A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS TOWARDS A CRITICAL DISCOURSE: ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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MARK ANTHONY ABRAHAMS

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BY

© MARK ANTHONY ABRAHAMS

A thesis submitted to the school of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

Department of Education
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ABSTRACT

This study involves six English Second Language Teachers working in two different Education Departments responsible for the education of Blacks in South Africa. The teachers participated in a Participatory Research process towards developing a critical discourse in materials development for classroom use.

This thesis is divided into two parts. The first describes an exploratory process in which the participants responded to specific research questions through a procedure of general reflection on teacher work and environment and a more specific investigation of language in education and teachers in society. At the end of this process, the participants were asked to focus on particular models of materials development.

The research is located within the National Education Coordinating Committee in South Africa which was established to investigate and develop a People's Education which would respond to the educational needs of all the people in the country.

The second section of the thesis evaluates and reflects on the extent to which the participants were able to develop a critical discourse. It comments more generally on the use of

Participatory Research as a research methodology and considers short-term and long-term implications for further research. This thesis contributes to notions of participatory research and to the analytical capacity of the participants.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In South Africa, the educational provision reflects in stark form the power relations of the social arrangements. The issue of educational provision has sparked numerous protests during the past five decades, particularly since the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 to implement their 'official' policies of Apartheid. The discriminatory provision of educational resources existed long before the implementation of Bantu Education in 1953. The racist educational strategies of the regime however underscored the political intent of their policies. Early resistance to this kind of political manoeuvring, such as the Cultural Clubs of the African National Congress during the 1950s, came to an end because of harassment of teachers involved and other repressive measures. Years of severe repression followed which left most of the liberation movements banned and individuals jailed. The turning point came in 1976 with the 'Soweto' uprising as a direct result of the imposition of 'Afrikaans' as the language of instruction at schools for Black South Africans. The recognition of the inter-relatedness of education and politics stimulated and informed the protests throughout the 1980s which induced the formation

of the National Education Crisis Committee which set out to develop and establish a People's Education for people's power in South Africa. In the words of Sisulu (1986):

> We are no longer demanding the same education as whites, since this is education for domination. People's Education means education at the service of the people as a whole, education that liberates, education that puts the people in command of their lives. (p. 37)

It is this context that the present education crisis in South Africa must be assessed. Teachers in particular have been charged with the challenge to not only contribute, but play a central role in formulating and conceptualizing the People's Education referred to above. Some universities in South Africa, because of the relative autonomy they enjoy are currently investigating the concepts that are imbedded in the People's Education discourse. Newly trained teachers at these institutions, who benefitted from this environment find that their efforts are frustrated by the traditional Christian Nationalist Education policies found in schools today as well as reluctance on the part of other teachers to assist. Experienced teachers on the other hand have been denied the opportunity to debate alternatives to their created realities.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH:

I regard myself as one of the experienced teachers mentioned above. The initiation of this study was my attempt to extend that opportunity to a few teachers so that it could act as a catalyst in the ongoing process of deliberations concerning the nature education in our country. Teachers occupy a pivotal place within the organisation of schooling and schooling has always been, not just in South Africa, a site of contestation between and amongst people with various ideological interests. Teachers are then forced to make certain choices depending on their own understanding of the vested interests involved in education and their self-conception as part of the broader society. With People's Education in South Africa, teachers are being asked to make a particular choice, that is, to transform the education system and their teaching into liberatory education that will serve the interests of all the people in the country. Over the years however, teachers have been told, instructed, compelled, and coerced to implement certain methodologies, transmit 'worthwhile' knowledge, and adhere to certain codes of ethics that would be valuable to their students. These instructions came from principals, administration boards, inspectors, subject-advisors, and researchers or academics. It would be counter-productive for the proponents of People's Education to act in the same way with teachers as those listed above.

Teachers have developed ways of resisting impositions and often use only those aspects of new methodologies, innovations, and research findings, which agree with their understanding of how teaching should be organised.

My teaching experience informed me of both the attitudes of teachers towards research and instructions as well as the dormant, critical potential of some teachers. Armed with this insight, I set out to establish a process to build on the critical potential of a few teachers in a way that would not alienate them but encourage them to explore their own understanding of what they do daily. The main thesis of this study was to develop a **critical discourse** that would empower teachers who are interested in contributing towards an 'alternative' education system in South Africa.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND PROCEDURES

This research intended to integrate the call to build a transformed education system with the challenge of empowering teachers to understand and conceptualize their immediate tasks in relation to the broader aims of a new education system. As a means of developing a critical discourse we focused on the question of **how we as teachers should address the inter-relatedness of language, education, culture and economics when confronting teaching materials.**

In order to avoid making the assumption that the participants agree that an inter-relatedness exists among the various components outlined in the research question, two sub-questions were added to act as a basis for discussion and debate.

a) How do these issues; language, education, culture and economics manifest themselves as aspects of our experiences?

b) What are the primary concerns that need to be addressed when developing materials for use in the classroom?

Once the commitment from the participants was gained we met to plan collectively how we intended to approach the research questions. Dates for meetings or seminars were negotiated and stages of the research were proposed to the participants. The stages were, the Speculative Reflection Stage, which was to be a tentative reflection on the experiences of the participants regarding their school and classroom environments; the Specific Reflection Stage, which was to focus on language, language teaching, and teachers, where readings were introduced and used to stimulate discussions and inform the participants of the different perspectives existing on issues under discussion; and the Reflective Action Stage, where

particular models for curriculum materials development were discussed.

POPULATION INVOLVED

The study involved six English Second Language Teachers working in four high schools controlled by two different Education Departments responsible for the education of Black South Africans. The choice of the target group was influenced by my teaching experience in the field chosen and working in the two departments either by teaching or assisting with workshops for teachers through the Teachers' Union. The participants can also be regarded as 'progressive' teachers who have been active in Teachers' Union activities and who expressed a commitment to seeking a change in the educational system with which they are involved. With these participants I intended to explore possible ways of conceptualizing a People's Education through a process of reflection and action.

The participants were part of the study as a collective and the collaborative effort rather than individual contributi[illegible] was the focus. Individual quotes of the participants were used to outline the nature and development of the discourse and not to monitor their contributions as individuals.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND METHODS OF GATHERING DATA

My concern throughout the study was the development of a critical discourse, one that stemmed from a particular reality of the participants but also informed by available literature that could contribute to a collective understanding of that reality. I used the literature on critical pedagogy and People's Education in my analyses of the discourses in the various stages as a way to assess the extent the discourses could be regarded as "critical" while still rooted in the practical reality of the everyday lives of teachers. It is important to note that this study was an exploration of a process that would lead to the illumination of the experiences of the participants, and not to prove or explain a particular hypothesis.

The procedures of the workshops were recorded on audio cassettes and transcripts of a previous session were given to each member of the group before the meetings so that individual evaluations could inform the deliberations of that session. Individual interviews were also used as a means of collecting data. At the end of the study the participants were asked to comment on the process. This formed part of the assessment or evaluation procedures which contributed to an overall analysis of the research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS OF ANALYSIS

The decision to adopt a participatory research methodology for this study was influenced by the collective aspect of the methodology, the possibility of producing knowledge rooted in the reality of the participants and the emancipatory claims made in the literature explaining the methodology.

It was my task as participant researcher to involve the participants in a process of collective analysis of the data. Using the transcripts, the participants were asked to reflect on their discourse, how it related to the literature provided, and the research questions in the study.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I provide, in the next chapter, an outline of the historical location of the research within the broader context of education in South Africa as well as its focused position within the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC) and its local structure in the Western Cape. I explain the origins of the concept "People's Education" in its relation to the NECC. The contextualization of the research is significant in that it provided a motivating force for the research.

This is followed, in Chapter Three, by a review of the literature which informed the study. The review covers the literature on critical pedagogy and how it relates to People's Education as well as literature focusing on language and teachers within this paradigm.

In Chapter Four I outline the research methodology. I locate Participatory Research within its research tradition and, using the literature, I explain the aims of this particular methodology. This is followed by a motivation for choosing it for this study, the procedures that were followed to set up the research, and the ways in which the data were collected.

Chapter Five deals with the first stage of the research, namely, the Speculative Reflection Stage. The participants were asked to reflect on their immediate realities. This included commenting on the physical limitations and constraints they have to endure in their work, staff support for innovations, teacher and student attitudes towards language, and staff development programmes in which they were involved. In this chapter I summarize and provide an analysis of the reflections during the first two sessions of the group.

The Specific Reflection Stage which is described in Chapter Six has two parts. The first is a concentration on English and the problems related to teaching English and English as a

medium of instruction in South Africa. The second part focuses on teachers, their role in society and teachers as intellectuals. I provide motivation for the selection of articles discussed during these sessions as well as a summary and analysis of the discussions.

Chapter Seven offers two models for materials development dealt with in the Reflective Action stage. It was necessary for the participants to use the information gathered in previous discussions on which to reflect and assess the usefulness of the two models for use in the classroom.

The reflections during the stages above formed the basis for the critical discourse that was intended with this study. In Chapter Eight I summarize the discourse and review the extent to which the participants had answered the research questions. Secondly, I reflect critically on Participatory Research as the methodology employed in this study. I discuss its usefulness to the research and assess some of its claims in the light of my own experiences. I also use these experiences to make some recommendations for others who intend using it in education. This is followed by general conclusions and suggestions for further study and discussions.

STYLE OF WRITING

The reader will notice distinct changes in my style of writing; this reflects the different sources of information for the research. A more formal, "academic" tone exists, as well as an informal one that is indicative of my role within the research. Rather than try to integrate these stylistic differences, I would like them to be seen as an illustration and expression of the range of demands on the participant researcher.

Throughout the research I will refer to high school students as 'students'. Others may prefer the term 'pupils' but for the sake of consistency and personal preference I will stick to the first one.

LIMITATIONS AND HOPES

The study itself is limited to six, English Second Language Teachers who are teaching in a specific geographic location in South Africa. They all work within two Education Departments responsible for the education of Blacks in that region. The teachers can also be regarded as "progressive" teachers who, through their involvement in Teachers' Union activities and personal convictions are committed to working towards change in South Africa. Only a limited scope of readings will be

used as a basis for discussion.

This research is a response to a particular set of circumstances which had affected the majority of the people in South Africa. It comes in the wake of the call for People's Education for people's power and is located within a structure that has been set up to achieve that goal. Within this transformation process, teachers have been identified as having to play a key role in establishing and concretizing People's Education. It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to a continuing focus on developing teachers as transformative intellectuals. Only as transformative intellectuals, able to engage in self-critique and reflect critically on their work, will it be possible for teachers to fulfil their rightful role at the heart of the education system. The research is oriented to both the "macro" and "micro" level of investigation in an attempt to equip teachers with the understanding of the dialectical nature of the theory-practice relationship and their role in policy-decisions concerning their work.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL LOCATION OF THE RESEARCH: PEOPLE'S EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL EDUCATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE (NECC).

The historical location of the research provides the necessary background that informed much of the motivation for the research. For the purposes of this study the concept "location" takes on a broader meaning than merely physical environment. It includes historical events, initiatives, struggles, opposition, and strategies within the context of education in South Africa.

This chapter offers a brief look at the historical role of education in South Africa. This is followed by an outline of the origins of People's Education and the debates surrounding this concept.

I conclude the chapter with a description of the National Education Crisis/Coordinating Committee and the setting of my research.

EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Educational inequities in South Africa have for decades been a source of discontent and more importantly, a site of

struggle for a just society. Education has historically served as an instrument to ensure and preserve white domination. Since the early days, the South African government has used education to marshall labour power to meet the needs of industry and white farmers, inculcate servility among blacks and instil a sense of superiority among whites, and thus consolidate white hegemony. "Bantu Education" was formally introduced in 1953 five years after the Nationalist Party came to power. This was their way of entrenching and extending an existing system of racially segregated schooling as part of the ideology and practice of its policy of apartheid. The irony in the promulgation period of apartheid education is that its policies of legislated, unequal educational opportunities were formally articulated during the same period when more, according to Reagan (1989);

> egalitarian policies concerned with the rights of cultural, linguistic and racial minority groups, and provision of equal educational opportunity for all children, were gaining support and popularity (at least in terms of public discourse) virtually everywhere else in the world. (p. 6)

As H.Wolpe (1988) points out, the central objective of Bantu Education was devised to produce "a black population not only educated to a level considered adequate for unskilled work and

subordinated, but which would accept its subordination and inferior education as natural" (p. 6). From this basic precept follows the vastly greater resources poured into white schools and universities.

TABLE 1 - Per capita expenditure on education in South Africa

Year	African	Mixed Race ("coloured")	Indian	White
1953-4	R17	R40	R40	R128
1969-70	17	73	81	282
1975-6	42	140	190	591
1977-8	54	185	276	657
1980-1	139	253	513	913
1982-3	146	498	711	1211

Sources: Blignaut, 1981 and SAIRR Surveys

Christie: (1985, p. 98)

Expenditure on education has increased dramatically since 1984, largely because of continued pressure from communities, but the disparity between groups still remains. The 1988/89 figures indicate this, African (R765); Coloureds (R1360); Indian (R2227) and Whites (R3082). (Source: S.A.I.R.R.; The Third Alternative 1989/90, p. H5)

The inferior and segregated education for blacks has been one of the principal instruments for ideological control and for promotion of divisiveness among oppressed classes. The four education systems for Whites, Indians, the "Coloureds" and African were designed to reproduce the social relations prescribed by apartheid ideology. The department for African education was further subdivided into ten compartments to fit into the tribal Bantustan or Homeland scheme which was part of the government strategy of divide and rule.

The low pass rate of blacks on the matriculation examination at the end of Standard 10 (twelfth grade), contrasts sharply with that of whites. The Department of Education and training (DET) and the National Senior Certificate (NSC) are national matriculation examinations taken by Black African students. The Transvaal, Cape, and Natal matriculation boards are the provincial examination bureaus for Whites. Indian and Coloured students take separate matriculation examinations under the control of separate racially defined bureaus of education. The Joint Matriculation Board examination is taken mainly by private school students, and thus may be taken by any of the five "official" racial groups classified by the South African government (Whites, Indians, Coloureds, Blacks, and Chinese). For 1988 the average pass rate for blacks was just over 52 percent, slightly higher than the previous year. (see Table 2 for 1984 results)

TABLE 2

STANDARD 10 EXAMINATION RESULTS, 1984

	White	Indian	Coloured	African
Number of candidates	55,619	10,508	14,138	86,371
% of all candidates	33.4	6.3	8.5	51.8
Number who passed	50,835	9,127	10,138	42,042
% who passed	91.4	86.8	73.4	48.7
Number with Univ. En.	25,103	3,670	2,108	9,756
% gaining UE	45.1	34.9	14.9	11.3

Source: Franz Auerbach, Interview, Funda Center, Soweto, March 7, 1988 - S.M. Shafer (1989, p. 61)

Only 35 percent of all the Black "African" matriculants passed the 1990 final examination. This being an all time low and an indication of the continued crisis in education in South Africa.

Education, like housing and access to the labour market, has been used in an attempt to divide the African workforce and to differentiate between skilled and unskilled workers. Yet, with all of this planned social engineering, the social

reality of apartheid produced a consciousness among black students in the last two decades that caused turbulence in schools and universities, and prompted the regime to introduce reforms designed to quell the grievances.

PEOPLE'S EDUCATION

The 1976 uprising which started at school level as a protest against Afrikaans as medium of instruction at schools can be regarded as a turning point in the education struggle in South Africa. This protest led to a country wide uprising, linking the education struggle with the economic hardships within the townships. Government clampdown served to deepen the crisis and protests erupted again in 1980, this time with a clearer recognition of the link between the school crisis, economic crisis and community struggles. Mass mobilisation through educational, political, economic and community struggles became the order of the day. The government responded with more repression in the form of bannings, detentions, and 'emergency' regulations. The banning of the major student organisation, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) in 1985, led to unco-ordinated action with a large majority of students prepared to sacrifice their education and to fight for the end of apartheid. Students called for 1986, which was the tenth anniversaryy of the 1976 Soweto uprisings, to be named "The year of no schooling". 'Liberation now, education

later' and 'Liberation before Education' became common slogans (Walters and Kruss, 1988).

This unfolding crisis led to the formation of the Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee (SPCC) which met in December 1985. This committee held that the demands of the students were legitimate but had difficulty with the strategy of 'no-schooling'. The SPCC sent a delegation to meet with the African National Congress, the major South African liberation movement which operated in exile, who agreed that it was essential for students to return to school. The SPCC then hosted a National Consultative conference which was attended by representatives from more than 160 anti-apartheid organisations. This led to the formation of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) and the birth of the call for People's Education for people's power.

The conference declared that People's Education is education that:

1) enables the oppressed to understand the evils of the apartheid system and prepares them for participation in a non-racial, democratic system;

2) eliminates capitalist norms of competition, individualism,and stunted intellectual development and one that encourages collective input and active participation by all, as well as stimulating critical thinking and analysis;

3) eliminates illiteracy, ignorance and exploitation of any person by another;

4) equips and trains all sectors of our people to participate actively and creatively in the struggle

to attain people's power in order to establish a non-racial democratic South Africa;

5) enables workers to resist exploitation and oppression at their workplace.

(Wolpe, 1988, p. 20)

The formulation above indicates that people's education is not only about changing the process and content of education. It is also part of a political strategy to contribute to the overthrow of the apartheid regime. By formulating People's Education in this way, the conference laid the basis for organised student action. The student action would be aimed at, as Wolpe says, "the immediate construction of alternative educational programmes and structures which would co-exist in contradiction with, and begin to displace, the content and undemocratic, racist structures of Bantu Education."(Wolpe, 1988, p. 21)

The sentiment of action and struggle for genuine change is echoed by George Mashamba (1990):

> in People's Education the struggle for change is a struggle for fundamental, qualitative change, whereby both black education for domestication and white education for domination will be superseded by a non-racial end democratic People's Education for both national liberation and social emancipation.(p. 27)

This point is important because the demands of People's Education were not for 'equal' education to that of the whites. The 'people' alluded to in the concept "People's education" refers to all sectors of people in South Africa. Hartshorne (1988) states clearly that apartheid education, damaging and destructive as it has been for black South Africans, has also, except in the strictest sense of material benefits, failed the white community.

> Apartheid education has generally been authoritarian in character, influenced strongly by Christian National ideology, the principles of fundamental pedagogics and an underlying philosophy of the moulding of good citizens to fit into ordered society and to be obedient to the State and the values of the existing order. (Hartshorne, 1987, p. 123)

Debates around People's Education have also highlighted the duality present in its guidelines . Adler points to "a dichotomy ... present in People's Education between those who see it as a vehicle for mobilisation and those who see it as a foundation for future education" (Kruss,1988, p. 4). Muller (1987) however, points out that People's Education was a response to a political crisis so it is understandable that political considerations should in the beginning loom larger than educational ones. He says further that,

> In order to strike the balance between education and politics, the 'process' nature of People's Education was emphasised. In the curricular sphere, the insistence on 'process' has meant an emphasis on the development of critical skills rather than an emphasis on alternative content (Muller, p. 111).

Viewed from the perspective of process, says McKenzie , People's Education is dynamic because it is "still in a state of undefined fluidity, and it is critical because it stands in a relationship of critique to the dominant educational ideology." (McKenzie, 1986, p. 67)

But, according to Hartshorne (1987), the upsurge of People's Education has provided a new opportunity to debate the realities, the relevance, the quality and style of education in South Africa and to negotiate its future for all the people of this country.

