of some teachers who are dynamic and use Freire's (1970;1990) concept of "praxis". They are progressive and are able to reflect on their theory and practice. They use Friere's (1970; 1990) concept of "critical pedagogy" and allow dialogue, are not afraid to engage with difficult subject matter and deal with conflict. A second group of teachers recognise the exclusion of the Xhosa learners, but lack the skills to make their classroom a safe place for these learners to feel free to participate. A third group of teachers still operate in the authoritative mode where learners are invisible and voiceless. Included in

this category are some teachers who are overtly racist. However, there is evidence that some of these racist actions are being challenged by colleagues and reported to management.

#### **6.4 The role of the Department of Education**

The revised (2005) National Curriculum Statement Policy document, states that the aims of the Constitution (1996) are to “heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights”. To attain these ideals, the Curriculum Statement adopts an inclusive approach using the ideology of multiculturalism, yet, as this study shows, 74% of the teaching staff at Advance High had not undergone any training in multicultural education.

From the evidence presented in this study it is clear that transformation for many of the Xhosa learners has not become a reality. They are still marginalized and excluded. The failure of the Department of Education to put official systems and structures in place to assist management and the School Governing Body with deracialisation, can be viewed as a contributory factor to the assimilationist practices at Advance High. The colour-blind policies and practices have remained largely unchanged, with the Xhosa learners having no choice but to fit in with the “business as usual” practices of the school. The research done by Sekete et al. (2001) for the Human Sciences Research Council concurs with these findings. These researchers found that in spite of the Department of Education’s introduction of legislation to accelerate change and support schools with the deracialisation process, schools still display a limited capacity to change.

Harber (2001) shows that the main problem in many schools is not that teachers resisted deracialisation. This study found that this to be true at Advance High. The principal and eighty five percent of the staff at Advance High indicated that they would attend diversity-training workshops, including social justice education workshops, if these courses were offered by the Western Cape Education Department.

## **6.5 The Western Cape Education Department**

This study has shown that at Advance High, the transformative ideals of the Constitution (1996) and of the South African Schools Act (1996), have, as yet, not been achieved. However, this research has also shown that social justice education has the capacity to achieve the aims of the Revised National Curriculum Statement Policy document which is to “heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and human rights”. Social justice education will allow each learner to reach their full potential irrespective of race and other social differences.

The evidence gathered in this study shows that there is a need for transformation at Advance High. This research recommends training in social justice education by the Western Cape Education Department.

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## APPENDICES

University of Cape Town

## **Appendix 1: A brief account of the social construction of race and its South African expression**

### ***Race as construction***

The justification for this historical tour of race can be found in the advice given by the theorists Back and Solomos (2000: 23):

[B]ecause the question of how to conceptualise racism is not purely an academic matter, it is important to develop analytic frameworks that explain the role of ideas about race in specific historical and political conjunctures. It is from this starting point that we can begin to understand the complex mechanisms through which contemporary racisms have evolved and adapted to new circumstances.

Guided by the questions that I ask in my thesis, I have included this section as an endeavour to trace how the concepts of race and racism have come to play such a pervasive role in structuring and representing the social and political worlds. Omi and Winant (1994: 55) suggest that it is the task of theory to explain this situation.

I begin by conceptualising race, then racism, from an international perspective, especially in terms of the United States and Europe. I do this firstly, because of the profound effect and influence these continents have had on these discourses in South Africa and secondly, because like Saul Dubow (1995: 2) notes, “it is surprising to find that there is so little academic exploration of the intellectual roots of racism”. Here he is referring to South Africa.

Omi and Winant (1994: 71) propound that race and racism should not be used interchangeably. This may be true. However, in our modern world these discourses are unquestionably inter-related and coalesce.

Race is a complex concept. Theories of race and its associated concepts are highly contested. This is evidenced from the ever-expanding range of books and journals that address questions about race, racism and related topics from a variety of disciplinary and conceptual perspectives (Back and Solomos 2000: 1). Many modern theorists and other scholars interested in this discourse, confer that the meaning of race has changed over time. They aver that the theory of race has been transformed from an essentialist, biologicistic notion to the dominant assumption in current studies that race is a social and cultural construction (Omi



and Winant 1994; Banton 2000; Jordan 2000; Foster 1991; Steyn 2001; Hamilton et al.. 2001).

Omi and Winant (1994: 11) state that racial theory is shaped by actual existing race relations in any given historical period. The importance of history is also emphasised by Banton (2000: 36) who maintains that “race is a concept rooted in a particular culture and a particular period of history which brings with it suggestions about how differences are to be explained”. To try to make the complexity of the concept of race more intelligible, I will do a brief historical trace of race.

### ***Tracing race through history***

I will begin with a broad overview of discursive resources on the origins of race as found in Christendom, Greek mythology and the philosophy of the chain of being. Interwoven with these narratives, I will show how they were “recycled” (Nederveen Pieterse 1992) and how they were used in the service of the imperial project, and later would make their way into the Enlightenment notion of the science of race (Steyn 2001: 6).

