BLACK TEACHERS (RE)NEGOTIATION AND (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF THEIR PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA’S POST-APARTHEID CURRICULUM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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This qualitative case study explored the narratives of Black South African teachers as they seek to (re)define/construct and (re)negotiate their pedagogy as critical agents in South Africa’s journey through educational, political, social and cultural transformation. In doing so, the study explored how they negotiated their practice within the complex intertwining and tensions of identity, lived experience, liberatory struggles, and their notions of emancipatory teaching and learning.

The theoretical frameworks of post/anti-apartheid, critical theory, and feminist theory inform this study. The work of multiple South African scholars who have explored, theorized and recommended a post-apartheid pedagogy/educational dispensation is reviewed and discussed. The work of specific “western” scholars - Freire, Giroux, and hooks is also reviewed in relation to how it informs and is informed by South Africa’s notions of a post-apartheid pedagogy. The border crossing of these sets of literature and theoretical frames is an attempt to disrupt the binaries of ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘western’ and ‘third-world.” It attempts to blur such rigidity and authority through critical tensions and therefore place the anti-apartheid educational ideology with/in the dominant (western) discourse on educational transformation.
This study theorizes research as a reflective decolonizing process that guided the methods used and analysis of the teacher narratives. It also engages in the ethics and politics of transnational research(ers) and theorizes the personal within the research process.

The teacher narratives offer possibilities for a closer engagement of how educational policy is interpreted/enacted in the classroom. Their narratives show how their teaching practice/philosophy is shaped and negotiated, constrained and set free by their personal histories, identity politics, racial encounters, apartheid, political (non)consciousness/activism/discourse, and project participation. It points out the complex interconnectedness/fracturing of the above and the often intangible that impacts teaching and learning. What emerged were an unveiling of myriad complexities, convictions and ambivalences to the (im)possibilities of the teaching and learning environment as an empowering vehicle for social change in South Africa. The teacher narratives burst with promise, ambivalence, optimism and somberness about the transformative possibilities of South Africa’s new curriculum. This study contextualizes the current educational discourse in South Africa within the very classrooms new educational policy is intended to impact.
Dedicated to my parents

and

my husband Ravin
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

South Africa currently finds itself somewhere on the continuum of its educational transformation, in the midst of shedding the remnants of its apartheid education and launching into new democratic curricula that is intended to produce an informed and active citizenry. Past curricula in South Africa “perpetuated race, class, gender and ethnic divisions and emphasized separateness, rather than common citizenship and nationhood. [It is therefore imperative that the] new curriculum be structured to reflect the values and principles of [South Africa’s] new democratic society” (Nkomo, 1990).

Whilst this study is framed within the new educational endeavor in South Africa, it engages with apartheid and the post-apartheid ideology. South Africa’s educational history cannot be divorced from the apartheid ideology of racial differentiation and discrimination because such racial segregation was institutionalized within the educational system (Maylam, 2001). The shifting of power to the National Party (the ruling political party in South Africa) in 1948 led to legislation that clearly demarcated a racialized and segregated education in South Africa (Nkomo, 1990; Maylam, 2001; Motala & Pampallis, 2002). Until 1994, such unequal and discriminatory educational
practices legally pervaded the lives of Black\(^1\) students and teachers. Such a historical past necessitates that current educational research and discourse traverse this historical terrain in order to contextualize and make meaning of South Africa’s current educational ideology, policies and practices.

South Africa was and continues to be a deeply stratified nation that is marked by hierarchical access to knowledge, schooling, and learning. There is little chance for the maintenance of a democratic nation if this deep stratification continues unbroken. In his preliminary reflections on post-apartheid education, Nkomo (1990) stated that the new education system must “foster the liberation of the person, unleashing the full potential of the person to play a vital role in the development of a society bound together by a social contract that upholds a cohesive national consciousness [by] radically remolding the teaching, organization, and training of the youth” (p. 303). However, the profound effects the apartheid legacy has created in engendering an unequal society may provide challenges that far exceed the possibilities of the current educational endeavors to create an equitable society in the immediate future.

Much of the extant research and educational discussion about South Africa’s educational transformation has been grounded in apartheid education. There has been much discourse on the history of South African education and since the 1980’s a flurry of proposed alternative approaches to the role of education in South Africa’s post-apartheid

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\(^1\) The term Black has its roots in the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) of the 1960s in South Africa. It was an inclusive term to refer to all of those who were marginalized and oppressed under the apartheid regime. It was used to collectively refer to Africans, Coloureds and Indians during the struggle. But the apartheid government appropriated this term in the late 70s to refer to Africans only. However, the term Black remained an inclusive term for the oppressed and those aligned with the liberation (Jita, 1999). I use the term Black/African interchangeably in the study to refer to the collective experience of oppression for people of color, as well as the specific oppression of the indigenous African in South Africa.
political and social transformation (Nkomo, 1990; Jansen, 1990; Mzamane, 1990; Setai, 1990; Gardiner, 1990). The South African Department of Education has adopted the Outcomes Based Education (OBE)\(^2\) model and developed a curriculum framework, Curriculum 2005 (C2005)\(^3\) for its education system.

As expected, because this educational transformation is so recent, there are no published studies focusing on the perspectives of the teachers with regard to the new curriculum and pedagogy in South Africa. While there are emerging critiques and concerns about South Africa’s new educational ideology and curriculum,\(^4\) the missing component to these educational discourses is that of the teachers themselves. The teacher ‘voice’, particularly the ‘voices’ of Black teachers in South Africa are still resoundingly silent within the dominant discourse of educational transformation, educational policy, professional development, teaching and learning in South Africa. What is their perspective of OBE? How do they now conceptualize their teaching practice within this new framework? How do they negotiate their “new” roles within C2005? How do they empower students and themselves in environments that are still deeply embedded in the legacy of apartheid? In this study I raise these questions and re-tell the stories of the teachers as they “speak” about their role within South Africa’s educational transformation. This study is an attempt to interrupt the current dominant educational discourses and interject the narratives of these young educators as a means to re-consider educational theorizing in South Africa.

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\(^2\) See Chapter 2 for brief description of this ideology and the South African Department of Education’s rationale for choosing this ideology.

\(^3\) This is the new K-12 curriculum, driving curriculum and pedagogical change in South Africa. See Chapter 2 for description of this curriculum.

\(^4\) See e.g. Motala, E. & Pampallis J. eds. (2002); Kunnie, J (2000); Martin, G (1999); Satyo, S. (1999).
The main focus of this study was to explore the narratives of “new” educators as they seek to (re)define, construct and (re)negotiate their pedagogy as critical agents in South Africa’s journey through educational, political, social and cultural transformation. In doing so, the study also explored how they negotiated their practice within the complex intertwining and tensions of identity, lived experience, liberatory struggles, and their notions of emancipatory teaching and learning.

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. How do issues of lived experience, politics, race and culture influence the way black teachers conceptualize their teaching practice?

2. What impact does pedagogical practice have on social change?

3. Do black teachers in marginalized school settings provide academic spaces to empower their students? If so, how?

These are critical questions for the educational and historical juncture in which South Africa now finds itself as it reformulates its apartheid structures to develop a more democratic teaching and learning environment and practice. Just as public education was a primary site for institutionalizing and perpetuating the social-organization of apartheid, public education is considered a primary site for creating equity and equality within our still divisive South African society.

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5 The teaching experience of the teachers ranged from 1-5 years.
6 I use ‘lived experience’ in this context to be inclusive of hope, imagined possibilities, spirituality.
Educational “Transformation” and Pedagogical Possibilities in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Formal schooling and education of Black people in South Africa, during Dutch, British and the National Party rule has a brutal and violent history. Their missionary zeal to christianize the “heathen Kaffir” (Molteno, 1986) and educate him for menial labor violated indigenous principles of education and stripped blacks of their human dignity, cultural roots, and history (Molteno, 1986; Wilson & Ramphele, 1989). However, race as a sole signifier for educational access/separation was not institutionalized until the early 1950’s. In 1948 the National Party legitimized apartheid through the implementation of a number of legislative acts, for example The Race Classification Act and the Group Areas Act of 1950. The National Party also legislated inferior, segregated schools for Africans in 1953, Coloureds in 1963, and Indians in 1965 (Bassey, 1999). According to Molteno (1986) were the group areas act was intentioned to:

remove all black people all of the time physically from the context in which the wealth of the land was owned and controlled, Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education was designed to help remove them psycho-ideologically and ‘resettle’ them in their separate ‘places’ of subordination (p. 93).

It is argued that the 1953 Bantu Education Act was enacted to serve the labor needs of the capitalist class, and reinforce ethnic divisions among Africans with the intent to “retribalise” (Molteno, 1986) that would result in fragmentation, thus diffusing the development of African nationalism (Molteno, 1986; Kallaway, 1986). While the physical separation of black people was an important ‘divide and conquer’ mentality of
the apartheid regime, the systems of Bantu, Coloured and Indian education were aimed at
the minds of the black people. The apartheid regime recognized that:

…. the greatest threat and danger to white exploitation and domination is
the political consciousness of the masses of the oppressed people ….. their
acquaintance with and knowledge of the history of the liberatory
movement in other parts of the world, and their unity of purpose [which]
transcends racial or ethnic differences and strikes at the very foundations
of the social, economic, and political structure (quoted in Molteno, 1986
p. 94).

Thus separate education/schooling for the four race groups attempted to control the
direction of thought, limit the boundaries of knowledge and communication and
condition the black mind for servitude and subordinated positions in South African
society. It can be argued that the main focus of separate education was not necessarily an
attempt to deny educational opportunity/access, but more so a calculated attempt to
protect white privilege, institutionalize social control, to subvert black South Africans’
political and economic aspirations, and distort the ideological contents of apartheid
(Molteno, 1986; Bassey, 1999). South Africa’s educational history and the role
education played in institutionalizing and resisting apartheid is discussed further in
chapter two.

The post-apartheid democratic government instituted and implemented a number
of social policies intended to transform South African society. Critical to this
transformation is the educational policies intended to redress the inequalities of apartheid.
Educational transformation in South Africa is characterized by educational policy that is
intended to redress educational and social inequities.
Change in curriculum and teaching practice is seen as the centerpiece in the transformation of education and society. One of the first initiatives of the new democratic government in South Africa was to re-design the K-12 curriculum, conceptually, structurally and content wise. The Department of Education adopted the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) ideology and the currently phased new Curriculum 2005 (C2005). The move to the OBE challenges the past assumptions under which education was administered for the four race\(^7\) groups in South Africa. South Africa’s C2005 stresses lifelong learning as the strategic intervention for transforming its current educational system and claims to contribute to social justice, equity and development. Both OBE and C2005 are discussed further in Chapter two.

**Context for Study**

My engagement with the issue of education and its role in liberating the oppressed in South Africa began long before the development of this proposal. As a student and teacher in apartheid South Africa, I was disenchanted with the apartheid education I received and was later forced to subject upon the students I eventually taught. My negative experiences with racism, sexism and oppression – my frustration with living the “in-between” life as an “Indian” in a hierarchical society led to a construction of self. Still embracing multiple identities and subject positions I re-evaluated my sense of self. A definitive sense of self began emerging in my teenage years, as a black student/community activist, later teacher, with a commitment to social justice and

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\(^7\) I use the apartheid term race here not as an essentialized concept but as a means to illustrate apartheid ideology/practices based on racial categorization: White, African, Coloured & Indian.
national liberation. As a practicing teacher and researcher, this evolved into a commitment to a pedagogy that lends itself to social justice.

While I have been engaged at various levels with the political, social and educational changes in South Africa since my arrival in the United States almost eleven years ago, the research questions I pose for this study emerged more clearly and definitively during a visit to South Africa in the summer of 2001. This particular visit to South Africa was initiated by the possible funding of a teacher exchange grant. During school visits to township, rural/farm and urban schools and discussions with educators, I perceived a lack of understanding of the OBE model amongst the teachers. While my interactions with the teachers were limited to short discussions, the teachers themselves always steered the conversation to changes in the curriculum as a result of C2005. Teachers were apprehensive about the curriculum change because they were not receiving sufficient guidance and training with regards to OBE and C2005. They also cited the lack of available resources as a hindrance to the successful implementation of C2005. Amidst these feelings of uncertainty, I also witnessed hope and optimism among educators whose schools were located in the most marginalized areas of South Africa. It was this sense of optimism that spurred my efforts to learn about those educators who practice a “liberatory” or “transformative” teaching philosophy and are creating spaces and opportunities to empower their students through the mandated curriculum.

The opportunity for this study arose out of a United States Department of State grant that funded a yearlong educator exchange between “new” South African and United
States urban educators\textsuperscript{8}. This project was collaborative, targeting new educators in South Africa and the United States who demonstrated leadership or showed potential leadership qualities within their urban educational communities. The teachers in South Africa were recruited from the Midlands region of Kwazulu Natal. The United States teachers were recruited from a large urban school district in a mid-western state. While the South African and United States teachers worked collaboratively for the duration of the funded project, this study only focuses on the five South African teachers.

While I struggled with the ethics of conducting my study within the larger funded project – this field (site) became the opportunity for me to manage a transnational life where two geographic sites (South Africa and the United States) take on meanings of “home.” As such, conceptions of home become/remain partial and selective but can become significant in defining the field and the researcher’s position within it. Knowles (2000) examines the positionality of “home” and “field” of transnational researchers. Knowles directly speaks to the complexity of these two constructs for the transnational researcher by posing the following questions: “What happens when here and there contain both home and field? What are the threads connecting life and work when researchers are themselves transnationals?” (p. 54). This requires critical reflexivity on the part of the transnational researcher about “what we do, why [and how] we do it [research]?” (p. 56). For this study it calls to question issues of power, spatially and relationally; the tensions of “insider-outsider” research; identity within a re-imagined

\textsuperscript{8} This grant was administered by a Civic Education Program within a large mid-western university. I served as project coordinator of the Civic Education Program and directed the South Africa-United States exchange.
community in post-apartheid South Africa; complicities within imperialist structures. I attempt to examine this complexity in my methodology chapter. Both the United States and South Africa served as field-sites for the data collection. This research is framed within a qualitative case study and utilized interviewing, focus group discussion, observations, and document analysis.

**Theoretical Border Crossing**

The theoretical frameworks of post/anti-apartheid, critical theory, and feminist theory inform this study. The work of multiple South African scholars who have explored, theorized and recommended a post-apartheid pedagogy/educational dispensation is reviewed. The work of specific “western” scholars - Freire, Giroux, and hooks is also reviewed in relation to how it informs and is informed by South Africa’s notions of a post-apartheid pedagogy. The intersecting literature of these scholars’ discourses on educational practice and its implications for empowerment and social justice strongly helps anchor the study within its political, cultural and historical moorings. Slotting the study within a single theoretical lens- based on either race or ethnicity, gender or class - would have limited the boundaries of the study since its intention is to open up spaces for dialogue across and within these issues and its implications for the teachers’ pedagogy within a rapidly changing political and social environment still fraught with issues of oppression (political, racial, gender, class, economic) and inequality.
The border crossing of these sets of literature and theoretical frames is an attempt to disrupt the binaries of ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘western’ and ‘third-world.’ It attempts to blur such rigidity and authority through critical tensions and therefore place the anti-apartheid educational ideology within the dominant (western) discourse on educational transformation.

**Significance and Limitations of the Study**

Cooper and Steyn (1996) state that as South African scholars attempt to transgress traditional discipline/intellectual boundaries by challenging established ways of thinking, a “moment” of “new emerging theoretical trends” is taking shape. New emerging intellectual lenses and transgressions occur as new knowledge is created (p. 8). This study attempts to add to this new knowledge creation by highlighting a significant area of educational transformation in South Africa – an area thus far neglected in the dominant educational discourse – that of teachers and their role within the new curriculum philosophy of engaging students as active learners and agents of social change. This study not only makes an important contribution to the emergent literature in South Africa on educational reform but more importantly speaks to the complex nature of teaching and learning that is still so strongly embedded in issues of race, colonialism, apartheid, poverty and the complex interactions and interrelationships of these issues. It examines critical tensions on how liberatory education is constructed and practiced in urban environments in South Africa. In a country still grappling with the practice/performance of democracy this study adds a much-needed complexity to the scholarship on
educational change and pedagogical practices. These teacher narratives can provide a new space in which to explore critical questions/thinking on the role of teachers within South Africa’s democratic educational transformation. This study therefore has implications for policy makers and teachers in South Africa.

Conducting this research study within a larger funded project presented constraints that impacted the data collection process and enacted power relations that could have influenced the type of information collected. I speak to this in my methods chapter. As a case study the results of this study cannot be generalized to the larger teacher population in South Africa. The teacher’s within this study were selected because of their participation within the larger funded study and therefore selection was not representative of the teachers in South Africa. The study was also limited by my inability to observe the teachers actual practice in their classrooms, as well as their interactions with their students.

Organization of the Dissertation

The second chapter provides a brief historical context of education in South Africa and reviews a sampling of literature that locates the theoretical framework of the study. Literature that speaks to the development of an emancipatory pedagogy is reviewed. South African scholars’ conceptualizations of a liberatory post-apartheid pedagogy and its implications for social justice and decolonization is discussed. Freire’s pedagogy based on conscientiztion, Giroux’s critical pedagogy based on teachers as transformative intellectuals, and hooks’ transgressive engaged pedagogy is also reviewed.
The third chapter theorizes research as a reflective decolonizing practice. I provide a rationale for the use of case study as a means to engage in qualitative inquiry. The selection and access to the teachers, data collection and analysis are also discussed. I examine through a reflective practice the ethics and politics of research(ing) and theorize the personal within the research process. I attempt to examine the power relations and politics inherent in conducting research within a funded project and how this may constrain/affect the data collected.

Chapter 4 presents the teacher narratives under three main “sections.” The first section focuses on the teachers’ descriptions of sense of self as teacher and the multiple meanings and experiences that bring to bear on their individual and collective identities and teaching. The second section traces their engagement with Curriculum 2005 and the possibilities they enact/imagine within it. The third section elaborates on the teachers’ examination of the legacy of apartheid within their schools and other educational institutions.

Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter where I attempt to summarize the “findings” of the study. Using the themes: Resources of Biography and Pedagogical Practice; The Emancipatory Possibilities of Curriculum 2005; and the Development of a Change Oriented Pedagogy; I attempt to highlight the teachers’ engagement with a number of critical educational issues and discourses related to teaching and learning and possibilities for developing a “transformative” and/or change oriented practice.
CHAPTER 2

THEORIZING “TRANSFORMATIVE” PEDAGOGY

This study is situated within black teachers’ (re)negotiation and (re)construction of their pedagogical practices within South Africa’s new “transformative” curriculum; the implications of their pedagogical practices for social change; and their “radical imaginations” on the role of the school and teacher in providing learning spaces to empower their marginalized students. As such I work within and across multiple theoretical frames.

The theoretical frameworks of anti-apartheid, critical theory, and feminist (of color) theory inform this study. The intersection of these frameworks exemplifies my exhaustive search to find a single theoretical framework that attempts to fit my research study. The issues/tensions that arise out of the study require their own affirmations and thus the attempt to create a counter space within the inescapable dominant educational discourse. Such dilemmas are not new for “third-world” researchers or those of color, in particular those working with “marginalized” or “third-world” participants/issues. Anzaldua (1990) refers to this as the formulation of “marginal theories that are partially outside and partially inside the western frame of reference” (xxv). These are theories that
overlap many “worlds” and helps to articulate “new positions in these ‘inbetween’ Borderland worlds of ethnic communities, and academics” (xxvi). The overlapping of these theories helps to tease out the nuances of colonization, apartheid, race, politics, socio-cultural tensions that are deeply embedded in South Africa’s tainted apartheid history. The intersectionality of these theoretical frameworks opens up new spaces within dominant discourses for those on the margins. These new spaces/discourses unravel in the narratives of the five teachers in this study.

A review of literature combining the work of multiple South African scholars’ notions of a ‘liberatory’ pedagogy for a post-apartheid South Africa and a description of South Africa’s current educational curriculum is discussed. In addition the specific work of Freire, Giroux and hooks with reference to their conceptualization of transformative teaching and learning are reviewed. This set of literature provides a juxtaposition for analyzing how transformative curriculum and pedagogical practices have implications outside of the classroom and lend themselves to social change. I use the western based theoretical frames within this study to provide a form of scaffolding for entree into the dominant educational discourse of South Africa’s conceptualization of a ‘transformative pedagogy’ that is intended to empower its people, liberating and decolonizing them from the chains of apartheid.

The utilization of multiple theories for this study is not an indication of my uncertainty of the place of this study, but rather an attempt to position this study within the main discourse of these theories. It attempts at creating a counter space within these (dominant) discourses for those living in the “third world.” This study is about teachers
whose geographic and cultural space is usually “otherised” and marginalized. Ultimately what these theories allow is a space to disrupt the ‘center’ by bringing in perspectives from the margin, to examine the center and to reflect on dominant educational discourses both in South Africa and the US.

Situating the Theory

Although the theoretical construct for this study is drawn from multiple frames, each shares a common Freirian influence. Freire’s pedagogy for the liberation of the oppressed serves as a base from which Giroux’s critical pedagogy, bell hooks’ engaged pedagogy emerged. There also seems to be some Freirian influence on the development of an anti-apartheid education ideology, especially during the apartheid regime. I claim no direct connection between the work of Freire and the development of an anti-apartheid education in South Africa. The strength of the four sets of literature is the “difference” they bring to the conceptualization of a “transformative” or “liberatory” pedagogy. My intention is to speak to/of the interconnectedness of the concepts/ideas that seemingly bring these theoretical frames together.

Freire’s (1970) critique on traditional pedagogy is particularly salient. The traditional pedagogy, or the “banking education” model emphasizes the transmission and transference of knowledge to students where the teacher deposits information to the students – the teaching philosophy that was implemented under apartheid South Africa specifically for educating black people. South Africa’s new Curriculum 2005 is designed to make learners active participants in their learning and acknowledge and affirm their
life experiences. As such, Freire’s ideas on the role of education, and the work of critical theorist, Giroux’s notion of teachers as transformative intellectuals\(^9\) and black feminist hooks’ notion of an “engaged pedagogy” will be reviewed and its relevance to South Africa’s education examined. While these constructs of pedagogy are somewhat different based on the lenses through which issues of economics, race, gender, oppression etc. are discoursed (sometimes silenced), the essential precept is that of empowering students to intervene in their own learning – the claim Curriculum 2005 makes.

The limitations of this scholarship are acknowledged in terms of it being situated within a US context and western frame. However, the utilization of the particular concepts mentioned above lends itself to creating a space for an emerging scholarship of a more contextualized ‘liberatory’ pedagogy for post-apartheid South Africa. It also provides a space to disrupt the often times referenced US critical pedagogy as a universal conceptualization. The discourse on South Africa’s post-apartheid pedagogy then offers an alternative analytical lens to examine a pedagogy for student empowerment. This literature review does not delve into the critical and feminist theories as entire theoretical frames, rather it specifically utilizes particular scholars’ work for its relation to a pedagogy of empowerment to examine how students and teachers can be critical agents for social change.

This chapter is divided into two ‘sections’. In the first section I provide a brief historical context of apartheid public education in South Africa and the role it played in

\(^9\) I recognize the criticisms/limitations of Freire and Giroux’s pedagogy, however the purpose of this chapter is not to address these criticisms. See e.g. Lather’s (1998) article “Critical Pedagogy and Its Complicities: A Praxis of Stuck Places” in *Educational Theory* Vol 48 (4); Ellsworth (1989) for such a critique.
the production and reproduction of knowledge. The second section reviews a close reading of the four sets of interconnecting literature that focuses on the theorizing/practice of an empowering pedagogy in South Africa and the US. Through the articulation of these four sets of literature, I attempt to place my study within/against the ebb and flow of these scholars’ conceptualizations of an empowering pedagogy.

**Historical Context for Public Education in South Africa**

Historically, public education in South Africa was a primary site for institutionalizing and perpetuating the social organization of apartheid. Within South African apartheid education each race group received a different culture of learning that attempted to develop particular mindsets/thinking so as to maintain the apartheid system status quo. Very simply put, the White population was educated to be leaders and the Blacks as subservient workers. While all of color in South Africa (Blacks) the Indians and Coloureds were allowed some privileges in this hierarchy that were denied to the Africans (apartheid racial terms used here to illustrate inequality). Thus Indians and Coloured often filled roles between (and sometimes within) these two extremes.

The implementation of Bantu\(^{10}\) education in 1953 ensured a legacy of separate and unequal education and an interruption in the practice of an indigenous education\(^{11}\) in

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\(^{10}\) The word “Bantu” in the Nguni group of languages mean “people”, however the South African apartheid government usurped this word and officially used it to refer to the indigenous South African (Nkabinde, 1997; Arnold, 1981). See e.g. Hlatshwayo, S.A. (2000); Nkabinde, Z. P. (1997); Kallaway, P. (1986); Kwesi K. P (1999); and others for a closer reading of Bantu Education apartheid ideology and labor (re)production.

\(^{11}\) See e.g. Hlatshwayo, S.A. (2000); Njobe, M.W. (1990); Nkabinde (1997) for an examination of the forms/organization of indigenous education prior to colonization and an analysis of the impact/conflict of western/colonial educational forms on the continuation/survival of indigenous education in South Africa.
South Africa. Bantu education translated into an education of labor for the privileged – a deliberate inferior form of education\textsuperscript{12} to train blacks “exclusively for employment in menial, low-wage positions in a racially structured economy” (Nkabinde, 1997, p. 6).