In order to address the needs of alternative curricula in schools, subject commissions were set up. To date only the People's History, People's English and People's Mathematics commissions have managed to produce materials to be used in schools. Evaluations of these commissions have indicated that the work was severely curtailed by lack of clarity about the scope of the work, government clampdowns in the form of

detentions of members, the banning of People's Education literature from schools, and the inability of teachers to use materials because of their own limitations.

Teachers have been targeted as a crucial force for the development of People's Education. Hartshorne warned that "No post-apartheid education will be possible without post-apartheid teachers" (1987, p. 131). People's Education promotes democratic values such as co-operative work and active participation, in opposition to current authoritarian and individualistic values dominant in schools. Educational practices which implement these principles have to be developed, particularly by teachers. People's Education is therefore not a rigid dogma but a constantly changing and dynamic process to which teachers, who are centrally placed within the education process, must contribute. Besides the 'process' perspective of People's Education, it is also to be regarded as a goal.

As a teacher during 1985 and a member of a newly formed progressive teachers' organisation, which was subsequently banned, I was confronted with the challenge to promote and develop the principles of People's Education. The challenge came at a time when, as a teacher, I was frustrated by the contradictory environment within which I had to work. On the one hand there was a call for relevant education within the

heightened political context as opposed to the dictates of the education department which insisted on 'normalisation' to protect the status quo. My subsequent activities - attending workshops, setting up NECC structures, and reading - led to the discovery that the only way to effect real change at schools and to develop clear guidelines for classroom practice, was through collaborative work with teachers who shared the same ideals.

This study is an attempt to enhance that process and through that process concern itself with the development of teachers as agents of change. The involvement of progressive teachers in a process of reflection and action is also significant in that it attempts to develop a participatory research process at grassroots level. This is in line with the guiding principles of People's Education which encourage a collective approach to school-based curricula.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION CRISIS COMMITTEE (NECC)

The National Education Crisis Committee was formed to advance the ideals of People's Education. Made up of representatives from community organisations, student bodies (tertiary and secondary), progressive teachers' organisations, academics, trade union movement, and religious groupings, the NECC was mandated to set up structures which would coordinate the

various tasks identified by the participants. The work of the NECC was hampered by the declaration of the State of Emergency during 1986 which led to the detention of several key people. The formulation of an Education Charter has also been one of the primary aims of the NECC. This consultative process - Education Charter Campaign - has been derailed by the State's reactions through detentions and general harassment. The broad objectives of the Education Charter Campaign are:

1. to collect the demands of the people regarding education through a process of widespread consultation;

2. to draw up a guideline for a future education system in a democratic South Africa, that will satisfy the needs of all the people;

3. to resist actively and take initiative against oppression in all spheres of education.

4. to provide a concrete channel for the student grievances which are caused by inferior education;

5. to clarify the role of education in apartheid South Africa, and the role of a progressive education system.

(McKenzie, 1986, p. 67)

The events of 2 February 1990, which effectively unbanned previously banned organisations (like the NECC) and allowed for the release of key individuals, ushered in a new era of 'open' debate, at least within and amongst progressive forces. Even before this historic event the NECC, at its annual conference in December 1989, became the National Education Co-ordinating Committee. The change in name was necessary because the role

of the NECC moved beyond that of mere 'crisis' management, but a strategically placed organisation to co-ordinate the work towards a new education system for South Africa. Hartshorne (1987) observes that "there is no question but that the NECC movement is easily the strongest initiative to emerge in the educational arena since the crisis came to a head in 1976"(p. 121).

The road to People's Education in its 'broad' sense has been an uphill one for the NECC but several gains have been made if one considers all the sectors involved in its development. The progressive teachers involved in the NECC have for years been urged to work towards a single, non-racial, non-sexist teachers' union. This has materialised in the form of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU, August 1990) representing approximately 200 000 teachers. National student bodies have been formed and the NECC has managed to establish Education Policy Units at some universities. The responsibility of these units was not only to provide academic back-up but also to begin to advance policy options along the route of reconceptualising People's Education. The NECC has also forged links with progressive service organisations working on literacy, early childhood educare and rural development.

Regional People's Education Commissions have initiated various working groups to draw interested parties into the People's Education debate. In the Western Cape, where this study is based, a Language Commission was formed to debate, discuss, research and consider language options for a future education system. Some of these options will be discussed under the work of the Language Commission.

THE WORK OF THE LANGUAGE COMMISSION

The Language Commission is open to all interested people who are concerned with language acquisition at the different levels of formal schooling as well as the informal sector. Presently the commission is dominated by academics and teachers but earnest attempts have been made to draw in a wider audience. Five areas of work have been identified by the commission and depending on the particular interest of individuals, interest groups have been formed.

A 'Primary Group' was formed because of a historical neglect in this area. Educational conflicts and debates have tended to be concentrated at secondary and tertiary levels. The aim of the group is to focus on language at primary and pre-primary levels and draw attention to the particular needs of that sector.

The 'Readings Group' is a forum where individuals can share language related readings and debate various issues emanating from those readings. Several people chose this group in order to become au fait with the current debates before moving on to other groups. This kind of collective activity ensures the development of confident, informed individuals.

Closely related to the previous unit, is the group responsible for 'popularising research'. Their concern is to disseminate research on language in education to a wider audience, with a view to popularising some of the important debates in this area.

A 'methodology group' was initiated to investigate, debate and share ideas around particular methodologies employed by teachers and educators generally.

The central component of the Language commission is the 'language policy' group. This group has been part of national debates on language policy and was also informed by the proceedings of a conference hosted by the African National Congress in Harare, Zimbabwe during March 1990. The conference, entitled, "Towards a language policy for a post-apartheid South Africa" produced valuable inputs for consideration. Dawn Norton outlined the current language

policy and commented on some of the likely options for the future.

> The official languages are English and Afrikaans. These are the two dominant languages of white people. This illustrates an important point about language policies - they serve the ruling class. More South Africans speak Zulu (6 million) or Xhosa (5,5 million than either English (3 million) or Afrikaans (5 million). African languages have regional status in the Homelands. For example Zulu in KwaZulu and Tswana in Bophuthatswana.
>
> (Conference Papers: p. 29)

She says further that English is likely to be promoted as the official language because most people speak English, especially in the urban areas. It is also an international language, and the language associated with education. The promotion of English as official language could also result in the perpetuation of an upper class elite because it would place other languages in an inferior cultural position. Another important argument against having English as the official language is that English, as a foreign language, would stifle educational development.

The Language Policy Group within the Language commission encourages further debate around options for the future. The

group is currently working on a survey which could assist in the process of canvassing the opinions of a wider audience. It must be remembered that all these activities are taking place in an extra-parliamentary capacity. There is a strong reliance on voluntary association without the benefit of resources such as adequate funding, the commercial press or broadcast agencies.

MY RESEARCH IN THIS CONTEXT

The teaching of English and in particular English as a second language is the focus of this study. The study also seeks to develop critical educational theory in the context of South Africa. It is informed by a belief that;

> ... through the study of language within the perspective of a cultural politics, teachers can gain an understanding of how language functions to "position" people in the world, to shape the range of possible meanings surrounding an issue, and to actively construct rather than merely reflect it.(Giroux, 1989, p. 191)

Armed with this belief, I felt that the study could contribute to the work of the Language Commission. The Commission was also strategically placed to act as a 'sounding board' and an

accountability group which could advise on the feasibility of certain methods and objectives.

I had originally planned that my study would fit into one of the 'groups', particularly the 'methodology group', from where I could draw the participants needed for my study. After discussions with individuals involved in this group it was decided that this was not feasible because not all of them were teachers and those who were, were primary school teachers. The other groups had their own agendas and could not provide the necessary rigorous environment needed for the research.

I was then encouraged to set up my own group and to report to the general body once I deemed I had something substantial for them to assist with or debate. That was how I proceeded from there but I also became part of the Language Policy Group as it provided valuable insight into the developing debates in this area.

The participants in this study were informed about the location of the research and they felt that they were part of a process that would in the end not only benefit them, but a broader audience of teachers, academics, students and parents. Locating the research was deemed an important part of the process. Equally important, if not more, was the placement of

the research within a particular theoretical framework. The literature on critical theory and critical pedagogy which informed the study is dealt with in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter I review the literature which informed the study. Of particular importance for the research is the literature on **Critical Pedagogy**, also referred to as Radical Pedagogy or Liberatory Education. The concept of a **Pedagogy of Possibility** which deals with questions of **empowerment and emancipation** will also be investigated. In particular I will show how the ideals of People's Education are incorporated and illuminated in the literature; look at the writings of Giroux, Apple, Freire, Mclaren and others on **the role of teachers as transformative intellectuals and teacher involvement in curriculum development**; and the issue of **language in education in South Africa today**. These areas of concentration were deemed necessary in order to develop a critical view of education which would help to illuminate aspects of a critical discourse rooted in the experience of the teachers involved in the study.

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

The Christian National Education system in South Africa, rooted in the philosophy of fundamentalist pedagogics, has failed to advance the aspirations of the majority of people in this country. It has served to perpetuate the status quo

(apartheid-oppression) be it through the conservative hidden agendas or liberal notions of 'rational' deliberations. This study seeks to contribute to a People's Education through a search for an alternative philosophy of education, one that challenges oppressive social formations and looks at effective strategies to combat racism, classism and 'banking education'. By rejecting and challenging traditional positivistic education, which claims the objectivity of knowledge and attempts to depoliticize the language of schooling, People's Education joins forces with critical theorists who promote a critical pedagogy.

According to Henry Giroux, a critical pedagogy "encourages and promotes a radical discourse where schools are recognised as political sites involved in the construction and control of discourse, meaning and subjectivities". (1983, p. 46) Scholars like Giroux, Apple, McLaren believe that

> schools serve the interests of the wealthy and powerful, while simultaneously disconfirming the values and abilities of those students who are most disempowered in our society already: minorities, the poor, and the female ... mainstream schooling supports an inherently unjust bias resulting in the transmission and reproduction of the dominant status quo culture. (McLaren, 1989, p. 163)

Giroux states further that critical pedagogy "has a public mission of making society more democratic". (1988, p. 92) This 'mission' is of particular importance in People's Education's endeavour to eradicate the oppressive apartheid education system.

The fact that education and politics are linked, permeates the literature of critical theorists. Paulo Freire, amongst others, emphasizes the dialectical relationship between political action and education. For Freire, "the political make-up of education is independent of the educator's subjectivity"(1985, p. 102), and it is never neutral. The realization of the political nature of education is important and would assist in answering a question posed by Freire (1972).

> If the implementation of a liberating education requires political power and the oppressed have none, how then is it possible to carry out the pedagogy of the oppressed prior to the revolution? (1972, p. 30).

People's Education recognises the wide impact of education and therefore links the education struggle with the broader struggle for democracy. The collective good of education and the co-operative nature of People's Education, as outlined in its initial objectives, is in opposition to the authoritarian

and individualistic values of dominant schools. Freire further criticizes dominant schools as oppressive;

> The banking concept of education, which serves the interests of oppression, is also necrophilic. Based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving objects. (1972, p. 51)

This view echoes Henry Giroux when he criticizes traditional views of schools where "theory has been firmly entrenched in the logic of technocratic rationality" as "merely instructional sites" (1983, p. 3). People's Education links education, formal and informal, to the broader struggle for a non-racial democratic South Africa. Schools therefore cannot be mere instructional sites, and there would be agreement with Giroux (1983) who says that schools should be analyzed within the socio-economic context they are situated. Schools are not neutral sites but actively nvolved in social constructions based on specific normative and political assumptions.

This analysis is repeated by Apple and Weis when they say that firstly, "schools assist in the process of capital accumulation by providing some of the necessary conditions for recreating an unequally responsive economy", and secondly that schools are "important agencies of legitimization".(1983, p.

5) Given the political nature of schools and its 'subjective' nature, "schooling is a political process that simply cannot be seen as either neutral or objective" (Giroux and Aronowitz, 1985,p. 140). How is education linked to politics? What role does the schools play in the political and cultural lives of people? These are some of the questions addressed by critical theorists and by doing so, they have moved beyond the reproduction theory i.e. that the basic function of schools is to reproduce the dictates of the state in the economic order. Bowles and Gintis (1976) explain their correspondence principle by saying:

> The educational system helps integrate youth into the economic system, we believe, through a structural correspondence between its social relations and those of production. (p. 131)

Driven by an awareness that ideological hegemony, fuelled by dominant schooling is not a one-way avalanche of oppressive and manipulative measures, but a dialectical process over control of the power relations, theorists like Paul Willis (1977) looked at how working-class kids responded to their schooling in a particular setting. Willis' group of working-class schoolboys known as "the lads", resisted the class-based oppression of the school by rejecting mental labour in favour of more "masculine" manual labour (which reflected the shop

floor culture of their family members). In doing so, they ironically displaced the school's potential to help them escape the shop floor once they graduated. This study indicated the impact student resistance to dominant schooling has on their futures. Mclaren says that schools have always functioned in ways

> that rationalise the knowledge industry into class-divided tiers, that reproduces inequality, racism, and sexism; and that fragment democratic relations through an emphasis on competitiveness and cultural ethnocentrism (1989, p. 161).

Traditional schooling, epitomized by the 'back to basics' tendencies, view students as mere recipients of valuable of knowledge transmitted in a setting that is supposed to be conducive to learning. This view fails to recognise the student as a dynamic entity with his/her own agenda and interests. Peter Mclaren (1986), in his book, "Schooling as a Ritual Performance" observed the resistance to schooling displayed by students during his case study and he found that the forms of resistance had become 'counter-rituals' which disabled education. Ira Shor (1986) identified the resistance, amongst others as silence, disruption, non-performance, cheating, lateness, absence, and vandalism.

For critical pedagogy, student opposition is an important activity because it is part of a lived culture that is created and recreated in their everyday lives. It must be seen as part of the students' understanding of their own present and their historical role in the school. Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) suggest that teachers would have to develop forms of knowledge and classroom social practices that validate the experiences that the students bring to school. This does not mean that teachers should accept every action of students as revolutionary and incorporate it as given. As transformative intellectuals, teachers need to identify only those activities which are counter-hegemonic and will enhance the social struggle. Th concept of 'teachers as transformative intellectuals' is discussed later. According to Giroux and Simon (1989), teachers who commit themselves to a project of a critical pedagogy must be able to decipher the popular culture of students so that they can identify those aspects which distort or constrict their human potentials. McLaren warns that "there is always a danger of falling into a neo-paternalism or a romantic identification, especially when describing the richness of working-class cultural forms"(1986, p. 232). An understanding of 'resistance' to schooling or resistance as manifested in the classroom is of importance for this present study because People's Education is a product of student and community resistance to apartheid education. Student resistance in the South African context has taken many

forms, including classroom boycotts, "stayaways", and "alternative education" rallies. This study is in agreement with Jansen (1990) who charges that "meanings of resistance require further reflection and theorizing in the South African context" (p. 69). The participants in this study will be confronted with the question of student experiences and how to incorporate those experiences into classroom practice.

Gibson (1988), however, points out that critical theorists seem to be long on critique and short on answers. Goodman (1989), in his study of student participation in a democratic school, comments that "the discourse on critical pedagogy often operates on an obtuse level of abstractions with few images upon which to gain a true understanding of the meaning and intent of the authors"(p. 45). Given this criticism it is important to look at what critical pedagogy suggests as an alternative to dominant schools. The criticism also serves as motivation for this study, which is a serious attempt to investigate the dialectical relationship between theory and practice. It provides an opportunity for practitioners to reflect on their experiences and to develop a discourse which will advance their understanding of their practices and assist in the actual classroom activities. Its significance also lies in its development of critical educational theory in the context of South Africa, thus building conceptualizations of

People's Education which is rooted in the experience of teachers and students.

PEDAGOGY AS POSSIBILITY

Radical theorists are known for their unrelenting critique of dominant schools and education in general. They in turn have been criticised for their inability to provide viable alternatives beyond the rhetoric of revolution. This has changed during the past decade with the development of the concept "a language of possibility". A language of possibility refuses to be incapacitated by the overwhelming odds in favour of the capitalist hegemony. It is fuelled by the notion of 'hope' and possibility for change and encourages constructive debate for alternatives.

> The dialectical nature of critical theory enables the educational researcher to see the school not simply as an arena of indoctrination or socialization or a site of instruction, but also as a cultural terrain that promotes student empowerment and self-transformation. (McLaren, 1989, p. 167)

Henry Giroux writes in an introduction to "The politics of Education" that Freire's philosophy of hope and struggle is rooted in a language of possibility that draws extensively

from the tradition of liberation theology. (Freire, 1986, p. xiv) Similarly, Simon (1987) encourages a pedagogy as possibility which would, through a project of possibility attain its broad aim of "the transformation of the relation between human capacities and social forms" (p. 373). This, according to Simon, will lead to a pedagogy of empowerment, and he defines empowerment as follows:

> Empowerment literally means to give ability to, to permit or enable ... To empower in this perspective is to counter the power of some people or groups to make others "mute". To empower is to enable those who have been silenced to speak ... It is to enable those who have been marginalized economically and culturally to claim in both respects a status as full participating members of a community.(1987, p. 374)

Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) explain that because schools are seen as active sites of intervention, the notion of power as a negative force that works in the interest of domination, must be redefined. They view power as both a negative and positive force.

> In our view, social control has to be seen as not just an instance of domination but also as a form of emancipatory practice ... The notion of power that underscores this

> positive view of social control takes as its starting point the empowerment of teachers and students and the confirmation of their histories and possibilities. (1985, p. 155)

The slogan "People's Education for People's Power" should be understood within this notion of empowerment. Although the masses of South Africa have been denied political power, George Mashamba says that the concept 'people's power' is not equivalent to that of 'political power'. It is that and more.

> People's power is people's sovereignty not only in parliamentary politics, but in educational, economic and cultural politics, i.e. in the practical concrete control of public affairs in the economy, education and culture. (1990, p. 12).

Empowerment therefore consists of a subjective personal process of change as well as an objective, structural/political dimension. For People's Education there must be a focus on both these dimensions of empowerment. Empowerment at personal level alone can lead to frustration because of the inability to effect change at societal level. If the focus is on macro/structural empowerment only, then individuals will be unable to relate to the particular discourse. Lazarus (1990) argues for

> an approach to empowerment that takes both the personal and political seriously; where the relationship between the individual and society is conceptualized in a dialectic way; and where the process of mutual transformation occurring within this relationship is considered when planning for and fostering empowerment. (p. 4)

This study is also cognizant of the contradictions inherent in the concepts of power and empowerment. Power, for Freire, is both a negative and a positive force. Negative power can be destructive and lead to abuse, as is used by those in 'authority'. Power, within a democratic formulation, according to Lazarus (1990), "incorporates both control and responsibility". For this study, the questions of teacher empowerment and the imbalanced power relationship within the classroom, become issues that will inform the critical discourse.

TEACHERS AS TRANSFORMATIVE INTELLECTUALS

Another important concept for this study, is that of 'transformative intellectuals'. Teachers have been identified as having to play a major role in the development of "People's Education" in South Africa.

> In People's Education there is a clear recognition of the crucial role of teachers within the transformation process. Not only will they have to be part of the process of curriculum production, but they will also have to be part of the vetting procedure. (Muller, 1987, p. 111)

Progressive teachers within the present apartheid education system have been forced to develop individual 'alternatives' to given curriculum materials in the face of bureaucratic clampdown and centralized regulations. Not all progressive teachers are able to develop alternatives on their own, themselves being 'products' of the system they are supposed to challenge. In order for teachers to start to change they need to reflect on what 'traditional' teaching has demanded of teachers. Freire sums up the attitudes and practices of teachers who regard knowledge as a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. These attitudes and practices echo those within the Christian National Education system of South Africa.

1. The teacher teaches and the students are taught.
2. The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing.
3. The teacher thinks and the students are thought about.
4. The teacher talks and the students listen - meekly.