### ***Race and Religion***

Early histories, as recorded in the Bible and by the Greek, Herodotus, document distinct human groups with differences in religion, physical appearance, manners and customs.

However, these relationships were not racially determined. Even the hostility and suspicion with which Christian Europe viewed its two significant non-Christian “Others” – the Muslims and the Jews – were religiously, and not racially, determined (Omi and Winant 1994: 61).

Memoirs of early European travellers and traders, before the fifteenth century, describe encounters with “others” as mutually satisfying, cast in terms of difference, but not inferiority Davidson (1994: 42) cited in Steyn 2001: 4; Jordan 2000: 33). Omi and Winant (1994: 62) describe the relationship during this period as “proto-racial awareness” when “Europe contemplated its ‘Others’ in a relatively disorganized fashion”.

Although images of the “other” had existed earlier, it was the expansion of European economic and political boundaries from the fifteenth century onwards that produced a gradual but major change in which meanings about “others” were generated (Omi and Winant 1994: 61; Foster 1991: 58; Steyn 2001: 4).

### *Race as descent*

A major paradigm that needed to be reconfigured was the European Christian notion of the origin of the human race. With colonial expansion these “discoverers” encountered more and more “natives” in the “new worlds” who were significantly different to their Eurocentric image of the world.

Many writers like (Banton 2000: 52; Omi and Winant 1994: 61; Steyn 2001: 4) refer to the Old Testament in the Bible as being the dominant paradigm in Europe, up to the eighteenth century, for explaining the differences between groups of people. The story of Creation in the book of Genesis, documents the origins of the human race. The Old Testament provided a series of genealogies by which it seemed possible to trace the peopling of the world and the relations which different groups bore to one another (Banton 2000: 52). This writer contends further that there were several possible ways of accounting for the physical difference within the notion of descent.

Firstly, it could be held that differences of colour were all part of God’s design for the universe; perhaps they were the result of divine judgement – the curse on the descendents of Ham by Noah - decreeing that they should be servants of his sons Shem and Japheth. Steyn (2001: 11) shows how “this curse was reconfigured to be seen as an explanation of and justification for slavery (during the 1500s and 1600s) and how this story provided an account that appeased any guilty conscience brought on by awkward convictions of the equality of humanity before God”. By the seventeenth century the explanation included the notion that the curse had been responsible for the darker skin colour of Africans (Jordan 2000: 46; Steyn 2001).

A second explanation that was offered for physical differences was that they were related in some way to climate and environment and were irrelevant to the important questions of man’s obligations to do God’s will (Banton 2000: 53). By the middle of the sixteenth century, however, this theory was no longer feasible and logical because the native peoples living on the same line of latitude, the equator, were not the same colour: those in Africa were Black, believed to be Blackened by the sun, but the Indians of America were “olive” or “tawny”. The conclusion was that Africans were “clearly a different sort of man”. Interestingly, this conclusion was arrived at after the opening of West Africa, the development of Negro slavery and the “awakening scientific curiosity” (Jordan 2000: 36-37).

A third explanation offered within the paradigm of descent, was that it was sometimes argued that since the differences between Europeans, Africans and Asians were repeated in successive generations, they must have had separate ancestors, with Adam being the ancestor of the Europeans alone (Banton 2000: 53). The Christian dilemma, as to whether all humankind originated from one or many stocks or from “one blood” (Jordan 2000:39) gave rise to conflicting beliefs in “monogenesis” and “polygenesis” (Banton 2000:53).

These discourses on race demonstrate the tension in Christian philosophy during the time of European expansion and exploitation of the “new world”. Disturbing questions had to be answered, such as whether all of humankind could be part of the same family of humans and even more pertinent, the extent to which native peoples could be exploited and enslaved (Omi and Winant 1994: 62).

### ***The exploiter and the exploited***

So how and why were these differences used for exploitation and enslavement to create the division of society into Europeans and “Others”? These are the questions I need to answer in the following section of my thesis.

Prior to the “conquest” observers often used the term “natural” only to mean “ingrained” when referring to the “natives”, but by the time of the subjugation of these peoples, “natural” came to mean innate wickedness which included savagery, stealing, cannibalism, heathenism, animality and a peculiarly potent sexuality (Jordan 2000: 41). By the nineteenth century, the capitalist spirit and profit-making motive of the European explorers used the argument that the native workers were innately degenerate and degraded to justify their inhumane treatment and that the natives naturally merited their condition (Cox 2000: 73; Steyn 2001: 5).

The notion of savage had been around in Europe prior to Europe’s expansion. However, by the time of European expansion, the Greek term “barbaroi”, which was used to refer to all non-Greeks, acquired negative connotations of “baseness” and “rudeness” and merged with the notion of savageness (Nederveen Pieterse 1992: 31). Africa particularly, was “the land of the grotesque – grotesque creatures with grotesque features, grotesque mentalities, and grotesque habits” ( ibid: 8).