With this education came the enforcement of subservience – most effectively metered out through rigorous curricula that served as sites of apartheid indoctrination\textsuperscript{13}. According to Nkomo (cited in Nkabinde, 1997) Bantu education was an instrument for the apartheid regime to:

1. produce a semi-skilled black labor force to minister to the needs of the capitalist economy at the lowest possible cost … [and] to blunt competition with white workers.
2. socialize black students so that they can accept the social relations of apartheid as natural, that is, to accept the supposed superiority of whites and their own inferiority.
3. forge a consciousness and identity accompanied by a sense of superiority among whites.
4. promote the acceptance of racial or ethnic separation as the natural order of things or as an arrangement better suited for South Africa’s complex problems of national minorities that can only be solved through the separation of the races or ethnic groups.
5. promote black intellectual development by minimizing the allocation of educational resources for blacks while maximizing them for whites. (p. 8)

Bantu education served to further the apartheid regime’s “negative social engineering” and long-term subversive goal of denying Blacks “intellectual independence” (Nkabinde, 1997, p. 8) so as to freeze any possibilities of economic, social, and political independence.

\textsuperscript{12} See also Diseko, N. (1990) who provides statistics on financial investments in education according to race by the apartheid state, as well examples of curricula, teacher qualification, resource etc. disparity based on race.

\textsuperscript{13} This is elaborated upon later in this chapter under the heading Production and Reproduction of (apartheid) Knowledge.
Schooling of the colonized in South Africa was a key institution of control – a creation of a “culture of silence” where the “colonial element in schooling [was] its attempt to silence, to negate the history of the indigene, to rationalize the irrational and gain acceptance for structures which are oppressive” (Carnoy, quoted in Kallaway, 1986, p. 9). Such an education was deliberately tailored to develop a certain type of black “intellectual” in South Africa – marked as a new indigenous elite – to counter those indigenous (and other) groups that resisted and protested the practices of the colonizers, in other words to silence the voice of government opponents (Nkabinde, 1997; Kallaway, 1986).

It would be heresy on my part to submit that the apartheid regime was totally successful in its attempts to suppress and oppress the minds of the black populace. Events of resistance to colonial education according to Molobi (cited in Nkabinde, 1997) was reported as early as 1658 when the slaves at the Cape rejected the form of education offered to them, as well as when African chiefs refused (as a form of resistance) to send their children to mission schools. Since the 1920s, students have used school boycotts and mass “stay-aways” as forms of protest of colonial/Bantu education\(^\text{14}\). While the apartheid regime was fairly successful in their divide and rule strategy, their very practices stirred the imaginations of black students, scholars, parents and community activists to actively pursue an education for liberation. The Soweto student uprising of 1976\(^\text{15}\) was a culmination of decades long passive protest and resistance. The tragic

\(^{14}\) See e.g. Mohamed, Y (1990); for discussion on forms of resistance enacted by student movements.

\(^{15}\) The Soweto student insurrection of 1976 was a tragic national moment in South Africa. More than one thousand Black students were killed in demonstrations (Kunnie, J. 2000). Students were protesting against the Bantu education system and the government's policy of mandating Afrikaans as a second medium of
events of this day catapulted South Africa’s youth and activists into another decade and a half of unprecedented political and educational protest and action, resulting in South Africa’s first democratic government in 1994. The Soweto Riots were a defining moment for black youth in the struggle for equal education and national liberation. The resulting upsurge of student power demonstrated through the school boycotts of the latter seventies and eighties was a clear indication to the apartheid government that these very schools intended to propagate an “education for domestication,” had become the “Trojan horses” – the sites of struggle against such oppression (Kallaway, 1986, p. 20). My intention is to make clear that the provision of apartheid education did not simply and unproblematically benefit the apartheid government at all times – that the colonized were simply powerless, silenced and passive. What I hope to show in this brief analysis is that schools/schooling under apartheid were in fact also “systematically appropriated by the colonized people and that [schools] have played an important historical role as sites of struggle” (Kallaway, 1986, p. 10) towards the larger struggle for national liberation.

Today, with the end of apartheid a legal reality, public education is touted as playing a vital role in creating equity and equality within our new South African society. However, despite eight years of post-apartheid democracy, schools continue to legitimize inequalities and serve as sites of oppression, poverty and inequalities particularly for Black students whose families are unable to ride the economic waves of so called equality. While South Africa’s new Curriculum 2005 has unveiled and addressed the blatant intellectual/educational inequalities of the apartheid regime, the lack of instruction in Black schools (this in addition to Black students already having English as a medium of instruction)
institutional support, financial and teaching resources, teacher training and apartheid era facilities and equipment ensures the continuation of apartheid education in schools that have a majority Black student population.

The Production and Reproduction of (apartheid) Knowledge

Apartheid’s institutionalized racism in South Africa pervaded all spheres of South African life, but perhaps had the most profound effect on education – the production and reproduction of knowledge (Prah, 1999). Prah elaborates that racism did not only affect the social, political, economic and other infrastructural base of knowledge production in South Africa, but it more importantly also affected the “substance of what passed as knowledge itself” (p. 4).

As a result of the 1953 Bantu Education Act, the apartheid regime had direct access to most of the young black people. This made it easy to “institute control by inducing passivity in the students and by creating false ideas about black history, identity and culture” (Mohamed, 1990 p. 259). This type of education was intended not only to “undermine the integrity of black people, but also to prevent their intellectual development” (p. 259). In 1954, Dr. Vervoed, then prime minister of South Africa, made this clear:

What is the use of teaching the Bantu child mathematics when it cannot use it in practice? The school must equip him to meet the demands which the economic life will impose upon him …. There is no place for him above the level of certain forms of labour …. For that reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in the European community. (cited in Mohamed, 1990, p. 260)
This deliberate attempt at an inferior black education was to ensure cheap unskilled labor and to prevent black people from becoming intellectually powerful to challenge the state.

In analyzing how knowledge/ideas are socially constructed frames of references, Prah poses the following questions: “How do social realities affect the production and producer of knowledge? How does knowledge affect the social order?” (p. 4). The production of knowledge in the black schools during apartheid is aptly described by Baine and Mwamwenda (1994, cited in Nkabinde) as “authoritarian, disciplinarian, teacher dominated, content oriented …” where teachers relied on prescribed texts, dictated class notes, promoted memorization, steered away from student interaction and active participation (p. 21). Rote learning and memorization was the order of the day and at the expense of critical thinking and knowledge application. However, Black students have always expressed their dissatisfaction with this philosophy of education. A 1980 study by Maurice (cited in Jansen, 1990) offers a glimpse of students’ call for curricula to reflect and validate their experiences. He quotes students’ articulation about the apartheid curriculum:

THEY decide what we are taught. Our history is written according to their ideas. Biology and Physics are taught in our schools but which we cannot apply to our everyday lives. We are not told that most diseases of the workers stem from the fact that they are undernourished and overworked. We are taught biology, but not in the terms of the biology of liberation, where we can tackle the concept of “race” to prove that there is no such thing as “race.” We are taught geography but not the geography of liberation. We are not taught that 80 percent of South Africans are dumped on 13 percent of the land….. We are taught accountancy merely to calculate the profits of the capitalist” (p. 329).

The question today is whether the majority of black students are receiving appropriate spaces to construct knowledge within a democratic society - or is the continued
immersion of their lives in the apartheid legacy structures continue to perpetuate apartheid era knowledge making, production/reproduction?

**A Pedagogy for Post-Apartheid South Africa**

This section attempts to place South African scholars’ conceptualization of a post-apartheid pedagogy within the broader framework of South Africa’s historical, political, economic and cultural struggle for liberation. The struggle for educational equity and equality in South Africa is intimately linked to the broader political struggle for freedom and liberation. Therefore South Africa’s current education policy becomes meaningless if not considered within this broader context. This section will explore South Africans’ scholarship of a post-apartheid pedagogy against the backdrop of resistance to/against/within the apartheid system.

The emergence of the Black Conscious movement (BCM) in the 1970s helped develop a “new wave” of thinking that released the “paralysis” that was brought upon the liberation movement by massive state crackdowns in the 1960s. The thinking of the Black Consciousness movement was stimulated by the work of Franz Fanon. Fanon’s (1963) argument of how colonialism affects the psychology, national values and culture of the oppressed, in his book *The Wretched of the Earth* propelled the BCM to insist that black people of South Africa needed to be psychologically freed from the “oppressive slave-mentality of apartheid and the claustrophobia of white liberalism of the 1960s” (Wilson & Ramphele, 1989, pp. 267-8). In essence, The BCM helped the oppressed in South Africa to “rediscover their sense of worth and human dignity by focusing on their
cultural roots and history” (p. 269). The liberation struggle by the BCM became more than a struggle for access to power, but “one where the oppressed were demanding participation in the process of redefining power itself – [a process] essential to authentic development” (p. 269).

Freire’s educational philosophy was also “discovered” in South Africa in the early seventies by the Black Consciousness Movement, the University Christian Movement and the South African Students’ Organization (SASO). What was particularly appealing about Freire’s philosophy/espoused methodologies was his concept of “concientizazo” – his insistence that there is a specific link between personal and social liberation. Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, though banned in South Africa during the apartheid regime, found its way to the ‘bush colleges’ and was enthusiastically studied by young activists of the Black Conscious Movement (Alexander, p. 57). Alexander states that Freire’s work appealed to the young activists because it was a mirror image of what they rejected in the Bantu education system. Thus many informal courses on Freire’s methods were conducted. SASO students and others also conducted literacy and conscientization projects in urban and rural townships (p. 57).

According to Heilberg (quoted in Alexander, 1990), many educational activists and theorists in South Africa accepted¹⁶ Freire’s pedagogy because:

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¹⁶ It is important to note that while Freire’s ideas were appealing its possibilities for the South African context was limiting. For example Freire’s theory and strategy of “revolution” (which is not based on actual/direct experience) is void of any analysis of any particular historical and social context and generalizes the Brazilian experience of oppression to all oppressed people; his ideas of human freedom and societal change may be simplistically analyzed and presented as simply possible through “willing” it; his analysis of oppression in the “Third World” is dichotomous – oppressed and oppressor – and is based on capitalistic terms (Elias, 1994). South Africa’s state of oppression was more complex than the dichotomy
1. Freire’s anti-capitalist social theory accorded with the experience of and the insights at which the liberation movement in South Africa in general and the educationists active in it in particular had arrived increasingly;
2. the pedagogical situation of which Freire’s pedagogy had been formed resembled that which existed in South Africa’s ghetto’s and homelands;
3. Freire’s pedagogical method of combining education/culture with conscientisation and politicization accorded with the views of the BCM and was subsequently adopted by the broader liberation movement;
4. The specific organization of the liberation movement in the late seventies and especially in the eighties as a grassroots movement anchored in small groups and projects in the ‘community’, brought with it an exceptional sensitivity regarding democratic principles. This sensitivity, reinforced by Freire’s pedagogy, consequently became integral to the practice of ‘alternative education’ (pp. 57-8).

While the ideas of Freire and others on liberation influenced the development of People’s Education and alternative education in South Africa, it was the “genius” of the Black Consciousness Movement that “made it possible to indigenise these ideas, to naturalize these ideas, to give them a particularly South African timbre, a particularly South African flavour” (Alexander, p. 107). The BCM did what Freire criticized did not occur in North America. It did not simply import Freire’s pedagogical practices but “re-creat[ed] and re-[wrote]” them to fit the South African context. (Freire/Macedo, 2000, p. 6).

Until the early 1970s the apartheid regime was fairly successful in maintaining its status quo. However, with the 1976 Soweto uprising, the apartheid edifice started to crumble. June 16, 1976 served as a warning signal that the “racist fantasies of the Vervaed-Vorster era were about to be blown away by the winds of change” (Alexander, 1990 p. 4).
Curriculum and Social Transformation

Enver Motala (1992), in *Education in Transition*, aptly stated that in order to redesign educational policies in the new South Africa, policy makers need to ask: “Who are its [education’s] new intellectual foot soldiers – it’s pedagogues? What role must be played by the cadre of educators in the future?” Has the new South African government asked these questions as it put in place new educational policies/requirements and guidelines? This study is situated within Motala’s call for a deeper analysis of the role of educators within South Africa’s larger democratic struggle.

In Neville Alexander’s (1990) compilation of conference papers on the development of education for liberation, alternative education, or People’s education in South Africa in the 1980’s, he insisted on the need to “theorize our experiences … because it is imperative that beacons be set for future education, that direction and goals be determined so that energies now being expended are not wasted or misdirected” (p. 49). There is little doubt that the multiplicity of educational projects and experiments of people’s education and alternative education of that period influenced the theoretical framework and design of Curriculum 2005. It is therefore becomes necessary that South Africa continues to theorize its educational experiences as it transitions for the first time into a democratic education system.

Alexander’s 1988 warning of a class divided society and its implication for educational equity rings true even today in a democratic South Africa. Alexander states that a society divided by class reproduces the ideas of the dominant class and, if education does not challenge this, it will continue to reproduce the status quo. He argues
that even disenfranchised learners come to school with ruling class ideology. Within the marginalized communities that the five teachers in this study teach, the possibilities of reproducing the apartheid era status quo are a frightening reality. These students and communities have not as yet harvested the fruits of liberation - neither educational, economic nor political power/equity. They have remained almost intact within their apartheid abodes. So, how can they be touched/infused with a more democratic liberatory educational experience? Alexander states that the new teaching corps needs to be suffused with “radical social theory” (p. 64). He contends that this is not simply the “ politicization of teachers,” but rather the adoption of a “liberation pedagogy” (ibid). For teachers to disrupt the reproduction of the status quo, they have to, according to Alexander, “acquire a viable theory of society …. serve as guides to learners without imposing their particular views [and must] become catalysts that unleash the latent creative powers of their students” (ibid). While apartheid era structures and ideology remain in many marginalized communities, this study presents possibilities for the practice of a more empowering pedagogy within these disenfranchised communities. However, one cannot deny that the success of these particular teachers was also possible through a support system (as a result of their participation in the larger funded project) not easily available to other educators.

What role is curriculum to play in translating political freedom to psychosocial liberation for black South Africans? Can curriculum eliminate the “psychological constraints and prejudices with which people view themselves and society?” (Jansen,
1990). According to Nkomo (1990), for knowledge to have a democratizing effect on South Africans

A massive effort to decolonize the prevailing Eurocentric epistemology must be a priority project. The African reality must be at the center of the new democratic epistemology if only for the compelling logic of restoring the humanity of those who for centuries had been alienated by racially-inspired, exclusionary models embedded in the prevailing epistememological order (p. 313).

This call to assert and claim humanity of the colonized is a call echoed by many anti-colonial and indigenous scholars (Smith, 1999, Fanon 1990). Smith (1999) states that colonized people are “compelled to define what it means to be human because there is a deep understanding of what it has meant to be considered not fully human, to be savage” (p. 26). Therefore the struggle for humanity within previously colonized nations has been “framed within the wider discourse of humanism, the appeal to human ‘rights’, the notion of a universal human subject, and the connections between being human and been capable of creating history, knowledge and society” (italics my own. p. 26). In other words how can South Africa address the “doctrine of white supremacy appropriated knowledge, definitions, meanings, and constructed canons that placed whites at the center of the universe [and theories that have been] formulated on the basis of particularized European experiences but given a universal status?” (Nkomo, 1990, p. 310).

Jansen (1990) states that in order to overcome centuries of colonial rule and educational and social indoctrination, South Africa has to move beyond political liberation. Educational approaches – curricula supported by social and political policies can facilitate the process of “mental decolonization.” Jansen delineates some possibilities
of the objectives and content of a post-apartheid curriculum that should empower students to:

1. uncover the myths of apartheid society
2. objectively explain their experiential reality; and
3. constructively challenge the sociopolitical determinants of their relative position in the community (p. 331).

He states that a post-apartheid curriculum should not only provide the relevant content that reflects the needs, aspirations and interests of the people but should also include democratic control over curriculum decision-making (p. 327). Jansen further urges that both practicing and preservice teachers will need systematic curriculum training that will provide them with critical theoretical orientations to educational theory and praxis. He suggests that such training should include:

1. a critical orientation to curriculum knowledge, particularly in its relationship to society
2. the ability to choose critically and confidently from a range of alternatives
3. the ability to justify curricular decisions
4. the ability to evaluate and improve personal performance
5. most importantly, the ability to "produce curricula around forms of culture and school knowledge that empower students who traditionally have been excluded from the benefits of a ‘critical education ….” (p. 333)

Mzamane (1990) advocates for a cultural approach towards the development of a pedagogy for liberation. He argues that such an approach is necessary to construct a new framework and curriculum for an educational system that will “restore the underprivileged and oppressed to their history and culture and at the same time validate cultural pluralism in its positive aspects in South Africa” (pp. 365-6). Colonial domination imposed an education system that denied the colonized “useful knowledge about themselves and their world, [and it] transmit[ted] a culture that embodie[d] [and
was designed to consolidate a slave mentality” (p. 369). He therefore envisions that the role of liberation education is to “give people knowledge about their world: how the world shapes them and how they, in turn, can shape the world” (p. 368). Mzamane uses various examples of how theatre, the arts, literature can be integrated into an education for liberation. By using these indigenous cultural forms, he illustrates that education for a national culture must be designed to “restore Africans to their history and to liberate the African mind from the vicious Eurocentric beliefs and prejudices. A pedagogy of liberation education must be rooted in the cultural institutions of the people as they unfold; it must take stock of the traditional institutions of the people, their history and destination” (p. 370). He further argues that education and culture can play a “decisive role in the social transformation so vital and necessary for the underprivileged to triumph over apartheid” (p. 367). Jansen, contends however, along with Hlatshwayo (2000) that curriculum change per se cannot be a substitute for social change. They acknowledge that curriculum change cannot guarantee social change, but that schools/curricula can contribute to changes in society. Jansen argues that curriculum change is more a “reflector than a generator of social change or development” but simultaneously emphasizes that it is a “significant component of social change to the extent that it encapsulates the knowledge of the people and reflects the aspirations of the nation” (p. 330). However, he cautions that the optimal impact of curriculum change can only occur when it supports and is supported by broader social changes.

Njobe (1990) in his call for education for liberation in a post-apartheid South Africa argues that in order for new generations of black South Africans to see themselves
as equals irrespective of differences pertaining to race, sex, religion and national identity, schools need to address the “colonial distortions and bias in knowledge, attitudes and value systems.” This new orientation in the education system could be “expected to remove colonial prejudices and practices of racial discrimination, domination and exploitation characteristic of the colonial era” (p. 55).

Do such possibilities exist within an educational framework? Has C2005 just in its policy implementation achieved this? What about the role of teachers? Does new policy/good practice ideology translate to a true decolonization, a freeing of the mind? Are Black youth who are still marginalized within their own communities and extended ones as in the case of the commuting student to formerly Indian/Coloured/White schools experiencing this removal of colonial prejudices and practices? Unfortunately the treacherous legacy of apartheid remains fairly intact in the townships and urban schools, creating in South Africa’s democratic era a national liberation with local oppression?

**Curriculum 2005. A reflection of anti-apartheid ideology?**

South Africa’s Curriculum 2005 – a post-apartheid conceptualization of a democratic teaching and learning philosophy - is a direct contraposition to the apartheid curriculum. It critiques and topples traditional notions of student-teacher interaction and roles; knowledge building and making; teaching practice; student voice and empowerment; community and school engagement; and accountability, education and social transformation.
The key principle of Curriculum 2005 is its focus on lifelong learning viewed as a “crucial and strategic intervention to transform the education and training system” (Manganyi, 1997, p. 1). In his foreword, Manganyi, then Deputy Director General of Education, stated that previous curriculum in South Africa perpetuated race, class, gender and ethnic division, and separateness rather than common citizenship and nationhood. In order to address this, Curriculum 2005 is designed upon the principles of co-operation, critical thinking and social responsibility, and empowerment of individuals. This is also South Africa’s first attempt at a national unitary system of education and training.

The Curriculum design was informed by the principles set forth in the March 1996 White Paper on Education and Training,17 and the government’s Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP).18 It is also based on the principles that education and training:

- are a partnership/responsibility of the state, community, and private sector;
- teachers are equal partners in the development of the curriculum and materials development;
- that learning should be learner-centered recognizing and building upon the knowledge and experiences of the learners;
- that the curriculum be relevant;

17 This document outlines the first steps towards developing a new education system in South Africa.
18 The RDP was adopted the transitioning SA Government of National Unity. There were six basic principles of the RDP: It is an integrated programme, based on the people, that provides peace and security for all and builds the nation, links reconstruction and development and deepens democracy (cited in Motala & Pampallis, 2002).
that the curriculum address differences, diversity, learning abilities – promote
critical and creative thinking and promote nation-building and non-discrimination
(pp. 4-5)

This curriculum design with its life-long learning commitment is predicated on
the outcomes-based learning model (OBE). Key elements cited in this document for the
move away from the traditional content, exam-based system are that the outcomes based
model encourages, a clear focus of achievement/progress in terms of clearly defined (and
agreed upon criteria) outcomes rather than teacher input in terms of syllabus content.
The student under this system is allowed second chances. Those who meet the
appropriate criteria receive the appropriate credit(s). No longer is the concept of pass/fail
valid. Student progress is based on a system of continuous assessment that utilizes active
teaching and learning strategies (e.g. portfolios, peer assessment, journals, projects), a
direct move away from the single test/exam based promotion system of apartheid style
education (Gulting, Lubisi, Parker & Wedekind, 1998)

A Curriculum 2005 orientation booklet for teachers, developed and published by
The Media in Education Trust (1997), clearly delineates the move from the traditional
system to the new one through reader friendly graphics and pictures. The main message
of this booklet is a new way of looking at teaching and learning:

- learners are viewed as unique individuals capable of succeeding;
- teachers model the role of facilitators, team oriented, nurturing and
  supportive of student learning, guides learning (not knowledge
  transmitters);
and assessment as integral to learning, is ongoing, tests knowledge, skills and attitudes and helps learners to succeed (as opposed to assessment being separate from learning, testing only for knowledge, and used to judge learners).

A re-evaluation of C2005 has recently resulted in a new revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (Department of Education of South Africa, 2001). At the core of this statement is a call for an education for social justice and citizenship – developed from the vision and values of the Constitution and Curriculum 2005. This document specifies twelve critical and developmental outcomes. A description of the citizen such education should produce:

Critical Outcomes enable school goers to:
- Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and language skills
- Identify and solve problems by using creative and critical thinking
- Organize and manage activities responsibly and effectively
- Work effectively with others in a team, group and community
- Collect, analyze, organize and critically evaluate information
- Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others
- Understand that the world is a set of related systems

Developmental outcomes are intended to enable school-goers to:
- Reflect on and explore a variety of strategies to learn more effectively
- Participate as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities
- Be culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts
- Explore education and career opportunities
- Develop entrepreneurial capacities (Department of Education of South Africa, 2001, pp. 1-2)

The rationale for adopting the outcomes based education model for its curriculum design is outlined in the NCS document. It specifies the intention as “activating the minds of
young people so that they are better able to take part in economic and social life” and “ensures that all are able to achieve to their maximum ability and are equipped for lifelong learning” (p. 2). This system, according to the document, values the process of learning as much as the content with the outcomes to be achieved clearly stated at the outset. Learning outcomes and assessment standards are developed from the critical and developmental outcomes. Assessment standards are then derived from learning outcomes. This document implies a transparency to teaching and learning that was missing during apartheid education, which was characterized as content (prescribed syllabus) testing driven by memorization and rote learning. The revised curriculum offers teachers possibilities for empowerment/ownership previously denied. According to the document there is “considerable room for creativity and innovation on the part of the teachers in interpreting what and how to teach” thereby promoting a more activities-based model of teaching and learning that encourages “active learning” (p. 2).

The NCS document also clearly states the role this curriculum will play in promoting human rights and social and environmental justice, with a particular emphasis on the issues of poverty, inequality, race, gender, age, disability, and sexual preference (p. 3). Multiple references to education for all in this document is a direct address to the apartheid government’s goal of education for some – suggesting that inclusivity of all contributes to achieving the goal of social justice, equity and development:

Social justice requires that those sections of the population previously disempowered by the lack of knowledge and skills should now be empowered by it. If social justice and equity are to be achieved, then curriculum needs to be structured and designed in such a way that all, and especially those with special needs, and least resources and skills, are empowered by it.” (p. 3)
There are eight learning areas within this curriculum framework: languages, mathematics, natural sciences, technology, social sciences, arts and culture, life orientation, economic and management sciences. A learning area is defined in the document as “a field of knowledge, skills and values which has unique features as well as connections with other fields of knowledge and learning areas” (p. 4). Central to this curriculum is integration and progression. Integration is expected to be achieved “within and across learning areas,” such that each learning area has to demonstrate how “conceptual progression is to occur through the assessment standards,” and assessment standards specify more “complex, deeper and broader knowledge, skills, values and understanding to be achieved in each grade as well as from grade to grade” (p. 4). It is clear from the NCS that issues of social justice and equity are key principles for the implementation of a democratic education.

The following section reviews western scholars’ conceptualization of a “transformative” pedagogy.

**Pedagogy of the Oppressed - revisiting Freire**

Freire’s conceptualization of “concientizacao” in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) appealed to many oppressed nations. Young intellectuals and political activists living in dictatorial regimes often risked their lives to read about Freire’s philosophy of liberation and empowerment. Freire’s notion of “concientizacao” involves not only an awareness of one’s social, political and economic situation/contradictions but also an awareness of one’s ability to take action (and to act)
against the oppressive elements of one’s reality in order to change the situation (Freire, 2000). The process of conscientization encouraged people to “analyze their reality, to become more aware of the constraints on their lives, and to take action to transform their situation. A pedagogy of the oppressed therefore entailed the conscientization of the oppressed by making them aware of their oppressed state and the ability to transform their oppressed state through their praxis (Freire, 2000; Elias, 1994). Freire, however fails to discuss the limits of conscientization.