5. The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined.

6. The teacher chooses and enforces choice, and the students comply.

7. The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the acting of the teacher.

8. The teacher chooses the programme content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it.

9. The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students.

10. The teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.

(Freire, 1972, p. 47)

The above attitudes and practices grow out of an ideology of domination. Freire (1978) says that those who are called to teach must first learn how to continue learning when they begin to teach. The dialectical relationship between learning and teaching is supported by Margaret Yonemura (1986) who reflected on teacher empowerment and teacher education. She came to understand that child empowerment is an outcome of teacher empowerment. Gramsci, in his prison notebooks, wrote that "the relationship between teacher and pupil is active and reciprocal so that every teacher is also a pupil and every pupil a teacher" (Entwistle, 1979, p. 74). And Doyle (1989) says that "schools must therefore be seen as places where both teacher and student grow". (1989, p. 7)

Aronowitz and Giroux (1985), in their comments on the conservative, liberal and radical debate over schooling, suggest that the nature of teacher work should be reviewed and that teachers are to be viewed as 'intellectuals'. For them the category of intellectual is helpful because "it provides a theoretical basis for examining teacherwork as a form of intellectual labour" (p. 30).

They make an important addition to the understanding of the category of transformative intellectuals, that is the "task of making the pedagogical more political and the political more pedagogical" (p. 36). Like Gramsci, Freire (1985) redefines the category of intellectual and argues that all men and women are intellectuals. Giroux (1989) then adds that teachers who assume the role of transformative intellectuals should "treat students as critical agents, question how knowledge is produced and distributed, utilize dialogue, and make knowledge meaningful, critical,and ultimately emancipatory" (Giroux, 1989, p. 175). The role of teachers, according to Harris (1990), should be cast as people who are seeking to expose and act meaningfully upon contradictions in experiences in schooling. Smyth (1987) adds that if teachers are to

> challenge and ultimately supplant the dominant technocratic view of schooling, it is necessary that they be articulate about the nature of their work, and where

> they are located historically and pedagogically in it. (p. 162)

As transformative intellectuals teachers should be aware of the limitations of formal education in the process of social transformation. Weiler (1988) points out that "teachers are actors and agents in complex social sites where social forces powerfully shape the limits of what is possible"(p. 148). Schools and the revolutionary activities inside their walls cannot effectively challenge the status quo on their own. The alliance of transformative intellectuals, students, parents and workers will create a political context that becomes pedagogical. Intellectuals should learn from and with others engaged in similar political struggles. For Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) this is very important because if as intellectuals, teachers are going to work in isolation, there is the danger of compromise and eventual conformity. Brosio (1990) agrees with this:

> Teaching and learning for democratic citizenship empowerment will require resolute adults [teachers, parents, academics] who are in the struggle for the duration; furthermore, it must be realized that they must develop strength superior to the awesome power of capital and capitalist hegemony. (p. 81)

This indicates that the alliance should be made up of individuals and groups who share a democratic vision and who will collectively and individually contribute to transformation or change. Ira Shor, in his dialogue with Paulo Freire (1987), says that liberatory teachers often wonder where to do most of their work, in classrooms or in movements or in community-based organisations. Freire responded to this that the best thing possible is to work in both places simultaneously but to avoid becoming ineffective in both places. Harris (1982), in his Marxist analysis of the class location of teachers, indicates that changing teachers, or teachers being motivated to transform themselves, would not be an easy task because teachers have much to gain by serving capital.

> Firstly, they are dependent for their employment on the state so their jobs are at stake. Secondly, teachers enjoy a privileged economic position and lastly, it is quite possible that teachers get a 'kick' out of being in control of others [pupils].(p. 132)

The contradictions which are rife in traditional education will however continue to feed the crisis in education and these contradictions will force teachers to confront their realities and make the necessary changes. Harris (1982) outlined some of the contradictions:

> Within schooling itself we find the stress on critical thinking and developing individual judgement lined up against the pupil's need to gain teacher approval and to pass external exams. Schooling is also caught up between overt declarations of fostering individuality and individual talent, and covert requirements to routinise and regiment the whole process. (p. 146)

These contradictions are mirrored in the broader society which would necessitate the formation of alliances. Apple (1982), points out that schools are caught up in contradictions, but so too are ideologies. Teachers as transformative intellectuals would need to, according to Giroux (1988), "develop a discourse that unites the language of critique with the language of possibility, so that as social educators, they recognize that they can make changes"(p. 128).

People's Education encourages an alliance of teachers, academics, parents, workers, and students. This study is located in an environment where dialogue takes place with a broader audience of progressive interest in education. The focus of this study is also teachers, in recognition of the important role they can play in the transformation process towards People's Education.

TEACHERS AND CURRICULUM MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

The empirical-analytical research model which informed traditional curriculum development has been unable to provide satisfactory answers to the mounting demands of present-day educational needs. This model has served the agendas of the South African apartheid regime with its prescriptive, scientifically supported approach. This succeeded primarily because of the tendency to create standardized, teacher-proof materials which would ensure continued control over the classroom process. Teachers, who form the primary executors of curriculum intentions within this paradigm, have been ignored and granted piecemeal participation in pilot schemes to provide legitimacy to products created outside of the school experience. This 'disempowering' environment is being challenged by this study. In order for teachers to become agents of change, they need to empower themselves with the view to creating a pedagogy of possibility.

According to Donmoyer (1989), critical theorists believe that the traditional school curriculum helps legitimate and perpetuate

> gender, race and class stereotypes, a dependency on established societal structures and those in position of authority, competitiveness rather than cooperation, and

> a willingness to work for extrinsic rewards rather than intrinsic satisfaction. (p. 265)

Besides the underlying intentions of the traditional (technical control oriented) curriculum, Apple (1988) claims that by separating the conception from the execution, teachers are being de-skilled. This 'factory' model results in the person (teacher) doing the work losing sight of the whole process and control over his/her work. For MacDonald (1980) the control-oriented model facilitates the maintenance in the long run of the workforce and the social relations of production through the transmission of a set gender relations, its association with the division between domestic and waged labour, and all the contradictions this entails. This view of reproduction, with the emphasis in capital and class, is echoed by Bowles and Gintis. (1976, 1980) The reproduction of gender relations can also be done through language usage in the classroom, as feminist theorist, J. Brady-Giroux (1989) claims.

> To ask teachers to be attentive to language does not merely suggest that they be able to identify how sexist interests are embedded in discourse; at stake here is recognizing that language actively constructs reality and as such must be seen as playing a central pedagogical and

> political role in any theory or gender formation. (1989, p. 8)

The traditional technical production perspective of curriculum development, to be found in the works of R. Tyler, H Taba, D. Walker, J. Schwab, M. Johnson, and J. Goodland, represents the dominant thinking in the curriculum field regarding curriculum planning. Macdonald and Purpel (1987), believe that the Tyler rationale has outworn its usefulness as the major paradigm for curriculum development.

Popkewitz (1981) lists the assumptions that underlie empirical analytical research.

> Theory is to be universal, not bound to a specific context or to actual circumstances in which generalizations are formulated ... The statements of science are believed to be independent of human goals and values ... There is a belief that the social world exists as a system of interacting variables that are yet distinct and capable of being studied independently of each other ... Variables of theory must be operationalized, given precise and distinct definitions ... The search for formal and disinterested knowledge forces us to rely upon mathematics theory construction. (1981, p. 6)

The perception of 'scientific neutrality' as articulated by McKernan (1988) that "science can never be held hostage to political fortune by being the servant to political ideology"(p. 198), is challenged by critical theorists. This belief, says Freire (1973), could never develop a critical consciousness. According to him, the traditional curriculum, with its own naive dependence on high-sounding phrases, reliance on rote, and tendency toward abstractness, actually intensifies our naivete.

This study, which has as a central component, the investigation, interrogation and analysis of the social, material, political and economic reality teachers find themselves in, recognises the political nature of curriculum. It is in agreement with Apple (1988) when he suggests that it is impossible to fully understand the curriculum materials unless we "first investigate the way our educational institutions are situated within a larger configuration of economic, cultural, and political power"(p. 195). This would imply that curriculum does not stand alone, but is the social product of contending forces. In an analysis of Lawrence Stenhouse's work, Rudduck (1988) states that he [Stenhouse]

> saw a curriculum development project not as a convenient means of regimenting teachers in different set of

> routines, but as a way of extending their individuality and communal power. Teachers, not curriculum packages, are the agents of change. (p. 31)

With the focus on teacher empowerment and developing teachers as agents of change, this study would support Simon's (1988) project of possibility which is a "move from visionary rhetoric to classroom reality, from curriculum critique to pedagogical possibility" (p. 3). Grundy (1987) suggests that

> we need to understand the fundamental premises upon which such a pedagogy [of possibility] is constructed - no curriculum has an a priori existence. If we are to understand the meaning of the curriculum practices engaged in by people in a society, we need to know about the composition and organization of the society. (p. 7)

For this study then, a look at curriculum materials would entail an analysis of the power relations at school, in the classroom, and in the society. It would also include a critical evaluation of the basic assumptions held by teachers, and will be guided by questions such as those raised by Giroux (1988).

1. What counts as curriculum knowledge?
2. How is such knowledge produced?
3. How is such knowledge transmitted in the classroom?

4. What kinds of classroom social relationships serve to parallel and reproduce the values and norms embodied in the accepted relations of other dominant social sites?

5. Who has access to legitimate forms of knowledge?

6. Whose interests does this knowledge serve?

7. How are social and political contradictions and tensions mediated through accepted forms of classroom knowledge and social relationships?

8. How do prevailing methods of evaluation serve to legitimize existing forms of knowledge?

(Giroux, 1988, p. 17)

LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

The teaching of English and in particular English as a second language is under investigation in this study. What has been particularly informative for the study is the current debate concerning the status of the different languages in South Africa, English being one of them and one of the two official languages. The vast majority of the population in South Africa does not have English as their mother-tongue. English is formally introduced to pupils at primary and secondary school levels as a second language and in some instances, a third language. English is also used as the language of instruction in most of the black high schools. Afrikaans, the other official language, has been rejected as a language of instruction, leaving English as the preferred language of instruction. It is within this scenario that the study aims to investigate, with English second language teachers, the

dynamics of classroom interaction, practice, student and teacher attitudes within the context of language teaching and learning in South Africa. The study has as a basic assumption that language, as with education, is not neutral. This assumption is supported by critical theorists.

A technical approach to language learning is discouraged by Giroux and Mclaren because "language is actively implicated in the power relations that generally support the dominant culture"(1986, p. 230). They suggest that an alternative starting point to the study of language recognises the significance of Antonio Gramsci's notion that every language contains elements of a conception of the world.

> Language does not merely reflect reality, but plays an active role in constructing it. It is also strongly connected to an intense struggle among different groups over what will count as meaningful and whose cultural capital will prevail in legitimating particular ways of life.(Giroux, 1988, p. 116)

According to Noam Chomsky (1988), language development, like all human development, will be determined by the nature of the environment, and may be severely limited unless the environment is appropriate. His following comment on the

status of "Black English" in America further supports the thesis of the 'non-neutral' nature of language.

> If speakers of Black English came to dominate and control American society, so that my speech would be regarded as non-standard and 'defective' then it might be argued that my children should be taught the language of the dominant culture, Black English, not the particular variety of English that I speak. (1988, p. 503)

The dominant culture in South Africa today ensures the superior and privileged status of the official languages, English and Afrikaans. Because Afrikaans is associated with the white Nationalist ruling party and with law-courts and government institutions, it has taken the bulk of the anti-colonial antagonism. English has even emerged in some black circles as a unifying language. Several people are promoting the idea of having English as the only official language in South Africa. Ndebele (1987) warns that the role of English in a future South Africa should be interrogated, and not accepted as merely a convenient tool.

> It (English), is a matter of complexity which goes far beyond the convenience and correctness of its use, for that very convenience, and that very correctness, are, in essence, problematic. (Ndebele, 1987, p. 2)

Alexander (1989) agrees with this when he says that unless the majority of people in South Africa want to learn and use English, and are motivated to do so through intrinsic and extrinsic values, it will become or remain the language of the privileged middle class. Alexander also poses important questions for consideration when dealing with English as official language:

> Who will set the standards?
> What kind of English(es) will be tolerated? What criteria will be indispensable? Consider the role of organisations such as the English Academy and the South African Council for English Education. (1989, p. 6)

Within the People's Education movement however, there was the consideration that English is presently being taught at schools and it should be used to enhance the broad aims of People' Education. For this purpose a People's English commission was established. This commission produced several proposals that would form the guidelines for People's English. People's English intends to assist all learners to:

1. Understand the evils of apartheid and to think and speak in non-racial, non-sexist and non-elitist ways;
2. Determine their own destinies and to free themselves from oppression;

3. Play a creative role in the achievement of a non-racial democratic South Africa;

4. Use English effectively for their own purposes;

5. Express and consider the issues and questions of their time;

6. Transform themselves into full and active members of society;

7. Proceed with their studies.

(Gardiner, 1987, p. 58)

These general aims were intended for the entire educational community, not only for those at school and other formal educational institutions. These guidelines indicate a move towards utilizing English creatively and critically. These guidelines have also been adopted by the language commission of the regional NECC, where this study is located.

More recently, Pierce (1989) argues that the teaching of English for communicative competence is in itself inadequate as a language-teaching. According to her

> the teaching of English, like any other pedagogical act, can reinforce existing inequalities in a society, but it can also help expose these inequalities and more important, help students explore alternative possibilities for themselves and their societies. (p. 422)

This view is supported by O'Neil (1985) who says that "conscientization is achieved by critical thinking, which makes language the instrument of decolonization" (p. 68). Teachers in South Africa, I would argue, who have had very little say over curriculum content, policy and design, have inadvertently and unwillingly become part of the apparatus of oppression. It is the intention of this study to investigate collaboratively, ways and means of 'exposing inequalities' and 'exploring new possibilities' as suggested by Pierce. As I indicated throughout the review, the literature cited above provided the necessary theoretical framework for the study. In addition to the above literature, the study relied on the literature explaining Participatory Research within its research paradigm and as a practical methodology in the field. This is the focus of the next chapter, but it should be noted that the two "fields" of literature complimented each other for the purposes of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participatory Research was employed as a research methodology for the purposes of this study. In this chapter I define participatory research within its research paradigm. I then explain briefly why this particular methodology was chosen and also describe the procedures I followed to set up the research as well as where it was located. This is followed by a description of the participatory process and stages engaged in during this study. Finally I provide an outline of my role as "participatory researcher".

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participatory research was deemed a suitable research methodology for this study. Before looking at its particular usefulness, it is important to define and locate participatory research.

Participatory research has developed within Adult Education as a reaction to the empirical-analytical research paradigm. This dominant, positivistic view lays emphasis on value-neutrality of the researcher; makes objectivity the hallmark of the research process; suggests complete control by the researcher

over the entire research process; and attempts to study people and social phenomena as the natural sciences do - meaning people are treated as objects which should be manipulated to prove some or other hypothesis. This form of research, which falls within the tradition of quantitative research based on positivistic philosophy, "assumes that there are social facts with an objective reality apart from the beliefs of individuals" (Firestone, 1987, p. 16). Its conceptual framework of society, structural-functionalism, tends to assume a normative system. This is also called the 'harmony model' of society because it stresses consensus over values with the belief that society is ordered in terms of a shared set of values.

Participatory research falls within the qualitative research tradition and is, according to Firestone (1987) "rooted in a phenomenological paradigm which holds that reality is socially constructed through individual or collective definitions of the situations"(p. 16). Walters (1983) says that "within the social and political sciences, both phenomenology and historical materialism have had an impact on Participatory research"(p. 106). Social scientists who engage in participatory research have a dialectical or 'conflict view' of society. Instead of focusing on 'what is' and 'how is' in the research, there is an emphasis on 'why is'.

> The stance of a critical social science toward social reality redefines the notion of systems and their relationships. Whereas the empirical-analytic paradigm defines 'systems' as independent set of variables, critical scientists seek to understand the totality of systems and how they interrelate. (Popkewitz and Tabachnick, 1981, p. 17)

Participatory research assumes that there is a political nature to all we do. Within the Adult Education tradition, where participatory research developed, researchers were confronted with political issues, which could not be addressed through traditional research methods. This led to a search for alternative approaches to Adult Education and a claim that all work has implications for the distribution of power in society. The researchers came to the conclusion that there can be no neutral or value-free social science. They are more inclined to support a claim put by Form (1971):

> Since researchers live in a political community, they must behave politically and consider politics in their methodology.(p. 24)

Participatory research (PR) is an attempt to provide an alternative to the dominant research paradigm as well as to provide access to knowledge to the researched. Knowledge is a

core issue in participatory research. It begins with the premise that knowledge has become the single most important basis of power and control. The production of knowledge has become a specialized profession and only those trained in that profession can legitimately produce it. Knowledge, participatory researchers would argue, has become a commodity. This commodity is used to alienate people, as decisions, affecting ordinary people, are shown to be based on 'expert' knowledge. Ordinary people are rarely considered knowledgeable, in the scientific sense, or capable of knowing about their own reality. Participatory research assumes that the oppressors' power is, in part, derived from their control of both the process and products of knowledge creation. The dominant groups (classes) therefore also have the ability (power) to shape what is considered "common knowledge". This leads to what Fay (1987) calls a "false-consciousness". In an attempt to make 'expert' knowledge accessible, participatory research has set for itself the aim of empowering people through the democratization of the research process. Contemporary contributions that have been made and are intended by participatory research are, according to Tandon (1989), its belief in valuing people's knowledge, helping to refine the critical capacities of people, assisting people to appropriate knowledge produced by the dominant system, and liberating the minds of ordinary people. Hall (1981) describes participatory research as "an integrated activity

that combines social investigation, educational work and action"(p. 7). He outlines the following characteristics of participatory research:

1. The problem originates in the community or workplace itself.

2. The ultimate goal of the research is fundamental structural transformation and the improvement of the lives of those involved.

3. Central to participatory research is its role of strengthening the awareness in people of their own abilities and resources and its support to mobilizing and organizing.

4. Although those with specialized knowledge/training often come from outside the situation, they are committed participants and learners in a process that leads to militancy rather than detachment. (Hall, 1981, p. 8)

The participatory aspect of participatory research is of particular interest to this study. The participants in this study, the teachers, have been accorded that status not as objects of study, but because of a belief that they can and indeed must contribute to the knowledge production. This is akin to the collective ethos promoted by People's Education and the democratization of access to knowledge supported by a critical pedagogy. Giroux (1988) says that "radical social theory has been plagued historically by the development of the relationship between intellectuals and the masses" (p. 118). Participatory research aims to bridge the traditional gulf between researcher and the researched by doing research with people rather than on them.

ISSUES, QUEST[illegible]TATIONS IN PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Vio Grossi (1981) warns researchers of the "spontaneous-naive approach" to participatory research. Adherence to 'participation' and the ideas of social transformation that participatory research put forward do not imply a radical revolutionary position.

> The idea of participation alone is insufficient. It is as likely to lead to social integration as it is to social change ... Even more, when the process of creating knowledge is adequately led by the community towards the goal of transformation, the data gathered may turn out to be useful for the dominant elites ... permitting them to extend and deepen their domination. (Vio Grossi, 1981, p. 45)

Empowerment will not take place merely because of participation of the oppressed. Researchers who hold the "spontaneous-naive" view of participatory research, argue that "the people have all the answers because they have the real knowledge. Nothing is further from the truth." (Vio Grossi, 1981, p. 46) Certain conditions, according to Fay (1987), need to be met in order for a social theory to be critical and practical. There needs to be a 'crisis' in a social system

and this crisis must be brought on by a 'false consciousness' of those experiencing it. This false consciousness should then lend itself to a process of 'enlightenment' which would empower the group to facilitate their 'emancipation'. Fay (1987) explains further that a critical social science:

> ... looks to the elimination of socially caused misery by the emergence of people who know who they are and are conscious of themselves as active and deciding beings, who bear responsibility for their choices and who are able to explain them in terms of their own freely adopted purposes and ideals. (p. 74)

If one adopts the naive view of participatory research, i.e. that the people have all the answers, then there would be no crisis, no oppression, and therefore no need for the research. Hall (1981) raises the distinction between participation and manipulation where the research method is used to manipulate the researched.