Heathenism was cast as barbaric and a fundamental defect which set the “natives” distinctly apart - “Judged by Christian cosmology, Negroes stood in a separate category of men” (Jordan 2000: 40). Semiotics too was used to support this negative perception of the natives. During the early Christian period, black came to be the colour of the devil and within the dualistic framework of Christianity where good was symbolised by God, and evil by the devil, through association, the Black “native” was deemed evil and immoral ( Steyn 2001: 12). Embedded in the concept of blackness was its direct opposite – Whiteness. No other colours were so frequently used to denote polarization: White and black connoted purity and filthiness, virginity and sin, virtue and baseness, beauty and ugliness, beneficence and evil, God and the devil (Jordan 2000: 35).

As the Europeans expanded, semiotics played a role in them regarding themselves as “children of God, full-fledged human beings” (Omi and Winant 1994: 62) which distinguished them from “others”. Their light skin signified a natural grouping of people, who through an assumed superiority which was “endogenously determined”, occupied a dominant relationship to darker skinned people. Clearly, race was established relationally (Steyn 2000: 5). The Europeans’ Christian ethos did not stop them from appropriating both “labour” and goods” through military conquest and plunder (Omi and Winant 1994: 63). These theorists postulate further, that “the slave trade in Africa consolidated social structure of exploitation, appropriation and domination” and that its representation first in religious terms, then in scientific and political ones, initiated modern racial awareness (Omi and Winant 1994: 62).

### ***From Religion to Science***

The Age of Enlightenment during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries brought with it a developing Enlightenment consciousness; one that witnessed the predominant European view of the native African as an inferior human being change to a view that the differences were “inherent in the sense of fixed and inevitable” (Foster 1991: 59). It is with the development of the European Enlightenment that the main racial divisions of the world began to be firmly established. Rationalism demanded new universal definitions of man’s place in nature as well as his position in God’s universe (Dubow 1995: 25). This writer states that one of the great paradoxes of the Enlightenment is that it implied not only the advance of scientific forms of reasoning, but also the rationalisation of old prejudices.

From the mid eighteenth century scientific racial classifications of the kind developed by men such as Linnaeus, Blumenbach and Cuvier became more frequent (Dubow 1995: 26; Foster 1991: 59). These writers show how Linnaeus' classification of man in *Systema Naturae* distinguished between European Man, Asiatic Man, African Man and American Man. To each of these he attached character descriptions. For example, Europeans were ingenious, inventive and governed by law, whereas Africans were crafty, lazy, careless and governed by the arbitrary will of their masters. Dubow (1995) continues by stating that this typological thinking was intrinsically static and that it was based on arbitrary ideal categories which privileged difference and diversity over similarity and convergence.

Cuvier extended the work of Linnaeus to the study of "man". He divided man into three main races; Caucasian, Mongolian and Ethiopian, which were further subdivided. He maintained that they were all one species, but differed permanently in ability because of the biological differences between them (Banton 2000: 54; Dubow 1995: 26). Dubow postulates that typological theory of race had powerful adherents in Britain, France and America, where it developed as the debate over slavery (ibid.). This essentialist notion was taken up later by scientific racists such as Arthur Jensen who argued that hereditary factors shape intelligence, raising the highly volatile questions about racial equality (Omi and Winant 1994: 64) and Robert Knox who sought to establish an essential link between anatomical differences and national character (Dubow 1994: 27).

By the middle of the nineteenth century "race science" was firmly entrenched with race scientists measuring heads, noses, jaws, limbs and skulls in order to provide apparently objective evidence for their racial taxonomies (Foster 1991: 59). One example was Samuel Morton who through craniometric means purported to show that the races of the world could be ranked in order of superiority. Hardly surprisingly, this defender of slavery's "objective" data ranked Whites with the biggest brains on top, Blacks with the smallest brains at the bottom and American Indians in the middle (Dubow 1994: 28-29; Foster 1991: 61; Banton 2000: 55-56). Morton's data has been refuted by Stephen Gould in his book in which he states: "all I can discern is an a priori conviction about racial ranking so powerful that it directed his tabulations along pre-established lines" (Gould 1981: 69).

By the end of the nineteenth century typological theory relied upon science on the one hand and on the other, upon the growing European acceptance of an association between

differences in physical appearances and ability to build a progressive civilisation (Banton 2000: 56). As Miles (1989: 33) has suggested, the scientific discourse did not replace earlier representations of the “other”, but were woven together: savagery for instance “became a fixed condition of the Negro or African race, a product of a small brain, and civilization became an attribute of a large-brained White people”. The significance of science in legitimating racial hierarchy cannot be underestimated.