Freire’s educational theory of liberation is undergirded by his notion that learning is a movement to critical consciousness – i.e., learning occurs when one moves from one level of consciousness to another. This form of learning demands that learning becomes an active process re: his concept of “conscientizaco.” Freire also makes clear that learning is political – it is power for those who generate it as well as those who use it. In other words learning is political because it cannot be separated from knowing/learning something and deciding to change it, preserve it or to fully experience it as one’s own problem (Elias, 1994 pp. 128-130).

Education according to Freire often resembles the “act of depositing” – where the teacher is the depositor (of information/knowledge, communiqués) and the students the depositories - thus the concept of banking. Freire states that the banking method of education is a “characteristic of the ideology of oppression” and it “negates education and knowledge as a process of inquiry” (Freire, 2000 p. 72). This passive method does not provide opportunities for students to develop critical consciousness and thus their ability to become transformers of their world. This continued passivity instead tends to simply
make students “adapt to the world [of oppression] as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them” (p. 73) without questioning and challenging the forces that oppress them. This act of domination and indoctrination is embedded in the student-teacher dichotomy perpetuated in the banking system – the teacher as the controller of knowledge, student thinking and action. Freire’s criticism of this system of education is rooted in his call for “education as the practice of freedom” as opposed to “education as the practice of domination” (Freire & Macedo, 2000 p. 75).

Freire states that a commitment to liberation necessitates a rejection of the banking concept of education. The goal of education should be to develop conscious beings through “problem-posing” education (p. 81). The problem-solving approach to education allows for students to be on equal terms with their teachers in developing the problem(s) to be investigated and their re/solutions. This avoids the student-teacher dichotomy present in the banking system i.e. the teacher is not “cognitive at one point and narrative at the other” instead the teacher is always “cognitive whether preparing a project or engaging in dialogue with the students” (Freire & Macedo, 2000 p. 75). In other words, the

Problem-posing educator constantly re-forms his [sic] reflections in the reflection of the students. The students – no longer docile listeners – are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. [problem-solving education] strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality [and develops in people] the power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation … [and the] form[s] of action they adopt is to a large extent a function of how they perceive themselves in the world. Hence, the teacher-student and the students-teachers reflect simultaneously on themselves and the world without dichotomizing this
reflection from action, and thus establish an authentic form of thought and action” (pp. 75/77).

Through this problem-solving focus of education Freire delineates a dialogic teaching method. He describes this as a “process of learning and knowing [that] must always involve a political project with the objective of dismantling oppressive structures and mechanisms prevalent both in education and society” (Freire & Macedo, 1995 p. 380). Both Freire and Macedo clearly distinguish between dialogue as a conversation and dialogue as a process of learning and knowing. As expressed by both, Freire’s dialogic teaching is often misused/misrepresented as a process of sharing that usually remains at the level of conversation, often offering those oppressed/victimized a “feel good [group therapy] about his or her own sense of victimization” (Freire 1998 p. xiv). Such ‘group therapy’ efforts by educators who claim to be implementing Freire’s dialogical mode of teaching negates the power of this approach. The dialogic approach is a conscious effort to move the sharing of experiences from been understood only in psychological terms to one that is understood within a “social praxis that entails both reflection and political action” (Freire & Macedo, 1995 p. 380). In other words dialogical teaching creates a process of learning and knowing that “invariably involves theorizing about the experiences shared in the dialogic process” (p. 381).

Freire also responds to the mis-interpretation in North America about the role of the teacher during the dialogic process. Often, as stated by Macedo (Freire & Macedo, 1995) in his interview with Freire, teachers using the dialogic process claim to be facilitators. Freire responds to this by differentiating between been “facilitator” and teaching to “facilitate” (p. 378). The ever so popular language of moving away from the
use of “teacher” to “facilitator” (as seen also in South Africa’s C2005 documents), has brought with it a false sense of a democratization of power in the classroom (p. 377). As Freire and Macedo see it, this “attempt to cut the chains of oppressive educational practices, [has] many North American educators blindly advocating the dialogical method, creating in turn, a new form of methodological rigidity laced with benevolent oppression – all done under the guise of democracy with the sole excuse that it is for the students’ own good” (p. 377). In attempting to clarify the roles of teacher and facilitator Freire states that:

When teachers call themselves facilitators and not teachers, they become involved in a distortion of reality. In de-emphasizing the teacher’s power by claiming to be a facilitator, one is been less than truthful to the extent that the teacher turned facilitator, maintains the power institutionally created in the position. That is, while the facilitators may veil their power, at any moment they can exercise power as they wish [e.g. grades, curriculum]. I think what creates this need to be a facilitator is the confusion between authoritarianism and authority. [However, in] trying to divest of authoritarianism [one cannot] relinquish one’s authority as teacher. Teachers maintain a certain level of authority through the depth and breadth of knowledge of the subject matter that they teach. The teacher who claims to be a facilitator and not a teacher is renouncing …. the task of teaching and hence, the task of dialogue. (p. 378)

Freire goes on to state that when educators attempt to

divest of an authoritarian educational practice, they should avoid falling prey to a laissez-faire practice under the pretext of facilitating. On the contrary, a better way to proceed is to assume the authority as a teacher whose direction of education includes helping learners get involved in planning education, helping them create the critical capacity to consider and participate in the directions and dreams of education, rather than merely following blindly. [The teacher thus is] an active presence in the educational practice [but should never allow their] presence to transform the learners’ presence into a shadow of the educator’s presence. Nor can educators be a shadow of their learners. The educator who dares to teach has to stimulate learners to live critically conscious presence in the pedagogical and historical process. (Italics my own) (pp. 378-9)
While Freire’s work continues to influence the development of critical/liberatory teaching practices in especially marginalized communities, the forms of oppression that Freire addresses remain primarily economic and limits the engagement of his critical pedagogy to address in a realistic manner much of the social, cultural, racial and political problems of South Africa. However, Freire’s dialogical approach to teaching, the goal of conscientization through the learning process and his discussion of the role of facilitator/teacher offers much “food for thought” in analyzing South Africa’s own conceptualizations/practice of these issues.

**Teachers as “Transformative Intellectuals”**

Giroux, like hooks, is a key advocate of Freire’s pedagogy of empowerment. Giroux’s work in developing a critical pedagogy harkens Freire’s philosophy about pedagogy discussed above. The development of Giroux’s critical pedagogy is based on the argument against traditional classroom instruction and the notion that “learning is a neutral and transparent process removed from the juncture of power, history, and social context” (Giroux, 1988 p. ix). Giroux’s insistence that schools be viewed as sites of struggle and possibility (for resistance) rather than as simply “seamless [sites of] oppression” (xv) echoes the educational struggles that took place in South African classrooms and schools during the seventies and eighties. What role then does the teacher play in transforming schools as institutions of democratic struggle? Giroux points to the role teachers can play as “transformative intellectuals” by developing “counter hegemonic pedagogies” (p. xxxiii) that will empower their students not only by
giving them the knowledge and social skills they will need to effectively function in the
larger society as critical agents, but more importantly to educate them for transformative
action. For teachers to both become transformative intellectuals and to help their students
become the same, they have to move away from the view that teaching is simply
routinized, technocratic and neutral. Teacher work should be seen as a form of
“intellectual labor” (Giroux, 1988, p. 125) suggesting that teaching involves an
integration of thinking and practice as a means for teachers to become more reflective
practitioners. No doubt the effectiveness of this move is also dependent on how the
organization of the school itself is reformed and how “management pedagogies” inhibit
teachers intellectual development. This is an important constraint but I do not dwell on
that issue in this discussion.

In order to interrogate the social function of teachers as intellectuals, teachers
have to view schools as sites that encompass economic, cultural and social tensions that
are inextricably tied to issues of power and control. As such a central tenet of
transformative intellectuals is the “necessity of making the pedagogical more political
and the political more pedagogical” (p. 126). To make the pedagogical more political
means:

Inserting schooling directly into the political sphere by arguing that
schooling represents both a struggle to define meaning and a struggle over
power relations. [This requires that] critical reflection and action become
part of a fundamental social project to help students develop a deep and
abiding faith in the struggle to overcome economic, political and social

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19 Giroux refers to this as the teacher-proof curriculum packages where teachers don’t have input in the
design, development and planning of curricula and are simply seen as implementers of these curricula. By
not dwelling on this issue I am not suggesting that C2005 is not interpreted as a curriculum package to
some. It may as well be so especially for those in marginalized environments.

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injustices, and to further humanize themselves as part of this struggle. (p. 127)

Making the political more pedagogical means utilizing

Forms of pedagogy that embody political interests that are emancipatory in nature … that treat students as critical agents; make knowledge problematic; utilize critical affirming dialogue; and make the case for struggling for a qualitatively better world for all people; [and to take seriously] the need to give students an active voice in their learning experiences. (p. 127)

In order for students to understand the transformative possibilities of their lived and classroom experiences, teachers need to make classroom knowledge relevant to the lives of their students. By providing curriculum content and pedagogical practices that affirm and resonate with student experiences, teachers offer a space within their classroom for student voice to emerge and help students to recognize the political, social and moral implications of their own experiences. Teachers therefore must create possibilities to make “knowledge and experience emancipatory by enabling students to develop a social imagination and civic courage capable of helping them to intervene in their own self-formation, in the formation of others, and in the socially reproductive cycle of life in general” (Giroux, 1988 pp. xvi-xvii).

Giroux calls for educators to raise questions about the interconnectedness of ideology, instruction and curriculum. This requires a critical examination of how/what knowledge is acquired/presented via the official and hidden curriculum. This means an ideological shift from the view of schooling as technical and ahistorical to a sociopolitical perspective that focuses on the relationship between schooling and the idea of justice (Giroux & Penna, 1988 pp. 22-3). As critically engaged intellectuals teachers can no
longer see knowledge as objective but has to be understood within the power relations
that produce such knowledge and those that benefit from it. As such the challenge is for
educators to interrogate the existing “regimes of truth” that influence curricular and
pedagogical issues (Giroux, 1988 p. xviii).

McClaren (1988) in his foreword to Giroux’s book Teachers As Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning succinctly summarizes Giroux’s argument for
the development of a critical theory of schooling. Giroux’s formulation of a critical
pedagogy is the commitment to the

... imperatives of empowering students and transforming the larger social
order in the interests of a more just and equitable democracy ....[with the
central issue of developing] a language through which educators and
others can unravel and comprehend the relationship among schooling, the
wider social relations which inform it, and the historically constructed
needs and competencies that students bring to school. (p. xi)

For teachers to influence curricular and pedagogical issues they need to assume
the role of “transformative intellectuals” (Giroux 1988). The five teachers in this study
are not simply positioned as Giroux’s transformative intellectuals within South Africa’s
pursuit for a more just and equitable education system and society. The current rhetoric
of transformation in South Africa suggests that teachers can become “transformative
intellectuals.” However, what are the possibilities/limitations of Giroux’s mainly classist
and economic formulations of transformative within marginalized settings? That is, how
realistic is it that teachers in marginalized communities in South Africa can actually
assume power/control over their educational settings and in the decision making process?
How can Giroux’s neo-Marxist conceptualization of transformative pedagogy lend itself
to South Africa’s attempt at social transformation?
“Engaged Pedagogy”

hooks’ educational theory, engaged pedagogy, has developed out of an interplay of anticolonial, critical and feminist pedagogies, providing an “engaging and powerful standpoint …. for interrogating biases in curricula that reinscribe systems of domination while simultaneously providing new ways to teach diverse groups of students” (p. 10). She critiques, in somewhat similar vein as Freire and Giroux, the banking education approach and its ideology of maintaining the status quo. Since this critique has been delineated under Freire’s pedagogy I will not reiterate it here. However, it is important to keep in mind that while hooks’ libertarian education addresses the issues of “cultural reproduction of dominant and discriminatory elements in educational settings and in society” as does Freire and Giroux, her analysis moves beyond classism to embrace the complexity of racism and sexism.

hooks’ theorizing of an engaged pedagogy is largely built upon her own educational experiences as a Black student and educator. Her experiences of marginality as a woman, with oppressive racism, sexism and classism as well as the influence of the work of Freire and Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk, helped her shape and articulate her educational pedagogy – a pedagogy fundamentally based on developing and nurturing critical consciousness in both teachers and students. hooks begins her book *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*\(^{20}\) (1994) which outlines her educational theory, by recollecting her educational experiences in school and at college. She begins with vivid descriptions of the “sheer joy” of learning in her Black

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\(^{20}\) I use this book as the primary source to discuss hooks’ conceptualization of an Engaged Pedagogy.
elementary community school (p. 2). The teachers there according to her were enacting a “revolutionary pedagogy of resistance” by nurturing the students intellect to become scholars, thinkers and cultural workers - this was a “counter-hegemonic act, a fundamental way to resist every strategy of white racist colonization” (p. 2). hooks refers to this type of education as the “practice of freedom,” (p. 3) that is, a “way of teaching [so] that anyone can learn” (p. 13). However she lost this practice of freedom when she was bussed to a white school – the “pleasure” and “ecstasy” of learning was replaced with “obedience to authority”. This continued into her college education too. She describes her graduate classroom as a “prison, a place of punishment and confinement rather than a place of promise and possibility” (p. 4). Except for a class on feminism she experienced no opportunities to become a critical thinker. What this apathy and boredom afforded her though was to imagine a different way of teaching and learning.

Critical for hooks was her ability to make the classroom an exciting place. Even though she borrowed ideas about pedagogy from Freire and feminist pedagogy, she found that they had not examined the notion of “pleasure in the classroom” – the idea that learning can be exciting and fun (p. 7). This was a particularly radical notion especially for college classrooms. However, as she states, her critical reflection on her experiences in unexciting classrooms enabled her to “imagine [not only] that the classroom could be exciting but that this excitement could co-exist with and even stimulate serious intellectual and/or academic engagement” (p. 7). hooks is quick to add that excitement is not the only ingredient for the development of an exciting classroom – there needs to be an interest in one another, recognition of other voices and presence in the classroom (not
just the presence of the professor/teacher) as well as viewing the classroom as a communal place where collective effort can create and sustain a learning community (p. 8). A sense of community according to hooks is essential in creating a climate of “openness and intellectual rigor” and recognition of the “value of each individual voice” (p. 40).

hooks distinguishes engaged pedagogy from conventional critical and feminist pedagogy by its emphasis on “well-being” thereby providing a more “holistic” approach to teaching and learning (p. 15). While Freire was preoccupied with the mind, Hanh offered hooks a way of thinking about pedagogy as a “wholeness, a union of mind, body, and spirit” (p. 14) and as a means to view students as “whole human beings with complex lives and experiences rather than simply as seekers after compartmentalized bits of knowledge” (p. 15). This pedagogy stresses the link between theory and practice to avoid the reification of knowledge and uncritical reflection of social reality from issues faced by students within and outside the educational setting. Classrooms enacting engaged pedagogy provide students multiple perspectives that enables them to know themselves better and to live in the world more fully (Florence, 1998 p. 77). Building on Freire’s idea of “concientization,” hooks developed strategies for enacting this in the classroom – she refers to this as “critical awareness and engagement” – the foundation of engaged pedagogy (p. 14).

Engaged pedagogy seeks more than to develop in students a level of prescribed literacy, professional skills, conformity to the status quo or to nurture a reflective and critical stance. This “transgressive” (hooks, 1994) pedagogy according to Florence
(1998) calls for a “reconceptualization of the knowledge base, linking theory to practice, student empowerment, multiculturalism, and an incorporation of passion, to make learning more engaging and meaningful” (p. xvi). Engaged pedagogy seeks to counteract hierarchical relations in social arrangements and cultural reproduction in schools; it critiques the ‘prescribed’ roles of the teachers as privileged voices, learners as passive recipients of ‘established truths’; promises greater teacher-student interaction and empowers students to assume responsibility for creating conducive learning environments in conjunction with teachers (Florence, 1998, pp. 76-77).

Florence (1998) provides a critical analysis of hooks’ engaged pedagogy and assesses its relevance to a Third World context – specifically, Kenya. The link that hooks’ educational critique establishes between marginalized people in the First World (namely the United States) and to colonized people provides sufficient rationale to explore the relevance of hooks’ work to a Third World context. hooks insists that marginalized people acknowledge and confront their marginality by creating oppositional explanations for texts that explore different ways of being and provide alternatives to prevailing unjust social practices. hooks also advocates for the decolonization of the mind of colonized people. Just as Florence found applicability to the Kenyan context, hooks’ critique of biased curricula and traditional approaches to teaching and learning that reinscribe systems of domination, alienate students in the learning process, and maintain the status quo, has relevance to the South African context. Does this study offers a glimpse at aspects of an engaged pedagogy, a transgressive practice
performed/imagined within the South African context of marginalization, oppression, transformation and hope?

**Summary**

In this chapter I provided a historical context for the development of a post-apartheid pedagogy. I also analyzed literature with cross-cultural theoretical connections. While this study is fully grounded in anti/post-apartheid ideology on “liberatory” and “transformative” teaching and learning, I have also reviewed alternative literature within the dominant (western) discourse on such pedagogies.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RATIONALE

Theorizing/practicing a de-colonizing methodology

I frame this study within Smith’s (1999) call for the practice of decolonizing methodologies. Imperialism/colonialism Smith, the indigenous Maori scholar/researcher, states has framed the indigenous experience. Thus the approach of “research through imperial eyes” has claimed the right to having

[the only] rational ideas … which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life and of all human beings. [And] assumes a certain ownership of the entire world, [through] established systems and forms of governance …. in institutional practices, [thereby] determin[ing] what counts as legitimate research and who count as legitimate researchers (p. 56).

As discussed in the literature review, South Africa has suffered the same from “research through imperial eyes” and makes the similar call as Smith to re-inscribe an indigenous epistemology outside of imperialist methodology/research. While the collapse of apartheid hegemony has challenged the established ways of scholarship, research and knowledge making/creating in South Africa, the firmly entrenched ideological orientations, monopolized scholarship and institutions of apartheid continue to

Utilizing multiple critical discourses about working with/in marginalized/Third World communities and framing this research within the frame of political struggles for the oppressed/marginalized, I attempt a reflexive practice of research by examining issues of power, race, community, and tensions of researching within ones own community and professional space. This study’s attempt at enacting a decolonizing practice is not a naive claim to reverse the effects of research through imperial eyes. It supports the argument that:

Methodologies that explicitly address projects of decolonization allow [an]alternative lens to conceive the idea of field and doing educational qualitative research. Moreover, such research acts have the possibilities to re-draw multiple power lines embedded within the fieldwork and to articulate the idea of field as an uncertain as well as a materially real political location. Such interpretations of fieldwork interrogate the seemingly familiar or sure gaze of the ethnographer and very vein of the researcher’s organized knowings” (Subedi, 2002).

I also frame my methodological approach by exploring the critical question posed by Vo, L.T. (2000): “What are the methodological and analytical implications of third-world scholars from first-world academic institutions studying third-world communities in the first world?” (p. 17). Building on Vo’s question as she critiques the debate over ethnic insider-outsider perspectives in ethnographic studies, I seek to re-conceptualize the
performance of insider-outsider by interrogating essentialized notions of ethnicity/color and community. While the current literature on doing research with/in one’s own community examines the essentialized/homogenous notions of culture, race, ethnicity, what it lacks for me is a space to analyze how the bodied self often becomes the marker of insider-outsider discourse and “one’s community” becomes the community one looks like. As a South African woman of color who identifies herself as African/Black but is the embodiment of the essentialized Indian/Asian, doing research with/in ones community poses tensions inadequately analyzed. Becoming the “other” in this study both within one’s community as a result of a re-imagined community post-apartheid, as well as being a third-world scholar within a first world institution doing research with one’s community within a first world context further problematizes the insider-outsider hyphen. It also insists on an examination of my own complicities within the imperialist structure of doing research with/in my marginalized community as I locate myself by virtue of my position as researcher, project coordinator, academic within the US research academe. As such I raise issues of race, culture, and the de-naturalizing of the “I” in an attempt to critically locate (my) “self” (as a destabilized category) within the continuum of the hyphen and the ethics of researching.

Research Design

A qualitative research inquiry was chosen for this study. I address the issues/possibilities of practicing a decolonizing research practice and frame this study as utilizing a more reflexive process of research that interrogates the complex tensions of
doing qualitative research within a decolonizing framework. This study examined how five young educators working in marginalized learning environments (re)conceptualize/(re)negotiate their teaching practice within the new C2005 in South Africa. It also explored the implications of their teaching practice for social change and student empowerment. As a research methodology the qualitative inquiry offered the most advantageous approach to “deal with [the] multiple, socially constructed realities” of the teachers as well as to “understand and interpret how [they] construct the world around them” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 6). Unlike quantitative inquiry’s preoccupation with measurement, frequency, quantity, amount, intensity and analysis of causal relationships between variables, a qualitative inquiry provides a mode for the researcher to stress the “socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 8). It allows the researcher to address the “inherent complexity of social interaction and to do justice to that complexity, [and] to respect it in its own right”; avoid the simplification of social phenomena; to explore and extend the understanding of interactions; and to uncover/make visible some of the complexities of social interaction and phenomena (p. 7).

To examine and understand the teachers’ engagement with C2005, the development and practice of their pedagogical practices, and empowering spaces they provide(d) for their students, it was necessary to employ a research methodology that afforded the possibilities for in-depth description and interpretation by the researcher – the qualitative inquiry was thus best suited for this research study.
A case study approach was also utilized for this study. Cohen and Manion (1994) state that:

Unlike the experimenter who manipulates variables to determine their causal significance or the surveyor who asks standardized questions of large representative samples of individuals, the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit – a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. The purpose of such observation is to probe deeply and to analyze intensively the multifarious phenomena that constitute the life cycle of the unit (p.106).

Case study research is particularly useful in the examination of educational phenomena. It often seeks, as in this study, “to understand specific issues and problems of practice” (Merriam, 1998, p. 21). According to Cronbach (cited in Merriam, 1998) case study differs from other research designs in that it calls for “interpretation in context” (10). It concentrates on a single phenomenon or entity and attempts to “uncover the interaction of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon” (10).

Since my interaction with the teachers were intense and submerged within the parameters of the larger funded project work, the qualitative case study was ideally suited for this research purpose. According to Stake (2000) during qualitative case study research the researcher spends “extended time, on site, personally in contact with activities and operations of the case, reflecting, revising meanings of what is going on” (p.445). The nature of the activities of the larger project, as well as my responsibilities as coordinator meant constant interaction with the teachers at a personal and professional level and within various settings, activities and events of the project.

The qualitative case study approach adopted for this study provided a holistic perspective of the phenomena (the teachers’ pedagogy) examined by allowing
possibilities for a more “in-depth understanding of the situation and its meaning for those involved” (xii). Merriam states that the qualitative case study approach is an ideal methodology for dealing with “critical problems of practice and extending the knowledge base of various aspects of education’ (xiii). Since this study is one of few in South Africa that focuses on the teachers “actual” or “imagined” practice/pedagogy within the new curriculum, this study will not only extend the knowledge base of such issues in South Africa, but can help develop a new phase in the examination of such practices in post-apartheid South Africa. While case studies do allow for generalizations either about an instance or from an instance to a class the power of this approach is its attention to the subtlety and complexity of the case in its own right (Adelman et. al 1980; Cohen & Manion 1994).

Adopting a case study approach also blended well with the flexibility of utilizing the qualitative methods of interviewing, observation, participation, document analysis as well as description and interpretation in the analysis of the data.

**Selection and Access to Teachers**

As mentioned in chapter one and at the beginning of this chapter, the teachers participating in my study were simultaneously participating in an international educator exchange project. The teachers were notified by the SA teacher coordinator that I will be inviting them to participate in my research study. A few days after the teachers arrived in the US I spent some time explaining the purpose of my study as well the questions it attempted to explore. Some were intimidated by having to sign consent forms –
questioning the need for such a document and what their signatures meant. After explaining the need for such protocol all five teachers agreed to participate even though I stressed that participation was voluntary. Their willingness to participate was often couched in their sense of wanting to help me complete my dissertation and for the larger good of South African education. Through their polite agreement and willingness to participate, I questioned myself on whether I was exploiting our shared nationality, historical, political, and educational heritage. The idea of being “pioneers”21 in a new international educational venture that had positive ramifications for teaching and learning at the local level in South Africa may have also spurred their efforts to participate and be at the forefront of educational change. However, I need to also confront the likely possibility that their “willingness” to participate was affected by their participation in the larger funded project. Did they really have a choice in participating in this research project? How were they coerced to participate simply because they may have been unsure of the consequences (even with my assurances that there will be none) of their non-participation?

Data Collection Methods

The principal data collection techniques applied in this research were the gathering/collection of information (official and training documents on C2005) from various sources prior to the arrival of the teachers in the US. The methods utilized for data collection included in-depth individual interviews, focus group discussions (in the

21 One participant described their work as such.
US and SA), participant observation, document analysis (e.g. teacher and student reflections, social action project outlines), and my researcher journal. In addition to the above, a day after the teachers arrived in the US, they were asked to complete a survey focused on teacher attitude, beliefs and practice. The original intent of this survey was to gather data for the funded project, but an unintentional outcome was an opportunity for me to gain from their responses a sense for their attitudes towards various educational issues, use of teaching methods, and engagement with their students. Data collection for this study ‘officially’ began in July 2001 with the collection of documentation about C2005 and OBE as well some teachers’ critiques of the possibilities of C2005 within their particular school contexts. In August of 2001 the teachers participating in my research and within the larger funded project submitted an essay titled: *The role of education in addressing the needs of civil society in your local school and community.* This essay was required as part of the selection process for participation in the funded project.