> Under the guise of participation - rhetoric, slogans, strategies to 'involve' the people - outside interest may attempt to manipulate communities or workplace groups for purposes of domestication, integration and exploitation. (Hall, 1981, p. 11)

Fay (1987) says that a particular narrative must be offered as a reason why people should change their self-understandings, and this must be done in an environment in which these people are free to reject the theory. If this condition is not met then there is no meaningful way to ensure that their acceptance is the result of reflection and not coercion. Participatory research attempts to offer an environment conducive to the above requirements. The participants are part of the process of knowledge production. They have the opportunity to experience and develop the learning process which would take them from their false consciousness or 'common-sense' reality to enlightenment. This process is also called 'disindoctrination', towards the discovery of their own socio-economic position which would lead to action for overcoming their condition of oppression. Should the research process be successful in activating the participants to act upon their condition of oppression, it will have fulfilled the requirement of "catalytic validity" proposed by Lather (1986):

> ... given the emancipatory intent of praxis-oriented research, I propose the less well-known notion of catalytic validity. Catalytic validity represents the degree to which the research process reorients, focuses, and energizes participants toward knowing reality in order to transform it, a process Freire terms conscientization. (p. 272)

Participatory research sets social transformation as one of its goals. Social change however, is only possible if alternative organisations, working against oppression and towards empowerment of the oppressed, are either initiated or strengthened through the research process. As this cannot be guaranteed, and the fact that the power of the dominant forces are not dormant but active during the research process, the research should not underestimate the obstacles to effective change. These obstacles can be, the power and influence of the dominant forces (the government, principals, political parties etc), and or the resistance to change by the participants.

Participatory research is more often than not initiated from outside the constituency by people who have technical expertise of one kind or another or by a small and relatively skilled leadership within the constituency. This leads to several questions which have to be asked and answered by the researchers. The following questions were formulated by the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (1982):

1. INITIATION AND CONTROL: Who initiates? Who defines the problem?
2. CRITICAL CONTENT: What is studied? Why? By whom?
3. COLLECTIVE ANALYSIS: How is information gathered? By whom? How is data analyzed? By whom?
4. LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: What is learned? Who develops what skills? What are the products and by-products?

5. USES FOR ACTION: How are results disseminated? Who uses them? How are they used? Who benefits? (p. 42)

I will show further on how I have asked and answered these questions about the present study. At this point it is important to note Freire's explanation in Jurmo (1985), of the importance of 'dialogue' in a research process "that involves and empowers people rather than only uses them as a source of information to be conveyed to others"(p. 4). Freire contends that there is a need for researchers to enter into dialogue with participants around the questions raised earlier. For him the whole process should be 'dialogial' so that contradictions within the process, which will inevitably manifest itself in some form or another, can be confronted and challenged.

> Dialogue is not a chaste event, dialogue makes love every day. (Freire, in Jurmo, 1985, p. 3)

This quotation sums up the intensity of the dialogial process, it is not just a convenient mechanism to be used, but an intricate part of the research process. This brings us to the question of time spent on the research. Time is an important factor in the research process. More often than not, the researcher engages in the research on a full-time basis whilst participants are still busy with their 'traditional' daily

concerns. The time-factor can impede or enhance progress in the research process, depending on the nature of the project, the physical conditions of the participants, the funding available, and the potential benefits to be derived from the project.

Participatory research cannot claim to be the only style of research that can contribute to social transformation. Whatever methodologies or instruments that are utilized in this process, must be used critically. It is often necessary to use 'instruments of measure', such as surveys and questionnaires, normally associated with quantitative methodologies.

WHY THIS METHODOLOGY WAS CHOSEN

A short-term objective of participatory research, as outlined by the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (1982), is

> to produce a collective understanding of the local situation which can lead to action on problems directly and immediately affecting participants in the research effort (p. 38).

The aim of this study, to develop a critical discourse that will enable English teachers to create curriculum materials

which are relevant, appropriate, and beneficial to their students, corresponds with the above short-term objective of participatory research. This type of discourse analysis seemed an appropriate methodology for this study because it gives recognition to not only the political nature of research, but the imbalance in the power relations in society. In the transformational process, promoted by People's Education, teachers are to play a major role. It will be impossible for individual teachers alone (in isolation) to achieve this transformation. Educators who are actively engaged in critical pedagogy often find themselves in a contradictory position. They earn a living working in institutions that play a fundamental role in producing the dominant culture. On the other hand, it is possible for them to, as Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) point out:

> offer students forms of alternative discourse and critical social practices whose interests are often at odds with overall hegemonic role of the school system. (p. 40)

If, as intellectuals, teachers are going to work in isolation, there is a danger of compromise and eventual conformity. A participatory process celebrates the experiences of teachers and provides a forum for collective growth where their experiences are reinforced through discourse and action.

Zacharakis-Jutz (1988), when discussing empowerment and power, indicated that "the first step toward social change is to develop alternatives to the educational meritocracy" (p. 45). This study is indirectly linked to alternative structures and there was a reliance on, rather than a rejection of, teachers' experience.

THE SETTING OF THE PARTICIPATORY ACTION

The role of the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC) in developing an alternative 'People's Education' system has been explained in a previous chapter. It is within this organisational structure that I wanted to locate this study because social change and structural transformation, as explained in the participatory methodology, depend on the struggles of strong social forces.

A proposal for this study was submitted to the Coordinator of the Regional People's Education Commission of the NECC. Because there was a particular interest in the area of 'curriculum-studies', the proposal met with immediate support and encouragement. It was suggested that the proposal be adapted to include the development of teacher 'inservice' strategies. With this inclusion, the proposal was presented to the Language Commission of the NECC who sent a delegation to discuss the research. It was felt that the study should

proceed with teachers outside of these structures as that would help in the process of involving more people, and that the Language Commission would act as a 'sounding-board' if needed. This process took approximately six weeks. It was also dictated by the availability of conveners and pressing issues of the time that filled the agendas of the organisations. One such issue was the Intensive Learning Campaign. This campaign was launched by educational and community organisations to assist Black matriculants with preparations for their final examinations. Students had missed a good part of the school year because of their involvement in protest action against the appalling conditions at their schools. Organisations, and students felt compelled to work towards the final examinations even though conditions remain unchanged. Teachers were asked to assist with extra classes and tuition and organisations, like the NECC, provided learning resources. It is against this background that the dialogue regarding the initiation of this study took place.

Within this dialogue, the questions such as, "who initiates?, who defines the problem?, what is learned?, and who benefits", were raised. My involvement as researcher for academic purposes was also questioned. This study was eventually endorsed by the NECC with the understanding that the findings will be written-up in a popular form with English teachers in

South Africa as my audience. My work within the Teachers' Union and record of commitment to collective teacher action served as credentials for the organisation.

SCHOOLS

Six government high schools (Standards 6 to 10 - grades 8 to 12) were targeted, three which fall under the auspices of the Department of Education and Training and the other under the Department of Education and Culture. The first department (DET), is for students classified as African, living outside the apartheid created homeland within and near urban centres. The majority, living in the Western Cape where this study is located, have Xhosa as their mother-tongue. The second department (DEC), is for pupils classified Coloured (mixed-race) but some schools do have pupils classified as African. Afrikaans is the home language of the majority of students in this department. The schools were chosen because of the their location, all of them serving communities which could be classified as working- class. These communities were established some thirty years ago by the government as part of the apartheid master-plan. All the houses are government owned (municipal housing) rented dwellings, built for low-income families. During the last three years however, people were allowed to buy the houses and upgrade them according to

their needs. Overcrowding and unemployment are social realities which these communities have in common.

They were also chosen because of my teaching experience at high school level and previous contact with the schools and principals as part of Teachers' Union activities. The fact that I was known to the principals and teachers made the task of explaining my intentions much easier. I was not regarded an 'outsider' but recognised as an individual who had in the past initiated and participated in teacher-training workshops. This is an important point which will be discussed in more detail later when I describe my role as participant researcher. It should however be noted that I entered into the dialogue with teachers as a colleague and an activist.
As participation in this study was voluntary, I insisted on explaining the project to the teachers myself, and not leaving it to the principal to instruct a staff member to become part of it. Principals were very supportive of the project and allowed me access to the English teachers. They, the principals, had concerns about the proposal to set up the seminars during school-hours. This concern was prompted by the fact that the project was started during the last term of the school year. Teachers were expected to be at their posts to prepare the students for the final examinations at the end of the year. Principals were also sceptical about an offer to get student-teachers to stand in for teachers. This time of

the year is definitely not the best time to start a project of this nature and if I had a choice, I would have left it for the new year. Aside from revision that occupies the time and energies of teachers, teachers must also set examination question papers, they are involved in marking their scripts and the administrative duties that accompany examinations.

After speaking to the English teachers at those schools, interested teachers were asked to attend a planning meeting where dates, time and venues would be discussed. At this meeting the contents of the first two workshops (seminars) were also discussed. This would cover the first stage of the participatory process - namely the, SPECULATIVE REFLECTIVE STAGE. We collectively worked on a set of questions [APPENDIX 1] which would allow for a tentative reflection on current/present conditions at the different schools. These reflections would also inform members of the group of the differences and similarities of their various educational settings.

Ten teachers expressed interest in the study but only six teachers attended this meeting: four teachers from the DEC schools and two from the DET department schools. After some effort to draw in more people, especially from DET schools, it was decided (by the group) that we should proceed with the study, as we would waste time looking for more teachers and

also because more teachers could not guarantee better participation. The principals and staffs at the various schools were also informed that they could request reports on the progress of the study. This was done in order to broaden the ownership of the participatory process, but it was left to the principals and staff members to decide the extent of their involvement.

TEACHERS/PARTICIPANTS

All six teachers are English second language teachers and university graduates with varying degree of teaching experience. The most senior teacher in the group has 34 years teaching experience, which includes ten years teaching in Zambia. He is therefore the only person who has had teaching experience outside South Africa. This person is one of the four males who all happen to work for the Department of Education and Culture. This is the same department I worked for. It is interesting that no females from this department volunteered. The two females in the group, the more senior one having twelve years teaching experience, both work for the Department of Education and Training. Four of the six teachers are currently busy with post-graduate studies - this may be another reason for their interest in further learning - and this also influenced the study because they were busy with their own examinations and assignments which caused some of

them to neglect the readings provided during this study and resulted in postponement of some sessions. The youngest teacher in the group has two years teaching experience in the formal school setting, but was involved in adult education before becoming a qualified teacher.

FORMAT OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The teachers were informed that the reason I chose a participatory methodology was because I wanted to do research 'with' teachers and not 'on' teachers. I also emphasised the fact that teachers in our educational context have been marginalised in the 'conceptual' stages of education and firmly believed that teachers could and should make valuable contributions at this level. It was further explained that the crucial element in the process, their participation, would allow for an introspection and analysis of:

(a) The role of schools in society;

(b) The teachers, as agents of change/transformative intellectuals.

(c) The students, and parents, in democratizing education.

(d) As well as reflection on how certain interests are manifested in teaching materials and methodology. (field notes, 6 Sept. 1990)

After discussing the components promoted in participatory research; investigation, education and action; we developed the stages for our own study.

The first stage, SPECULATIVE REFLECTIVE STAGE, was a tentative reflection on current modus operandi - curriculum content, teaching methods, materials, students and teachers' attitudes towards subject, examinations requirements, teacher innovations, and physical conditions of schools and classrooms. Questions that were dealt with during this stage, were colliectively formulated and discussed over two sessions, each lasting approximately three hours.

The next stage, which we called the SPECIFIC REFLECTIVE STAGE, focused more on the areas where the teachers were directly involved i.e. language in education and teachers and education. Readings, which would augment, support, and or contradict the experiences of the participants were introduced during this stage. For the one section, language and education, four articles dealing with English teaching, English in South Africa and an alternative approach to English, were studied:

> Z.A. Ngwena (1988) "Problems of teaching English as second language in Soweto schools";

N. Mngoma, D. Mothei, and N. Thobejane (1988) "Should English as a medium of instruction be introduced earlier or later in black schools?";

N. Ndebele (1987) "The English language and social change in South Africa";

and M. Gardiner (1987) "Liberating language: People's English for the future."

The readings took the discussion and debate beyond the immediate classroom reality of the participants. The group was also informed of current debates within the NECC language commission. This section took two sessions to complete, each lasting approximately two hours. At issue here was the question of language and power, with one view that language is neutral - a technical approach - as opposed to the view that language is not neutral but is saturated in ideological baggage. As users and teachers of English, the participants were confronted with their own assumptions and aspirations. This served to strengthen the debate as people argued from a personal point of view.

The second section of this stage dealt with teachers and issues concerning teachers. The discussion flowed naturally from the previous discussions around language. The

participants also realized that language does not merely reflect conditions and reality, but plays an active role in constructing it. When they were forced to use the language under discussion to describe their reality, it revealed particular world-views which were based on certain assumptions that could be detected in the language they used. The readings in this section were two articles by Kevin Harris taken from his book, "Teachers and Classes: A Marxist Analysis" and another article by Henry Giroux from his book, "Teachers as Intellectuals".

K. Harris (1982) "Class location and class position of teachers"

K. Harris (1982) "Revolutionary strategies for teachers"

H. Giroux (1988) "Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals"

At this stage most of the schools were busy with examinations and the participants were caught up either in administrative duties or marking. Some of them wrote their own examinations at various institutions. The one group session that took place for this discussion was inadequate as time did not allow for thorough discussion of all the issues. It was then decided to have interviews with individual teachers and to

make the transcripts available to the others. This proved easier said than done because schools are extremely busy during that time of the year and several interviews had to be postponed because of this. Two people were not interviewed but they were given the transcripts of other interviews and asked to comment on them at a following session.

The transcripts were used to identify key issues, to locate contradictory statements and to clarify certain meanings and interpretations. This was called "reflecting on reflections" which served two purposes. Firstly, the participants needed a refresher for their memories, as they had a five weeks break from the project (school and public holidays). Secondly, it was used to challenge their assumptions because the reflections (which I did) were done in the form of critical comments. As this was the beginning of a new school year and teachers had other pressures and duties, it was decided that the interview method would facilitate matters. The 'reflections on reflections' were also directed at individuals which favoured the interview method.

For the REFLECTIVE ACTION STAGE, the participants were asked to go through all the copies of the transcripts and the articles used during the study. In addition to that, they were given copies of an article taken from Jerrold Kemp's book, "Instructional design process".

J.E. Kemp (1985) "The instructional design process"

This was given as an example of the technical approach to materials development. They were also asked to read an article by H. Giroux:

H. Giroux (1988) "Overcoming behavioral and humanistic objectives"

These articles served as additional material to the transcripts. The latter containing the experiences and opinions of the participants. The participants were asked, over two sessions, to consider the second part of the research questions. That is, what are the primary concerns that need to be addressed when developing materials for use in the classroom? The participants could then draw on the transcripts to look at how language, culture and the economy were seen as being interrelated and reflect critically on methodologies that would best serve their interests. Individual lessons on a common theme were then developed and they were asked to comment on the last section of the research question.

DATA-GATHERING TECHNIQUES

The location of participatory research within a phenomenological paradigm and a qualitative research tradition has implications for the purposes and methods of collecting data.

> In order to produce and share more critical knowledge, participatory researchers abandon the dominant research tenets of detachment and unilateral control of the research process and products. (Maguire, 1987, p. 46)

The data-gathering techniques were selected because they did not alienate the participants from the research process. Instead they promoted participation and the participants were encouraged to question interpretations at all times and asked for clarity on their own contributions. The following techniques were employed at various points to record, reflect on information and analyze contributions.

1. My field-notes
2. Individual interviews
3. Group discussions
4. Audiotape recordings

The participants also initiated the use of a questionnaire during the study. This initiative will be discussed in the next chapter

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCHER

For Participatory research, as developed within Adult Education, the issue of participatory researcher is crucial. Researchers working within this educational environment have more often than not been 'outsiders' who must negotiate (dialogue) extensively with participants to justify their presence. They must win the trust of the participants especially if a cultural barrier exists. It is therefore important for such researchers to deepen their knowledge of the people involved and of the social, political and economic conditions which dictate their immediate and broader environment. One of the aims of participatory research is to bridge the gulf between researcher and 'the researched'.

> The ideal is a form of cooperative enquiry between the researcher and the subjects of the research where ... awareness in people of their own abilities and resources is strengthened. (Walters, 1983, p. 107)

I entered into a participatory relationship with the teachers, informed by a belief that teachers can contribute in a

meaningful and invaluable way to the conceptual development of education in South Africa. As an 'insider', who shared the same experiences, frustrations, some ideals and beliefs, I experienced very few obstacles during the negotiation process. There were also no class differences between and amongst participants, which is almost always the case when an 'outsider' is involved, and because most of them were involved in post-graduate studies, they could identify with the academic demands of the research.

This does not mean that an uneven relationship did not exist. On the contrary, the participants had to contend with their normal teaching duties whilst I had the luxury of full-time focus on the research. I also had access to, and the opportunity to read relevant literature which they did not have. The readings introduced during the study were selected upon my recommendation. Only one article, by Ngwena, was offered by a participant. It was important for " , from the outset, to discuss our respective roles and to reach agreement on clear terms of reference on the control and direction of the project. Throughout the study I tried to adhere to advice given by the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (1982). They say that a participatory researcher must;

1. Be able to understand the constraints within which the participatory research is conducted.
2. Show a willingness to be self-critical and to seek out and be open to criticism from the constituency.

3. Have an ability to ask critical hard questions while leaving the final decisions up to the constituency.

4. Have a commitment to making the interests of the constituency a priority over your personal interests. (p. 39)

The above advice is necessary because it is very easy for a participant researcher to engage in 'pseudo-participation' instead of 'real-participation' which is required. Apart from ensuring real participation on the part of participants, the participant researcher also has the responsibility to give guidance, pass on vital information, keep participants informed and to be aware of the limitations of the research.

In order to keep the research process informed about the debate around language in South Africa, I joined the Language Policy group of the Language Commission in the Western Cape. I also had the opportunity to introduce the study at a national People's Education workshop. Several people showed interest at this workshop, made critical comments and asked various questions, but because the study was not completed at that stage, I could only speculate about possible outcomes. My role, as participant researcher, was explained and negotiated at the beginning of the process and the participants (teachers) accepted and even welcomed that role because of the time constraints which limited their involvement in research projects.

In the next chapter I describe the reflection and action that we collectively engaged in during the first stage of the research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SPECULATIVE REFLECTION STAGE

This chapter focuses on the first stage of the research, using the theoretical framework provided in Chapter Three, and the guidelines on the research methodology outlined in Chapter Four, as informing agents for the deliberations and analyses. The term, speculative reflection, was borrowed from Woods'(1986) "speculative analysis stage" in his ethnographic approach to the study of schools. Speculative reflection in this study would be a tentative reflection on aspects of the experiences of the participants. Prior to the start of this stage, five to six weeks were spent on negotiations and dialogue with all the parties that needed to be consulted. These parties included the Language Commission of the National Education Coordinating Committee, the school principals, and the teachers. The participants (teachers) wanted clarity on the aims of the project, they were concerned also about the duration and amount of time they would have to spend on the project. These concerns were prompted by their commitments to students, as they were preparing for the final examinations, and some of them had examinations of their own to consider.