Beliefs that superior races produced superior cultures and that racial intermixtures resulted in the degradation of the superior racial stock and other such racist ideas found expression in the eugenics movement. Eugenics and other forms of Social Darwinism (evolutionary biology), cited as irrefutable proof that differences between individuals, nations or races were innate and unalterable, had an immense impact on scientific and socio-political thought in Europe and the US especially in the wake of civil war and emancipation and with immigration from southern and Eastern Europe and East Asia (Omi and Winant 1994: 64; Foster 1991: 61; Banton 1995: 123). This happened despite Darwin’s challenge that there were no permanent forms in nature and that each species was adapted to its environment by natural selection (Banton 2000: 57, Foster 1991: 61).

### ***Race in the twentieth century***

From the early twentieth century there was an insurgent challenge to the biologicistic notion of race, which has resulted in race being viewed as a social concept (Winant 2000: 181; Omi and Winant 1994: 65). These writers explain how intellectuals like Max Weber discounted biological explanations of racial conflict and instead vouched for social and political factors. Anthropologist Franz Boas labelled any assumptions on a continuum of “higher” and “lower” cultural groups as pseudoscientific. Another scholar, African American W.E.B. Du Bois alluded to the socio-political definition of race. For Du Bois “the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races of man...” (Back and Solomos 2000: 3). The Chicago sociologists, led by Robert E. Park introduced the assimilationist paradigm to explain interracial adjustments (Park 2000: 110; Omi and Winant 1994: 15). These views were currents of the ethnicity-based theory with race but one of a number of determinants” (Omi and Winant 1994: 15). The other determinants were “culture” which included factors such as religion, language, “customs,” nationality, and political identification. “Descent” involved hereditary and a sense of group origins (ibid). Work done by writers like Huxley and Haddon and Ashley Montagu was intended as a

criticism of notions such as sub-species or races (Montagu 1964: 24 as cited in Foster 1991: 61). For Montagu, the term race was emotionally charged and elicited emotionally conditioned responses. He postulated the replacement of the term race by what he felt was the more noncommittal one, 'ethnic group', which would open the door to understanding or at the very least "leave it ajar" (ibid). We see a definite shift from race- science to "race relations" (Foster 1991: 61).

This shift had come about because of political struggles waged by the racially defined groups who participated in anti-colonial and civil rights movements, that challenged the structural and cultural racisms (Omi and Winant 1994: 65). For these theorists, the theme of race has become a political issue, especially since the advent of the twentieth century racial horrors, such as the colonial slaughter, Apartheid, the holocaust and what they call the massive blood-lettings required to end these evils. They do not, however, suggest that race has been displaced as a concern of scientific inquiry, or that struggles over cultural representation are no longer important (ibid).

The 1960s see earlier views of race as status or as psychological phenomena challenged by a view expressed in class terms (Foster 1991: 62). In the United States this class-based paradigm challenged the nation-based view which caused fragmentation especially within the racial minority movements by the late 1960s (Omi and Winant 1994: 107).

Banton (2000: 59) states that an examination of the present use of the words race, races, and racial would probably show that they are employed chiefly to designate outwardly identifiable categories, and that people differ greatly in the degree to which they believe or assume that the labels explain anything. He continues to say that race is presently being used for purely political purposes to identify communities and also for bureaucratic concerns without intending to imply that the chief differences between them stem from inheritance. For Omi and Winant (1994: 65) transcendence of biologicistic, genetically determined conceptions of race, does not provide any reprieve from the dilemmas of racial injustice and conflict, nor from controversies over the significance of race in the present.

### ***From race to racism***

Having completed a trace of the concept of race, I will now attempt to unravel the complexity of racism. Foster (1991: 55) admits that there are many difficulties and obstacles standing in

the way of a clear understanding of this discourse. He mentions that the many contemporary terms such as multi-racialism, non-racialism, anti-racialism, traditional racism and reverse racism attest to this notion. McLean Donaldson (1996: 17) talks about individual racism and dysconscious racism (McLean Donaldson 1996: 90); Tatum (1997: 49) includes cultural racism and the psychology of racism (Tatum 1997: 36); Dubow (1995) expounds on politicised racism, scientific racism, intellectual racism, rationalized racism, societal racism and new racism. The concept of racism truly does have many facets.

If racism, like race, has changed over time (Omi and Winant 1994: 71; Mc Lean Donaldson 1996: 14) then perhaps a good starting point to understand the meaning of racism would be to trace its roots. Many writers are in agreement that the desire to rationalize the exploitation of non-European peoples fostered a complex ideology of paternalism and racism (Banks, 1991; Bennet, Jr., 1982; Garcia, 1991; Mc Lean Donaldson 1996: 14-19). The ideology of racism is rooted in the belief of superiority and entitled privilege. Foster (1991: 55) uses Robert Miles' (1989) definition of racism as an ideology: a representation of the "other" in terms of negatively evaluative content. It is held to be a specific discourse involving (i) particular representations of real or imagined somatic features and (ii) attributions of negatively evaluated characteristics.