Combining professional responsibilities with my dissertation research proved to make doing research a ‘messy’ endeavor. Traditional notions of sanitized data collecting techniques, separation of personal and professional, friend versus research participant, field versus home, researcher and researched collapsed creating permeable boundaries and blurred distinctions.
Individual Interviews

I conducted two in-depth individual interviews with each participant. The first was conducted a week and a half into their participation with the exchange project, the second interview was conducted closer to the end of the project and after the first focus group interview/discussion. The interviews were both semi-structured and informal to allow for “creative interviewing” that more appropriately responded to the changing situations and events of the project (Fontana & Frey, 1994). I conceptualized the interviews as a “conversation with purpose” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995 p. 80) and an “interaction” – an interchange between people or persons conversing about themes/topics of mutual interest (Kvale, 1996 p. 2), an “evolving conversation between two people” (p. 280), reducing the rather coercive exercise of presenting questions to be answered. Even if this was my intention it did not always begin as such. I still wielded the power by beginning the “formal” interview with the question. This became my role within the individual interview – to be the initiator of the conversation. The degree of success of the conversation/coercive environment often depended on the amount of time the teacher could spare. The relaxed interview that panned out successfully as described by Kvale, Fontana and Frey, Marshall & Rossman, was indulged by the absence of time constraints.

Interviewing, when combined with participant observation allows the researcher to “understand the meanings people hold for their everyday activities” (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 80). The second set of guiding interview questions were developed through participant observation and interaction with the teachers. I observed the interaction of the teachers during a number of their 15 workshop sessions. During these
sessions I recorded notes on the types of questions the teachers were asking and the
discussions they participated in and/or generated. I used the information gathered from
these participant observations to re-work my interview questions and/or add questions to
the list.

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992) the generation of such questions
especially as a consequence of participant observation are "connected to known behavior,
and their answers can therefore be better interpreted" (p. 39).

Informal conversational interviews were the primary form of data gathering for
this study. It is considered the most user-friendly method and allows the researcher to
learn about what people think and how one person's perceptions compare with another,
and what values inform behavior. This type of interviewing does not require a structured
a priori list of questions, but rather allows the questions to emerge from the conversation.
This creates a more natural situation and enhances what gets said (Fetterman, 1989).
Even though I had ‘guiding’ questions that I planned on asking each participant, the
interviews for each teacher often went in directions led by the interviewee. Often
participants chose to elaborate more on one issue/question than the other. Each interview
session lasted between forty five to ninety minutes. The participants and I ended our
interviews/discussion when we felt that we had reached saturation of the issues discussed
and when they had ‘completed’ the telling of their stories.

Aside from the two formal individual interviews I had many other individual
interactions and discussions because of “chance encounters” (Crane & Angrosino, 1992,
p. 57). According to Crane and Angrosino such chance encounters often elicit the ‘best
information.” I lay no claim to eliciting “best information” through these chance encounters. What these encounters offered were alternative possibilities for interacting, dialoging and sharing with the teachers. The discussions of these chance encounters often picked up on conversations/discussions/issues presented in the workshop sessions, interactions with presenters, school visits, and issues related to American culture and norms and sometimes from the teachers personal and group interviews. While such possibilities presented itself through these chance encounters with individual and/or groups of teachers it was certainly not devoid of tensions inherent in the research process. However, it offered a useful alternative space to the individual and group interviews to engage in different interpretations and discussions. The data from all the interviews were recorded through note taking and audiotaping.

**Focus Group Discussions**

I refer to this part of the data collection as focus group discussions rather than interviews – although I use these phrases interchangeably to describe these sessions. These sessions were often filled with debate, controversy, disagreement and analysis of the issue(s) discussed. These forums served not only as a “convenient way to accumulate the individual knowledge of [the] members [of the group, but it also gave] rise synergistically to insights and solutions that would not come about without them” (Brown et al, quoted in Patton 1990, p. 17). I often threw out issues that arose from individual interviews in order to stimulate further discussion on such issues. This helped tease out some of the tensions that may have been inherent in these issues during the individual
interviews. It was also a way for me to encourage further discussion and analysis on the topics/issues that arose (or I wanted further clarification on) during individual interviews, project interaction, workshop seminars, informal discussions and conversation. This gave me the advantage of delving into and understanding the issues from both the group dynamic as well as the individual. For example, during individual interviews at least three teachers referenced that teaching and learning should be a “democratic” process. I wanted a better understanding of what the teachers meant by “democratic” teaching and learning. I presented this as a possible discussion during the focus group discussion.

Often times the discussions took a completely different life because of the ‘cross discussion’ among the participants and the SA coordinator. Morgan (1988) states that the hallmark of focus group interviewing/discussion is that it explicitly uses the “group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group” (p. 12). Utilizing focus groups helps to balance the data collection interaction during individual interviews where the interaction is purely between the researcher and the interviewee. The benefit of focus group discussions is that the “participants’ interaction amongst themselves replaces their interaction with the interviewer, leading to a greater emphasis on participants’ point of view … [and] offer[s] a stronger mechanism for placing the control over [the] interaction in the hands of the participants rather than the researcher” (p. 18). I made every attempt not to “force” the discussion towards the outlined questions, but rather let the focus group discussion take on a life of its own. However, I did every now and then try to refocus the discussion to issues I had hoped the participants would talk more about.
The SA teacher coordinator participated in the group discussion but did not participate in the individual interviews. His participation happened both by default and naturally as part of the group as a whole. His insights and teaching experiences often brought a new vigor and dynamic to the discussions.

The third focus group discussion occurred about seven months after the teachers left the United States. A group of US teachers and myself went to South Africa in July 2002 to participate in a culminating conference (for the larger project). It was at this conference that both the South African and US teachers presented their work to an additional sixty practicing South African secondary teachers, administrators and department of education representatives. I met with the South African teachers (one was unavailable because he was to marry later that week) at the end of the conference. After the conference we participated in a retreat where we debriefed and reflected on the yearlong project as well as discussed possible continuation activities. During this retreat I gave the SA teachers copies of their transcripts to review and provide feedback. We also met as a group a day later to discuss their transcripts as well as the ways in which I was crafting their narratives. This was an informal meeting in my hotel room. In order to talk about how the themes emerged I asked permission to share some of their narratives with each other. No rejection to this request -we discussed the ways each talked about various issues. None challenged or disagreed with the representation of their narratives.

I discussed how the broad themes emerged from their transcripts during our individual and group interaction and under which the narratives would be developed.
None of the teachers wanted to remove any piece of their transcripts/discussion. One teacher could not understand why she would have to rethink/re-read what she talked about during our interviews and discussions. She stated, “Whatever I mentioned is true. I believe in what I said … there is no need to change anything.” For that reason she also chose not to take on a pseudonym – according to her there was nothing to ‘hide’ – her talk/her story was representative of whom she is. What questions then do arise for “trustworthiness of data” – do we assume that in providing our participants opportunities to re-evaluate what was spoken/the written transcript that we are giving them the ‘power’ to change their mind? Or do we insult the integrity of their spoken word during that particular historical moment? Should the fact that none of the teachers chose to change/edit their written word imply that they are disinterested or simply think that this is a useless exercise? They have said what they wanted to, why change it now- after the fact.

None wanted to co-create their narratives. They seemed satisfied with the direction I was heading. This succumbing to my understanding of their stories became both a limiting and liberating factor. Their belief and trust in my ability to re-present their narratives often lead me to freeze up in my writing/thinking, agonizing over the decision to include/exclude certain information/presentations. The teachers and I had multiple conversations about their professional development and work on the project, project politics, South Africa’s educational struggles, successes, challenges – at the local and national level. It is difficult to differentiate what became the data for this study and what was data/feedback on the project.
Researcher Journal

A field diary/journal and analytical notes was also utilized (Spradley 1980). The field diary served as a vehicle for the researcher to describe personal experiences, impressions, and observations. The analytical notes consisted of analysis and/or interpretations of patterns emerging from the observations and interviews.

Data Analysis

In most qualitative field research data analysis is an ongoing process during the data collection period. There is no discrete separation between the collection of data and analysis – it often occurs simultaneously and at various levels (Burgess 1984; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). While I had expected and hoped to do more in-depth simultaneous data collection and analysis, my data analysis during the data collection process was partial.

Data analysis for this study utilized elements of “grounded theory” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and was a combination of analysis in the field and analysis after the field (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). Constrained by project responsibilities and intense interaction with the participants and project activities, simultaneous data analysis during the data collection period included re-listening to the taped interviews (without transcribing), and highlighting key issues/themes/areas of clarity that could be followed up with during the focus group discussions. I also reviewed my interview and observation notes and journal entries. Keeping Le Compte & Schensul’s (1999) caution in mind that “premature coding is like premature closure” I did not engage in “rigorous and specific coding”
during the in-field data analysis process (p. 97). Instead this simultaneous data collection and analysis processes helped me to re-evaluate some of the questions I had planned to ask at the focus group discussions, write comments about emerging ideas, and develop a focus to try out the ideas and themes with the participants as well as to explore literature, metaphors and re-examination of the research focus (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

The elements of grounded theory offered a useful space to examine and theorize an emerging educational phenomenon in South Africa, that is the teachers’ pedagogical practices within a new curriculum framework. Grounded theory as a form of analysis for this study validated the “interpretive work” of the study and insists that “interpretations must include the perspectives and the voices of the people whom we study [and the researcher takes] responsibility for [her/his] interpretive roles” (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 274). Incorporating elements of grounded theory in my data analysis helped locate themes that “emerged” through my reading and re-reading of the data from interviews, observations, conversations, my journal entries and notes, and re-listening to tapes. During the in-field data analysis I began identifying emerging patterns within each of the teachers’ individual interviews and focus group discussions. During after the field data analysis, I transcribed the interviews and again made note of emerging patterns. This inductive procedure allowed the data to be examined first to see what kinds of “chunks” from the data seem to “fall naturally” together (LeCompte & Schensul, p. 46). During the entire coding process I kept memos, made text margin notes, posed questions, made analytical notes, made connections to literature and theory. This occurred in the following ways: (1) Using an inductive procedure to examine the data I read the
transcripts and developed a descriptive coding scheme. These descriptive codes where
taken out directly from the transcripts and seemed to be key words/phrases that the
teachers used to explain/describe their current/imagined teaching practice. For example,
I coded such phrases/words as “democratic teaching,” “critical thinkers,” “democratic
citizens,” “empowerment” “transformation.” I continued this descriptive coding scheme
with the focus group interviews and with other documents (e.g., teacher essays,
reflections). This process entailed multiple re-readings, re-coding, deleting and adding of
codes. (2) Then using the descriptive codes from each individual teacher interview and
group interviews, I re-read across the data looking for similarities across the data. This
was done by highlighting the key phrases/words from each interview transcript (using
different colors for each phrase/word and making note of page numbers). This cross
coding allowed me to synthesize the data. (3) Once I had completed the descriptive
cross coding I coded analytically. That is, I tried to move from the descriptive to the
explanatory. In order to do this I posed questions (e.g., Why did the teachers feel that
their student were/were not critical thinkers?; How can I explain the teachers’ sense of
(lack of) empowerment?). This process forced me to warrant assertions (Erickson, 1986)
from the coded data and to form more focused categories/patterns/themes. This was the
most difficult process for me. At first I felt like I was finally “getting somewhere” as I
identified frequently occurring patterns/themes but locating and re-locating the data
within the patterns/themes seemed like an endless process. I could not stop – one day it
made sense to place certain codes within a particular theme/pattern, the next day I could
not rationalize my decision! During this process I tagged quotes from interviews, and

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chunks of information from other document sources that would help “illustrate” the patterns/themes. I presented this data in various ways – by cutting up the transcripts and pasting the quotes, and document information under each theme. Themes were written on large poster paper – this helped me to visualize the themes and move the data around. I often found that the same quotes appeared in more than one pattern/theme. I re-evaluated these and made the decision to remove it from one theme or leave it in both categories and expect that it will find its “natural” place during the writing process.

Using this as a start I began the data analysis, trying to explain to the reader what I thought was meant by the quotes, trying to explain the meaning, paraphrasing and providing contexts that will elucidate the themes. While I looked for instances that would confirm the patterns that emerged, I also tried to locate disconfirming data. An example of this is the theme that emerged on race/racism: Should the silences of the three female teachers on this issue be considered disconfirming data? How do their silence disrupt this pattern/theme?

It was at this stage in the data analysis process that I had my last focus group meeting in South Africa with the teachers and where I wanted to discuss the themes/patterns I saw emerging from the data. This was a form of member check to gauge the teachers’ acceptance/rejection/negotiation of my interpretations. This discussion was explained in my focus group interview section. The teachers’ “acceptance” of the emerging themes created great anxiety for me. Knowing that the teachers showed little to no interest in pursuing any other active engagement in the writing of their narratives, as well as our geographic separation, limited any possibilities.
for further member-checks with regards to the final representations of their narratives. Thus this still leaves me vulnerable to the criticism of how I can be justified in allowing certain data into their narratives and excluding others.

Using our discussion, the established coding categories, and analytical notes and initial emergent themes/patterns I re-coded and categorized the data. This meant moving around texts within the categories; re-reading transcripts; sometimes re-listening to the interview tapes to capture intensity and clarify the written intent of the transcript. This moving back and forth across data forms proved useful in rethinking choices for placing data in categories, developing analytical connections across the individual teacher narratives while keeping their unique individuality intact but at the same time using such individual narratives to create a collective.

Narrating Voice/Voicelessness

Narrative was utilized as a form of (re)presenting the teachers’ engagement with multiple educational, political, personal and socio-cultural issues as it related to their teaching practice. Narrative analysis offers an opportunity to learn about social processes through analysis of specific narratives, suggesting that narrative analysis is “grounded in a particular theoretical commitment” (Chase, 1995, p. 20). Chase states that such a commitment entails:

Understanding general social processes requires a focus on their embodiment in actual practices, that is, in actual narratives. In other words, life stories themselves embody what we need to study: the relation between this instance of social action and the social world the narrator shares with others; the ways in which culture marks, shapes, and/or constrains this narrative; and the ways in which this narrator makes use of cultural resources and struggles with cultural
constraints. By analyzing the complex process of narration in specific instances, we learn about the kinds of narratives that are possible for certain groups of people, and we learn about the cultural world that makes their particular narratives possible – and problematic – in certain ways. (p. 20)

The above suggests that narrative always takes place within social contexts that can constrain or unfetter the kind of narratives re/produced. Therefore, the teacher narratives in this study are not simply presented as “stories” (as in folklore, fiction), but is my best attempt at re-creating what unfolded in the interviews and other interactions to “show” how the teachers theorize their teaching practice. This theorized practice is grounded with/in the communities they live and work in, the larger political sphere, the realities of their teaching environments and the unique and collective similarities/differences they engage in their practice.

In presenting the teachers narratives as a space for their voices to emerge within the dominant educational discourse, I don’t intend to romanticize or make unproblematic the power (powerlessness) of their “voices” or mine. While teacher voice for this study is primarily embedded in the ‘voice as participation’ philosophy supported by critical pedagogy (Freire 1970, 1985; Simon, 1987; Giroux, 1988; Giroux & McLaren, 1989) as a mode of empowerment, I attempt to take ‘voice’ further as conceived by Lensmire (1998) as a “project involving appropriation, social struggle and becoming” (p. 262). As I listen to my interviews, review transcripts and look for “themes” to explore/discuss I am also acutely aware of Hargreaves’ (1996) critique that the literature/discourse on teacher voice tends to selectively appropriate and decontextualize “only those voices that broadly echo our own.” The tendency according to Hargreave is to ignore the voices that “differ
or even offend” and privilege our echoed voices across a range of teaching contexts” (p. 13)

In an attempt to move away from the romanticizing of teacher voice I am conscious of Hargreaves’ argument against an “apolitical presentation that simply celebrates teacher voice [but instead a] need to re-present teacher voices critically and contextually” while at the same time ensuring that multiple voices are selected – even those that have “discrepant things to say about teaching and learning” (Kalmer, pp. 42-43). A point of clarification for my study was my insistence in reading and re-reading the transcripts to “find” those experiences that were similar to mine. My “disappointment” that many of the younger teachers did not have (my initial interpretations) a politicized consciousness in terms of the development of their practice. It was difficult to disrupt this thinking – my own historicized and politicized conceptualization of teaching and learning was so influenced by the apartheid structures that I did not want to accept that a person of color could not be influenced by such structures.

I attempt in this study to contextualize the teachers voice as suggested by Kalmer. She insists that for any re-conception of voice, more careful attention be paid to the social and historical contexts of classrooms. That they be viewed as “complex intersections of cultural histories, multiple identities, institutional constraints and shifting power relations between students and teachers and between students” (43).
Issues of Validity and Data Trustworthiness

I have attempted throughout my methods chapter (e.g., in discussing the methods used, teacher participation, self-reflexivity, inserting self within the research process) to address an analysis of issues related to validity. What I do here is to bring this together by examining alternative issues of validity within the contemporary qualitative research field (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000; Lather, 1997; Richardson, 2000). I have attempted in this chapter to conceptualize “validity” outside of the “regime of truth” in an attempt to “displace its historical inscription toward policing the borders between science and not science” (Lather, 2001, p. 241). Rather this study located within Lather’s call for validity to be positioned as a “space of constructed visibility that gives to be seen the unthought in our practices of epistemology and methodology” asserting that validity is “much more than the limits of objectivity [and] claims of scientificity” (pp. 241/243). I argue that scientific neutrality and objectivity evaded this study as it engaged in an openly ideological commitment to issues of oppression and social justice. As such, as the researcher, validity lay in my ability to take a “self-critical stance regarding the assumptions we incorporate into our empirical approaches” and validate that research itself is openly ideological and “legitimate(s) privileges based on class, race, gender [geographic space, and power relations]” (Lather, 1986, pp. 65/64). Self-reflexivity within the research process becomes a critical element of validity.

The validity of this research therefore is not simply located within the “triangulation” (Denzin, 1978) of different methods of collecting data. While the study utilized different data collection methods I assert that the validity of this research lies in
its ability to move away from the traditional notion of triangulation and member checks, towards a process of “crystallization” (Richardson, 2000). Richardson articulates crystallization as form of validity that does not adhere to presenting the “truth” but rather makes visible that “what we see [in our data] depends upon our angle of repose” (p. 935).

Thus,

Crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of ‘validity’ (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves), and crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know (p. 934).

Thus no narrative is ever complete, including this one, and knowing is always partial. Crystallization validates uncertainty and acknowledges that the “omniscient voice of science” in our texts is mythical. We need to acknowledge that our texts are as much representations of our selves as it is of our participants. That as researchers we place ourselves in our texts – through the language we utilize; writing formats we choose; the voices we silence/uplift in our narratives; acknowledge that we do “contaminate” our texts; that no text is ever innocent (Richardson, 2000).

If validity also lies with the reader as co-analyst of the case presented (Erickson, 1986), a combination of multiple data collection methods, and methodological theoretical triangulation, data coding allows the reader/audience to experience vicariously the setting that is described, and to confront instances of key assertions and analytic constructs; survey the full range of evidence on which the author’s interpretive analysis is based; consider the theoretical and personal grounds of the author’s perspectives as it changed during the course of the study (p. 145).
There are a number of tensions and complexities within this research process that is
difficult to articulate but was necessary for me to engage in. So, I end this discussion by
allowing the reader (as co-analyst) to engage in the questions I posed to myself as I
crafted and considered issues of data trustworthiness for this case. How/did the teachers
participate selectively, that is freely and coercively, in this research process? Did their
refusal to participate in the writing and engaging in specific dialogue (as in the “silences
of the female teachers on the issue of race/racism within the educational system) be
examples of their selectivity? Where they able to yield any “power” within this research
process? Did they use their selective participation to provide sufficient information for
me to complete my dissertation, and not give me access to more or other information?
Was their claim/my interpretation of their gesture to “help” with completing my
dissertation a “favor” from compatriots or as a result of “pressure” from someone in
“control” of the larger funded project? Did the un/familiar geographic spaces of the field
alter/enable power relations, thus altering/enabling the dialogical interaction? How is it
that an interrogation of the administration of the funded project became such a heated
discussion in South Africa than in the US? How did I become implicated in US
imperialism by representing/defending the project against “attacks” from the teachers and
others? Would such contestations have taken place within the US field? How was my
“outburst” of “betrayal” (of friendship, honesty, hope) interpreted by the teachers?22 Was

22 This occurred during a discussion (the conference in SA) with the teachers and myself after an affiliate
organization member insisted that the teachers participating in the funded project were dissatisfied with the
SA administration of the project and made sweeping accusations about the project administration. The
teachers insisted that they had not approached anyone about their unhappiness with the project
administration. What was meant to be a culminating showcase of the teachers’ work at the conference
ended with accusations, denials, resistance and love. This was an extremely emotional meeting that left
I read as one of those “westerners” who expect ‘us’ to be indebted to “them”? When was I “us” and “them”? Was I able to move between and within both categorizations? Who gave me access to this movement? And when? How/what kind of information did the teachers offer depending on where I was placed/able to access within those categories. Did such categorizations differ in the US and in SA?

**Insider-Outsider and the Ethics/Politics of Researching**

**Locating ‘Self’ within the Hyphen**

Part of my struggle with becoming a researcher is to ask myself: Who is this research for? Whom am I writing for? I’ve always held that my dissertation has to be more than a ‘scholarly piece’ – I hope for ‘transformative scholarship’. But how does a “transformative” or “liberatory” research practice become (re)imagined/realized within a “liberated” South Africa? What becomes transformative scholarship? Transformative for whom, when, where, why and how? What responsibilities are insisted upon, resisted/enacted during the research process for it to become transformative? How does one translate/transfer a resistance to apartheid ideology of activism/social justice to one within a democratic state? What becomes the role of the diasporic South African researcher within the South African community? What legitimacies are extended/withdrawn/usurped during the research process as a result of my self inflicted (economic) exile? How does one negotiate the various identity tags (us, them, other, we, South African, Indian, Black, somewhat American) that mark one during the research process? These questions are more than rhetorical, it insists on consideration and
examination during the research process, not in a search for the answer but as a means to reconsider the process/act of research(ing).

There is a distinct connection to almost all that I do in my life and it is in no small measure attributable to my experiences of having lived under apartheid. There is a sense of responsibility in me to connect my personal and professional life with activism, of giving back. So, I struggle to figure out a way to write/think about how to connect as, Brantlinger suggests, my scholarly activity to emancipatory goals for the community I work with/in.

Living and studying in the US for such an extended period of time has brought with it its own tensions related to doing research within my own community in South Africa as well as with diverse communities/issues in the US. With its neat categorizations of race/ethnicity, it is difficult to legitimately identify across categories in the US. In this American diaspora, I am an Indian woman embodied in an African soul – forced to live both my heritages as binaries rather than as an embodiment of multiplex subjectivities with crosscutting identifications (Narayan, 1997, p. 28).

I’ve never felt a sense of not belonging – or a sense of living in the Indian diaspora in SA – as I do living in the US. So, for me it is not so much a feeling of being displaced twice over – being “Indian” in SA is different from being “African/Asian” in the US. South Africa is home to me – in the varied meanings: family, culture, national identity. I don’t claim to be indigenous to SA, but I claim it as my cultural and geographic space, fully knowing that this may no longer be a legitimate claim after having been away for so long. So, how do geographic boundaries, trans-national travel
and living outside of the marginalized communities you once belonged to create the insider-outsider tension in one’s work and interaction with/in one’s communities? And, how do I talk about racial privilege and at the same time discrimination in my life as a woman of color living in society divided by gradations of color? How did color rather than culture shape my identity and ways of knowing, both in South Africa and the US? In a society that ‘othered’ and ‘objectified’ people of color, how does one counter such othering/objectification while doing research? How does black/blackness become re-imagined/conceptualized/practiced in the new South Africa and within the research process? Who gets to be included/excluded in such categories? I argue that “self,” “other,” “them,” “us” “Indian,” “Black,” “South African” became destabilized categories within this research process?

In attempting to theorize the location of self within the hyphen, I borrow from Kamler’s (2001) theorizing on relocating the personal. Kalmer addresses the struggle to re/locate the personal “theoretically and pedagogically” as well as “within broader social, cultural and political contexts of production” (p. 1).

The inserting of the personal in this study is not merely the insertion of the private, a confessionary tale or valorization of self. Instead it provides a context for the varied meanings I as a researcher bring to the text of the participants. It is not neutral. “I” speaks to issues of gender, race, politics, privilege – and how all of these influence the lens through which I interpret this study/the voices of the teachers/the way their narratives/stories are presented/not presented – what gets to be said, what remains silent. This speaks to Lensmire’s (1998) notion of appropriation – that it emphasizes the activity
of self in relation to the cultural resources available. Appropriation involves a taking
over of those resources – experiences, language, histories, stories – and reworking them.
This labor, according to Lensmire, crafts a self and a voice, a voice dependent on the
voices of others who precede the writer but which is also remade by the writer as she
takes over the language of others: “In crafting her voice, the individual responds to and
transforms the utterances of others in the production of her own speaking and writing”
(Lensmire, p. 280). My writing of the narratives of these teachers therefore
“remake[s]” and “relocate[s]” my subjectivity (Kamler, p. 51).