Using the research question(s) as our guideline, in particular - "how does the inter-relatedness of language, culture and economics manifest itself as aspects of our experiences?"-, we

decided to reflect on various situations, conditions, and perceptions as this would reveal the aspects of teachers' experience as far as language is concerned. Time and the objective conditions prevailing during the initial stages of the research, limited the focus and the reflections on certain issues and questions [APPENDIX 1]. The first stage was covered over two sessions in October 1990, each session lasting approximately three hours.

This chapter will deal with the questions pertaining to setting, physical limitations, staff support, teacher innovations, teaching of literature, across curriculum contact, teaching methodologies, teacher involvement in curriculum development, and training and in-service training of teachers. These questions were provided to the participants two weeks before the first session and because of the overlap in a number of categories, the participants were allowed to raise issues as they came up during the discussions and not necessarily in the order on the document. This allowed for a relatively lively reflection on their environment. What follows is a summarised record of the first two sessions. As participant researcher, it was my task to select those aspects of the deliberations that would (1) reflect the reality of the conditions and (2) be useful towards the development of a critical discourse. Not everything the participants said was relevant or useful for

our purposes and participants also regularly repeated themselves or others when they agreed with certain statements.

This is followed by a reflective analysis of the sessions. In the first part of the analysis, I show the extent to which the participants displayed insight and critical awareness of their teaching environment. The second part of the analysis was done in the form of critical comments by myself on aspects of the discussions which participants had to comment on or clarify. At the end of this chapter I discuss an initiative of the participants and provide general comments on the reflection and analysis. The participants also gave signed permission [APPENDIX 2] for me to use their first names in the writing up process. The two females working in the Department of Education and Training are Phumla and Cecelia and the males in the Department of Education and Culture (House of Representatives) are Edgar, Howard, Carl, and Tony.

PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

The motivation behind the first question, i.e., what physical limitations do you have at your school?, was simply that we recognised that there are severe limitations which impede the teaching process at the schools. These limitations cannot be denied or treated as if they do not exist. Teachers' attitudes, methodologies, and general practices are often

determined by these limitations. Although the focus of this study would be language and language teaching, there are other factors, like the physical conditions which must be considered. The following extracts from the transcripts would suffice to give some kind of picture of what teachers in this setting have to contend with.

> One is expected to teach between 42 and 48 periods per week. There are teachers with one free period a week. A big problem is in the junior classes. Teachers have to mark six times forty essays regularly. When it comes to creative writing I don't see them being able to do that. [Phumla - 11/10/90]

> We are not allowed to use the photocopy machine, this with a role of 1300 and no textbooks. [Phumla - 11/10/90]

> Up to now (October - Final examination in November) there are students who've not received textbooks. [Phumla - 11/10/90]

> Some teachers sit with one textbook and then they have to photocopy questions or send the book around and let kids read. [Howard - 11/10/90]

These conditions, overcrowding and lack of resources, were found to be common in the schools represented in this study. It was also reported that worse conditions would be found in neighbouring schools not included here. As was pointed out earlier, the schools represented in the study are situated in working class areas catering for black and coloured (mixed-race) children. During 1990 these conditions prompted students and teachers in the Department of Education and Training (DET), where conditions had reached a chronic stage, to protest. This resulted in the loss of teaching days and low pass rates at the end of the year. These conditions are not new. The participants are all products of education systems with similar and even worse conditions and have been involved in protests against "gutter education". Reflecting on why these conditions persist, participants came to agree with Molteno's (1984) impressions:

> Bantu, Coloured and Indian Education were designed to control the direction of thought, to delimit the boundaries of knowledge, to restrict lines of communication, and to curtail contact across language barriers. They aimed to dwarf the minds of black children by conditioning them to servitude. (p. 95)

Whilst political 'reforms' are in process, and small changes made in certain legislations, such as a limited number of

black students being allowed to attend previously whites-only schools, the stark difference in expenditure in the education of white and black students still remain. Teachers become demoralised while working in this kind of environment.

> This impedes progress. One becomes frustrated. [Edgar - 11/10/90]

EFFECT OF ENVIRONMENT ON TEACHERS

The frustrating environment definitely affects teachers, at least that was found when the next question, i.e. is staff supportive of innovations?, was asked.

> The problem is not so much introducing new ideas, but getting other people to participate in the process. Innovation becomes the responsibility of two or three teachers. [Howard -11/10/90]

It was even suggested that these people might be lazy, that they do not have the interests of their students at heart. Another thought was offered in this regard.

> The question of laziness is deeper than what we see on the surface. The system has discouraged the person. Years ago it was a punishable offence to be innovative. Those

> teachers [who could not be innovative] affected their pupils, who are the teachers of today and they don't have a history of innovation. [Edgar -11/10/90]

The conditions referred to above have not been in effect over the last 14 years. It is impossible for teachers not be aware of the political nature of education in South Africa and also of the pivotal role teachers can play in this sphere. But it was found that teachers who were indeed politically involved, often divorced their outside life from classroom practice.

> I found that politically active teachers are not necessarily progressive teachers. [Howard - 11/10/90]

There was agreement that just including more political content into subjects, did not necessarily make the teaching of those subjects progressive.

> Innovation does not mean content only. Just including more political content. It is methodology also. [Carl - 11/10/90]

Teachers, it was found, were also not expected by the education departments to be innovative. They could get promotion by doing only what was required and by maintaining a reasonably good pass-rate. There was also hardly any

'cross-curriculum' activities going on amongst teachers at the schools from which the participants came. This simply meant that teachers did not meet and discuss educational matters at staff level. Discussions were mostly limited to administrative tasks and duties. At one school they had formal time - one period per week - set aside for subject meetings. These meetings were used to discuss examination requirements such as the setting of question papers. Principals were more concerned about the running of the schools, using teachers as managers around issues such as discipline, dress-code, and absenteeism. Teachers at these schools also do not consider language teaching as central.

> You find that science teachers instil in kids that math and science are more important. Students would do maths homework in langauge classes. [Tony - 11/10/90]

> I've observed teachers of other subjects e.g. History who mark essays and ignore language usage, looking only for facts and relevant dates. [Carl - 11/10/90]

> People believe in artificial barriers of English being separate to Biology etc.[Howard - 11/10/90]

Howard also felt that the department, through its pass requirements, aided the negative attitude towards language. English second language teachers are not allowed to fail students in oral. The oral mark counts for the bulk of the total mark, 120 of 300 total. As students only need 100 marks to pass, with 60 marks guaranteed, they don't see the necessity to excel or put in more effort. These requirements only apply to the second languages. Although it is compulsory to pass the language in order to be promoted, they make it so easy as to ensure that the pupils only have minimal communicative competency. According to the participant, it perpetuates the poverty spiral where these children are excluded from job opportunities because of their lack of proficiency in the language. This argument was in a way supported by Edgar who said:

> Don't ask me how this happened. The English second language students come from poorer socio-economic areas. [Edgar -11/10/90]

The other participants disputed this claim and felt that, as a blanket statement, it would not hold true. Three of the schools involved in the study are dual medium schools, meaning that they offer instruction in both official languages. The

students at these schools generally come from the same communities. It was however found that students were affected by the languages spoken in the various communities.

> Attitudes are affected by what the predominant language in the community is. Students who speak English in a predominantly Afrikaans community are shunned. Their peers influence them. [Tony - 11/10/90]

There are also political factors which influence students' attitudes towards language.

> The problem lies with the students. They see English as a capitalist language which doesn't have to be done or forced upon them. They also argue about why they have to learn English whereas Xhosa [their home-language] is not compulsory. [Cecelia - 11/10/90]

Maree (1984) discussed this very point when she looked at the resistance black students in South Africa have to schooling.

> Black children of secondary age in urban areas are aware of their exploited position and the education system does not succeed in winning acceptance of it. (p. 158)

At student level, especially the senior classes, there is an awareness of the political nature of education and even language. Students are questioning the relevance of certain knowledge and content. At a national language policy conference, Norton (1990) warned about the danger of promoting a language other than the mother tongue for official purposes.

> The promotion of a language different to one's mother tongue carries the suggestion that in some ways the mother tongue is "not good enough". This could lead to feelings of cultural and racial inferiority. (p. 30)

It could however not be found that there was a rejection of English. At some of the schools students were eager to do English because they recognised the hegemonic powers of the language. Their attitude towards English was influenced by economic factors. They were aware that in order to get a good job, they needed a good command of English. This lead the discussion to what the role of the second language teacher should be.

> I was torn between what I thought was needed and what the department required. [Mark - 17/10/90]

With the above comment, I wished to indicate that there was almost a dichotomous relationship between what I saw as

important and the demands of the department. The requirements of the department are fairly straightforward. Inspectors and subject-advisors wanted to see a certain amount of writing exercises at specific times during the year and some indication of the drill and practice of grammatical work. Teachers commented on this by showing how they cope with the requirements of the department.

> At the beginning of the year I would deal with creative writing. By mid-February I would have asked them to write so many essays (developing creative writing segments). So I get away with that by spreading the dates evenly. Other teachers devise other ways of getting around the requirements. [Phumla - 17/10/90]

Instead of pursuing the dichotomy alluded to earlier, the discussion changed to the role of subject-advisors and inspectors. In the one department (DEC), subject-advisors attempted to fulfil their function by organising workshops and assisting subject teachers in a non-threatening way. These workshops and visits by these advisors are however so few and far between that it renders the process ineffective. The subject-advisors within the other department have become "inspectors", policing the work of teachers and because of this, there have been several protests against this system and they are not allowed at two of the schools involved in this

study. They were barred from the schools because of their role in promoting policies that were not acceptable to the schools. The teachers within this department (DEC) have attended only two in-service programmes for English second language during the last two years, each lasting about two hours after school. Two comments sum up their feelings about this kind of assistance.

> All methods are good and well, but there are so many constraints. There is a need for in-service training but there should be follow-up. [Carl - 17/10/90]

> I found them a waste of time. It would be more useful if you have it in a group in a particular geographical area. [Howard - 17/10/90]

Teachers are not consulted on matters such as format and content of in-service programmes. The educational forums which teachers willingly attend are those run by teachers' unions and academics at universities who have a deeper understanding of the educational needs and where teachers are always consulted beforehand. One participant, Phumla, who works within DET, was part of a delegation to look at English textbooks for use in schools. She was the only teacher present with principal subject-advisors and representatives of

the department and authors of the books completely outnumbering her.

> There was no way I could outvote them. I knew they wanted credibility. [Phumla - 17/10/90]

This is another indication of how the education departments operate, and with the people they purport serve having no political means of redressing the situation, they continue to have free reign.

TEACHERS AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The participants were then asked to comment on their perceptions of teacher involvement in curriculum development, given the blatant control mechanisms and strategies by the department bureaucracy to marginalise teachers.

> I feel that the textbooks should be written by teachers. We should organise workshops.[Edgar -17/10/90]

Although this sentiment was agreed with by the participants, they could not provide details or examples of how this was going to be made possible. One motivation for this suggestion was that if teachers were involved in textbook writing, it would provide them with the recognition that they deserve

which is absent at the present stage. Teachers, it was said, wanted their egos satisfied, they wanted rewards beyond the financial remuneration. Again there was no comment on the educational viability of this suggestion other than that teachers (in this case English second language teachers) should be involved in curriculum development and textbook writing. What kind of teaching methodologies, the participants were asked, were employed by them that would contribute to the advancement of English second language teaching?

> I think that sometimes I tend to do most of the talking. I would describe my method as a mixture of transmission and transaction. Teachers decide what to do while on their feet. [Howard - 17/10/90]

> The curriculum does not allow for much transformation to take place. Students like being give instructions e.g. exercises. The don't like discussions. They ask why their books are not full of grammar exercises. [Carl - 17/10/90]

It became evident that as curriculum developers or textbook writers the participants had limitations caused by conditions prevailing in classrooms and the teaching environment at the schools. Some of these constraints are, a lack of reading

culture, no remedial assistance available, and lack of training on the part of teachers. Edgar commented on this aspect when the teaching of grammar was discussed.

> We must be careful here. Some people never teach any grammatical concepts for the simple reason, they don't know these things. [Edgar - 17/10/90]

Teachers are not challenged to change their own understanding of teaching through the official English Second Language curriculum because it is repetitive and vague. They are also not required to go beyond the parameters of the syllabus. One teacher commented that he taught the same grammatical concepts year after year. At the end of standard ten the students were still making the same errors. This he ascribed to socio-linguistic influences outside the school which are more powerful than the formal education at school. In the one department (DET), where three languages are spoken, Xhosa, Afrikaans and English, the latter becomes more of a foreign language than a second language. The participants were asked to comment on how they managed to overcome the cultural divide that exists when teaching English under these conditions.

> I've been able to relate Shakespeare's colloquialism to the colloquialism of Cape Town. Where I do have a problem is with poetry where students have to understand

and empathise with Yeats and others. We cannot divorce our learning from the suffering of years. [Edgar - 17/10/90]

I never did the prescribed poems with the lower standards, we would go through a process of writing our own poetry. [Mark - 17/10/90]

I would teach Blake's "LONDON" and Serote's "JOHANNESBURG" together.[Phumla -17/10/90]

Teachers are left with the responsibility to make the content 'relevant' to students' experience but this process is not supported by the educational departments who prescribe texts that are inappropriate and who ban literature deemed 'undesirable'. The only way teachers or subject-heads are involved in selection, is through a choice they have to make from a suggested list of often unsuitable books and texts supplied by the departments.

The one aspect on the list of questions that was not discussed was that of evaluation. This was partly due to time constraints but mostly because the participants have not been exposed to or experienced different forms of evaluation. The written examination remains the sole assessor of students' ability. The participants, when discussing teacher

innovations, commented on the limiting nature of "formal examinations". Three formal examinations are written annually. Teachers find themselves preparing for examinations most of the time with little or no time available for creative and innovative activities. At one school they did away with one of the examinations as an experiment. It was found afterwards that this had no detrimental effect on the outcome of students in their final examinations, in fact it provided teachers with more time to develop programmes that would otherwise have been curtailed by the examination. The department put an end to this as it did not meet with their requirements.

STUDENT ACTION

Another issue that was raised, and which has influenced "teaching" over the past ten years, is student action. The tense South African political situation has made schooling an arena of intense and bitter struggle. Educational demands have become political demands and one way students have been articulating their dissatisfaction with the present regime is to stage school boycotts or stay-aways. When the students return to classes there is no time for creative teaching. Preparation for examination becomes the only focus of teachers and students.

INITIATIVE OF PARTICIPANTS

An important development in the study came with the suggestion that we should consult students as part of the process. As this was not included in the initial research plan, the idea was thrown open for discussion.

> They are after all the people who are directly involved with what we're trying to do. [Edgar - 11/10/90]

There were strong motivations for this suggestion and it was felt that a questionnaire would be the best way of doing this. Despite warnings that questionnaires, if not done correctly could be misleading, time-consuming, and costly, the participants felt that a questionnaire would be useful and they were not overly concerned about the 'scientific' nature of the survey, as long as it gathered certain information. One of the participants offered to draw up a questionnaire which was tabled at the second session. The questionnaire [APPENDIX 3] originally consisted of 60 questions covering various aspects of students' lives and their attitudes towards languages. The final draft was trimmed to 49 questions, covering personal details and the preferences of students.

A detailed discussion and analysis of the questionnaire will be dealt with in the next section of this chapter. At this

point it is important to note that this was an initiative of the participants. Participatory research attempts to involve people in the research process and this makes the question of 'ownership' a dialectical process. Although the participant researcher is instrumental when it comes to recommendations and methodology, the participants should be encouraged to contribute towards the study beyond their participation.

It is for the above reason that I supported the questionnaire and proceeded to have it typed and processed. I was also given the duties of collecting the completed forms, and of presenting a summary analysis at one of the meetings. The suggestion, to have a questionnaire, must also be put into perspective. The teacher who suggested it had an informal discussion with his students about some of the issues we were addressing in our sessions. He was amazed by the informed opinions students had and they also contributed towards his understanding of student needs. Coupled with this were the actual discussions during our own sessions where the teacher was exposed to a serious reflection on schooling. The participants were not thrown in at the deep end and asked to discuss philosophical questions about education. On the contrary, they were asked to share opinions about issues that were real and which affected them daily. Moving from outside classroom environment (physical conditions, staff support, teachers' attitudes) to inside the classroom (methodologies,

subject-advisors, student attitudes) the participants reflected in non-threatening conditions with peers who shared the same ideals - to improve the schooling of their students through a process that would develop their own understanding of education and improve their teaching. It is within this environment that the suggestion for a questionnaire was made.

As participant researcher, it was my duty to ensure that the workshops developed into more than mere 'talkshops' where teachers are allowed to air their gripes and opinions. The next section attempts precisely that. The above reflection, and in the case of the questionnaire, action, provided a basis for critical analysis.

REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

It should be pointed out that the above reflection is only a summary of what transpired in the two sessions. I have selected the above comments and issues to provide an insight into what was discussed. The analysis of the actual discourse will go beyond the comments made above because the participants often revealed a lot by 'how' they said things instead of only through 'what' they said. As part of the process to develop a critical discourse, it was my task as participant researcher to interpret the existing discourse of the teachers and to subject it to a critical analysis. The

interpretation or analysis was then given to individual teachers for their comment. This analysis process was informed by a particular sociological conception of society, that of "conflict" or "contradiction". Winter (1982) described this conception, when he discussed his "dilemma analysis", as follows:

> That social organisations at all levels (from classroom to the State) are constellations of (actual or potential) conflict of interest; ... that the individual's conceptualization is systematically ambivalent or dislocated; that motives are mixed, purposes are contradictory, and relationships are ambiguous. Hence the statement of an opinion in an interview is taken to be a marginal option which conceals a larger awareness of the potential appeal of validity of different and even opposed points of view.(p. 168)

This method of analysis created an 'imposed' interpretation that sought to challenge the participants to reflect on their assumptions which could serve towards the development of a critical discourse. The 'critical' element in the analysis took its meaning from Fay (1987) who defined it as, "offering sustained negative evaluation ... on the basis of explicit and rationally supported criteria"(p. 26). This type of

collaborative analysis is supported by Maguire (1987) who promotes a feminist approach to participatory research.

> Participatory research assumes that ordinary people, provided with tools and opportunities, are capable of critical reflection and analysis. Given this premise, establishing reciprocal, emphatic adult relationships between the researcher and the researched no longer endangers knowledge creation. Instead, it improves the possibility of jointly creating a more critical understanding of a given reality. (p. 47)

INNOVATION AND TEACHERS

The participants, as indicated earlier, are all university graduates, members of a teachers' union and have all been exposed to various debates around schooling and teaching. Therefore, it did not come as a surprise when the participants showed great insight and critical awareness of their teaching environment. Some of them presented social causal relationships when arguing particular points. Others argued at a deeper, philosophical level. An example of the latter was when the issue of teachers' support for innovation was discussed. The participant felt that the reason teachers were unable or unwilling to participate in innovative programmes, is beyond just being mentally or physically unable.

> Once you innovate, people shy away from you because it is at variance with their ideological perspectives. Their conservatism, based not on ignorance, but on a particular ideological perspective, in most cases 'materialism' which fits in well within the capitalist society we live in, forces them not to participate. [Edgar 11/10/90]

This statement echoes Aronowitz and Giroux's (1985) point about 'ignorance', referring to the apparent ignorance on the part of teachers: "Ignorance is, in a sense, a form of knowledge defined by the way it actively resists certain knowledge." (p. 157) Although the participants did not elaborate on the meaning of 'progressive teacher', they pointed out that politically active teachers were not necessarily progressive teachers nor that more political content meant more progressive methodology. They however indicated that attitudes towards language were somehow related to economic factors. One participant said that English second language students come from poorer socio-economic areas. Whilst there was no consensus on this issue, everybody agreed that student attitude towards English was influenced by economic factors.