Foster (1991) maintains that ideology itself is a highly contested term and therefore needs clarification. He uses it in the restricted and critical sense derived from its Marxist heritage to refer to ways in which meaning (stratification) serves to create and sustain power relations of domination. Another definition for racism commonly used is "prejudice plus power" (Tatum 1997: 7; Mc Lean Donaldson 1996: 12). The latter writer stresses that without clear insight into the role that power plays, it will be impossible to address, and someday eradicate racism (McLean Donaldson 1996: 13). It is with this rationale that I embark on the next section of my thesis, namely, to expound on "the complex ways by which Whites [in South Africa] came to persuade themselves of their innate superiority and God-given 'right to govern'" (Dubow 1995: 291). I will give particular attention to how racial science helped to facilitate the realization and ideological maintenance of White power and authority especially with regard to a system as all-encompassing as segregation and Apartheid.



### ***Tracing the evolution of race and racism in South Africa***

For this broad, but brief discussion, I take inspiration from the advice given by Dubow (1995: 6) when he says:

Ideally, patterns of popular racism as experienced in daily life should be analysed in conjunction with theoretical racism. However, this cannot be achieved until such time as we have a fuller understanding of the extent to which theories of racial difference formed part of the ideology of White supremacy in the twentieth-century South Africa.

### ***The influence of physical anthropology and comparative linguistics on the racial origins in South Africa***

Scientific theories of racial difference in South Africa were often derived directly from overseas. However, metropolitan ideas were selectively absorbed and differentially applied in the colonial context (Dubow 1995: 286). The period between 1905 and 1929 was referred to as the 'South Africanisation' of science, having gained international scientific recognition, both as a producer of scientific knowledge and as site of special scientific interest especially with the discovery of the Taung fossil and the interest it generated in the discourse of racial origins. Scientific racism led to comparisons being made among the aboriginal peoples of S A such as in the Stow-Theal racial paradigm; a tripartite division between Bushmen, Hottentot and Bantu was entrenched. In chronological, physical and cultural terms, these fundamental types were ordered on an ascending scale of evolutionary sophistication - the original Bushmen hunter-gatherers, having been succeeded by the Hottentot pastoralists and them in turn by the Bantu agro-pastoralists.

In Social Darwinist terms, the historical sequence of human habitation and conquest serves to reinforce the idea that White supremacy is the natural outcome of a logical process where the survival of the fittest is manifestly seen to prevail (Dubow 1995: 69-74). The previously mentioned categorisations created a linear model of historical development which served to legitimise the right of Whites to assert themselves as settlers on the sub-continent. Race typology emphasised difference and divergence over similarity and convergence. This typology was overlaid by the binary-based notions of superiority and inferiority, progress and

degeneration at a time when modern theories of racial segregation began to be discussed at political level (Dubow 1995: 114-115).

The rise of the eugenics movement at the turn of the twentieth century offered important reinforcement to those who continued to seek scientific justification for their prejudices. A relevant area that needs mentioning at this point is the different ways in which the 'mind' was captured and conceptualised. Intelligence testing offered what appeared to be a more direct and scientifically objective method of comparing mental capacities. It ranked racial groups by their mental worth. Unsurprising, these tests tended to confirm the popular racist notion that (Black) Africans were inherently intellectually inferior to Whites. That mental testing gathered momentum at just the moment that debates over segregation and the poor White question became pressing political priorities, was no accident – the inferiority in the case of White groups was generally said to be caused by environmental factors (Dubow 1995).

Of significance is the way in which the mental testing movement objectified those whom it observed, sustaining the notion of the existence of essential differences between 'us' and 'them', and reinforcing the view that moral and political issues could be settled on the basis of impartial, empirical science (Dubow 1995: 243-245). It legitimised the right of Whites to make decisions for and on behalf of Black Africans.

Although little is known about the use of Intelligent Quotient (IQ) tests in the South African school system other than that they have been routinely used for educational purposes, Dubow (1995) intimates it may be that it is in this realm that their effect on society has been most pronounced (*ibid*).

In the field of comparative philology, linguists who sought to establish the origins of a proto Bantu language have succeeded only to create linguistic barriers which served to divide South African Blacks into constituent racial or ethnic 'population groups' (*Ibid*:119). These racist assumptions began to be challenged by social anthropologists who viewed them as problematic, especially because of their use to justify political segregation and later Apartheid. In the context of racial determinism during the 1920s and 1930s, the approach was so deeply ingrained in the methods and dubious assumptions of physical anthropology that it would take many decades (if ever) to be excised. These racist ideas prevailed despite the

major shift towards the 'races of man' paradigm, celebrating the universalism of a common humanity in Europe and America brought about by the horrors of Nazi ideology and World War 2.

### ***Racist ideology consolidated in South African***

One reason for the stubborn entrenchment of racist conceptions and laws that elaborated racial differences in South Africa after the war, as put forward by Dubow (1995: 21) is that "almost every ideological construction coexists with a counter ideological tradition". This suggests that ideologies may be more, rather than less, compelling if they are fundamentally ambiguous or even internally contradictory – so long as a semblance of overall consistency is maintained (ibid: 17).