Locating the “self” within the study further attempts to locate the researcher as
occupying an uneasy space between two discursive locations: as a privileged, educated
South African living in a privileged diaspora and one whose lived memories and political
and cultural/historical affiliations and loyalties are strongly rooted in the discriminatory
practices of apartheid SA. Such discursive locations though not distinct entities force me
to evaluate my historical memories and connections to my participants as well my
imagined South African community. Having conducted research in two geographic
locations, the field-sites fraught with power relations and project politics, necessitated the
need for me within my multiple positionalities to examine my own connections and
influences between “the various sites of production and traveling discourses that
influence the scattered parts of communities, which are often defined in different ways by
people both within and outside of them” (Louie, 2000, p. 57). This research process
forced me to engage in how sense of community and historical and political traditions
Locating the personal within the theorizing process poses the questions: Why do I seek to find a way to do research that contributes to social justice, to attempting to have marginalized voices heard and faces seen? Why this yearning for justice, for social and economic equity, for working with those who are themselves ‘otherised’ and marginalized? Reyes and Halcomb (1988) speak to this same issue. They state that as Hispanic academics their research interests stem from a “recognition that we have endured racial discrimination and from a compelling need to lend a dimension of authenticity to the prevailing theories about their communities” (p. 306). However, while this may be our intent, our research within the dominant academic community are often met with covert disapproval and are often dismissed as minor or self-serving (Reyes & Halcomb, 1988). Often those in the academe regard this “brown-on-brown” research as nonacademic, narrow in scope, non-objective and not valuable (Reyes & Halcomb, 1988; Medina & Luna, 2000). A direct reference to the mythical value placed on studying the “other” from the traditional eurocentric perspective. In analyzing Dubois’ notion of double consciousness, Ladson-Billings (2000) argues that such a conscious applies not just to African Americans but also to people “constructed outside of the dominant paradigm” and is enigmatic of “complex phenomena [and] multiple ways in which epistemological perspectives are developed [and] informed by [marginalized scholars] own cultural and identity positions” (p. 260). For this reason, scholars of color, having found no legitimate space within the dominant paradigm, sought/seek alternative
epistemological frames to describe/analyze the experiences and knowledge systems of people on the outside/on the fringes of the dominant paradigm (p. 260).

Smith (1999) speaks to the problematic of the insider-outsider model. Most research methodologies assume that the researcher is the ‘outsider’ able to observe without being implicated in the scene ….. ‘insiders’ have to live with the consequences of their actions (p. 137). Visweswaran (1994) echoes the same complexity when working within one’s own cultural group. She states that the relationship between research and accountably is “perhaps more acute, but hardly less complicated.” (p. 140). Neither can one claim at the same time that relations of power disappear when one is a member of the group researched. Kumar (quoted in Visveswaran, 1994) speaks to the complexity of tensions that exist within cultural groups: “A cultural encounter can and does take place between classes, and the difference marking conflict, domination, and objectification that go on within ‘a culture’ are as resounding as those between ‘a’ culture and ‘an’ other” (p. 140). This suggests that even as a Third World researcher/scholar within the US who claims to oppose research through imperial eyes, I have to confront my own complicities within an academe that has educated, otherized, embraced (even if only as the exotic other), and rejected me.

I am insider and outsider at the same time within this research process – insider by our collective Africaness, and the outsider partly because of my Indian identity – clearly marked and differentiated within apartheid South Africa, our different economic/racial experiences, and my privileged life in SA because of my skin color. My diasporic experiences in the US serve to simultaneously distance myself and bring me
closer to my country of birth and the mold of my core identity. I argue though as Narayan (1997) does that there is no “fixity of a distinction” between insider-outsider (p. 23). Instead of such a dichotomy it is useful to think about research with/in one’s community as an enterprise that encompasses historicity and in Narayan’s words:

..shifting identifications amid a field of interpenetrating communities and power relations. The loci along which we are aligned with or set apart from those whom we study are multiple and in flux. Factors such as education, gender, sexual orientation, class, race, or sheer duration of contacts may at different times outweigh the cultural identity we associate with insider or outsider status. Instead, what we must focus our attention on is the quality of relations with the people we seek to represent in our texts.: are they viewed as mere fodder for professionally self-serving statements about a generalized Other, or are they accepted as subjects with voices, views, and dilemmas – people to whom we are bonded through the ties of reciprocity and who may even be critical of our professional enterprise? (p. 23)

Being the insider and outsider at the same time, presents many tensions during the research process (Smith, 1999; Min-ha, 1997). Wong (1989) speaks to the complex negotiations of identity, language and history as one attempts to conduct research with one’s own community or the community one is associated with. Smith (1999) states that insider research has to be as “ethical, as reflexive and critical as outsider research ... and it has to be humble ... because the researcher belongs to a community as a member with a different set of roles and relationships, status and position.” (p. 139).

The role of an ‘official insider voice’ is also problematic. The comment ‘She or he lives in it therefore they know’ certainly validates experience but for a researcher to assume that their own experience is all that is required is arrogant. One of the difficult risks insider researchers take is to ‘test’ their own taken-for-granted views about their community. It is a risk because it can unsettle beliefs, values, relationships and the knowledge of different histories” (p. 139).
How does my South Africaness play out against my quasi-American status?

How am I expected to help my compatriots negotiate American culture when I am othered within it myself? How am I simultaneously positioned as informant, other, them, us within this study? How are my views on either cultures solicited and challenged?

Min-ha (1997) questions where the dividing line between insider and outsider stops and how it should be defined – by skin color, language, geography, nation or political affinity? But she poses the more critical question in polarized discourse about insider-outsider – “what about those [like me] with hyphenated [hybrid] identities and hybrid realities?” Minh-ha goes on to state that the I is not unitary and that differences do not exist only between insider and outsider – as two entities. Rather that there are differences within the outsider and insider self – as a single entity, because: “She who knows she cannot speak of them without speaking of herself, of history without involving her story, also knows that she cannot make a gesture without activating the to-and-fro movement of life” (p. 418). In talking about herself as a woman (the subject as researched and researcher) and her refusal to naturalize the I, Min-ha speaks for many in similar situations. I quote her because she eloquently describes my tension of being both insider and outsider within the SA community:

The moment the insider steps out from the inside she’s no longer a mere insider. She necessarily looks in from the outside while also looking out from the inside. Not quite the same, not quite the other, she stands in that undetermined threshold place where she constantly drifts in and out. Undercutting the inside/outside opposition, her intervention is necessarily that of both not quite an insider and not quite an outsider. She is, in other words, this inappropriate “other” or “same” who moves about with always at least two gestures: that of affirming “I am like you” while persisting in her difference and that of reminding ‘I am different” while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at. (p. 418)
In exploring my identity and positionality within my research practice I attempt to show how “particular ‘hybrid’ identity formations may be linked to particular theoretical dilemmas or representational strategies engaged by post-colonial [subjects and to show how we] may be moved by different sets of questions concerning power, domination, and representation; how we may ourselves be positioned (and not always by choice) in opposition to dominant discourses and structures of power” (pp. 139-40). Therefore the ways in which we think, research, and write, are almost always outcomes of the possibilities and constraints of our historical, material, cultural, political, institutional and biographical circumstances. How then can writing take place from a disengaged stance? It therefore becomes necessary to make ‘visible’ the setting in which one’s ideas are generated (Middleton, 1996).
CHAPTER 4

(RE) CONSTRUCTING/NEGOTIATING A TEACHING PRACTICE WITHIN A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

In this chapter I attempt to re-tell how the five Black South African teachers participating in a larger international teacher exchange project engaged with a number of critical issues related to South Africa’s new educational endeavor. I caution that the narratives presented here are only re-presentations of their collective and individual stories confined within a particular time(s) and place(s). In the process of re-presenting their stories through my lens I have fragmented, fractured and sutured their narratives to fit within the confines of these pages. What the following re-presentations offer is a sense of how multiple meaning are brought to bear on and/or (co)created with regards to particular issues as a result of political, cultural, social, educational and racial experiences.

Their narratives are re-presented under three “sections.” The first section shares the teachers descriptions of self as teacher and constructs how their individual identity formation and multiple and varied experiences may influence/dictate their teaching

23 See Appendix A for teacher biographies.
philosophy/practice. Section two traces the teachers engagement with C2005 and the possibilities they envision within this new curriculum for their students and themselves for engaging in a “liberatory” pedagogy that can counter the effects of apartheid. Section three constructs their interrogation of the legacy of apartheid as it continues to live within the educational, economic and social structures of democratic South Africa.

Identity, Experience and Pedagogy

Self as Teacher

In order to capture the vitality of the participants’ own sense of self as a teacher I offer them (restricted) space to introduce and describe in their own words themselves as teachers. Does using their own words take away my “scientific” responsibility of summarizing, paraphrasing and analyzing their self-declared identities as teachers? The intention here is not to use the data to support an analysis of self, it is instead used “demonstrably, performatively” without the intervention of the researcher (Lather, 1992, p. 95). Not only is it a humble attempt to present the participants to the reader through their eyes/I’s, it is also an attempt to deconstruct the notion that the “researcher [is the] universal spokesperson who has privileged access to meaning” (p. 96). The following are responses from the teachers to the question “How would you describe yourself as a teacher?”

Sabs: I consider myself to be a very accessible teacher to the learners. Open teacher. Very compassionate and also very dedicate to doing the job which I am employed to do. But what I believe is my biggest qualities is that I can relate well with the learners. [asked why he thinks he relates so well to the students he replies] Because in the school where I am teaching most of the children are coming from poor backgrounds and when
they are having problems about not affording certain things that are needed at school you find that other teachers don’t understand. Personally, I understand because of my background. I have more understanding of such [poverty] issues.

**Layla:** Education plays a pivotal role in any person’s life – it is a tool of empowerment and I think that’s the reason I became a teacher. Is to make a difference in somebody’s life. I also enjoy working with young people – so it was like an ideal opportunity to match the two. And I think I am able to relate well to my students so I am able to establish that rapport with them. We are able to communicate on basically anything – the problems they have - anything they need to discuss with me. I pretty much have an open door policy with my students. [when asked why she thinks she relates so well to her students she states] Yeah, we were discussing this with the older teachers in the school and they say because of our [with reference to other younger teachers in her school] age and the fact that students can relate to us better because we are more in their age group whereas with the older teachers they have to always have this level of respect, this fear – that is how they [students] perceive it you know. I would say a lot has to do with age.

**Thembile:** ….it gives me pleasure having to share the knowledge with my students. Also, [I am] willing to learn from them because I don’t believe that I know everything. And I don’t feel shy to tell them [students] that I am not like the boss – someone who knows everything. They’ve been through all their experiences and in their life which makes them unique as individuals – of which I can learn from that. So, we rather share information, so that they have a sense of ownership for their own learning – in that sense learners are motivated to learn from you.

**Gugu:** ..I think that I am a very dedicated person and I am always very conscious about what I do in the classroom….I always make sure I teach until they [students] understand what I am teaching them …… I think it [relationship with students] is good because I am like a very friendly person. I don’t go into the classroom and be so serious. Like if there are students who have problems, especially the girls they usually come to me …. So they are free to come and talk….. I think students just like - you know I like to do a lot of hairstyles, you know – they like to compliment – in a way that is always creating initial friendship between me and the students.

**Lucky:** I would say I am a committed teacher, dedicated as well. Teacher wanted to see progress and see my school producing good results, Grade 12 in particular. And a person playing an important role in the community and also contributing to the school development, particularly my school.
Political (non)Activism and Teaching Philosophy

Despite living under the oppressive state of apartheid these teachers’ political experiences/consciousness/activism are varied and fragmented. This speaks to the complex nature of the apartheid structures and its varied impact on the oppressed and marginalized. Their experiences speak to the seductiveness of apartheid for those ‘innocent oppressed’ for whom the lure of ‘false stability’ created a false consciousness of well-being and content. It also speaks to the destructive force of apartheid for those who resisted. Having lived under the apartheid state myself, I was disillusioned at what I thought was a lack of political consciousness amongst some of the teachers. My bias to assuming connections between political affiliation/activism and pedagogical practice/decisions became apparent (to me) during some of the individual interviews. I found myself during the interviews with the female teachers probing for possibilities, for some acknowledgement that their personal political oppression/struggles and the larger collective struggle for freedom in South Africa had some impact on their teaching philosophy and practice. Their insistence that there was none, made me to reluctantly move on.

The female teachers talked about not becoming aware of their oppression until college and/or their first teaching experiences – this was a complete departure from my own experiences. Plagued by memories of political upheaval/unrest, school and college boycotts, and student activism, I may have inadvertently been seeking the same experiences in my participants. My naïve surprise at the three female teachers’ innocence of/to the apartheid system was a bruise to my own assumptions of black consciousness in
South Africa. My ‘stuckness’ in the apartheid resistance of the seventies and eighties became apparent when talking to the three younger female teachers who were only born during those tumultuous years. These teachers revealed to me more succinctly than any of my experiential/theoretical/rhetorical forays into the indoctrination of apartheid that apartheid was successful in deceit – in building a false consciousness of comfort and well being amongst many of the oppressed.

Thembile insists that she had no political experiences (and continues to have no open political affiliations/activism) that may have influenced her decisions about her philosophy to teaching. Her educational experiences are the most varied amongst all of the participants. Thembile actually attended three of the four apartheid educational systems. She attended a township school for her primary grades, a Coloured school for middle school and a White school for her secondary education and a white college for her teaching diploma. All of her racial experiences within those schools were positive. She only recalls in her narration of these schooling experiences the dedication and commitment of the Coloured and White teachers to ensuring her success. As we talk about her varied experiences it is clear that she is struggling to not ‘bring down’ her experiences in the township schools. Inadvertently though she has to compare schools in order to talk about their differences. Her uncomfortableness becomes noticeable when she explains why she talks about the white school she attended in relation to the township school. She lowers her voice and begins “it was in 1994 – it [the white school] was quite a nice school …. could see the change – could measure …. how to describe? Not trying to stereotype …. in township schools tend to find old people teaching there and they are
there because there is not anything else they can do – not because of the love of what they are doing. They will not try and use new methods, not keen, not want to learn … don’t want to change … a bit lazy.” And then she goes on to explain how a teacher in the Coloured school worked with her to improve her Afrikaans grade and her motivation to become a teacher stems from her white science teacher whose teaching methods and commitment to teaching inspired her to become a teacher to “share this same knowledge to my community.” This tacit acknowledgement that her own community does not receive the knowledge she was receiving in the white school is emblematic of the educational inequalities present during apartheid. Thembile stated that the above inspiration combined with her lived experiences in a disadvantaged township and schools and the rhetoric of current day democracy is what guides her teaching philosophy. Does acknowledgement that black students were not receiving the kind of quality education she did in the Coloured and White schools speak to her subconscious engagement with apartheid?

Gugu had not engaged with the inequalities of apartheid until she encountered political unrest/disenchantment amongst her college peers. Gugu talks specifically about her high school experiences as apolitical. She attended a model township school\(^{24}\) that had white administrators and teachers as well as a few Indian teachers. She proudly states that it was “one of the best schools you could find.” She states that the school promoted gender equity, students were very disciplined and the school enjoyed a high profile status – the then President de Klerk visited the school. She admits to sometimes

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\(^{24}\) A few of such schools were built in various townships by the state as a showpiece of how well apartheid provided for the African in South Africa.
still been confused about apartheid because she was not exposed to this at her school and that the township she lived in was “quiet and in the school nobody was interested in politics.” She talks about her initial encounter with political issues when she attended ___________ College in Imbali (a township). Her reaction to a student strike protesting the treatment of the rector:

We could not understand, especially myself, I could not understand, because I thought everything was fine … and they were complaining that the rector was not treating us the way he was supposed to…lots of things came up at that meeting … we could not attend classes. Then the rector closed the campus.

When asked how she felt about this she replied: “I did not like it because I did not think … some of the issues they said against the admin was doing .. they were reasonable things…” She goes on to talk about her frustration of having the college closed a number of times because of student strikes and the struggle she and her family had to find money to travel back and forth. Then she describes her ‘ah-ha’ moment when all that was going on at college started to make sense to her. For her first teaching position in 1996 she was assigned to a school similar to the one she attended during her high school years. She states:

When I came here I found that they [white teachers] were discriminating against us black teachers – not the principal [who was also white] but these other educators. We could not touch the copy machine …. [told] not make too much noise. They were making these remarks and I think I’m the one who started questioning these issues. Why, why are we not even allowed to touch the phone – to answer it. We were about thirteen or fourteen black teachers, they were nine, we were the majority.

This recognition of discrimination based on race within her workplace propelled Gugu into a new world of political awareness and activism. She is now an active member of
the South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU) and the gender convener for her circuit and union site steward. She has organized workshops that have dealt with human equity, challenges facing women, the role of women in the new South Africa and how to commit to women’s economic empowerment on a global scale. This young woman has come into her own, and within the democratic South Africa, is tackling issues of inequality that she now sees are clearly imprinted in apartheid’s past.

Layla speaks of her “sheltered” upbringing as an Indian child, teenager and adult. While she participated in one student rally in her final year of high school as an act of solidarity with their teachers she had not otherwise engaged in political activism or issues. Her first teaching position was a dramatic shift from her own education in all Indian schools with same students and teachers. Like Gugu, her political socialization to issues of race and inequality reared its ugly head during her teaching experiences:

Compare self to teaching now….. lot of problems at the beginning – tension and conflict and had to be very careful what you said as a teacher or else it will be taken as a racial slur, especially in the school I was in my first year – very tense atmosphere. That is where I had my first experiences with racial issues and how important it is to be sensitive to these things and how it can be taken in the wrong way. My first experiences with that socialization and dealing with these political issues happened then. And it was also the time schools were integrating and we were this new democracy emerging and they were encouraging schools to integrate and allow this cross cultural experiences I would also talk to my learners about their background, the schools they came from, issues they had to deal with there and the fact that they had to travel such far distances to our school – just because they want to get an education because they are not getting that in their areas. I think I became aware of this major divide you know and the great sacrifices they are making just to influence their way of life.
Layla’s middle class sheltered experiences as an Indian did not prepare her for any of the racial and unequal treatment she witnessed/heard about through/from her students. Hearing her speak, it seems like she saw a new past South Africa through her students’ lives. Layla speaks about her marginalized students as the ‘other’ often referencing her students as “them”, using inferences/references to otherizing. These references are not unusual given the language of separation/othering enforced upon us during apartheid and continues to be used today.

The experiences of the two male teachers are significantly different from the three female teachers. Their political consciousness and activism began in secondary school. Their schooling was disrupted by school boycotts. Sabs’ political activism began after he took a year off during his high school education. Ironically his decision to take that year off was a result of his reluctance to become involved in the “political fighting of the area.” He returned in the early nineties to a boarding school to complete his last 2 years of high school and became a youth activist and member of COSAS. After high school he attended the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, a predominantly white university. As a member of COSAS he “participated in a number of activities there and also that is where I started to get interested in the issues of education.” He goes on to explain a tutoring project he participated in that helped matric [final year of high school] students from the surrounding township areas. These students were tutored by youth activists like Sabs during the weekends. As Sabs states, many who tutored from the University of Natal, “realiz[ed] that most of us are coming from those schools and we knew the problems that they were facing so we felt it was our political duty to deal with those
problems that were actually faced by those students. So we wanted to improve the range of matric pass.”

Lucky’s educational/political experiences most closely paralleled my own – no surprise because we share the same birth year and hence found ourselves in the middle of the youth political activity of the late seventies, the eighties and nineties. During this interview we reminisced about those high school and college years that were fraught with police brutality, unrest and uncertainty. Using political unrest/events as markers of remembrance he narrates the events of his high school and college years and its impact on the roles he is often requested to take on as a teacher. He describes his high school experiences as one in which “I was involved in political activity” and it was in “1985/86 when the violence started and the police started to raid people and it’s when I had to leave the school. I had to leave Pietermaritzburg.” He described his leadership in the school boycotts and university protest. His initial high school experience ended in expulsion. After returning to school and completing his matric he took another year off to self-study and upgrade his high school pass to an exemption in order to enter university. He is a savvy negotiator of his political consciousness/activism and educational/economic aspirations.

Both Lucky and Sabs allude to the political tensions they had to deal with/engage in, in order to survive the apartheid system. Both Lucky and Sabs’ disrupted schooling is a familiar episode in the lives of Black students of the eighties in South Africa. Often torn between their political loyalties/philosophy and educational aspirations many youth of that time sacrificed their education and lives for the promise of freedom. Sabs’
decision not to get involved in political activities of the two major Black political parties (African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)) during his high school years certainly was not an easy one, but one strategically decided upon so that he could have a better chance at completing high school and moving on to college. Lucky negotiated the same strategic decisions with regard to his political activism and desire for a higher education. He talks about the premeditated moves he had to make in order to complete high school. When he returned to high school in 1987, a year after his political arrest, he “pretended as if I don’t know anything about politics because my aim was to get matric and proceed on.” He started hanging out with “people from rich families” in order not to be tagged as political because these rich people “they don’t talk politics” and they are “respected” because they have businesses. With few opportunities for higher education available to Black youth at that time, these decisions by Lucky and Sabs were warranted by a need to move out of the circle of poverty and hopelessness. Education seemed to be the only vehicle for economic upliftment – and the teaching profession was one in which all races could participate since education itself was racially segregated and we could teach our own.

**Decolonizing the Mind, Decolonizing Practice**

This theme began emerging early in our informal conversations, discussions during the workshops, and with the other American teachers. Building on their current experiences as well as the limitations of resources, structural and organizational implications of township schools, the teachers were often skeptical about the possibilities
of active engagement of their students in the learning process. However, some teachers described these possibilities as currently existing because they offer their students spaces/opportunities to experiment, to research, to engage in hands on activities. Two teachers, Thembile and Sabs, who talked about the active engagement of their students, taught science and biology – suggesting that such content can more easily allow students to be hands on and more actively engaged and move away from rote and memorization, typical of apartheid era classrooms.

Some teachers talk about their own efforts at moving away from apartheid era teaching/learning ideology. Lucky, the oldest of the teachers had to more consciously re-evaluate his teaching practice – his teaching styles and philosophy very closely resembles the rote learning, memorization and the teacher as sole authority over teaching and student learning. He often talked about the need for his own re-thinking about his role in the classroom. He tags this reflection and re-thinking as a critical piece to his becoming part of the new teaching philosophy/practice – the very solidified roles as teacher and the approach that he was acclimated to during apartheid education conflicts with the new rhetoric and his re-visioning of himself as a teacher within the new South Africa.

**Democratic Learning, Democratic Teaching: The Case for C2005**

All five teachers seem to agree that despite the criticisms to C2005 and OBE, the lack of teacher training and governmental support (organizational, structural, resources, financial) Curriculum 2005 offers opportunities for more “democratic teaching” and developing “critical thinkers” in their students than the apartheid curriculum. It is
difficult to imagine that any other curriculum could be as oppressive as the apartheid one. But this is more than just offering opportunities for students to become critical thinkers, it offers the country itself the possibilities to achieve a national democracy through a curriculum that engenders greater possibilities for a democratic citizenry.

Since the students these teachers teach are not currently mandated to follow the C2005 guidelines, I wanted to get a sense of how the teachers saw the current roles of their students in the learning process and what roles they would like to see their students develop. So I asked these questions in the individual interviews as a preamble to also understanding what the teachers perceived to be their own roles within C2005 as well as to get a sense of how and if they had to rethink their practice.

Currently C2005 is been phased into each of the secondary grades. Up until the 2001 school year teachers with grade eight students were expected to implement C2005 in their classrooms. However, as explained by the teachers this did not necessarily occur because of a variety of issues, ranging from little to no training to teacher resistance. Thembile and Lucky taught grades 9-12 and therefore where not mandated to implement C2005. Thembile though does successfully implement the C2005 approach in her classroom. This comfort level with the new curriculum approach is due to her recent teacher training experiences that focused on C2005. Lucky by his own admission understands very little about the new curriculum/philosophy. He has become more familiar with the curriculum philosophy/rhetoric because of his participation in this project – the SA teacher coordinator and those teachers familiar with C2005 conducted a group discussion/explanation when they realized that they did not fully understand many
of the issues related to C2005. Prior to this Lucky had not attended any workshops/training with regards to C2005. Sabs and Layla teach grades 8-12 and therefore are required to have implemented C2005 at least in their grade 8 classrooms. Sabs explains that as a science teacher he has considered himself “at least to a certain extent practicing OBE” but also speaks about the constraints: “but as far as the curriculum has been concerned it was impossible to do that because you got this syllabus that you have to complete – you got this work that is required by the head of department (HOD) and principal, so it forces you to go according to the traditional method.” Sabs received a one-week training on OBE and C2005. Layla, in describing her approach to teaching seems to align it to the C2005 approach. Her comfort level with the new approach is evident in the way she talks about the possibilities C2005 can offer students and teachers. She also talks about the challenges both to her self and her students. However, she received significantly more training/workshops than the other teachers – her school administration had initiated this training and expects all of their teachers to implement C2005. Gugu teaches grade seven and seems to be on the right track to implementing C2005. She also speaks of the challenges of doing this because of lack of support, training and students who either resist/are unfamiliar with their new roles in the curriculum. Gugu received about two weeks training/workshops on OBE and C2005.

Three of the teachers described their students as passive learners who continue to exhibit apartheid era expectations and roles. Gugu refers to her students as being “like an audience ….. waiting for a teacher to come and give them something .. to deliver.” She talks about her challenge to find ways to motivate her students so that they can begin to
“work independently … use their own thinking skills and to be able to be creative on their own.”