> Student attitude has a lot to do with economics. They want a job and they need English for that. Also, they

need English if they want to study at a tertiary institution. [Tony - 11/10/90]

These, and other contributions, indicated a level of awareness amongst the participants that went beyond mere classroom practice. This awareness can be the result of a number of influences: their studies, their involvement in teachers' union activities, workshops attended throughout their careers, experience gained over years, and or the past/current/continuing crisis in education in South Africa. Whatever the reason(s) for their awareness, this process of reflection established that the participants had particular opinions about education and language teaching within their own realities. Some of them shared opinions while other opinions remained unsupported by the rest of the group.

TEACHER BIAS

In my analysis of the transcripts I looked for general themes, contradictory statements, and conjunctures with the general literature of critical theory. As a general observation I noticed that the oldest participant, when referring to an individual (unspecified) teacher or student, used the 'male-singular' pronoun "he". All the other participants used both "he" and "she", thus acknowledging an awareness of gender duality in society and this is reflected in their language.

It was put to the 'participant' that this was a sexist practice that could be attributed to his age. A quote from Brady Giroux (1989) was used to substantiate this analysis.

> To ask teachers to be attentive to language does not merely suggest that they be able to identify how sexist interests are imbedded in discourse; at stake here is recognizing that language actively constructs reality and as such must be seen as playing a central pedagogical and political role in any theory or gender formation. (p. 8)

The participant initially argued that his practice of using singular male pronouns could not be regarded as a sexist practice. He suggested that it is less confusing to use only one pronoun "he" than to use "she" or the neutral "it".

> What I want to say is that the fellow who prefers to use "it" doesn't mean it but does it to please modern convention. [Edgar 28/01/91]

The same person however acknowledged that there was a gender and race bias in text books. White males are always depicted (in pictures and texts) as successful with professional careers. People of other races and women are generally portrayed in lesser roles to that of the white male. Whilst there was agreement that the above was a generalisation that

could not be made of all text books, the participant admitted that his use of the male pronoun was a particular bias that could create, and has created a false reality. This kind of male-centred reference has historical roots and was part of the participant's socialisation. After this discussion there was a marked change in the participant's perception of language use.

An analysis based on 'what' a particular participant said, was applied to following two statements.

> I'm not there to teach values, merely to build on them.
>
> Senior classes are much smaller than the junior classes because of the natural fall-out.
> [Tony - 11/10/90]

The first statement was not addressed by the other participants. At the time it was uttered I felt it was not appropriate to raise objections to it as it would have influenced the direction of the discussion. I informed the participant during the analysis session that I believed that schools legitimate certain norms and values. If this belief is to be accepted as the truth then the participant would be 'building' uncritically on those values that schools promote because schooling and teaching cannot be regarded as 'value-

neutral'. The participant recognized the 'non-neutral' status of schools with regard to values, and as a person, a cultural entity, he invariably passes on certain ingrained values through the course of everyday interaction with students. The participant however felt strongly that it was not his duty to teach Christian, Muslim or any specific religious ethics. Within the South African educational context, this is a contentious issue. The education system is based on fundamental pedagogics and called the Christian National Education system of South Africa. There is thus a particular religious bias enmeshed in the system, which is what the participant was objecting to.

The second statement of this participant, in particular the term "natural", indicated to me that teachers, principals and even parents and students have developed a self-fulfilling prophecy. Senior classes are smaller because they are expected to be smaller. The pyramid effect of schooling, with a high drop-out rate at junior level has become a norm. The participant agreed with this analysis and added that the root cause could be found in the history of educational provision for blacks in South Africa. Twenty years ago black people were not expected to go beyond senior primary schools. The latter applied mainly to black males, as females were not expected to go to school at all. Legislation regarding job-reservation ensured that whites obtained certain posts and

blacks, even if they had gone beyond junior secondary school, were not able to find jobs suited to their qualifications. This lead to a 'culture of lower-level' performance - academically lower than the whites - which in a sense, although not as stark, is still in existence. The removal of racist and oppressive laws from the statute books was not enough to rectify the condition and it is exacerbated by the continued disparity in per capita spending on the education of blacks and whites in South Africa.

Schools also contribute to the above 'condition'. Another participant commented that less experienced teachers are asked to teach the overcrowded junior classes and with that workload these teachers become demoralised. The hierarchical nature of the school set-up allows senior teachers to be given less work. They are given other administrative tasks. This supports a hierarchy that enables subordination and control. Teachers are not challenging this, instead they work towards the attainment of positions of authority.

> If teachers of matric classes were to be asked to teach junior classes they would regard it as some kind of demotion or a lack of confidence in their ability to teach at senior level. For them it is a status thing. [Phumla - 28/01/91]

The present education system is such that schools are not judged by the number of people who successfully complete their school careers, but by the pass rate of matriculants at the end of a school year. The fact that these matriculants represent only a fraction of students who initially enroled at the high schools, is not considered important.

Two comments, one that was used before, on the English curriculum testify to the redundancy of the present syllabus.

> The English curriculum is vague and repetitive resulting in teachers deciding what to do while on their feet. [Howard - 17/10/90]

> The curriculum does not allow much for transformation to take place. [Carl - 17/10/90]

The curriculum does not demand much from teachers. Its repetitiveness is somehow indicative of the minimum competency level that the education departments want to instil in the students. It is also a reason for teachers' complacency and allows teachers to get away with doing the minimum. Howard added that teachers do this, to the ultimate detriment of their students, in protest and ignorance, because they have had no say in the formulation of the curriculum. The department fears democratisation of this process because it

would threaten the bureaucratic control they currently enjoy. Teachers then become captives of the curriculum. By saying that the curriculum does not allow for transformation, teachers become managers within the bureaucracy that is called schooling.

The participants denied that they were slaves of the curriculum but admitted that they were forced to adhere to examination requirements, as that determined the success or failure of their students. It was also said that teachers very often moved beyond the confines of the curriculum and this leads to confrontation with the principals, subject heads and even students. The inevitable outcome is frustration on the part of the teachers who have to cope with these conflicts. Teachers learn to cope by looking for short-cuts to circumvent the ongoing demands to adhere to the requirements. As was highlighted in an earlier statement by Phumla;

> I worked out a trick for this. At the beginning of the year I would deal with creative writing. By mid-February I would have asked them to write so many essays ... so I get away with that by spreading the dates evenly and it means being quick with my marking. [Phumla - 17/10/90]

The above strategy was devised not for any sound educational purpose, but to satisfy the 'inspectors' whose job it is to check if teachers are doing their work. Their concern is not whether the students have benefitted through the process but to monitor their 'managers', the teachers. The participant agreed with this analysis but added that progressive teachers are often forced to do this.

> Dedicated teachers are often the first to be victimised. They pose a serious threat to incompetent and insecure principals who are sometimes unqualified to hold their positions. In order to ensure that they keep their jobs, progressive teachers have to employ tactics that would keep the wolves at bay and leave them with enough time to concentrate on 'real' education for the benefit of their students. [Phumla - 17/10/90]

PARTICIPANTS' INITIATIVE

The questionnaire was a sincere attempt on the part of the participants to involve their students in the research. It also showed an awareness that students, the recipients in the schooling process, need to be recognised as being able to make a valuable contribution to educational research. The participant who drew up the questions wanted a comprehensive survey that would include several aspects of students'

background and attitudes. These would be necessary he felt, to confirm or contradict our own perceptions and suspicions so that we could deliberate and operate on a sound informational basis. This being the general purpose of the questionnaire, we however did not work on a specific central aim.

As participant researcher, I was aware of the inadequacy of the questionnaire. Instead of intervening as an 'expert' and organising a workshop on survey design, I actively participated in this initiative of the participants. Time, and conditions at schools (examinations), did not allow for an extra session to be set up and I felt that they would learn more through the process than in any lesson or seminar. At the end of this process, I collected 115 of the expected 160 'completed' questionnaires and randomly chose 10 to use as a basis for collective analysis. This was after carefully going through each of the responses myself.

The first thing the participants noticed was that only three of the ten questionnaires were completely filled in. This made any conclusive or even tentative statement about their preference on an important issue such as the future language policy of South Africa, which was the last question, virtually impossible. A number of reasons were forwarded:

I think the questionnaire was too long, there were too many questions. [Howard]

I asked another teacher to give them to his class, I didn't have a class and I'm not quite sure he explained it to them properly. [Edgar]

I wasn't there myself, but my colleague, who administered the questionnaire, told me that they had difficulty with the language. They didn't understand some of the questions. [Cecelia]

Well, I must admit I didn't give them enough time. The only time I could see my class was the first period before the exams. This period is normally a study period and I guess they didn't think it was that important. [Carl] - 26/11/90

With these comments the participants raised the issues that were supposed to have been raised before the questionnaire was processed and distributed. The lack of proper planning resulted in an absence of a specified primary objective for the questionnaire. The general purpose, articulated by the participants, when the questionnaire was first suggested, was inadequate and because we neglected to do a pilot study first,

which would have highlighted these problems, it became a fruitless exercise.

Although the results of the questionnaire could not be used to support or contradict the perceptions of the participants, as was the intention, the process highlighted the issues involved in survey research methods. As a group we went through some of the advantages and disadvantages of survey research. The participants were left with important lessons after this exercise. We learned that underlying our intention with the questionnaire was the wish to test, as Rosier (1988) puts it;

> conceptual models ... with the aim of improving understanding of the network of factors influencing educational processes. (p. 107)

We also learned that although the survey [questionnaire] is the best research method to employ as a means of investigating multiple variables, care should be taken to avoid uncontrolled variables distorting the results. Careful planning and pretesting therefore become essential.

In this chapter , which focused on a number of themes, most of them highlighted in the analysis above, I showed how the participants were not only able to reflect generally on their work, but also be critical of what they do. This set the

scene for the stages to follow which would be more specific and also directed as a result of the introduction of several readings.

CHAPTER SIX

SPECIFIC REFLECTION STAGE

SECTION ONE

In the previous chapter the participants were invited to reflect on general issues affecting their teaching. In the first section of the specific reflection stage the focus was on language and education. Four articles were introduced two weeks prior to the session. The participants were asked to read through the articles critically and to comment on issues arising from the articles. The four articles were: Problems of Teaching English as a Second Language in Soweto Schools, by Z.A. Ngwenya; Should English as a medium of instruction be introduced earlier?, by N. Mngoma, D. Mothei and N. Thobejane; The English Language and Social Change in South Africa, by N.S. Ndbele; and Liberating Language: People's English for the Future, by M. Gardiner. The readings were chosen and dealt with in this order for reason of progression. From issues familiar to participants to more general questions pertaining to language.

As I pointed out earlier, this chapter has two sections, in the section to follow I provide a brief motivation for the choice of articles. Then I give an overview of the discussions which were stimulated by each of the readings. At

the end of the section I provide the reader with an analysis of this process in the first section. In the second section the participants were asked to focus and reflect on teachers and teaching. Readings were also provided for this section and they are motivated in that section. The chapter ends with an analysis of the second section as well a general analysis of this stage.

MOTIVATION FOR READINGS

The first two articles were chosen because they raised issues similar to those discussed in the previous chapter, namely overcrowding, lack of resources, general poverty, students' attitude towards learning etc. This provided a link with themes and issues which were familiar to the participants. They were asked to comment on the experiences of other teachers as explained in the articles. This step was deemed necessary towards the development of a critical discourse. It was important for the participants to reflect on their own experiences first and then to use that as a basis for analyzing and comparing it to other people's experiences. The other two articles were chosen because they both provide a critical perspective on the use of English in South Africa.

PROBLEMS OF TEACHING ENGLISH

The first reading by Ngwenya relates some of the difficulties encountered by English second language teachers and pupils in Soweto. Soweto, with an estimated population of between 2 to 3 million people, is the biggest city in South Africa designated for blacks. This city is part of the Witwatersrand in the north of South Africa which forms the largest industrial centre in the country. According to the author, the difficulties regarding the teaching of English as a second language can be grouped into political, economic, cultural, social and instructional factors. This initial assessment found agreement amongst the participants who were asked to focus their attention on certain statements made by the author in the article.

The first issue which the group was asked to focus on was the question of power and resistance by the students. The author felt that since the 1976 student uprising, students have lost respect for the teachers.

> The 1976 riots which came about because of resistance to Afrikaans as a medium of instruction made the pupils feel the power of influencing decision-making in the affairs of black education. Their influence is not absolute, but some decisions which were taken by the authorities have

been changed because of the resistance from pupils. As a result, they have lost some respect for their teachers. (p. 46)

The question of students' respect for teachers had not arisen during the previous reflections of the participants. Most of the participants agreed that students had lost respect for teachers.

> They [the students] regard the teachers as carrying out policy. There is nothing that stems from reality, it is anti-revolutionary. They are impatient and they want to see an education system that has meaning for them. [Edgar - 15/11/90]

> I think there was respect before. I was a student in 1976. We didn't have the same attitude of the kids today. We respected them and we feared them. [Cecelia - 15/11/90]

The first respondent supported his statement by citing the political awareness of high school students in particular. He added that teachers' unions and teachers' associations have played a reactionary role in the past. Instead of challenging the authorities they have collaborated with the apartheid education system. Teachers were regarded by students as being

more interested in keeping their jobs than fighting for a just and equitable society. This, according to the participant, was an indictment on the teaching profession and forced teachers to take a stand which resulted in the more progressive teachers' unions today.

> I think that process was healthy. Teachers should not expect students to respect them. They must earn that respect through showing respect for their students. They must not use their authority to instil fear and then call that respect. [Carl - 15/11/90]

> Yes, I agree with you, I think I feared my teachers more than anything else. They had the power to fail me and even to administer corporal punishment. [Cecelia - 15/11/90]

The last statement shows a change in perception of the participant. This change came about after listening to and commenting on the issue of respect which led to a discussion of the **power relationship** in the classroom. It was felt that this concept is central to the issue of respect. The participants were asked to discuss their role of empowering students whilst they maintain complete control over the process. Lazarus (1990) comments on the contradiction that exists in the empowering process:

> One could firstly argue that power is taken not given, but perhaps more important to note is the contradiction set up by a person (in this instance a teacher) who is structurally situated in an **imbalanced power relationship**, attempting to empower others. (p. 7)

The participants felt that students were aware of this imbalance and they resist this environment only when the authority is abusive and unrewarding.

> We should acknowledge this imbalance and through that facilitate the empowering process by making them aware of their potential, of their power. After all, they have the power to disempower us. [Carl - 15/11/90]

> Yes, we need to explain to them our concept of power. Not negative power but positive power. [Edgar - 15/11/90]

In terms of developing a critical discourse and creating a particular critical pedagogy the participants were disagreeing with Ellsworth (1989) who criticizes literature on critical pedagogy for implying that "students and teachers can and should engage each other in the classroom as fully rational subjects" (p. 301). The participants were expressing a conceptual understanding of the imbalance in the power relationship and how to use their authority and yet avoid

being authoritarian. An example of negative power was pointed out in the article by the participant where student action, extending holidays to coincide with those of other racial groups, leads to the students' own detriment. This kind of resistance, it was felt, can only be effective if it is a coordinated effort on the part of teachers students and parents. One participant regarded this kind of action, on the part of a few students, as reactionary and counter productive because they will only extend holidays but refuse to take the same action if holidays are to be cut short. According to, Ngwenya, this kind of action affects the teaching of English as a second language because

> the only time that pupils can be taught and made to learn the language formally is in class ... The loss in English lessons at present is causing much harm to the proficiency of the pupils in the language.(p 46)

The participants agreed that students were doing themselves a disservice by staying away from school but that schools also contributed to this. When schools reopen teaching time is wasted because of timetable problems, student registration and most important, the ill-preparedness on the part of teachers. The following suggestion and response again highlighted the class difference between English first and second language speakers.

> What about inviting first language speakers from other schools to assist with the problem of exposure? [Howard - 15/11/90]

> Not a bad suggestion but I can foresee the problems. My kids won't want to talk to those kids because of the difference in their socio-economic conditions. [Edgar - 15/11/90]

A last comment from the article that provoked response was the following;

> There is therefore no incentive to learn English when it serves no purposes as a means of communication for the black community or as a vehicle for better employment opportunities. English and Afrikaans are official languages in South Africa. It is more important to know Afrikaans rather than English to be employed by the state in most of its departments, which is also not an incentive to learn English. (p. 50)

This comment contradicted the conclusion arrived at by the participants when they discussed the attitudes of their students towards learning English. The participants again disagreed with the assessment that Afrikaans was more important, but they admitted that black people in South Africa

were exposed to different experiences and that Afrikaners were often the employers in state departments.

ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

The second article focused on English as a medium of instruction in black schools. The authors state that all the other groups of the South African population, except blacks, are taught in their native language and learn the other language, which may either be English or Afrikaans, as second language. Not only are blacks faced with two second languages, but at Std 3 (grade 5) the medium of instruction changes to English.

> In this arrangement they become victims of inter-lingual interference. This is very confusing to a child who has not mastered English and Afrikaans. The children find themselves unable to master any subject taught in English. (p. 38)

Black parents are unable to change this because the political power, which ensures the status of the two official languages, remains in the hands of the white minority. Parents also have no say in educational matters. According to the authors of the article,

> At no time do parents address themselves to playing a role in improving or changing the bilingual or trilingual programme as all such matters are left to curriculum or system planners. (p. 38)

The authors further found that children who are introduced to English as a medium of instruction early in life usually succeed at school. These children, say the authors, come from "well-to-do families" and from educated families who send their children to private schools where they are exposed to English inside and outside the classroom as well as in remedial classes for those who cannot cope with the rest of the class. The parents are actively involved in the education of their children who befriend English first language speakers and form a group of their own. This gives them more opportunities to practice the English language.

The overwhelming response from the participants was that the problem should be tackled at its roots, the political inequality in South Africa.

> We're going to have to change the power relations. We won't be able to address it seriously unless those inequalities are eradicated. [Howard - 15/11/90]

Another participant felt that even if political changes were to occur immediately, the education and schooling would continue to suffer because of the legacy of apartheid. The teachers would still be the same people, it would be impossible to get rid of the old school buildings with their depressing environments and it would take a long time before people accept each other as fellow citizens of one country. What was needed, the participant continued, was a language policy that would accommodate and encourage the economic aspirations of all the people in South Africa, not just those of the white minority.

At this point the participants were informed about the debates within the language policy group of the National Education Coordinating Committee. One consideration within the NECC is to promote English as the only official language as this would serve as a linking language of communication in South Africa where so many other languages exist. No other language in South Africa, unless promoted with unlimited resources available, can fulfil a similar function. This could however cause mother-tongue languages to be neglected and relegated to an inferior position. English first language speakers, who will remain the dominant group, would dictate 'standards'. The language policy group felt that it was important to canvass the opinions of the vast majority of people at grassroots level in order to assist with the decision-making

process. I was aware also that the exercise of canvassing the opinions should be a sincere attempt to involve people in the decision-making process that will eventually affect their lives. Alexander (1989) discussed the issue of English as the official language and pointed out that:

> We have to understand that unless the vast majority of the South African population is organically motivated to learn and to use English for the conduct of their affairs, English will become or remain ... the language of the privileged neo-colonialist middle class. (p. 5)

A sobering comment on the work of the language policy group was the fact that very few English teachers were involved in the process or even aware of its efforts.