This postulation was evidenced in the way in which the "Native question" was dealt with - the massive influx of African work seekers after the war was perceived as a threat to the largely Afrikaans- speaking unskilled and semi-skilled labour in metropolitan areas; the threat of urban Africans, in trade union 'activity' to White power and also Christian nationalism.

With reference to the latter, the proponents of racist beliefs, there had been attempts to situate the idea of race within a neo-Calvinist framework. These ideas were now reinforced by renewed Afrikaner nationalism based on a renewed belief that it was the Afrikaner volk's divine destiny to be God's "chosen people" (Dubow 1995: 249). Encouraged by Nazi ideas of superiority and the large body of eugenic literature, they sought to graft the findings of modern racial science onto Christian-national thought (ibid: 270). It was around the issue of miscegenation that the hysteria of Christian nationalism reached an unprecedented level of intensity, combining eugenic fears of biological degeneration with the terror of cultural and organic dissolution. This led to the belief that only total apartheid could ensure the maintenance of race purity to God's 'chosen' people, the Afrikaner.

The biologist, Kuyperian notions of 'diversity' and sovereignty of separate 'spheres' were highly conducive to the affirmation of a form of cultural relativism. Here, the idealist conception of nation, 'volk' and culture functioned as a useful substitute for a biological view

of race. Idealism, also convinced many adherents that Apartheid was a genuinely just way of solving South Africa's racial conflict. It was believed that total segregation would provide Africans with full opportunities to develop according to their own cultural norms. The adherents of the Apartheid ideology believed in its moral rectitude which was crucial to the relative cohesiveness of Afrikanerdom during the 1950s and 1960s (Dubow 1995: 281-283). This coherence has since been shattered both politically and ideologically, but how successfully is what this theses endeavours to explore.

Mahmood Mamdani (1995: 494) in his response to Neville Alexander's "Prospects for a non-racial future in South Africa" states that Apartheid centred around two core identities: race and ethnicity. He concludes that race was an identity that united beneficiaries and ethnicity fragmented the victims of Apartheid. The former were given a common identity, namely, White and the latter instead of a single Black identity, were fragmented into many ethnic groups – Xhosa, Zulu, Venda, Pedi and so on.

So where does the Coloured population group fit in? This is an important aspect of my thesis which I now turn to.

### ***Race mixture - the Coloured question***

I deem it necessary to include this section because my site of research is a predominantly Coloured school in a former Coloured area with a staff complement of Coloured teachers.

(James and Lever 2001: 331, Alexander 2001: 472; Erasmus 2000: 71-73; Dubow 1995: 185) describe the 'Cape Coloured' descendants of Afrikaner, English, African, Khoisan and Malay slave communities, more than any other group came to embody the 'half caste pathology'. With the tightening of racial boundaries in the first decades of the twentieth century, came the urgent efforts to define Colouredness. They could not be defined in essentialist terms because they were a residual group and were thus placed in an intermediate zone (socially, racially and politically) between Whites on the one hand and Blacks on the other

Dubow (1995) quotes the Wilcock Commission on the Cape Coloured definition of the 'typical' Coloured as follows: "A person in the Union of South Africa, who does not belong to one of its aboriginal races, but in whom the presence of Coloured blood... can be

established with at least reasonable certainty”. This demonstrates the hesitancy as regards to biological inheritance (Dubow 1995: 186; Foster 1991). Even though the findings lacked unambiguous scientific findings, popular stereotypes of Coloureds were constructed and endured in keeping with the ‘half-caste’ myth of eugenic thought, descendants of ‘advanced and primitive stock’. These included notions of moral and physical degeneration such as drunkenness, criminality, deviousness, disease, by nature anti-social and a tendency towards mediocrity - what the eugenic literature of the late nineteenth century called biological disharmony (Dubow 1995: 186-187).

An important outcome of this stereotyping, which has relevance to this essay, is what the research conducted by Fantham and Porter in the 1920s in South Africa reported, namely, “as a body, the Coloured are often despised by White and Black alike”(Dubow 1995: 184).

One other aspect I feel I need to include is what Findlay (1936) cited in Dubow (1995: 188) argues about, namely, that the statutory colour bar in South Africa at the time was self-defeating because it encouraged light-skinned Coloureds to ‘escape’ into White society. By his reckoning almost half of the Coloured population were ‘passing’ as White. Caliguire (1996: 12) makes the statement that Coloured were viewed as a group that enjoyed selected privileges. This has important implications for the next part of my essay, where I talk about Black resistance to racial oppression and later when I discuss contemporary racial identities where some Coloured people carry the notion that they were not White enough before during the Apartheid era and not Black enough now during South Africa’s new democracy.