Sabs is hesitant to specifically speak about the role of his students. Even though I try to steer him to be more specific about the students he teaches he speaks generally about learners. He describes them (and teachers) as still working within the “traditional methods – students are just there to take what the teachers come with and are very passive participants in the process.” He talks about the new education system offering opportunities for students to bring to the classroom and consequently to the learning process their own knowledge base from which they can engage with the content. He gives the example of how this can play out in the classroom: “Like for instance you will find that you are teaching learners something that has got electronics in it – you’ve got a child who is fixing radios and fridges at home but as a teacher you will come and theorize and theorize something you have never done. You don’t consider this person who is actually practically been involved in this. So, this new system creates room for this.” In addition to wanting the students to generate their own thoughts and own knowledge he wants to see students become confident enough to “question teachers.” He illustrates with an example how docile students are and tend to revere the teacher. He explains how he sometimes tricks his students when he does math problems on the chalkboard: “I conveniently write the wrong answer and you find that they copy it down. Perhaps when you come checking to some of them you will find this one learner she has written the right answer but she will say ‘No teacher I was afraid of asking but I thought maybe you made a mistake’.”
Lucky teaches grades 9-12, with students aged 14-21 and with almost no experience in the new system himself talks of his students as experiencing little of it either. He describes his learners as “still used to the system where the teacher is the only source of information…but I want to see them moving from that and moving to a system where they are becoming independent and critical thinkers and doing things for themselves … not to rely on teachers [as] one source.” He talks about encouraging his students to use the library and conduct research for their assignments but also acknowledges that such possibilities are constrained by the students’ access to such facilities.

The passiveness and docility of their students indicates that the democratic rhetoric/practice of the learning process has either not filtered down to the students or they still feel the powerlessness of their situation. Typically apartheid era classrooms developed and sustained such behavior. Behavior outside of these traditions often led to corporal punishment and suspension. As Lucky states such corporal punishment, though illegal, continues today – the “stick” if not actually used is still a visible threat in the classroom. Is it simply as suggested by Lucky a “question” of letting go of “tradition” or is it fear on the part of the teacher of losing the power and control over their students? Lucky, the teacher who was most oriented within apartheid era structures speaks to/of the challenges of re-engaging in the learning process within more democratic structures that offer students spaces and organizational structures to engage students in a partnership in the learning process.
When asked how they had to (re)think /describe their roles within C2005 all but one teacher speak of their “new” roles against the expected roles of teachers during apartheid. They utilize the language of the C2005 and OBE documents often referencing themselves as “facilitators” rather than the traditional notion of the teacher as the “fountain of all knowledge.” For some this move is still a philosophical one, for the most part (based on current educational rhetoric) yet to be entirely practiced.

As an attempt to keep intact the essence of the teacher’s analysis of their roles within C2005 and how and if they had to rethink their teaching practice as a result of the implementation of C2005, I present vignettes below of the individual teachers responses to these questions:

**Lucky:** I think my role have to change because the previous system required the teacher to be generally the one with a lot of information – the information giver. This one [C2005] requires [me] to change my thinking and my methods of teaching. Now you act as a facilitator instead of one-person giving information. …… gives the learners more chance to think for themselves. …… gives more democratic teaching I would say. …… this one [C2005] it changes the environment of teaching. Remember now we don’t have to sit like in a church … [we] can give them [students] group work which was not used before. And you facilitate instead of preaching or teaching. So, one has to change, also adjust yourself to admit other people, in particular the learners, because you’ve got a tendency of saying – learners the know nothing – teachers know everything. But now we need to adjust information, we can learn from them. It’s what we need to change – we must learn from them.

**Gugu:** My role as a teacher should be there just to guide. The students should be coming with their own ideas. They should be able to create. I think most of the time they should be one who should be teaching rather than me teaching them. I think that should be my role. Also be able to involve community …..

**Layla:** I think it is moving away from the traditional idea of the teacher being the fountain of all knowledge to the teacher being a facilitator of the students’ learning process. I think the role of the teacher is to encourage the student to think more critically; to help them to develop more lateral thinking which I see is
lacking in students these days. They are not able to think … abstracply about something. I think that’s what the role of the teacher is to encourage that in each student. … [my students have been] sort of actively involved in their class work – to a limited extent on their own. I’ve had to now rethink about how to get them to the point where they would be thinking like independently – very much on their own and not relying on the teachers for information or a perspective on something.

Sabs: … learners need to be sort of partners even though we can’t be at the same level with them but they need to be partners because ….. they have knowledge. It’s just that they don’t know what is actually needed of them. Now as teachers, we also need to become facilitators now. We don’t have to come like a preacher and to preach to the learners even if they don’t think what you are saying is correct – you need to create a room for discussion.

Thembi’s responses to the above questions were an indication of its inappropriateness for her particular context. As she explained, this is her first year of teaching and her teacher education program had already incorporated the OBE focus. Therefore her transition into the new C2005 was not a problematic one for her. There is no rethinking about her role within C2005 – she is currently practicing the C2005 rhetoric. She emphatically speaks about her efforts at wanting “my learners to…. do things on their own….to take charge of their own learning, instead of me giving them everything.” She is adamant that students have to “be responsible for their learning” and she feels that she provides these opportunities in the types of hands on experiments and research that she engages her students in their biology classes. But she states it is not easy, especially since her school takes in students from other schools – students who usually have problems in other schools. She has to constantly build this culture of responsibility amongst these new students as well as counter the experiences they have with other teachers. She speaks about turning around student “complaints” into positive possibilities – when her students complained that they did not have money to go to the
library to conduct research, they brainstormed ways to fundraise by making and selling things in their school. While she is the eternal optimist about the possibility of student empowerment over their learning she acknowledges the challenge, the slow process of having students think differently from what they are used to.

When asked how they perceive C2005 and how it may have changed in regards to the apartheid curriculum, the teachers responded differently. Both Lucky and Sabs thought that there were some changes to the history that was now included in the curriculum but felt that it still did not sufficiently or adequately address/include South African history from the perspective of those previously and currently marginalized. Lucky states that there still is an emphasis on European history. He wants to see history content C2005 be “written for the students” and for the students to “see history as something they can relate to.” Sabs advocates for a rewriting of the history curriculum that would include indigenous historians (together with the current academics who write this content) as a legitimate possibility for understanding/knowing “certain stories of the past” that have not been reflected in apartheid history nor does it surface in the new curriculum. Layla echoes some of Sabs and Lucky’s concerns and states that her understanding of history within C2005 has been considerably informed through her discussions about this with Lucky, a history teacher. She feels that C2005 does not adequately focus on SA history that she thinks is important to give:

students a better understand[ing] of what’s going on … a sense of identity and belonging to our country. Because if you don’t have that grounding you are not going to understand what is happening in the country and they won’t even understand their legacy of apartheid.
Thembile cautions that C2005 may be imbalanced towards offering more practical experiences at the expense of “knowledge that learners need” – the sustained engagement with content. This imbalance she thinks can occur through what the teacher chooses to concentrate on and most she believes err on choosing the practical applications over content. Maybe not adequately integrating the practical and the content. Gugu, insists that the education she received through the apartheid curriculum was “very good, even better than today.” She thinks that the apartheid curriculum should remain intact but teaching methods should change.

The teachers’ responses are indicators of the complex engagement of their multiple orientations. Their varied interpretations of the possibilities of the apartheid curriculum and C2005 are indicators of their varied experiences under the apartheid regime. Their responses indicate that they are rethinking their practice, their roles, that of their students and the government with regards to supporting and maintaining democratic learning environments. They talk about a decolonizing/democratic process of teaching and learning that is modeled on the tenets of C2005 and OBE. For some C2005 rhetoric is only that because of a lack of understanding and training. Others are currently more engaged with the move towards a more student-centered classroom where the student becomes an active participant in the teaching and learning process.

The five teachers exhibit varied comfort levels talking about and practicing the vision of C2005. It is difficult to place together any of the teachers as been at the same developmental level with C2005. They all acknowledge that inadequate teacher training and buy-in into this process can be detrimental to the success of C2005. It is clear that
these five teachers are committed to ensuring the success of C2005. In Sabs’ words “As teachers we’ve got both a political and a moral duty to ensure - in fact more than that, even a professional duty to ensure that C2005 succeeds because this is something coming about with changes in the education system, changes which are going to be useful, especially to us formerly oppressed people.” That hope that he articulates for C2005 for the (formerly) oppressed in South Africa echoes the optimism that these teachers have for its political power in equalizing educational experiences. However, such optimism from the teachers does not come with naïve pollyannaism and blind loyalty to a democratic governmental structure. The teachers are critical of the government’s role or lack thereof in placing structures that will ensure the success of C2005. The teachers insist that they alone cannot ensure success with change in their and that of their students attitudes, teaching methodology and practice. They reference their marginalized settings not as total roadblocks but as persistent obstacles to the process of change for their students, the community and themselves. They want to see the government play a more involved role than simply mandating a curriculum and providing sparse training. Comparing their educational environments to those of the former white schools, they feel that C2005 favors those schools. Layla states that OBE can’t be successful in their schools compared to the formerly White schools because those schools “have smaller classes, more resources ….. If we had those kinds of facilities, those smaller classes we could also do these things.” The reference to facilities and other resources is a reference to those privileges former white schools enjoyed from the apartheid government. These schools
today continue to enjoy such privileges and are better prepared and organized to implement the new curriculum.

As Gugu compares a class that she observed of her American counterpart she talks of the (im)possibilities for developing independent thinking and cooperative learning amongst her students. Her American colleague utilized a research-based focus for this particular lesson and his students were able to conduct internet research during classroom time because of the availability of computers in his classroom. Such a resource is a far off dream for all of the schools these teachers teach in but a probable reality for many of the former white schools in South Africa. They question the integrity of the government in mandating such a curriculum without providing the necessary support their marginalized school environments need.

In addition these marginalized schools, unlike the former white schools are burdened with many social and economic constraints of the communities they either find themselves or from which their students commute. These constraints, according to the teachers, are not adequately addressed by the government in its uniform mandates and expectations of all schools. The teachers talk of the government threat to close down low performing schools. This frustrates and angers Lucky because he feels that the government is comparing schools to industry – an unfair equalization of such different structures:

..to me it is difficult to compare schools to industry because we are dealing with learners. We are not dealing with a tin of fish .... where you see it is a reject you throw it away. But you have to understand the problem of the learner – the social and economic problems of the particular learner. Why is this learner not coping ...So now with the tin of fish if it is a reject you throw it away then you produce another tin. What we are approaching
now [the government] say we must be like industry – if school is not producing it must close down.

They argue about their rights as educators – to appropriate training, resources, governmental support, equitable salaries as professionals, compensation for work outside the school day and appropriate professional development. At the same time they examine what their accountabilities and responsibilities are to their learners and the communities they come from despite all of the shortcomings of the system. They critique their own professionalism and those of their colleagues and the role of the teacher union(s) within this educational process of change. They display enigmatic struggles of demonstrating support for a government everyone wants to believe has the power to change the larger apartheid system so that the previously oppressed have a decent hope for a better life and at the same time not wanting to become passive recipients of a system that in practice/on the ground is not working for the very learners and communities it intends to uplift. The complexity and entanglement of these issues are not lost on this group of teachers – there are no simple answers/solutions – it requires self-critique and reflection as well as appropriate accountability and responsibility from the various players within the educational environment. These five teachers are not afraid to critique their own complicities within the system and are also prepared to enact their accountabilities and responsibilities to educational change.

One major stumbling block to the current efforts of the government, according to the teachers, is that of teacher attitude to the new curriculum. The larger portion of one group discussion focused on negative attitudes towards the new curriculum. The teachers suggest that the C2005 document with its various references to program organizers, phase
organizers, critical/specific outcomes etc., can be intimidating and confusing to teachers in its use of such terminology and may have resulted in the negative attitudes of teachers. In addition to the document itself, they also cite teachers’ skepticism of the OBE model because of its “failure” in other developed countries. Such negative attitudes then according to the teachers play out in what/how teachers perceive the possibilities of such a curriculum becoming successful in South Africa. They also talk about how this affects the (not so) meaningful engagement of those teachers who do attend workshops. The teachers cite examples of how teachers negative attitudes to OBE lead to those who attend these workshops to simply sign in as participants but leave without actually participating in the workshops and devaluing the training because it is conducted/facilitated by practicing teachers. They speak of the same negative attitudes within governmental officials who are subject advisors. As subject advisors they should not only promote but also have in-depth understanding of the new curriculum and the OBE philosophy in order to provide appropriate/successful practical classroom application of the new curriculum/education philosophy. However, this does not always occur – many of the subject advisors (especially the ones who have been in the system for quite a while and may be at the end of their tenure) are themselves struggling with developing a comprehension of the changes as well as a belief that such changes are possible/practical within the constraints of many of the educational environments. Often then, as mentioned by some of the teachers, these subject advisors do little to help the practicing teachers better understand and implement their new curriculum.
The combination of these attitudes/practice, lack of training and governmental support may lead to detrimental consequences for this promising curriculum. Such attitudes and practices are not unexpected since it is likely steeped in apartheid traditions, current skepticism and simply in the challenges/nature of change. The history behind such attitudes and practices has to be addressed before attempting curriculum training. A rethinking about the curriculum process has to take place at the grassroots level.

Opportunities for dialogue amongst and within practicing teachers, administrators and others involved in the educational system will provide a forum for those involved to engage with such critical educational issues – such forums are rare to find right now.

Lucky employs a useful metaphor to articulate the major problem of attitudinal change to educational change. His use of the following poison/disease metaphor best helps to put into perspective the intensity and depth of the legacy of apartheid and its many offshoots (racism, indoctrination, skepticism, suspicion…).

But people especially must change - the attitudes of the teachers - because like say you give a person fifty grams of the poison and but the remedy is about five grams you see ..... we have been eating apartheid for a long period .... using Bantu education for a long period. But with a short period it is not for us to vomit what has been eaten so far. So it should be a process and a need for special people, special remedy, that will deal exactly with the disease of this attitude because it is a disease - we need to work on it.

Lucky’s argument is that the teachers’ resistance/negative attitudes are expected. How can we expect radical change in such a short time-span? His metaphor speaks to the need for continuous engagement with the new teaching philosophy. He calls for patience – that we cannot expect teachers to be bulimic – vomiting at once all of the indoctrination of apartheid.
But he does call for “remedies.” What could the special remedies be? The teachers have within their discussions during this project brainstormed some (as mentioned above). Each teacher is deliberate in her/his evaluation of the curriculum change. They unanimously talk about this change taking time, the need for patience, and that this is not an “event” but rather a “process.” However, within that same breath they talk of the urgency to address the above issues now – time is not on the side of those who continue to be oppressed/marginalized within the system. What follows in the next section is a description of one “remedy” these teachers have developed to address the passivity of their students, the new curriculum approach as well as their desire to engage both themselves and their students more actively and critically in the learning process.

**Teaching for Social Change: The Power of Social Action**

Before describing the Social Action projects that was developed and implemented by the teachers and their students, I would like to present vignettes of the teachers’ vision of the role of education (and subsequently themselves) within South Africa’s transformation. These excerpts come from the essays the teachers’ submitted with their application to be considered for participation in the exchange project. It offers us a context to understand the choices they make in their teaching practice.

**Sabs:** As educationalists we need to play an active role in healing the wounds left by institutionalized apartheid on civil society. Through education we can build a truly democratic society. The schools curricula should be structured in such a way that they are able to address the immediate socio-economic needs of the surrounding communities. For example, a school situated in a highly agricultural area should be able to produce learners who are ready to enter the field of commercial farming by the time they exit formal schooling. Education should be used as a tool to address the socio-economic needs of more than five million
South Africans who are presently living below the poverty line. Schools need to engage communities in establishing self-help projects [and] aim at inculcating a sense of ownership among communities.

**Themble:** Education is the key to success and better, brighter future. It is through education that we communicate. In our school poverty is the greatest problem that the society faces ….but our school is a place of learning and development. It is through education that we are able to reach out to …. People in our community [to address social issues like tuberculosis, poverty,].

**Lucky:** In urban community and schools educators are faced with children of the eighties, who come from the history of political violence, broken families and neglect … these learners often feel isolated political, social, and economical. I strongly believe that educators with necessary training can play an important role in developing local schools and community.

**Layla:** Public schools today have to respond to an ever-increasing diverse student population. Education plays a pivotal role in the lives of youth in modern day South Africa, as it is an effective tool to promote a multicultural and multiracial society. Through the powerful medium of education were are able to develop racial tolerance and equip students with the skills needed to coexist in an integrated work environment that a civil society demands. The school curriculum should thus expose students to a rich array of viewpoints, perspectives and experiences.

**Gugu:** Building a relationship between the school and other stakeholders such as parents, traditional leaders, businesses is very important. The school is the center for community activities [and we should] encourage parents to participate fully in the education of their children. Learners should also be part of the partnership in the school.

As briefed in Chapter One the teachers developed community/social action projects that they implemented in their classrooms during January-June 2002. The issues they and their students chose to focus on speak for themselves. What follows is a brief description of the projects and its impact on the teachers and their learners.
Development and Description of Social Action Projects

Prior to arriving in the US to participate in workshops, seminars and interaction with US teachers, the SA teachers worked with their students and community to brainstorm ideas for their projects. Four of the five teachers worked closely with their students and sometimes colleagues to determine a project focus. It became apparent through our discussions and dialogue that the topics chosen held special significance to the lives of students and/or community. The extent of initial collaboration on the determination of the project focus between students and teachers varied. Thembile, Layla and Gugu describe their projects as student initiated and driven. All three asked their students to consider the “problems they encounter within their area,” and “what affects them personally” as well as other students in their school. Most classes came up with a number of issues. The teachers helped the students to narrow their focus and/or certain issues/topics were discarded because of organizational/structural limitations. While Sabs did speak to his students about the project and brainstormed ideas with them he chose his current project because of the possibility that he would be deployed to another school. A group of students in his original school identified teenage pregnancy as a problem of their community. However, because of his impending deployment he decided to focus on a project that could have impact on either community. Lucky was unable to discuss possible topics/issues for his project with his students because they had begun taking their exams. The rationale for deciding on his topic was largely based on his participation in a local art project that was internationally funded as well as the rising vandalism and graffiti around his school environment.
Sabs’ and his ninth grade natural science students chose a community project titled *Silwa Nendlala* – translated *Fighting Poverty*. His school is tucked away in the back roads of a semi-rural area. This area has not escaped the national problem of unemployment, hunger and poverty. Sabs’ intention for the development of a community garden was to provide both his students and the community basic agricultural skills and knowledge of nutrition that would equip them to begin their own community/private household vegetable gardens. He cites poverty as the “primary cause of environmental degradation since people who face starvation knowingly overexploit their vital resource base.” He claims then that “The proper use of the agricultural land together with the development of basic agricultural skills in learners can alleviate poverty and malnutrition. This Social Action Project aims at developing these basic skills in learners. Its main focus is for learners to impart these skills in their communities.”

His students engaged in collecting soil samples that were sent to a laboratory for analysis, determining the type(s) of soil present in the piece of land they will clear for planting vegetables, and then determining the types of vegetables that will thrive in such soil(s). Students began this project with a piece of land overgrown with tall grass and weeds – land that had never been tilled before. All attempts at tilling the soil using manual tools was in vain. Sabs and his students struggled to convince neighboring (white) farmers to assist them by plowing the land for them. This delayed the start of the project. In the meantime students investigated the various types of soils, nutrition, malnutrition, the digestive system and importance of farming in South Africa. The project was finally rescued by a neighboring farmer who finally imagined the possibilities
these students could bring and not only ploughed the land but also provided seeds and
seedlings. The real work then began for the students. Most could not believe the strength
needed for such backbreaking manual work of digging and making rows. When I visited
the garden in July there were neat rows of small but lush greenery. It did not betray the
water resources it lacked. Watering the plants as Sabs explained was a tedious and
difficult process. Since there is no running water nearby, the students had to carry
buckets of water to the vegetable garden. During the school holiday they were able to
work with some members of the community to help water the plants.

Integral to the project was how to replicate it within the community and the role
students will have in doing this. In order to do this, once the vegetable gardens were in
place, Sabs posed the following to his students:

What can we do to promote the idea of vegetable gardens to the
community? The need to involve unemployed members of the
community. What role needs to be played by the learners in helping the
community as far as the implementation of the projects is concerned?

This session yielded suggestions for a showcasing of their vegetable gardens to the
community – an exhibition day that would combine the actual showing of the garden and
the classroom work of the students. One idea to promote backyard or community
gardens was to offer community members starter packs of plants or seeds and for the
learners to work as consultants with the community members as they implement their
gardens. They were also successful in “rop[ing] in some unemployed members of the
community” to participate in the current project as well as to allocate a piece of land next
to the school garden for them to develop their own garden.
Sabs’ writes about the benefits of the project for his students: “They now understand their role in society. They also saw the relevance of education to the day to day life.” Sabs’ reflection on his professional development as a result of the project: “..my implementation of the project contributed a lot to my professional development. I managed to overcome a lot of challenges. ……Working with learners as a team was an eye opener for me as how much learners can contribute to their own learning. At times I found myself actually learning from my learners.”

**Think – Choose – Live: Addressing Drug and Alcohol Abuse Among High School Students**

*School Students* was the creation of Layla’s life orientation and guidance grade eleven class. The aim of this project was to get students to avoid using drugs by developing an anti-drug campaign/programme at school that brought drug awareness to the fore and engaged students in a variety of activities aimed at discouraging substance abuse amongst high school students. Students in the project also created a pamphlet that raises awareness of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. The pamphlet begins with a powerful message to students:

Drugs do not discriminate. They infiltrate all levels of our society; they ask no name, title, age, or gender. Masters of disguise, they have many names, forms, faces and colours. Drugs destroy whatever they come into contact with, effectively erasing our health, sanity, homes, families, and eventually our lives. Talking business with them is talking death.

Such intensity from sixteen, seventeen and eighteen year olds is breathtaking. The pamphlet provides facts about drugs teenagers are likely to encounter as well as information on alcohol. Their slogans “Choose To Be Drug Free” and “Just Say No!” is loud and clear and visible in the huge banners and posters the students created around the
school, the community speakers/presenters invited to their school, their presentations to
the rest of the student body, the pledge table and ribbons they distributed to students who
pledged to be drug free at least for that week were clear indications that these students’
project was leaving its mark on the student population. The students developed a drug
awareness campaign for their school as well as immediate community. While one of
their major activities, a drug awareness march on the main street alongside their school,
did not materialize because they could not elicit permission from the school, these
students have succeeded in communicating their message of staying drug free.

Layla’s students describe life-altering experiences as a result of their participation
in this project. As a culminating piece to the class project Layla asked her students to
reflect on their participation in the project. The students’ reflections are honest critiques
of their own drug and alcohol experimentation. Those who admit to such experimental
behaviors speak passionately about becoming drug free as a result of their participation in
this project. Their reflections also address some of the resistance they received from
other teachers, administration and peers. The success of their campaign, despite such
opposition and resistance, they attest was only possible because, in the words of one of
the students, “we believed in ‘us’ and we wanted success.” Here are a few responses
from students who speak about the impact of the project:

I always thought that alcohol was just something to keep me entertained
and happy but now I know that it doesn’t solve problems but makes them
worse. I told my friends about the damage that alcohol can do to us and
we all decided to stay drug free and never to go to parties as parties may
tempt us into drinking.

I have never done anything like this drug campaign (project) before, and I
feel really good, and proud of myself. I feel like I have achieved
something and made a difference to someone’s life, which I never thought I could do.

I learnt how to make wise choices. I did not know that the choices I made affected so many people. … I will pledge to be drug and alcohol free for the rest of my life because “life is a precious gift.” I won’t throw mine away (from our project).

When asked to reflect on what benefits she thought her students received as a result of their participation in the project, as well as her own development, Layla writes in her reflective report:

Perhaps the most amazing experience in implementing my social action project has been the response of my students and the positive impact of this project on their characters. I have been most impressed by the high levels of enthusiasm and motivation of my students. I watched with immense pride as they developed leadership roles, took initiative for what they were doing, and became self-confident individuals with the realisation that they can work together to make a difference in the lives of their peers … and community. These students enthusiasm has been a great source of inspiration for me, especially at times when I felt a little overwhelmed by all the work that had to be accomplished within a limited time frame. I can honestly say that the success of our project has largely been due to co-operative teamwork and the very special relationship that I developed with my students in the course of planning and implementing our programme. My students and I have become a very united entity with a very strong bond that is characterised by mutual respect and understanding.

Addressing Teenage Pregnancy in Schools was the project initiated by Gugu’s ninth grade life orientation students. The stimulus for this project is explained below:

They are teenagers, not children anymore but not yet adults. Being a teenager is that “in-between” time. Teenage years are often called adolescence or puberty. [during this time the] body produces sex cells [and] makes it possible to reproduce. The teenage years are crucial in the life of a teenage girl. She can very easily make a wrong decision. Recently there has been an increase in the rate of teenage pregnancies in South African schools. It is for this reason that learners from _________
Combined School chose Teenage Pregnancy as their Social Action Project.

This project also tied in with the national message of addressing the issue of HIV-AIDS and prevention of it. A combination of issues as it related to teenage pregnancy afforded this project a wide audience. The students and teachers were successful in having active participation from community members, especially parents. Explicitly addressing such contentious topics as sexual intercourse, contraception, abortion, and HIV-AIDS this project forced students to confront harsh realities and engage in critical dialogue.

Gugu explains that there was possibly one defining moment in the project that impacted all who attended – students, parents and teachers alike. One activity that moved all within the project was a talk given by a teenage mother on single parenting and the loss of teenage-hood. This face-to-face interaction had a louder impact than any of the visuals, readings and in class discussions. This young mother brought the ‘real’ into the lives of her peers and perhaps motivated some of the responses below:

This project has taught me that a relationship that is based on equality is a good one. No one should put his/her interest first.