> The work of the language policy group should be promoted through the teachers' union so that smaller working groups can be established to facilitate this process.[Howard - 15/11/90]

ENGLISH IN A CHANGING SOUTH AFRICA

As was noted earlier, the two readings by Ndebele and Gardiner were chosen because they both provide a critical perspective on the use of English in South Africa. The readings also

complemented the previous articles by providing suggestions to the problems raised by those authors. Ndebele's article was particularly significant because it was originally the keynote address delivered at the Jubilee Conference of the English Academy of Southern Africa, a body controlled by South African white native speakers of English, during September 1986. It added a critical perspective to an earlier discussion of the promotion of English as the official language. Ndbele (1986) says that the role of English

> is a matter of complexity of which goes far beyond the convenience and correctness of its use, for that very convenience, and that very correctness, are, in essence, problematic.(p. 4)

Native speakers of English, according to Ndebele, do not celebrate the birth of new languages based on the English language. Instead they

> descend into fits of anxiety, firstly over the purported mutilation of their language with the possible attendant loss of intelligibility, and secondly, over the fear of the loss of influence. (p. 2)

Ndebele views the continued control of native speakers of English over the language as a form of social control where a

particular culture, which is inherent in the language, will dominate. He feels that South African English must be open to the possibility of it becoming a new language, not only at the level of vocabulary, but also with regard to the grammatical adjustments that may result from the proximity of English to indigenous African languages.

The participants responded to the article by focusing more on 'how' he said things than on 'what' he said.

> He writes in a very inaccessible way. I got totally lost. [Carl - 15/11/90]

> He's very verbose. This guy writes the Queen's English and encourages a people's English. [Edgar - 15/11/90]

> I think one can say the same things much better using a more accessible language. [Howard - 15/11/90]

They were reminded that the paper was written in an appropriate register for an address to the English Academy. The main point being that when contemplating the use of English in the South African context it should not naively be regarded only as a neutral and convenient tool. In the article, reference is also made to Guy Butler who suggests that it is the task of mother-tongue speakers of English to

promote and see that it is spread according to their standards. This, according to Ndebele is a subtle form of imperialism where the teaching of English has been incorporated into the functional instruction of corporate English. One participant was critical about the notion of language imperialism.

> English is not the property of the imperialists only. We also use it. What is going to determine the English that's going to be spoken is to be linked to the whole power relations. [Howard - 15/11/90]

It was suggested to Howard that by making this comment he was in fact in agreement with the author of the article. Native speakers of English have had and still have the political power which has been denied to the majority of South Africans. Their interests have been promoted through their language where they dictate the standards. The issue of standards led to the following questions by one of the participants.

> How do we reconcile his approach to a common English when you think in terms of international relationships? What about students in South Africa wanting to study at say, Oxford University? [Edgar - 15/11/90]

It was pointed out to the participant that he was referring to a small group of people who normally study overseas and this might be a serious concern but that attention should be focused on the wider population in South Africa. Why do people need a language? What do they do with their own language? These two questions were put to the group and they were asked to comment on a quote by Baldwin (1985) who discusses Black English in America.

> People evolve a language in order to describe and thus control their circumstances, or in order not to be submerged by a reality that they cannot articulate ... A language comes into existence by means of brutal necessity, and the rules of the language are dictated by what the language must convey. (p. 194)

The participants then admitted that all other spoken languages in South Africa have been influenced by various languages and dialects.

> The Afrikaans spoken by our kids is not standard Afrikaans but interspersed with English and Xhosa words. [Carl - 15/11/90]

> Yes, even Xhosa speakers cannot use one sentence without an English or Afrikaans word in it. [Phumla - 15/11/90]

> But we complain when they use their own home-grown English that they all understand and use to communicate quite intelligibly with each other. [Edgar - 15/11/90]

It was then agreed that when the author referred to an alternative English he did not mean a lowering of 'standards'. The language should be used by the communities and influenced by the various cultures. Allowance should be made for new words and if the language structure becomes a hindrance, then that will also have to change because language is not static. This agreement did not detract the participants from the belief that the language of the article was inaccessible and unnecessarily verbose.

> I remember one writer saying that it's bad writing when you can't write in such a way that you get through to people immediately. You're wrestling with the language yourself. [Edgar - 15/11/90]

The register used by the author in the article was fairly common to that used in academic journals. This led the discussion to the language used in educational journals.

> One can then argue that these journals are reactionary because it is meant for an elite group of people. [Edgar - 15/11/90]

> Present classroom research often falls into the trap of not being accessible to teachers. They use academic jargon which has no meaning for the ordinary teacher. That's what led to the breakdown between theory and practice. [Carl - 15/11/90]

A suggestion was made for teachers to write their own journals where they can share their ideas and promote the English that would develop out of daily use during their interaction with students. Teachers should also be encouraged to write their own short stories, using colloquialisms which can act as a counter-hegemonic strategy to the literature forced upon students. This indicated an attitude that English could be used for purposes other than those intended by the authorities.

> As far as I am concerned language and ideology are synonymous. We must use the present structure to create ideology through language. This can only be done if the people embrace the language and make it their own. [Edgar - 15/11/90]

Nobody commented on Edgar's contribution so they were referred back to a statement made by Carl, regarding the breakdown between theory and practice. This issue was considered important because although all the participants were university graduates, two of them started their teacher-training at Teacher Training Colleges and in the South African context (the international debate is not denied) there has been considerable debate on where to place the emphasis regarding teacher training. Some people at universities are saying more theory, less practice because only experience can improve practice and others at teacher-training colleges maintain a position of more practice, less theory because, according to them, teachers are made not born. The participants admitted to having a bias towards university training but that was because they believed that there should be a balance between theory and practice.

> Personally I've noticed that it's difficult to apply your theory in reality, you need to be practical as well. But college trained people need the theory to apply their practice properly. [Phumla - 15/11/90]

> Teaching is not only the method, there's also the philosophy.[Carl - 15/11/90]

Within the context of language the participants felt that it is important for all teachers, not just language teachers, to be aware of the ideological underpinnings of language. Teacher and student experiences, which are rooted in practice should inform theory so that suitable strategies can be worked out to combat discriminatory practices. The journal for teachers was again mentioned as a possible way of doing this.

PEOPLE'S ENGLISH

Using English for the purpose of liberatory educational thought is promoted by Gardiner in the last of the articles in this section. The author feels that through a process of consultation, which is at the heart of People's Education, a People's English can be developed. People's English, according to Gardiner intends to, amongst other things, assist all learners to,

> determine their own destinies and to free themselves from oppression ; use English for their own purposes; transform themselves into full and active members of society. (p 58)

This process must take place in an environment where critical and interpretive responsibility is stressed, says the author. It would allow students to encounter ideas and arguments as

enquirers rather than as victims. This is to ensure that apartheid powers will be resisted and at the same time the potentialities within the communities liberated.

The following response to this article started off the discussion around People's English.

> Given the ideological diversity existing in South Africa today, and the fact that the dominant ideology [corporate interest] continues to have the monopoly over resources, I don't see how they are going to allow a People's English to survive. Who's going to be the judge of this new English? Who says that we're right and they're wrong? [Edgar - 15/11/90]

The other participants wanted to know if he was serious about his questions and he replied that he was playing devil's advocate but asked the questions in an attempt to gain clarity for himself.

> You refer to a new English as if it is a ready-made product that somebody or some people are going to take out of a box. Gardiner emphasizes the consultative process in People's Education. The people will develop the criteria that we're going to need in the future. It

> is a long process, not an instant solution. [Phumla - 15/11/90]
>
> Yes, I agree with you, it's a long process. But we can start now, even in the face of opposition. Look at this present study, look at the article which was written during a time of severe repression, we can search for alternatives. [Carl - 15/11/90]

The participant who initiated the discussion through his question was satisfied with the responses but felt that the concept of 'the people' had to be clarified. South Africa, according to him, is made up of many peoples and differences pertaining to colour as well as class had been entrenched by the apartheid system. The participants were then asked if they were familiar with a definition of 'the people' as used by Mashamba (1990) in his critique of the People's Education discourse. They were not, and were offered the following quotation.

> The concept 'people' in People's Education is specifically non-racial and democratic. It recognizes the unity and diversity of the social forces which constitute 'the people'... It is a concept of 'people' which is concrete and historical in character, and which therefore rejects any timeless or abstract notion that

> divorces a people or nation from their material roots. (p. 8)

Mashamba points out that within the People's Education discourse, the use of the concept 'people' recognizes the reality of classes and class differences within the people. This is in keeping with the general conception of the 'people' in the non-racial democratic movement in South Africa.

At this point the participants requested more literature dealing with the concepts within the People's Education discourse and two of them offered the following questions for consideration.

> People's English has very noble intentions, but how are we to teach that? What about methodology? What kinds of methodologies do we employ in our overcrowded classes? [Howard - 15/11/90]

> How do we develop a People's English whilst there is no learning culture, where students are not interested in learning? [Edgar - 15/11/90]

The questions were referred to an earlier response about the consultative and process nature of People's English. It seemed that the participants could not see themselves as part

of a constituency that should be consulted on matters pertaining to the education of their students. It was again pointed out that People's English was not intended to be another pre-packaged learning resource with all the attendant methodologies that teachers could use and conveniently shelve for future lessons. Once they realised that they were called upon to formulate, develop and create People's English themselves, the participants made valuable contributions and also expressed some reservations they had about such a process.

> With a regular teachers' journal that can act as a channel for an English teachers' network, not through the teachers' union, we can harness the resources already existing amongst the English teachers in our schools. [Howard - 15/11/90]

> Someone, maybe within the NECC, should coordinate and write up the process of consultation with English teachers so that we can document and evaluate it at various intervals. [Carl - 15/11/90]

> This debate or discussion should first be taken to the teachers. We cannot and should not impose things on them otherwise they will resist. [Phumla - 15/11/90]

> That's precisely my point. We're making suggestions here forgetting the kind of teachers we have to deal with. They don't want more work, they'll resist us because they are reactionary. [Edgar - 15/11/90]

The discussion was ended at this point which brought us to a another crucial aspect within the myriad of factors involved in teaching, namely the teachers. A focus on teachers, which will be dealt with in the next chapter, was considered essential by the participants because they never have the occasion to debate and analyze the role of teachers.

REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

The participants made important contributions towards their own understanding of English teaching in South Africa. The discussions led to shifts in opinions, for example the initial view of students' respect for teachers and the power relationships that exist. More important, it lead to the realisation that as English teachers they had a role to play in the creation and formulation of not only educational materials, but language policy affecting all South Africans.

The participants showed insight with regard to the power relationship within the empowerment process. They admitted to the imbalance in the power relationship that exists in

classrooms. This did not indicate to them that they should abdicate from this position of authority in order to facilitate the empowering process. Instead they suggested an acknowledgement of the imbalance that would inform the process rather than hamper it. This conception of a liberatory teacher is outlined by Freire (1987) as follows.

> The issue is that the democratic teacher never, never transforms authority into authoritarianism. He or she can never stop being an authority or having authority. Without authority it is very difficult for the liberties of the students to be shaped. Freedom needs authority to become free. It is a paradox but its true. (p. 91)

At various points the participants were able to locate English in its broader agenda of politics, economics and social relations. The issue of a language policy that will advance the interests of the majority of the people in South Africa is a political issue. The promotion of English only for the purposes of establishing a workforce that is able to communicate for work purposes in that language, is not in the interest of the people but in the interest of capital. Competence in English has also become synonymous with education and status resulting in class divisions and antagonism between those who speak English and those who do not. The kind of English used can also isolate people and

deny them access to knowledge. The participants' difficulty with the article by Ndebele is a case in point but more important is the charge that 'academic jargon' is one of the causes for the breakdown between theory and practice. This would indicate that the call for teachers' journals is not because there is a lack of classroom and educational research currently available, but that teachers have been denied access to them because of the language. For the participants the 'theory - practice' divide was also an important factor in terms of teacher training and in-service training. Here they alluded to a conceptual understanding of the dialectical relationship between theory and practice which Lather (1986) calls a praxis. By suggesting that all teachers should be aware of the ideological nature of language, the participants were agreeing with Peirce (1989) who asserts that the teaching of English can support and advance inequalities existing in South Africa or it can be used to make students aware of injustices. She suggests that the teaching of English should be used to "help students explore alternative possibilities for themselves and their societies" (p. 419).

Despite the myriad of obstacles pointed out by the participants, including class-size, language policy, corporate interest, and socio-economic differences, they did not turn the study into a "council of despair" (Simon, 1988,p. 4). They

continued to view their role as one of searching for alternatives. By suggesting that English is not the property of the imperialists only and that we should create our own ideology through the English language, they could be said to have moved towards a project of possibility.

TEACHERS AND TEACHING

This section continues the specific analysis stage started in the at the beginning of this chapter. The focus is on the participants' reflections on teachers and teaching. During the general discussion on schooling (Chapter Five) the participants made several unflattering remarks about teachers. The following two comments are examples of the things said about teachers.

> They never volunteer for anything [English teachers at school] and don't contribute during staff meetings or subject meetings. They are reactionary and resist change. [Carl - 17/10/90]

> My biggest problem with our English teachers is that they don't read. How can they expect to instil a reading culture with the kids? I'm not talking about reading their prescribed books, but general educational stuff or even fiction of good quality. [Edgar - 17/10/90]

Generally teachers are blamed for poor academic achievement of students and for setting bad examples and accused of incompetence and laziness. But, who are these teachers? Where do they come from? How do they fit into ordinary society? These questions prompted the choice of the first article introduced for discussion in this section. The first article was THE CLASS POSITION AND CLASS LOCATION OF TEACHERS, by K. Harris. The second article, REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY FOR TEACHERS, also by K. Harris was selected because it attempts to provide answers for issues and questions raised in the first article. The last reading provided in this section was TEACHERS AS TRANSFORMATIVE INTELLECTUALS by H. Giroux which, in recognising the central role that teachers must play in schools, proposes a redefinition of the work of teachers.

This section deals with the discussions that were stimulated by each of the readings. I provide **further motivation** for the choice of the readings which is followed by **brief summaries** of the issues in the articles we focused on. The **discussions and comments by the participants** on these form the bulk of the chapter which ends with an **analysis of this process.**

CLASS LOCATION AND CLASS POSITION OF TEACHERS

The obove article was chosen partly because of what one of the participants said about teachers during the first meeting of the group.

> We are always caught in the middle. The students don't believe we're part of the struggle and the principal says we're too radical. [Tony - 6/10/90]

When it was suggested that we should allocate one session to focus on the role of teachers in society, which was part of the original plan, this article was added to the other two which had already been selected. It was felt that a critical analysis such as this would provoke reaction that could only benefit the proceedings. The most important political issues in South Africa at the moment are 'race' and 'racism'. It is not often that class is isolated because in the South African context they have become synonymous. Blacks are discriminated against because of the colour of their skin and they also happen to be the 'underclass'. As more and more blacks are incorporated into the economy through their own ingenuity and the reform processes of the regime, distinct class differences are developing.

In his Marxist analysis of the class location of teachers, Harris asserts that teachers act as political and ideological agents of capital. Although they (teachers) stand close to the working class as far as economic relations are concerned,

> in terms of both political and ideological relations, teachers stand very close to the capitalists and assist capitalist domination of the working class.(p. 131)

He continues by saying that teachers have much to gain by serving capital. They are assured jobs by the State, enjoy a privileged economic position and they get to be in 'control' of other people. But he warns however that this 'honeymoon' with capital is at the end. Teachers are to be made redundant, due to the high cost involved in paying teachers, in favour of technology that can be controlled much more easily and which is, according to capital, more effective. This is what he calls the 'proletarianisation process' taking place and adds that

> there is the brute fact which must be faced that liberal education, progressive education, or any Education concerned with the full personal, intellectual and/or cultural development of people has had its heyday and is on the way out.(p. 134)

All the participants had different responses to the issues raised by Harris. One participant indicated that he found the analysis too simplistic and argued that the reality is much more complex than serving capital or not serving capital.

> Our South African context is a bit different because of the racial discrimination. We find that the middle classes have joined the struggle because they want racial discrimination abolished. [Howard - 26/11/90]

> Yes and no. Teachers cannot help to assist capital because they are forced to teach a curriculum that supports capital. [Edgar - 26/11/90]

> Teachers are able to buy a house and have cars at a relatively young age. They definitely support capital in order to get these rewards. [Tony - 26/11/90]

Although the participants deemed Harris' analysis 'reductionist' and simplistic, they agreed that part of the analysis could be correct. Teachers do aspire to material gain and support the hierarchical system by clamouring for senior positions as a means of attaining the material benefits. Principal teachers, who receive the highest remuneration amongst teachers, are generally perceived as not supporting alternative educational programmes that would

threaten their position within the department. Various control mechanisms also assist in the process of keeping teaching in line. One such measure, the merit award system, which in itself cannot be regarded as reactionary, has been abused by rewarding only those teachers who openly support the status quo. Teachers are placed on temporary status which allows for instant dismissal, this temporary status is accorded automatically to single female teachers who change their marital status. Instead of reacting to these control measures with indignation, teachers continue to see themselves as superior to workers.

> Some teachers have a problem with being termed workers. They feel that they have studied for years and must be regarded as professionals. [Tony - 26/11/90]

> They see themselves as superior to even their students and have a very condescending attitude towards them. [Carl 26/11/90]

The participants were then asked to comment on Harris' statement about the proletarianisation of teachers' work.

> I suspect that in other countries the computer has taken over in education much more than in South Africa. We're

only starting now and I don't think it poses a threat to teachers. [Howard - 26/11/90]

What kind of education do they envisage with all this new technology? I think it's going to back-fire because individual needs and the psychology of students won't be attended to. [Carl - 26/11/90]

We can use this technology for our own purposes. We shouldn't resist these moves, but harness them as resources for liberatory education. [Edgar - 26/11/90]

No real concern about the introduction of new technology was expressed, in fact some of them welcomed the idea. It was put to the participants that this kind of proletarianisation has had devastating effects for workers in industry and that the same could hold for teachers. One participant felt that it might even be necessary to introduce technology.

We have a vast army of unemployed and uneducated people. It will be impossible to train the number of teachers needed to educate all the people in this country. We need all the assistance we can get. [Tony - 26/11/90]

I agree only to a certain extent. If we don't employ the technology critically, for our purposes, it will become

> a useful tool in the hands of the bureaucrats who aspire to control teaching for their purposes. We must develop education policies that we know will be supported by the majority of the people, not just capital. [Edgar - 26/11/90]

REVOLUTIONARY STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS

The last comment by Edgar prompted us to move ahead to the second article by Harris. This reading, which was part of the original research plan, was chosen because it purports to provide interested teachers with starting points with which to undertake revolutionary practice. It also regards schooling, as do proponents of People's Education, as a site and the stake of struggle. Given the negative interpretation by Harris of teachers' position in society, this article surprisingly focuses on 'positive action' that can be undertaken by teachers. Harris states that if teachers regard themselves as solitary individuals attempting to change things they should stop immediately. Instead they must conceive of themselves as

> historical agents engaged in class struggle and historical transformation; that is, as members of historically determined groups collectively undertaking historical action; then options are open again. (p. 143)

He further suggests that teachers should create the space and opportunity for struggle in schools by concentrating on and exploiting the contradictions which abound within the ideology of schooling. Within schooling there is the stress on critical thinking and developing individual judgement lined up against the pupils' need to gain teacher approval and to pass external examinations. These examinations often do not test the critical skills of the pupils but serve as a means of judging how well the teachers have covered the required content. Other contradictions listed by Harris are that:

> Schooling is also caught between overt declarations of fostering individuality and individual talent, and covert requirements to routinize and regiment the entire process. Teachers are required to deal with individuals in what is obviously a crowd-environment. (p. 146)

Harris claims that even the most reactionary teachers are, through the very process of teaching children to read and write, enhancing the revolutionary impact of those children. The collective ethos that he proposes however goes against the grain of how teaching is normally viewed. Classroom teaching generally is a solitary, isolated, and individualistic job. He feels that

> Teachers are very badly placed to think, organise and act collectively because of the individual nature and fragmented conditions of their work (fragmentation which also makes teachers far more vulnerable to supervisory control). (p. 148)

Despite this, he suggests that teachers have various avenues to challenge this kind of individualism. These avenues would include teachers' unions, the trade union movement, professional organisations, and broad-based educational interest groups. According to Harris, the latter avenue, which should include parents, teachers, and students, has not been exploited at all by teachers. He concludes with a few suggestions for teachers who intend undertaking revolutionary practices. Teachers should not quit because they will be replaced immediately by reactionary teachers, they should expose and break down existing discriminatory roles, promote class consciousness wherever possible, refuse to promote a competitive ethos in the classroom and they should teach their students well.