### ***Black resistance to racial oppression***

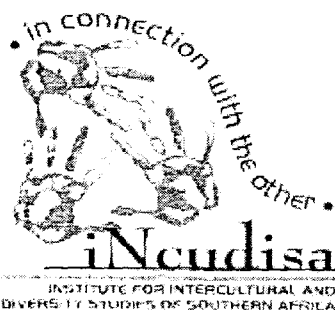
The colour-blind liberalism of the mid-Victorian era inspired aspiring Blacks to challenge the White racism and segregation. Since the early nineteenth century, Black ideologies and movements in South Africa have been influenced by the American civil rights movement (Fredrickson 2001: 10). This led to the formation of Black protest organisations such as The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) and other Black identity movements, which under the slogan of “Black Consciousness,” spurred Blacks on to become historical agents during the 1960s and 1970s. The African National Congress (ANC) also a protest organisation, proposed non-racialism to resist efforts by the White racist government to continue with its Apartheid

ideology. Erasmus (2000: 71) points out that the emphasis on Black unity “papered” over differential racialisation among the racially oppressed

During the 1970s and 1980s this Black resistance intensified and had come to constitute a threat to the survival of South Africa. This played an important role in the White Apartheid government abolishing discriminatory laws and fully enfranchising Blacks in 1994 (Fredrickson 2001: 18).

University of Cape Town

## Appendix 2: Letter of request for research



### Institute for Intercultural and Diversity Studies of Southern Africa (iNCUDISA)



17 March 2006

To whom it may Concern

Ref: Research

Kaylene Henriques is a masters student at the University of Cape Town. This student has expressed an interest in conducting research in your organization, which will contribute towards achieving her degree.

I confirm that her research will be conducted under my supervision and will meet the required standards of research ethics and methodology. Unless otherwise agreed by you and Kaylene, anonymity and confidentiality in the research are assured.

Should you have any queries regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Assoc. Prof. Melissa Steyn  
Institute of Intercultural and Diversity Studies in Southern Africa  
University of Cape Town  
Cape Town

---

Humanities Graduate School Building, University of Cape Town, Private Bag, Rondebosch, 7701  
Telephone: (27-21) 650 2361; Fax: (27-21) 650 5751.  
e-mail: [INCUDISA@humanities.uct.ac.za](mailto:INCUDISA@humanities.uct.ac.za) or [msteyn@humanities.uct.ac.za](mailto:msteyn@humanities.uct.ac.za)

## Appendix: 3: Letter of consent from Western Cape Education Department (WCED)

Nazwa  
Enquiries  
Imibuzo  
Telephone  
Telephone  
Ifoni  
Faks  
Fax  
Ifekisi  
Verwysing  
Reference  
Isalathiso

Dr RS Cornelissen  
(021) 467-2286  
(021) 425-7445  
20060410-0056



Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement  
Western Cape Education Department  
ISebe leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Mrs Kaylene Henriques  
32 Miles Road  
OTTERY  
7800

Dear Mrs K. Henriques

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: COLOUR-CONSCIOUS OR COLOUR-BLIND? HOW XHOSA MOTHER-TONGUE LEARNERS EXPERIENCE THE "COLOUR OF RACE" IN A PREDOMINANTLY COLOURED SCHOOL.**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **12<sup>th</sup> April 2006 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2006**.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December 2006).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the Principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the following school:
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Education Research.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Education Research  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Ronald S. Cornelissen  
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**  
**DATE: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2006**

MELO ASSERBLIEF VERWYSINGSNUMMERS IN ALLE KORRESPONDENSIE / PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBERS IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE /  
NCEDA URBHLE JINOMBOLO ZESALATHISO KUYO YONKE IMBALELWANO

GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LAER-PARLEMENTSTRAAT, PRIVAATSAK X9114, KAAPSTAD 8000  
GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LOWER PARLIAMENT STREET, PRIVATE BAG X9114, CAPE TOWN 8000

WEB: <http://wced.wcape.gov.za>

**INBELSENTRUM / CALL CENTRE**

INDIENSINEMING- EN SALARISNAYRAE/EMPLOYMENT AND SALARY QUERIES ☎0861 92 33 22  
VEULIGE SKOLESAFE SCHOOLS ☎0800 45 46 47



## Appendix 4: Letter of consent from the Western Cape Education Department

Navrae		Page 1 of 3
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 0x08 graphic		
Navrae	Dr RS Cornelissen	
Enquiries		
IMibuzo		
Telefoon		
Telephone	(021) 467-2286	
IFoni		
Faks		
Fax	(021) 425-7445	
IFeksi		
Verwysing		
Reference	20060410-0056	
ISalathiso		
	Wes-Kaap	
	Onderwysdepartement	
	Western Cape	
	Education Department	
	ISEbe leMfundo	
	leNtshona Koloni	