I am still a virgin and proud of it. I want to enjoy sex with my husband. I am still young if I do it now it will bore me too soon. So doing this project has taught me that it is not hard to say no to a guy who wants sex.

If you have sex you run the risk of getting pregnant so I have learned that there is only one way to avoid unwanted pregnancy and that is to say No.

If the above comments are a reflection of student engagement with the issues/activities of the project, it is pleasing to note that one of the project goals, developing critical decision makers, was achieved. Students’ comments make visible the certainty they bring to their
decision to say ‘No’ to sex, as well as an understanding of the consequences of unsafe and untimely sexual relationships. This project also provided opportunities for students to develop leadership qualities, develop positive group dynamics and boost confidence.

A student’s reflection on her participation reads:

This project has opened our eyes. We learned to work together as a group and we learned to organize and plan as a group and that has made us gain a lot of confidence.

Zikhulise – translated To Develop Yourself: Addressing Illiteracy in the Community was the focus of Thembile’s ninth grade life orientation students’ project. The school Thembile teaches in is located in the heart of a squatter settlement that borders the previously Indian residential areas. This school was specifically built to address the growing student population of the settlement. Therefore the bulk of the students attending this school live in the surrounding settlement. A small percentage is commuters. Thus when asked to list some problems in their community, the most common issue across her classes was that of illiteracy. This focus also dovetailed well with Thembile’s current work with ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training). This collaboration proved exceptionally beneficial for the development of the project as ABET specialists addressed the learners on issues of illiteracy as well as provided training for how the students can work with the community members on developing a literacy program.

Right from the inception of this project Thembile spoke passionately about the need to ‘empower’ the illiterate people of the country. The goals for the project were practical and based on the desires of the people in the community— for the adults of the
community to be able to write and sign their names and read the bible. The signatures would open up a new sphere for them in the economic/legal activities of their life. No longer will they need to be thumb-printed in place of a signature. Reading and writing and understanding basic math calculations that would assist the community group to negotiate their daily lives became the focus of the project. The church is a critical component to the lives of the members of this community. Their desire to be able to read the bible became a focal point for the reading activities of the training. I present below the goals of the project as outlined in the booklet:

This project aims at addressing illiteracy among adults who were denied proper education. The main goal is to provide them with basic education. The long-term goal is to increase access to education by using existing community facilities. It also aims at empowering people with skills and knowledge so that they can become confident and become active members in society. This project has the primary aim of creating a network for better reading and writing skills and to inspire and promote collaborative learning with adults and students in the community. The teacher will empower them to break free from the constraints of traditional curricular. The Project aims at empowering people through literacy regardless of their status in the community.

This project eventually became an intense after school one where a cohort of students received training on developing a literacy program and the students conducted regular workshops and activities for the for the community members participating in the program. The dedication and commitment of the youth in this program exceeded Thembile’s already high expectations. She swelled with pride when she talked about the various activities and the students’ engagement with the adults. Her hope for fracturing the divide between the adults and youth of the community, for creating a positive collaboration between the two groups based on respect, love and communal responsibility
surpassed any of the possibilities she had imagined while developing the project in the US. There is no doubt that her students gained as much from this project as the individuals who learnt how to read, write and do simple math calculations. Thembile writes that her students: “have gained skills and confidence within themselves. Right now they have approached _________ Offices to actually sponsor the school with mobile library which I think is excellent.” How can one argue – such drive and commitment from youth to become initiators of change within their own communities has to be lauded. Thembile’s reflection on the impact of this project on her personal and professional development reads:

I must say that being involved in this type of project has made a major impact in my development. I have certainly developed professionally, the way I work with my students has changed. This project has helped me build trust and good relationship with my students and all that in turn has enhanced my teaching. My students respect me, they see they have also developed tremendously.

**Changing the Environment: Addressing Vandalism in Schools and the Community** was the focal point of Lucky’s ninth grade human and social sciences class project. The preamble to the project outline explains that vandalism is a growing concern in South Africa. The project defines ‘vandal’ as a “person who willfully or maliciously damages property” and then states that this term is a commonly used one in many South African schools and communities. These acts of destruction as noted in the project drain governmental resources and inflict undue psychological and emotional suffering on the victims of vandalism. The visible signs of vandalism, especially through graffiti within
the school environment and immediate community were the impetus for this project.

Below is an excerpt from the project overview and rationale:

In South Africa acts of willful destruction committed by individuals and
groups not only destroys the environment, but also fosters religious,
political and racial intolerance. This project will provide students with
information that addresses vandalism in their schools and communities. It
will also spur students to willingly work towards actively eliminating or
decreasing acts of vandalism and replacing these with decorative murals
that will project positive messages to the community. By actively
involving themselves in this project, students will deter youth in schools
and communities from destroying the environment by acts of vandalism.

When asked what role the community structures can play in terms of protecting
the environment, a student writes: “The youth should play a vital role in protecting our
environment. The reason being that this project itself is promoted by learners who are
part of the youth.” Such conviction that youth can make a difference and mobilize other
youth is not an unfamiliar conviction in South Africa. As explained in Chapter two, the
youth played a crucial role in both initiating and maintaining the momentum of the
freedom struggle. This youth are thrown the responsibility of upholding the democratic
structures and building a citizenry that is both informed and actively engaged with the
responsibilities of democratic citizenship. Another comment by a student indicates how
caring for the environment becomes a personal responsibility as a result of participation
in the project:

Before I did not know anything about murals. After I was involved in this
project, I became more knowledgeable about murals. Before I did not care
about who vandalize the environment, but now I care a lot about
environment.
When asked to reflect on his professional development as a result of this project, Lucky writes that the implementation of his social action project allowed him for the “first time … to integrate class activity with civic action … to develop connections between classroom knowledge and civic action, which is the most important aspect of OBE.” The media attention his students received as result of the project and the visibility of their murals has, according to Lucky put “my school on a Pietermaritzburg map” and has allowed him to develop partnerships with the media, local government and a cluster of schools. He also states that his communication skills have improved because of his interaction and activities with various government, community and media structures.

As I complete writing the above brief descriptions I want to acknowledge my responsibility to the injustice I have done in attempting to re-present the projects. It is impossible to capture on a few pages, eight months worth of work, activities, interactions, success, challenges, dreams, failures, heart-warming stories of hope, love and desire, of doubt, convictions, falls, lessons learnt, lessons taught, laughter and tears, rejection and the ultimate triumph that all involved felt at some level or the other at the end of their projects. These descriptions are partial and fail to adequately convey what I saw, heard and felt from the teachers and their students. But what it does offer is a glimpse into such possibilities. The teachers and student reflections/comments speaks to the actualization of the imagined possibilities these teachers envisioned while they were developing their projects. Their skepticisms at the beginning of the project of overcoming student passivity, student lack of responsibility and self-direction were replaced with a conviction that such is possible even within marginalized educational environments.
“Cultural Pollution” and Racism in Education

Discussions, especially during the focused group meetings produce intense engagement with some issues of educational equality/equity in South Africa. It becomes unmistakable through these discussions that while all teachers agree that racism and gender discrimination continues to unveil itself in myriad ways in the educational system only a few are comfortable talking about these issues. There are many silences during this discussion from the three female teachers. Lucky and Sabs together with the SA coordinator became the dominant discussants on the issues of indigenous education/culture, racism and gender discrimination within the new education system. What follows is some indication of the personal discrimination teachers of color, especially African teachers, continue to endure as well as deep issues they insist on confronting if we are to ensure an equitable education system that births the rhetoric of educational equality, freedom and equal citizenship into practice - into a lived reality for those who remain in economically marginalized communities.

“Cultural Pollution”

…cultural pollution we call it – when our kids went to white schools. When they come back they want to behave like whites because of this thing of stereotypes – whites been superior or better people and you find ourselves … what we call dual culture. You teach your child to practice something at home but at school they taught the child something differently.

Lucky’s concern about white schools culturally polluting the minds of African students is a somber one. Such schools continue to promote and support apartheid era white cultural, social and power capital. Attending former white schools often means shedding
one’s own cultural heritage. It is this expectation that causes Lucky to suggest an early intensive indigenous African schooling where the African child can be in an environment where the “African is [positively] emphasized” so that when the African child attends a multicultural school s/he is “strong enough to defend [her/his] culture.” An early socialization to the African experience as a positive one is important because children are “vulnerable when they approach school life” and need to have a “strong foundation” before being exposed to other cultural groups, especially those children who have been historically marginalized and devalued. Lucky receives nods and confirmations from the other teachers as he discussed this issue but none of the others contributed to his argument.

Using a Needle to Kill an Elephant

During our second focus group discussions I decided to strategically build on Sabs’ concern that no white or Coloured teachers are participating in this project to explore the silence we have all had on the issue of race/racism and the power relations inherent in it both in South Africa as well as within the project. This was an important piece for my own thinking/reflective engagement with regards to my positioning within the research process as a professional colleague and compatriot complicated by the leadership role of project director and my extended diasporic experiences in the United States. Previous casual attempts at this issue was dismissed by the participants as non-problematic, that I did not yield power typical of what happens when some people of color in South Africa are in such positions. I was however searching for an analysis from
them that would not only include a discussion of how power relations within the project can influence the dynamic of the project itself and the research process, but also to examine their perceptions of my ability, as an Indian whose lived experiences, privileges and discriminations in South Africa differed from theirs, to portray them. My concern with the research process and issues of power as researcher yielded no direct comments/discussion. For me, the teachers were too comfortable allowing me privileges I did not feel comfortable with myself. Yet I could not engage them directly in this conversation. I will talk later about my second attempt at this discussion.

The pervasive silence with regards to the issue of race/racism was broken by Sabs’ comment that the issue of race in South Africa has shifted to a binary “black this side and white this side.” This binary concerns him as to how the “white community of teachers [will] identify with this project.” For him the lack of white participation/representation in the project is related to the “law of politics because the fact that we are black all of us here they are going to assume that you are from a certain political structure than whites- not because we have only been one but because of coming from certain political areas, that we have been caught up in the protest – this is one problem we have to also overcome.” This comment triggers the patterns of political alliances during apartheid that were more clearly defined by skin color – an assumption though not always true. His comment suggests that such political identification (or perceptions of political identification) continues to play out today. What implications then does this have for our project, for applicability across educational environments?
Will white educators consider the work these teachers have done on their projects valuable and possible for their classrooms? These questions remain unanswered for now.

After explaining his above concerns, Sabs refers back to my question about racism. His next statement is a difficult but much needed admission for all of us— that the issue of race/color/ethnicity is a complicated and complex one amongst the group he refers to as Black (Indians, Coloureds, Africans):

Yeah you see unfortunately such things [racism] are still prevalent in South Africa you see. As much as [names SA coordinator] is my comrade … my coordinator here … and my colleague, but there comes a stage where I look at him as an Indian ….sometimes ….rejecting something that come from Anash because we look at him as an Indian – that is still the case in South Africa.

Both the SA coordinator and Sabs are active SADTU members and enjoy a collegial relationship. This admission by Sabs was not an easy one but an honest one as he confronts his own prejudices/assumptions with regards to the racism in South Africa and also infer about the tensions in race relations between Indian and African. However, he explains that this admission of racism/prejudices within the black population is not as important as his concern about “bridg[ing] the gap between whites and blacks, especially teachers.” He uses the term black as a collective reference to Africans, Indians and Coloureds. When I interject that he may be creating a (false) binary in his discussion about the issue of race and that there should be serious consideration of how Indians and Coloureds are implicated with/in racism he explains that his lack of concern between African and Indian prejudice is because historically there has always been a shared interaction across these racial groups based on politics and color. He explains that he has
friendships and sustained interaction with Indian people but know no white people. The educational and geographical separation of the races during apartheid and the same trend that ensues almost guarantees that possibilities for developing the relationship Sabs desires is minimal. But Sabs’ refusal to interrogate the implications of Indians with regards to racism belies his own utterance above of the existence of such prejudices between African and Indian. His reluctance to speak directly to this issue is a bit perplexing considering his past and present political positions. Sabs is an outspoken advocate for equity and racial equality. By virtue of his position within the SADTU structure he has to deal with issues of race and equity within the educational structures. Considering his political activism as a teenager and young adult as well as his critique of both the strengths and weaknesses of the governmental structures with regards to building educational equity, his reluctance is difficult to fathom. Could he be negotiating the power relations inherent in this research process? Does he believe that addressing racism specifically with regards to Indians compromise his position within the project? Does he consider that my representation as Indian and that of the project director may have negative consequences/implications for him within the project? Does the project coordinator’s acknowledgement and response to Sabs creates a stopping point for discussion? The project coordinator speaks passionately about his sense of commitment and belonging to South Africa. He affirms Sabs’ analysis of the limitations of what is sometimes portrayed as racial harmony amongst the black population. He speaks with confidence that “I belong to this South Africa.” to illustrate his sense of being South African: “I am an Indian but South Africa is in my blood.” He speaks about this sense of
belonging as it relates to his own part in South Africa’s struggle for freedom. It is
evident from his talk that at least the two male teachers are aware of his past and present
political positions within the struggle. They nod in acknowledgement to his comments
about not been aligned with the oppressors and his critical stance with his comrades in
the union, questioning the commitment of educators to their students. Does Sabs think
that if he talks about Indians within the mix of racism that we would be biased towards
him? Could my own assumptions about him and the teachers (with regards to their
participation in the project) be tainted by my knowledge of their views on how Indians
are implicated in the apartheid system? Is this the reason too for the silence(s) on the part
of the three female teachers?

Lucky insists that the government must do something to address racism – that the
possibilities for them as educators to combat racism are insufficient and will be in vain
considering the larger racial structures that remain in place. Glib with metaphorical
images he explained:

..you see it’s like taking a needle and kill an elephant using the needle.
….but my problem is that it is not only the teachers who are facing this
[racism]. That is why I am using this needle with regard to an elephant.
Because teachers – I am referring to teachers as the needle and elephant as
this major racism itself. If the racism is there and for us there is not much
we can do. One is not saying we must not do anything. But we need our
country … it’s a process of addressing this [racism] because it is not
[only] happening in schools. We go outside it is happening, we go to town
it is happening, urban areas where we have workshops ….. What I am
trying to say at the end of the day is [is] it’s a problem that the country –
we need to work together – we need the level of government.

Lucky goes on to describe a meeting with white teachers in an ex model C school.
He explains that as head of history in his school he was asked to meet with people at this
school. He explained how the white women teachers were aghast to hear that he did not have an overhead projector and screen at his school. He stated that they were so taken aback by this ‘revelation’ that they did not even give him a chance to explain his problem with teaching history. Instead they sent him back with an armload of notes to use in his class. He explains how he felt about their perceived ‘generosity’: “So to me it was … it felt like pity … as if I am a lost .. somebody … I must go and implement ..” This anecdote that Lucky shares is in support of his argument that racism is not only embedded in the minds of the people but also embedded in the structures of the country, the schools been one of them. He argued that the townships were structured during the apartheid period and therefore it is “difficult to take Imbali, put it in Scottsville so that it can mix …and Scottsville to Imbali.” Using sports as an example of community development he explained how the previously privileged neighborhoods continue to receive support from City Hall for such development at the expense of places like Imbali and Northdale. He insisted that while teachers can contribute to addressing the problem of racism, “it lies with the country as a whole. The way the structure – because it is only written down – there is no racism but it’s structured – my problem is structure. ‘How can you mix the structures, how can you mix people?’ Because we are still living in our own townships, …using our own shops…. And as teachers off course we can play a very important role but with us I think it is very minimal since the problem is huge.”

Lucky’s sense of hopelessness in addressing racism is poignantly shared through his use of metaphors and sharing of his anecdote. Lucky speaks to/of the pervasiveness of racism in South African society that can overwhelm personal and group efforts.
Sabs acknowledged Lucky’s insistence that the government had to be responsible, but countered that teachers can make a significant impact. He was seeking self-reflection on the educators/education’s role in ending racism. He challenged the teachers to consider what can be done at what he called the “micro-level”:

What I was talking about was looking at racism at a micro-level whereby you find that at the moment the sports people they are doing something there [about racism]. They have actually acknowledged the fact there is racism in sport and they are doing something to fight it. I wanted us to be specific with ourselves – to do an introspection on ourselves as teachers because as I am saying there needs to be fight against racism at the micro-level – where musicians come together and see what they can do … the sports people … now as teachers … what can we do?

Lucky offered a suggestion that some kind of teacher exchange can occur at the local level. This would allow teachers to spend time in environments they would either unlikely have access to or choose not to teach is such schools. He bases this suggestion on his participation in our project. He talked about the acceptance he received from his teacher partner (a white male) in the US and questions whether such an acceptance is possible in an ex-white school. His imagination for such possibilities is enthusiastic, but he settles his enthusiasm with a seriousness that concerns all the teachers. How will such a thing be possible – to be accepted and teach history in a white school?

…but the problem is the stereotypes are still there. So there is a bridge to cross. I mean how can I go to __________? [he names a current ex-white school]….. I am confident of myself, I can teach those [white] kids. I can teach them I am sure of that. But the problem is that the question of acceptance. The school that I am coming from, the results you see ……here [in US] I felt at home – we were accepted to whites. Because at home I am only accepted to my people with my racial identity you see. So, that’s my problem.
This concern they share for acceptance as professionals across schools is a problematic one – one without a doubt inherited from prejudices, stereotypes and discriminations of the apartheid era. The teachers cite various examples of discrimination especially in access to administrative positions even within their own communities. Sabs explained that since positions within the school are solely determined and candidates chosen by the school’s governing body, many are unfairly discriminated against. While he explained that many black teachers don’t even apply for positions in white schools because “we know they are not going to take us” he is concerned with the hiring trends occurring in the township and other black schools. He explained: “Now in our school – an African school – the parents [who largely make up the governing body] got the mentality that if you bring in a White principal or an Indian principal the teachers will start working. So, what is happening now is White people are slowly getting into our schools – they are getting [administrative] positions.” He goes on to say that if this continues to happen and if they [black teachers] never apply for positions in previous white schools they shy away from the “solutions of the problem” and the more they do this the “more we get disadvantaged.” Sabs’ comments of the impossibilities to cut across structures within the school system because of prejudices based on race, location and perceived qualification parallels apartheid era assumptions and thus continues to enable the hierarchical positions of apartheid, where positions of power and authority where assumed by whites and sometimes Indians.

A second attempt at a discussion on race and power relations within the project yielded nothing more than discussed above. The participants at this meeting did change
the dynamic of the conversation. Those present were Sabs, Gugu, Thembile and Layla. Lucky was about to get married so he was unable to attend. We did not invite the project coordinator to this meeting. Sabs again took the lead in this short discussion. He reiterated that the kinds of tension he perceives between Indians and Blacks is mainly based at the social and economic levels. He sees Indian peoples’ political and racial attitudes closely tied to their socio-economic status – “a particular class”. He talked of the difficulty to critique/be critical of Indian people because “coming from a certain history, especially mass democratic movement here Indians were classified as Blacks, especially aligned to the ANC. Difficult to say something about Indians because closely aligned to the mass democratic struggle – can’t talk openly. Still believe Indians are comrades in the struggle.” We finally laid to rest the issue of racism through Thembile’s plea “race it’s a thing of the past and we rather go forward than in the past.” This young woman’s belief though naïve in the eyes of the old may be what South Africa needs for now to forge ahead, to develop its rainbow nation, free of racism, discrimination, and prejudice.

Sabs and Lucky polarized the race issue in South Africa as that of white and black, using the term black in this instance to be inclusive of Indian. There is no denying that apartheid created a large chasm between Black and White. However, the issue of race and the prejudices and discriminations it brings with it cannot simply reside within this large chasm either as a polarized reality or discourse. Sabs’ hesitant admission that such prejudices do exist within/across Blacks (as indigenous African) and Indians is a stolen glimpse into what becomes the unspoken, the silence in the discourse on race. Can
this silence, this avoidance of including Indian as problematic component within the mix of the ‘new’ discourse on race be a consequence of those who are represented within the project itself? Can I surmise that my own race representation as Indian, as well as that of the SA coordinator – two participants within the project who hold leadership roles - influences the silences that have emerged on this issue? Did this conversation take the meanders it did simply because of who were present in the room? Can one imagine a possible dialogue on race if a white participant was present? This speaks to the contingent/conditional nature of research and the need to interrogate the researchers assumptions and representations within/during the research process.

Could the silences of the three female teachers and Thembile’s insistence that racism is something of the past be the need for a nation to heal? Have I as the re-writer of the teachers’ engagement with this issue presented it without tainting the efforts of South Africa to overcome racism, and the teachers’ commitment to it? We have to be cautious though, that while we may try to imagine a new nation free of racism, and while we may be cognizant of its violent history of apartheid, our silences, in an attempt to erase/mend that violence, may take us to a utopian position in talking about race/racism.

**Summary**

What preceded this summary is an interwoven narrative of individual and collective experiences that the five teachers engage with as they make sense of, argue about and interrogate assumptions about teaching and learning in South Africa. Some re-
live their political oppression through their approach to teaching, others re-engage with
the political process (past and present) as they re/construct their teaching practices.
CHAPTER 5

TRANSFORMATION THROUGH EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ACTION?

Human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot simply be proclaimed, or legislated from on high. It is only when people themselves engage in social action to give meaning to the words enshrined in our constitution that human rights will become the living thread from which our social fabric is woven. In other words, the advance protection, defence and consolidation of fundamental human rights can only be the outcome of ongoing struggle: every day, in every community, in every sphere of human activity. The organization of the people to act as their own liberators, to themselves transform the prescriptions of the Constitution into a living reality is the basis of this ongoing struggle. (Mbeki, T., ANC Today, 2002)

This study was an attempt to understand how black South African teachers (re)construct and (re)negotiate their teaching practice within the new curriculum and how and if they consider their teaching practice to have implications for the larger challenge for social change/transformation in South Africa. Through individual interviews, discussion, interaction with the teachers, and reflective writings from them, it became increasingly evident that the teachers’ adoption of a more “liberatory” ideology and/or practice emerged as a result of a fairly complex interaction of experiences both within the educational and political spheres of South Africa and their personal/familial upbringing.

While Chapter 4 is a partial narration of how their teaching practice/philosophy is shaped and negotiated, constrained and set free by their personal histories, identity
politics, racial encounters, apartheid, political (non)consciousness/activism/discourse, and project participation, it points out the complex interconnectedness/fracturing of the above and the often intangible that impacts teaching and learning. “Resources of biography” as explained by Jita (1999) “includes such things as one’s experiences of marginalization, experiences of growing up or living in a particular culture and the experiences of participating in certain kinds of social or political activities.” This study engaged the teachers in both reflection and examination of these experiences and tried to capture some of their articulations with regard to these experiences and their teaching. There are no claims that their reflections are complete in their narratives. This being the first (for most of the teachers) conscious reflection and articulation of their teaching practice and their multiple positionalities as a result of their resources of biography, location and subjectivities creates opportunities for further examination. However, the teachers in this study, did more than reflect, they moved their reflection to action, as evidenced in the implementation of their social action projects. What this study traces is some of the imagined possibilities these teachers envisioned for their students and themselves while in the United States, and the realization of these possibilities through the implementation of their social action projects.

I began this study with many questions, not with the expectation of seeking solutions, but with the hope of gaining an understanding of how these teachers embrace/reject/negotiate C2005 and the OBE philosophy. I wanted to explore how they might imagine and practice an “emancipatory” pedagogy that would ‘empower’ their
students and lend itself to social transformation in South Africa. I reiterate the three research questions of this study:

1. How do issues of lived experience, politics, race and culture influence the way black teachers conceptualize their teaching practice?
2. What impact does pedagogical practice have on social change?
3. Do black teachers in marginalized school settings provide academic spaces to empower their students? If so, how?

In reviewing the research questions, I ponder how to address in this concluding chapter how these questions were “answered.” No definitive “answers” emerged. What emerged were an unveiling of myriad complexities, convictions and ambivalences to the (im)possibilities of the teaching and learning environment as an empowering vehicle for social change. What follows is a summary of the teacher’s narratives as they unfolded and wrapped themselves in their own ambiguities, sometimes partial, sometimes whole, simultaneously converging and diverging in directions that spoke to their collective histories and collective educational/political experiences. I am not implying that the collective is a static/stable category but rather that the collective itself is fractured by the teachers’ own individuality and subject positions. Therefore the collective is partial, complicated by individual interpretations and meanings brought to bear on the specific collective history and experiences of black people in South Africa.

I use the following themes to summarize and highlight the teacher narratives, discourse, and engagement with critical issues related to teaching and learning, social transformation, and student empowerment within the new educational focus in South
Africa. The first theme, “Resources of Biography” and Pedagogical Practice responds to my first research question; the second and third themes, The Emancipatory Possibilities of Curriculum 2005 and The Development Of A Change Oriented Pedagogy addresses the second and third research questions.