Mrs Kaylene Henriques

32 Miles Road

OTTERY

7800

Dear Mrs K. Henriques

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: COLOUR-CONSCIOUS OR COLOUR-BLIND? HOW XHOSA MOTHER-TONGUE LEARNERS EXPERIENCE THE "COLOUR OF RACE" IN A PREDOMINANTLY COLOURED SCHOOL.**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.

file:///F:/Navrae.htm

2006/07/26

3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **24<sup>th</sup> July 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2006**.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December 2006).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the Principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the following school:
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Education Research.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Education Research**

**Western Cape Education Department**

**Private Bag X9114**

**CAPE TOWN**

**8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Ronald S. Cornelissen

for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**

**DATE: 10<sup>th</sup> April 2006**

2

<b>MELD ASSEBLIEF VERWYSINGSNOMMERS IN ALLE KORRESPONDENSIE / PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE NUMBERS IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE / NCEDA UBHALE IINOMBOLO ZESALATHISO KUYO YONKE IMBALELWANO</b>
<b>GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LAER-PARLEMENTSTRAAT, PRIVAATSAK X9114, KAAPSTAD 8000</b>
<b>GRAND CENTRAL TOWERS, LOWER PARLIAMENT STREET, PRIVATE BAG X9114, CAPE TOWN 8000</b>
<b>WEB: <a href="http://wced.wcape.gov.za">http://wced.wcape.gov.za</a></b>
<b>INBELSENTRUM /CALL CENTRE</b>

## Appendix 5: Staff consent forms

To whom it may concern

Re: Permission to use an interview for a Master's thesis

I, ....., hereby grant permission for Kaylene Henriques to transcribe and use the recorded interview she conducted with me, as part of the data collection for her research project. She may use this data in her analysis, together with her other data, on the condition that I, the interviewee, remain anonymous, and that the information is kept confidential.

.....

Signature

University of Cape Town

## Appendix 6: Xhosa learners' consent forms

Dear parent/guardian

I have been granted permission by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and the principal of your child's high school to conduct research there. I have explained to your child what the research is about. I would like to include your son/daughter in this research project, and hereby request that you allow him/her to take part. I assure you that your child's name will not be mentioned in the thesis and that all the information that he/she gives will be treated as very confidential.

If you agree that your child can participate in this research, please sign the consent form and return it as soon as possible.

I thank you

Yours faithfully

Mrs Kaylene Henriques

Consent form

I, ..... the parent/guardian of .....

In grade ..... give permission for my child to be a participant in the research to be conducted by Mrs K Henriques.

.....

Signature

## Appendix 7: Questionnaires distributed to Xhosa learners

### Questionnaire 1

#### 1. Name and surname

.....

#### 2. Address

.....

.....

.....

#### 3. Sex/Gender

.....

#### 4. Home Language/ mother tongue

.....

#### 5. Other language spoken at home

.....

#### 6. School and grade

.....

#### 7. Primary school/s attended

.....

#### 8. Language/s you were taught in

.....

#### 9. What are you?

.....

10. What is your culture?

11. Tell me about your culture

12. What are some of the ways you can teach other learners about your culture?

13. Do you have friends from other cultures or races at school?

14. Do you sit or play with them during intervals?

15. If your answer is “no”, explain why not

16. Do you have friends from your own culture or race ?

17. Do you sit or play with them during intervals?

18. If your answer is “yes” explain why.

19. Do you feel out of place or left out at school? *Tick your answer.*

Sometimes ☐          never ☐          always ☐

20. What are the things that make you feel out of place.

21. Would you like to see more of your culture at school?

22. What are some things you would like to happen that will get the learners from the different cultures and races to mix more?

23. When you work in groups in class, do you join a group with just your own culture or race, or learners from other cultures?

[illegible]



## Questionnaire 2

1. Why did you or your parents choose this school as your high school?

2. What are the things that make you feel part of this school?

3. Would you prefer to be taught in your mother tongue?

4. If your answer is “yes”, explain why and if “no” explain why not.

5. Do you find it difficult to understand the lessons taught in the classroom. *Tick your answer*

Sometimes ☐ never ☐ always ☐

6. Do you think Xhosa should be taught as a subject at school?

7. Explain your answer.

8. Do you experience any problems at school?

9. If your answer is “yes” explain what you mean.

10. Who do you speak to if you have a problem at school? *Tick your answer.*

The principal ☐      a teacher ☐      a RCL member ☐      a friend ☐      nobody ☐

11. If you do have problems at school, what would you like to happen?

12. Do your parents attend parent meetings?

13. If they do not, what is the reason or reasons?

14. Write down anything else that you feel is important for me to know about your experiences at this school

### Appendix 8: Staff questionnaire on diversity training (Anonymous)

Question	Yes	No
<p>Have you had any training, either in-service or pre-service in any of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Multicultural education</li> <li>ii. Social justice education</li> <li>iii. Intercultural education</li> <li>iv. Anti-racism education</li> <li>v. Diversity studies</li> </ul>	7	20
<p>If you have had no training in these areas, would you be willing to have training.</p>	20	2