“Resources of Biography” and Pedagogical Practice

Sense of self as teacher as well as lived experiences laid the foundation for understanding the driving force behind the teachers’ proclivity towards a certain pedagogical practice/teaching philosophy. In describing self as a teacher, the participants often did so in context of their relationship with their students and/or community. Four teachers very specifically verbalized self as teacher in relation to their students. With their teacher self strongly rooted with their students, they articulated the personal connections they made to their students as a result of common lived experiences (present or past). They speak to the “open door” approach they have and the comfortable, relaxed and informal communication structures they have established with their students. At least three of these teachers described instances when they assisted their students with personal and financial problems. They have in essence all described themselves as teachers in a very personal way that alludes to their very successful and positive relationship with their students. The fifth teacher in this study did not reference his relationship with his students at a personal level when he described himself as a teacher. Instead, he described himself as a committed and dedicated teacher concerned with the academic performance of his students as well as general school and community
development. Could this lack of reference to the student-teacher relationships on a more personal level be due to the age and lived experiences of the teacher participants? This particular teacher is in his late thirties compared to the other four teachers who are in their early to mid twenties. This connection of teacher age and formality and/or lack thereof may be a partial indicator of the possibilities of relationships exhibited/described by the teachers in this study. It is also an indication of the era during which each teacher began her/his careers. Can teacher age in this case be congruent with apartheid and/or democratic educational ideology/expectations? Apartheid era educational expectations/regulations required student conformity and strict separation between teacher and student that was most successfully accomplished by structures of authority, student deference to teachers, and sole power in the hands of the teacher and administrators.

While Lucky, the fifth teacher, has embraced a more “liberatory” pedagogy, he admits to his “reluctance” and difficulty with departing from apartheid era classroom organization, student-teacher interactions, and formality. Is his “reluctance” an indication of his willing complicity within the traditional system or do the conditions within his teaching environment offer him fewer options/possibilities? Maybe he is creating his own possibilities despite the old traditions of his environment. The younger teachers described a more informal and personable interaction with their students where their concerns about their students exceed their academic responsibilities to their students. Their choice of speech/language/descriptors of their relationship to/with their students is negotiated within the rhetoric of C2005 and OBE where “control” in the
classroom becomes a blurred distinction and student respect and a healthy/positive student-teacher relationship are negotiated outside of the fixed formality of apartheid era exemplars.

What became less lucid than the teacher-student relationship is the role of the teachers’ (non)political consciousness/activism, experiences with racial discrimination/oppression and its influence on the development of a critical/empowering pedagogy. The teachers described their teaching (imagined or actual) as an effort towards engaging in some form of “liberatory” practice. Our discussions and interactions, as well as the development of their social action projects, all speak to the teachers’ trajectory towards such a pedagogy that offers “democratic” possibilities for their students. While they all couch their pedagogy within the larger national goal for empowerment, social justice and democratic citizenship, their differing engagement with and activism within the apartheid regime complicates an explanation of what really motivated, influenced and directed individual pedagogical practice. Their engagement with their disenfranchisement as blacks during apartheid occurred at various levels of conscientization and action. Gugu, Layla and Thembile seemingly speak unproblematically about these life experiences as actual motivators for their current teaching agendas, philosophy and practice. Yet it seems unlikely that such experiences cannot influence one’s state of pedagogical practice. All three teachers are reticent to “politicize” their practice within the apartheid discourse. Rather than considering their practice as apolitical, I suggest, for these teachers, that politicization has multiple meanings attached to it and multiple forms of enactment. As in the case of Thembile and
Gugu, they talk about their impoverished upbringing (as separate from the politics that
enacted such poverty), as well as their K-12 educational experiences (both under
oppression but positive) as more influential motivators for the development of their
pedagogy. For Gugu, the political became more important later in her professional career
and seems to have somewhat influenced the directions her professional career is currently
taking, especially with regards to her union work. Thembiile insists that the political has
nothing to do with her teaching, yet she is passionate about issues of social justice, equity
and equality – issues that are so embedded in the political sphere of apartheid. Layla’s
current teaching philosophy and practice can be viewed as metamorphosed through/by the
histories and lived experiences of her marginalized students. She speaks of
understanding apartheid inequality through her engagement with her students. As such
this engagement inevitably impacts/influences what she teaches, how she teaches, and the
socio-economic and political considerations she is more cognizant of as a result of her
engagement with her students.

In contrast, Lucky and Sabs from the outset indicated that their educational goals,
and ideas about emancipation/liberation/transformation were strongly rooted in their
political conscientization to apartheid ideology and political activism against the
apartheid state. While Lucky has adopted some of the organizational leanings of
apartheid educational ideology as in his strict implementation of discipline and student-
teacher formality, his ultimate goal is education for liberation, as was the call during the
national struggle for liberation. While Sabs and Lucky adhere to the same ideology of
liberation/freedom, they both speak about the difficulty of enacting such an ideology
within the apartheid curriculum. Their personal/political ideologies were often at odds with the expectations/requirements of the apartheid curriculum that directed their teaching practice during apartheid. The current curriculum supports their ideology and they seek ways in which they can now enact their ideology within their teaching practice.

The teachers’ engagement with their resources of biography and teaching philosophy is complex and contextual. Their identities as teachers and their teaching practices are continually in process – a process of becoming rather than being. Even during times of static suspension through the constraints of apartheid ideology/indoctrination/irrelevance, they speak of/to a process of an evolving pedagogy.

The “Emancipatory” Possibilities of Curriculum 2005

The teachers in this study addressed the emancipatory possibilities of C2005 and the OBE philosophy from various perspectives and positions. They are optimistic that emancipatory possibilities do exist within C2005 for those who were/are marginalized. As the curriculum is laid out though, in its documentation, such emancipatory possibilities are both pleasing and deceptive.

The teachers agree that the following are embedded in the new curriculum and are critical to an emancipatory pedagogy:

- the African experience is brought to bear on the curriculum with its inclusion of a more indigenous history (contemporary and past);
- a call for the development of informed citizens capable of critical thinking and intelligent decision making;
• consciousness raising and the ability to act upon one’s circumstances;
• a move towards building a culture of life-long learning; an education geared towards social justice and empowerment;
• professional freedom to create lively, engaging and communal classrooms that promote the learning of all students irrespective of race, economics, social status and class; and
• the inclusion of strong possibilities to develop community and parental partnerships.

Such rhetoric can be enamoring for those previously marginalized. The discussions that flowed around the possibilities of ‘emancipation’ through South Africa’s new curriculum though animated with its promise, were always tempered by a critique of what possibilities existed within their own environments for such promises to be actualized. The teachers argued, similarly to the argument by Jansen (1990) and Hlatshwayo (2000), that curriculum change in and of itself is insufficient. What is needed in addition to curriculum change within educational institutions, as well as in other spheres of society, is a “change in behavior and consciousness from kleptomania to constructive engagement in the destiny of the nation by creating social and economic opportunities for the less fortunate” (Bassey, 1999, p. 112).

Such violent practices, these teachers claim, become visible through the structural and institutional practices of the previously privileged educational environments. They question the role of the government in providing a curriculum that is intended to equalize an unequal society, yet not offering those most marginalized any support systems to work
towards such equality. Undeniably inherent in the current teaching environment is the institutionalized legacy of apartheid. Discussions on issues of race and racism within the education system and schools emerged as the teachers reflected on and critiqued their educational circumstances and that of their colleagues who continue to practice in previously white only schools. The teachers cite examples of discrimination and prejudice because of apartheid era stereotypes, perceptions and assumptions. They place such inequities/inequalities within the educational system squarely on the issue of race. As in Ramphele’s (1999) critique that South Africa’s higher education’s exclusionary practices/standards are embedded in racism and prejudice, the teachers in this study find the same happening within the K-12 educational setting. The exclusion of these black teachers from educational positions within white schools as well as higher administrative positions within black schools is reminiscent of Ramphele’s statement that the presence of blacks in higher education is often assumed by many whites that it is “testimony that standards of performance has fallen” (p. 151). Such racist notions she explains, uses “standards as metaphors for exclusivity” (p. 151). The teachers’ experiences of exclusion from educational positions monopolized by whites, as well as their own black community’s assumptions that White and Indian administrators are capable of producing elevated academic results is a case in point of the colonial mentality that still permeates former colonizers and colonized in South Africa. Unequivocally such colonial mentality continues to pervade the educational environment and remains relatively unexamined within the new educational dispensation (Kunnie, J. 2000). It becomes clear through the teacher narratives that while apartheid is legally laid to rest as a result of a democratic
constitution its heart continues to beat in their marginalized schools and communities where it maintains malicious inhabitation.

Burdened with apartheid inequities/inequalities (structural, professional, institutional, interactional), these teachers are skeptical of the possibilities of this new curriculum to bridge such inequities in their classrooms and professional collaborations. They do not discard such possibilities. They simply argue that the new curriculum continues to favor those who have been privileged and that its successful implementation is impeded in environments such as theirs. Lack of resources, apartheid era schools and inadequate training are some of the constraints discussed by the teachers. How is it possible, they inquired, for their students and themselves to compete equally with those who have classrooms and schools equipped with computers, running water, educational supplies, qualified teachers, extra-curricular activities, economically supportive communities, smaller student-teacher ratios, financial resources for professional development and innovative programming? Even within this group of teachers, Layla, the Indian teacher who teaches in a previously Indian school, makes visible such inequities. For example, her school, though by no means privileged, is able to offer more professional development opportunities for their teachers than some of the other schools. The school that Gugu teaches in is another example. It’s students and teachers still enjoy the limited structural privileges of having been a model township school during the apartheid regime.

Can the teachers’ ambivalence to the possibilities of C2005 for social transformation speak to the government’s call for patience? Is the expectation of radical
structural and attitudinal changes within such a short time unrealistic? The teachers themselves, though critical of the limitations of C2005, stress that educational change needs time to show its impact. They stress that such systemic change is a process rather than an event and therefore implying that the future holds more promise than the present. Amidst such ambivalences, the teachers do offer us examples of possibilities that could make a difference in the enactment of C2005 and its lofty goal of social reconstruction for the previously marginalized and oppressed. While there are differences and limitations with reference to possibilities within each school to successfully enact the new curriculum, the teachers exhibit through the development and implementation of their social action projects that such possibilities are realistic even within marginalized communities like theirs. This then would certainly favor the promise and the teachers’ belief that C2005, if committed to by educators and the government alike, can contribute to social, cultural and economic transformation in South Africa.

The Development of a Change Oriented Pedagogy

What can be surmised from the teachers’ responses to and engagement with the emancipatory possibilities of C2005? How do they conceptualize/imagine an empowering/emancipatory pedagogy within C2005? C2005 can become an empowering pedagogy for whom and what form does it take? As the teachers’ worked within these ambivalences a clear sense of agency emerged. Their sense of ‘empowerment’ spoke to a collective/community based social empowerment, rather than one embedded in capitalistic notions of individual betterment and economic advantage. The teachers’
conceptualization of “good citizen” revolved around the ideas of a “person who contributes positively to the country, that is, politically, educationally, socially and economically.” Their hopes to develop such a focus amongst their students becomes visible in their commitment to social issues and local community upliftment as evidenced in the issues chosen for the social action projects.

Cautious not to claim that the teachers in this study are “transformative” practitioners engaged in a “liberatory” practice as conceptualized and described by the various scholars in the literature review, I explore their “alternative” teaching practices (the use of social action) within the conceptualization of a change-oriented pedagogy. Unsure as to what entails an authentic “transformative” and “liberatory” pedagogy in post-apartheid South Africa we seemingly steered towards the notion that descriptors for such a pedagogy has to be antithetical to apartheid indoctrination and ideology. For example Lucky often talked about creating a “democratic learning environment” and explained that for him this means allowing students to question the teacher, they can “raise ..opinions, respect your views … disagree or agree, .. have a say in the class, not only the teacher imposes information…..you [the teacher] can learn from the learners.” He also included in this description a “psychologically free” environment, free of punishment from the “stick in particular.” The other teachers agree with his sense of a democratic learning environment, adding that there has to be “two way communication” in the classroom. The teachers made reference to developing “critical thinking and creative thinking,” “active citizen[ship],” “ownership,” and “independent thinking,” amongst their students. They refer to themselves as “facilitators” and the need for
learners to be “partners” within the learning process. All of these descriptors indicate a move in the direction of a re-thinking and re-conceptualization of the teaching and learning process.

The teachers actualized the above rhetoric through the student initiated and student led social action projects. Framed within the philosophy of C2005 the students and their teachers developed social action projects as exemplars of the possibilities of an alternative practice conceptualized within the new curriculum. Keeping in mind the teachers critique of the successful possibilities of such alternative practices within their marginalized environments, their completed projects speak to opening up such possibilities. However limited or partial these possibilities, it indicates that those teachers interested and committed to change-oriented pedagogy can find it within the new curriculum.

These projects had implications far greater than academic excellence. The teachers demonstrated the ability to inculcate within their students academic excellence, a sense of social responsibility and community, self-esteem and belief in their power as youth to make critical changes within their school and community. These were the same students the teachers described early in the research as “passive,” like an “audience,” “docile.” The teachers’ wonderment at the active engagement and ownership of the projects by the students, as well as the students’ assertion of academic and life changing opportunities presented through their participation in the projects is an indication that some form of “transformative” practice is taking place.
If we use Jita’s (1999) conceptualization of a transformative practice (as a result of his research with black science teachers in South Africa at the end of apartheid and before C2005) “as a kind of teaching that pays attention to the issues of voice and inclusion for all students and whose potential consequences for students are transformative for themselves and their social world” (p. 206), can we conclude that these teachers have been successful at a “transformative” practice? Using the experiences of these teachers and the possibilities they have presented (through the social action projects) for their students to explore their own democratic citizenship, responsibilities towards their learning, and enact some of the rhetoric of C2005, these teachers have been successful in initiating a pedagogy that holds promise for South Africa’s president, Thabo Mbeki’s call for the people of South Africa to “engage in social action to give meaning to the words enshrined in our constitution” and that people must organize to “act as their own liberators, to themselves transform the prescriptions of the Constitution into a living reality.”

**Implications for Educational Change/Transformation**

Motala and Pampallis (2002) state that current “writings” about the relationship between educational policies and their implementation are “wont to regard the plethora of wide-ranging reform polices as adequate to the requirements of transforming the educational system” (p. 5). They argue that these writings suggest that lack of capacity to implement policy leads to its failure. Such writings separate policy and the implementation policy thus obscuring the nature of the relationship between them.
Motala and Pampallis suggest that the way in which policy reform takes place may be more an indicator of its deficiencies. They therefore call for the “process of implementation [to] be examined in relation to the very policies from which it is derived, and the relationship between policies and their implementation must be analyzed simultaneously” (p. 6).

The rich narratives of the teachers in this study are embryonic with possibilities for a closer engagement of how educational policy is interpreted/enacted in the classroom. These narratives burst with promise, ambivalence, optimism and somberness about the transformative possibilities of C2005. It contextualizes the educational discourse in South Africa within the very classrooms new educational policy is intended to impact. Motala and Pampallis’ analysis of the contradictions inherent in the policy process speaks to some of the same contradictions the teachers articulate in this study. They speak to how educational policies may contradict the goals set out in the constitution. This study sheds some light on the following concerns about educational policy:

The goal of democratizing school governance, proclaimed in the legislation, is obfuscated by real relations of power and access to resources in the schooling communities. Here, democracy is bedevilled by the legacies of unequal power and access to resources which threaten to turn the process of democratization on its head. What are the limits these contradictions impose on the process of transition and how do they affect social delivery? What are the constituencies most affected by these limitations? These and other questions about the transition must be asked. (italics my own, pp. 6-7)

The narratives of the five teachers in this study, their engagement with the educational policies as it affects their marginalized communities and possibilities for practice, inform
the questions posed above. This study could be positioned as a seminal piece of ethnographic/qualitative research that elucidate the claims made by Motala and Pampallis.

The voices of black teachers in South Africa have been suppressed for so long that we could very well have forgotten how to speak! Yet these same voices were powerful during the political struggle for national liberation in South Africa. It is now time that these voices resurface as agents of change within the critical educational discourses in South Africa. While this study does not claim to give power to the voices of the teachers, it also does not negate the power of voice – as was illustrated in the collective power of voice during South Africa’s liberation struggle.

As in other countries, both developing and developed, teacher voice is negated within educational academic and professional discourse, policy-making and curricular considerations. The voices of educators of color across the globe have struggled to be recognized as legitimate contributors to the national and global educational discourse. Black teachers in South Africa have been historically marginalized from the dominant educational discourse. If spaces are not created for their voices, their intervention, their narratives, they will continue to remain on the fringes or in obscurity with regards to the educational transformation in South Africa. However, it is important to keep in mind when creating such spaces that “creating an intentionally interruptive space that is safe for all means breaking down the invisible walls that segregate those historically privileged from those historically silenced” (Weis & Fine, 2000, p. 169). A glance at published works on educational transformation in South Africa indicates that the
'invisible wall’ continues to occur – the dominant scholars remain those who were/are historically privileged, as well as male (across race). Future qualitative studies are urgently called upon to examine the role of practicing black teachers within South Africa’s educational transformation.

Closing

During the 1980’s and 1990’s there was an abundance of South African scholars who have outlined, debated and critiqued conceptualizations of a new liberatory future education for a democratic South Africa. Despite all of this preoccupation with a post-apartheid pedagogy for South Africa, as well as with South Africa’s current ‘democratic’ curriculum, the reality remains that most of the schools that affect the population that was most disenfranchised during apartheid remain in the urban ghettos of South Africa. The racial and socio-economic segregation of apartheid South Africa continues to play out in the democratic South Africa. The previous neighborhood location of schools remain intact and continues to reinforce polarization in education and aggravates inequality in education between rich and poor communities (Alexander, 1990). The lack of restructuring of urban areas ensures that an inferior education continues to be delivered to urban Black students (Motala & Pampallis, 2002). So in reality, what democratic learning spaces are provided for urban youth? How can the flip side of taking education out of the ghetto, i.e. taking the ghetto out of education become a reality? (Alexander, 1990)
How can a critical/engaged/liberatory/democratic pedagogy be imagined/practiced within such profound, almost hopeless constraints? This study is an intervention – a glimpse into such possibilities contextualized within a particular social, political and historical moment. Even as apartheid educational structures in post-apartheid South Africa continue to be perpetuated particularly in marginalized urban school environments, there are black South African teachers who attempt an “emancipatory” pedagogy. The teachers in this study are examples of these possibilities. This study therefore is very timely by surfacing at the cusp of South Africa’s post-apartheid educational transformation and serves to document some of the first teacher thinking about their roles within a democratic South Africa.
APPENDIX A

TEACHER BIOGRAPHIES

Gugu: Gugu is an African female. She has taught at her current secondary school level for five years. This is the only school she has taught in since becoming a teacher. Gugu has a higher diploma in education. She attended a model apartheid secondary school (was built by the apartheid state to showcase the “positive” of apartheid for Black people) for her own education. She completed high school without interruption and studied to be a teacher at a local college. She had her first political experiences/encounters/consciousness during college. She currently serves as a gender convener for her teacher union in her region. She currently teaches students between the ages 13-16 years. She teaches English, Human and Social Sciences and Life Orientation. Her school is located in a semi-rural area. The school she is teaching in is a previous township model school. Because of this her school has a solid structural and (limited) resource base. The majority of the students attending this school come from the surrounding farms. All of her students are African. Gugu lives on the school grounds in accommodation.
provided for the teachers by the school. She commutes over the weekend to the city.

**Layla:** Layla is an Indian female. She has taught at the secondary school level for four years. This is the second school she has taught in since becoming a teacher. Layla has a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Honors degree (graduate degree). She attended all Indian schools during her K-12 schooling and a predominantly white university for her undergraduate degree. She completed high school without interruption and studied to be a teacher at a local university that caters to majority White students. She had her first political experiences/encounters/consciousness when she started teaching.

She currently teaches students between the ages 15-18 years. She teaches in a previously Indian school. She teaches Afrikaans and Counselling. Her school is located at the entrance of the city center. The majority of the students commute to the school from the surrounding townships. Ninety percent of her students are African, the other ten percent are mainly Indian. Layla commutes to her school from her home in a nearby small town.

**Lucky:** Lucky is an African male. He has taught at his current secondary school for five years now. This is the only school he has taught in since becoming a teacher. Lucky has a Bachelor in Arts degree and a higher diploma in education. He attended township schools for his K-12
education, except for his final matric year. His high school education was interrupted because of school boycotts and his participation in the larger national struggle for liberation. He has continued to be politically active (in different ways) throughout his college and teaching career. He currently teaches students between the ages 14-21 years. He teaches History. His school is located in a township and he lives very close to the school. The students attending this school come from within the township. All of his students are African.

**Sabs:** Sabs is an African male. He has taught at the secondary school level for five years now. This is the only school he has taught in since becoming a teacher. While participating in the project he was expecting to be deployed to another school. Sabs has a Bachelors of Science degree. His high school education was interrupted because of school boycotts and his participation in the larger national struggle for liberation. He has continued to be politically active (in different ways) throughout his college and teaching career. He currently serves as the chairperson for the teacher union in his region. He currently teaches students between the ages 14-20 years. He teaches math, science, and life orientation classes. His school is located in a semi-rural area. Fifty percent of the students attending this school come from two nearby townships and the other fifty percent are from the neighboring
farms. Sabs commutes to his school from a nearby city. All of his students are African.

**Themboile:** Themboile is an African female. She has taught at her current secondary school for one year now. This is the only school she has taught in since becoming a teacher. Themboile has a Secondary Teaching Diploma. She attended a number of K-12 schools: early grades at a township school, middle and secondary at a previously Coloured and White schools. Her high school education was uninterrupted and she attended a previously White college for her teaching diploma. She currently teaches students between the ages 15-24 years. She teaches biology and general science. The school is located about 10 kilometres away from the city in the midst of an informal settlement. The students attending this school come from within the informal settlement. All of her students are African.
November, 2001

Dear Participant:

You have thus far interacted with me as the Program Coordinator of the Civic Education Program at the ________ Center, The ________ University. As well as the project coordinator for the Building Civil Society Through Education: An Exchange Program for Young Leaders in Education from South Africa and the United States. I am also currently a doctoral student in the College of Education at The Ohio State University. As a South African myself, I have been very interested in and have closely followed the educational transformation in South Africa. My visit to South Africa in June-August 2001, for organizational work on the project, made me realize that very little has been written about practicing teachers’ experiences within the new educational transformative curriculum in South Africa.

My dissertation research attempts to explore and examine how teachers in South Africa, particularly young teachers, conceptualize their teaching practices within this new curriculum; what their perspectives are on Curriculum 2005 and outcomes based education; as well as what they perceive their role to be within this new curriculum. I would therefore like to learn how you think about the above issues. Should you choose to participate, I expect the data collection process to be as follows:

(1) informal individual interviews which should last no more than 90 minutes each (between November-December)

(2) informal focus group interviews with other participants which would last between 1-2 hours. (November-December 2001 and June-July 2002)

I hope that this study will serve to give “voice” to teachers in South Africa and provide them a forum to talk about their role as teachers within the new educational curriculum. Through your participation in this study, the complex nature of teaching, particularly within an evolving transformative educational curriculum, will provide one of the first studies in South Africa to address the teacher perspective. This insight will inform scholars, educators, and policy makers on the various dynamics of pedagogy within a changing system.
Your participation is strictly voluntary and you have the right to refuse participation or answer any questions at any time. Your permission will be requested for audiotaping interviews. All of our conversations will be taped and kept in a secure file. To protect your identity, I will use pseudonyms. However, because the group participating in this project is small, someone familiar with you and/or the project may be able to associate you with specific comments/events/issues discussed in my dissertation. Please consider this possibility in your decision to participate in this study. I will request you to sign a ‘statement of informed consent’ that confirms your consent to participating in my study.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me (614) ______ or e-mail me at ______.

Sincerely,

Sharon Subreenduth
Robert Lawson
School of Educational Policy & Leadership  School of Educational Policy & Leadership

My signature below confirms that I have read and understood the information presented in the recruitment letter and Sharon Subreenduth has addressed my questions and concerns.

Participant Name: ___________________________

Participant Signature: _______________________

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APPENDIX C

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Individual Interview One

Teacher Belief Questions

Consider the content of history, politics and education from when you were in school - what should Curriculum 2005 retain modify or change from apartheid education?

What does it mean to you to be a good citizen?

How do you think schools might prepare students to be good citizens?

Why are you participating in this project?

What would you like to get out of this project for yourself? For South Africa?

What do you think should be the goals of civic education for South Africa? Why?

Scenario Questions

Please describe a typical class you teach?

Please describe the best lesson you taught this/last school year? Why do you think it was your best lesson?

Give an example of an issue that you would consider controversial. It might be an economic, social, political, local, national, international, or school related issue over which people disagree.

Are there any controversial issues you have discussed with students in your class? If yes, please list these issues.

Are there any controversial issues you would not discuss with students in your class? Please explain.
Background Questions

What was your schooling like? (When?)

Can you tell me something about your own background and experiences as an educator and your political socialization.

Explain when and how you learned your political ideas and beliefs.

Have you been politically involved? In which ways?

Individual Interview Two

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself as a teacher

2. Describe your school environment; students and community

3. What do you think about Curriculum 2005?

4. What purpose do you see Curriculum 2005 serving within SA education and society?

5. What are your perceptions of the outcomes based education model?

6. How do you describe your role within Curriculum 2005?

7. What is the role of your students in their learning process? What roles would you like to see them develop?

8. Have you had to rethink your role and that of your students’ since the implementation of C2005? Please elaborate?

9. Why did you consider participating in this project?

10. Please describe/explain if/how your experiences here have influenced the way you think about your teaching practice
Sample Interview Questions: Focus Group

1. What are your perceptions of C2005?

2. How are teachers in SA being prepared to teach within this new framework?

3. How did you go about choosing the list of social action projects for your students?

4. What purpose do you see these social action projects serving? Please elaborate

5. Have you previously taught using projects? Explain

6. Can you talk a little bit about some of your experiences hear at ______? What experiences had implications for your (re)thinking about your practice? Explain

7. Describe any experience(s) that had a profound impact on your teaching practice.
LIST OF REFERENCES