The participants focused on different aspects of the reading but there was general agreement that teachers should open their classroom doors for criticism, assistance and collective input. This would be a mammoth task according to one participant.

> Teachers don't like to be judged by their peers. They genuinely feel insecure when other teachers express interest in their activities in the classroom. Until teachers learn to become party to and accept constructive criticism, they'll resist any moves that would threaten their autonomy in the classroom. [Carl - 26/11/90]

It was suggested that the term "revolutionary activity" should be changed because of the militant connotation attached to this term. This was necessary, the participant clarified, because teachers, as do most middle-class citizens and aspirant middle-class people, shy away from confrontational strategies that would jeopardize their careers. He suggested that it should be changed to 'transformative' activities.

> I don't have a problem with that as long as you don't change the quality of the activities to pseudo changes and become reformist in the process. [Edgar - 26/11/90]

We were reminded by Tony that we were forgetting an important element of schooling while discussing the role of teachers, namely the students. He felt that some black students in the South African context, because of their militancy, their high expectations and the politicised nature of education would force teachers to examine their roles and their practices. He proposed that this kind of critical behaviour, on the part of

students, should be constructively channelled to put pressure on teachers. Progressive teachers should forge links with students through their representative structures and provide assistance in their educational programmes. Teachers who are struggling to cope with critical students should not be shunned but invited to join networks that will seek to open up the classroom doors as Harris suggests.

> Yes, but I think the most important lesson we can learn from this article is the suggestion that we must teach our students well. If we as revolutionary teachers are above reproach as far as our teaching ability, and caring attitude towards students are concerned then we will gain the respect and cooperation of parents as well. [Edgar - 26/11/90]

The issue of forging links with parents and students was considered important by the participants because they felt that it was one way of neutralizing the threatening supervisory mechanisms found at schools. The NECC is promoting Parents, Teachers, and Students Associations (PTSA's) to be established in all communities who will then be charged with the task of focusing on educational needs of the community. Howard also suggested that reactionary teachers should not be isolated. He cited cases where isolation of these teachers at certain schools had the opposite effect. It led to conservative

hegemonies at schools where those teachers collectively worked towards the isolation and eventual dismissal of progressive teachers. This is in agreement with Warren Little (1990) who warns that 'collegiality' is an instrument for promoting change but also one for conserving the present. He felt that teachers should be engaged at their levels of interest.

> If they like sports, we must go with them into sporting organisations. Some of them can only talk about their families. There's nothing wrong with that, we should engage them and share our views, in a non-threatening way, so that we can win their trust and win them over. [Howard - 26/11/90]

> What alternatives do we give these teachers? I know Harris suggests working towards a classless society, but that is unrealistic. He even admits that schools alone cannot achieve this. So what kind of education do we want for all South Africans. What do we say to teachers? Do we have a realistic view of what is possible? [Carl - 26/11/90]

Carl's questions redirected the discussion and prompted the participants to consider educational goals. The focus then changed to the article by Giroux who suggests that teachers

should become transformative intellectuals if they are to educate students to be active, critical citizens.

TEACHERS AS TRANSFORMATIVE INTELLECTUALS

This article by Giroux, was chosen because it provides an alternative view of teachers' work. The view of teachers as 'intellectuals' is also consistent with the view of this study that teachers can and should contribute to the discourse of schooling and education.

Giroux contends that instrumental ideologies and technocratic approaches to teaching are at the core of calls for the separation of conception from execution and the standardization of school knowledge in the interest of managing and controlling it. Prospective teachers are being taught methodologies that appear to deny critical thinking. They are also not asked to reflect on the principles that structure and determine classroom life and practice.

Teacher autonomy, according to Giroux, with regard to development and planning of curricula, is reduced by the introduction of "teacher-proof" curriculum packages. Teachers are expected to execute the instructions of the packages and this leads to what Giroux calls management pedagogies. The need to control the behaviour of teachers to make it

consistent and predictable across different schools and student populations, is the underlying theoretical assumption that guides this type of pedagogy. Within the management pedagogics certain knowledge is deemed more important than others and promoted on that basis. Shor (1987) in conversation with Freire says the following;

> Another part of the problem is the political hierarchy of knowledge. Some knowledge is given more value than others. For example, technology is more important to big business and to the military than is the humanities, so scientific research gets more money than liberal arts. Pro-corporate research is handsomely funded while peace studies or feminist research or socialist scholarships are marginalized. (p. 9)

Giroux further argues that one way to rethink the nature of teacher work is to view teachers as transformative intellectuals. This understanding of teacher-work, which goes beyond the limited view of teachers as professional practitioners performing tasks to realize effectively the goals set for them, would underscore the role of teachers as people dedicated to the values of the intellect and the development of the critical powers of their students.

Teachers as transformative intellectuals, he continues, must take active responsibility for questioning what they are to teach, how they are to teach and the broader educational goals they aspire to. This would challenge the technocratic and instrumental ideologies underlying an educational theory that separates conception of curricula from its execution. He concludes by saying that teachers;

> ... as transformative intellectuals need to develop a discourse that unites the language of critique with the language of possibility, so that social educators recognize that they can make changes. In doing so, they must speak out against economic, political and social injustices both within and outside of schools. (p. 128)

Howard pointed out that in the battle to democratize teaching, teachers would have to assert that they are intellectuals and not mere mechanics. He felt that management pedagogies could not account for and satisfy the diversity of economic, political, and cultural needs of students. The only concern of management pedagogies, according to Howard is to remain in control of the schooling process. He agreed that teachers were intellectuals, but added that all teachers could not be regarded as critical or transformative intellectuals. On the question of how transformative intellectuals could be developed, Edgar responded as follows:

> Critical thought and critical pedagogics should be taught so that it becomes a way of life for teachers. Not just for expediency, it musn't be used when they are forced to do so for fear of being derided. Teachers must be able to question things. [Edgar - 26/11/90]

Howard noted that having the development of critical citizens as a primary goal in a new education system would require more responsibility and therefore more work from teachers. He felt that teachers would resist unless students and parents demanded this kind of commitment from the teachers. Teachers should inform students and parents about the contradictions which exist in education and sell their ideals to them so that they can depend on the support from those constituencies. Teachers on the other hand should also support the communities with issues affecting them. This echoes the 'alliances' that Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) promote, where teachers as transformative intellectuals take the issues of the community seriously and collectively work towards creating conditions for emancipatory forms of self and social empowerment.

Tony suggested that an important alliance, which should be forged at the soonest possible moment, was the one with teacher-training institutions, universities and colleges. He felt that these institutions continued to produce reactionary teachers. Because they (the colleges) rely on state subsidies,

they refuse to challenge the prescribed curricula which could result in them losing financial support. The universities on the other hand, which have greater freedom as far as curricula are concerned, fail to exploit the opportunity they have to make a contribution to the creation of transformative intellectuals. It was then put to Tony that universities indeed contribute to a great extent but that student-teachers, as soon as they become teachers, are not in the position to effect dramatic changes because they are inexperienced and placed in junior positions at schools. Some of them by their own conservative nature allow themselves to be incorporated into the hierarchy with little or no resistance.

> It is our fault that we lose these new teachers to the conservative fold. We don't pay attention to new teachers and help them with their teaching. We should set up, amongst ourselves a reception committee that will take responsibility to educate and even be educated by new teachers. This becomes easier if the person happens to teach the same subject. [Edgar - 26/11/90]

Carl, the youngest participant, agreed with this strategy because he felt that he was left to find his own feet. Nobody on the staff assisted him during the first few months of his teaching career and it was taken for granted that he knew what he was doing in the classroom. Fortunately for him he had the

support of teachers outside of the school itself and they provided the necessary support. The subject groups which operated at his school did not function as support groups but as management structures. He found that he could not approach teachers in these groups for help because they were not interested in what he was doing.

> I must admit that my ego prevented me from opening up to them, but even if I did, I'm sure they wouldn't have been able to help me. The danger in this kind of situation, if you don't have any support at all, you start depending on your own schooling experience and in our South African sense, that would be tragic. [Carl - 26/11/90]

The discussion was ended with participants giving short inputs on their understanding of 'educating critical citizens' for a democratic society.

> We must develop critical thinkers for a future democratic South Africa so that people are not manipulated as were our fore-fathers. [Edgar - 26/11/90]

> I think it is like investing in the future. Not just making people critical of political issues that will affect them, but also environmental issues and social choices they have to make. [Tony - 26/11/90]

We must not shy away from the revolutionary aspect of this process. As transformative intellectuals we will have to engage in a struggle because corporate interest, as Harris states, will not give up their power easily. We should make our students and parents aware that they are involved in a struggle. [Carl - 26/11/90]

If we can convince teachers that they have something to contribute and provide the infrastructure necessary for that contribution then our battle is half won. We should also create an environment where teachers can debate issues. It is not necessary for every teacher to agree on everything. This kind of critical environment will build the confidence of teachers and they will pass it on to their students. [Howard - 26/11/90]

REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

Several themes were touched upon and developed during the discussions in this section of the specific analysis stage. The absence of the two female participants was made obvious with the non-reference and development of themes related to sex and the discrimination that involves female teachers. One could therefore conclude that, as individuals, the participants brought specific cultural baggage to the study.

When confronted with the fact that they did not focus on the issue of gender inequality, the male participants 'defensively' responded that they expected their female colleagues to raise it. In the end they agreed that it was their duty to raise the issue because gender discrimination is an integral part of general oppression in society. In terms of their position as teachers, the participants agreed that their unique class located them in a position that has the potential to support and bolster the status quo or develop counter-hegemonic strategies that could benefit the working class masses. There was a realisation that technology would continue to grow within the education field but it was felt that this should be harnessed and used to benefit progressive education, not just left to experts who would promote their own agendas. They did not offer any suggestions on how technology should be harnessed to benefit education. Another point that is related to the latter, is the cost of new technology, and how people are excluded from using them because of the cost involved. The participants also did not dwell on how working class students and people generally are alienated from and excluded from the new 'information systems' that serve the interests of capital and those who can afford them.

The idea of opening up the classroom for constructive criticism by peers was supported as this would challenge the

traditional view of teaching as a solitary, isolated occupation. This should be done in conjunction with building alliances with students and parents. 'Reactionary' teachers should be incorporated rather than rejected and all 'progressive' teachers should aspire to be the best teachers in their schools. An important aspect of the collegiality suggested by the participants, is the realization that it can operate to support and uphold the status quo as well as serve the purposes of transformation. This realization prompted them to consider ways of drawing teachers into the progressive fold, meaning that as progressive teachers they should have clear goals that would interest other teachers. The participants were convinced that all teachers could become transformative intellectuals. As transformative intellectuals, teachers should set for themselves, as a primary educational goal, the education of critical citizens for a democratic future. This goal they felt could be achieved by linking up with community struggles and broader alliances. In the South African context, teachers have neglected the forging of links with other structures in the community. This is not to say that as individuals, teachers are not involved in the broader struggle, it is only that they did not do so as a group of teachers. The participants provided some insight as to how teachers would be convinced to work in the broader interest of the oppressed people. In the process of developing into transformative intellectuals

teachers will realize that they are involved in a struggle and their contribution to developing critical citizens would be an investment for the future.

This is in agreement with Shor (1980) who says that the struggle for critical consciousness is nothing less than a battle for a new social order.

This chapter outlined the deliberations concerning language, language teaching, and teachers. These deliberations also showed how language, education, culture and economics manifest themselves as aspects of the experiences of teachers. As English Second Language teachers the participants must confront issues of the language policy of the country, language preferences and linguistic influences in the communities they work, as well as cultural differences and influences. This they must do within an educational system which is racist, sexist, oppressive, authoritarian, and which ultimately serves the ideological needs and interests of the ruling class. The participants however, view themselves as best placed to consider a project of possibility, where they will develop themselves into transformative intellectuals in order to assist in the empowerment process that is needed in their society.

The discussions during this stage of the research allowed also for introspection. The participants were challenged to

consider and debate their perceptions of the role of teachers. Informed by the above discussions and debates, the participants were asked to look at how, given their transformatory and emanicipatory intentions, they would go about implementing their ideals in the classroom. That will be the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

REFLECTIVE ACTION

After having gone through a series of what could be termed 'theoretical discussions' it was necessary to pull together the various trains of thought and suggestions. Debating the role of teachers and language in education certainly expanded the scope of reference for the participants. They were provided with the opportunity to consider English in its broader political, economic, and cultural use, as well as consider there own position within society. There was however an underlying concern that, at the end of the day, they would have to go back to their schools, face their students and 'teach'. During this, the action stage of the study, we concentrated on the second part of the research question, namely, **what are the primary concerns that need to be addressed when developing materials for use in the classroom?** The participants had at their disposal their own reflections and the content of the readings on how language, education, culture and economics are interrelated. Besides having this information, the participants were given two more readings to assist in the process of answering the above question. The first article was "The instructional design process", by Jerrold Kemp and the second one, "Overcoming behavioral and humanistic objectives", by Henry Giroux.

In this chapter I give reasons for selecting the readings and also brief summaries of the issues in the articles we focused on. This is followed by the discussions of the contributions and action that ensued. At the end I give my analysis of the process.

THE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN PROCESS

This article is the second chapter in the book by Kemp (1985) with the same title as above. It was deemed suitable because it provides a clear process that can be followed when dealing with instruction. The introduction of different approaches to developing materials facilitated the process because it gave the participants something concrete to work with. They were asked to comment on the approaches, and to add, disagree, reject, adapt or adopt them in the process of answering the research question.

Kemp's instructional design process is based on four fundamental elements, namely, learners, objectives, methods and evaluation, which form the framework of his instructional planning. These four basic elements are then developed into more specific elements which make up the complete design plan.

1. Assess learning needs for designing an instructional program; state goals, constraints, and priorities that must be recognized.

2. Select topics or job tasks to be treated and indicate general purposes to be served.

3. Examine characteristics of learners or trainees which should receive attention during planning.

4. Identify subject content and analyze task components related to stated goals and purposes.

5. State learning objectives to be accomplished in terms of subject content and task components.

6. Design teaching/learning activities to accomplish the stated objectives.

7. Select resources to support instructional activities.

8. Specify support services required for developing and implementing activities and acquiring or producing materials.

9. Prepare to evaluate learning and outcomes of program.

10. Determine preparation of learners or trainees to study the topic by pretesting them.

(p. 11)

Kemp uses the word "element" in preference to the terms step, stage, or level, because he says that the process does not take place in a linear way as the latter terms would suggest. He concludes by saying that the process is flexible, that the elements can be developed in many different orders and that opportunities are available for expressing one's own ideas and independent thinking while planning.

OVERCOMING THE BEHAVIORAL AND HUMANISTIC OBJECTIVES

This article is the fourth chapter in the book, "Teachers as Intellectuals" by Giroux (1988). It was chosen because it provides a critique of both the behavioral and humanistic objectives approaches to curriculum materials development and suggests an alternative approach to materials development. Giroux says that the behavioral objectives approach has an overly cognitive emphasis and a concern for trivial knowledge. While he understands their concern for exactness and certainty, he finds their denial of the value of personal meaning disturbing. The humanistic objectives school, according to Giroux, are often caught up in a "fuzzy" web of unclear and tentative statements of intent. This results in the development of courses that lack certainty and clarity of direction.

He charges that both schools have ignored the question of ends in their "technical" approach to knowledge selection. They do not ask the question "why". Their course objectives do not stress the importance of theory, particularly the relationship between theory and facts, and both schools have failed to analyze the importance of the relationship between classroom objectives and cultural capital. Cultural capital, according to Giroux, refers to the cognitive, linguistic, and

dispositional attributes that different students bring to school.

Giroux suggests that a new approach to course objectives must go beyond these limitations and puts forward his 'macro-objectives and micro-objectives' model as being able to do just that. He describes his macro-objectives in general terms as: differentiating between directive and productive knowledge, making the hidden curriculum explicit, and helping students develop a critical, political consciousness. The micro-objectives of Giroux are similar to traditional course objectives which include the acquisition of selected knowledge, the development of specialized learning skills, and the development of specific inquiry skills. Giroux feels that it is necessary to make clear to students what the links are between course objectives and the norms, values, and structural relationships within society, hence the importance of the relationship between macro- and micro-objectives.

The productive knowledge in the first macro-objective, according to Giroux, is instrumental in the sense of innovating new methods in technology and science. While directive knowledge is knowledge that questions how productive knowledge is to be used. The second macro-objective, that of making the hidden curriculum explicit is intended to help teachers and students become more sensitive to recognizing and

altering its worst effects. The last macro-objective centres around helping students develop a critical, political consciousness. For Giroux this does not mean emphasizing political content but more providing students with the critical skills and methods to look beyond their immediate environment in order to gain an understanding of the interrelatedness of the political, social, and economic realities in society.

It is claimed by Giroux that this macro-micro model can assist in developing course objectives that will foster educational experiences which will "illuminate the political richness and social complexity of the interplay between what is learned in school and the experience of everyday life" (p. 53).

DISCUSSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

The participants were asked to consider the usefulness of the two approaches. They had to decide if the one or the other was appropriate for use in answering the research question, whether we needed a marriage of the two or if they were both inappropriate. Howard felt that we needed clarity on the term "instruction" as opposed to "teaching" which would assist in evaluating that particular model for our purposes.

> I think the term has a lot to do with where this particular model [Instructional Design] comes from. You can correct me if I'm wrong but I think this model was first used in the army and then borrowed for their own purposes by industry. [Edgar - 6/2/91]

For Howard the term 'instruction' meant the learning of fixed knowledge and skills and the people normally involved in doing that are called 'instructors'. He wanted to know if teachers were to regard themselves as instructors.

> If we adopt the notion, and I think we agreed on this, that we regard ourselves as intellectuals with the view to become transformative intellectuals, then this model would become limited for our purposes. [Carl - 6/2/91]

The participants felt that the instructional design model, although it claims flexibility, was rigid in its approach that seemed more concerned with evaluating whether a specific body of knowledge had been learned. Edgar suggested that this was precisely the way the department wanted teachers to plan and execute their work. He asserted that by, using this particular instructional process, and teaching the prescribed work set by the department, the teacher becomes uncritical. Another participant felt that the model could not be written off useless.

> But we cannot discard this model. In terms of the learner analysis we can find out more about our students and inject the cultural capital as Giroux calls it. [Phumla - 6/2/91]

> I feel it extremely pertinent to state that I cannot divorce teaching from ideology. So therefore to fully subscribe to the behavioral or humanistic schools will be to repudiate my claim that teaching must be ideologically based. [Edgar - 6/2/91]

It was again pointed out that they were not asked to adopt any 'particular model' but merely use these approaches as a basis for their own approach to materials development. Howard then suggested that we look at using elements from both approaches as this was what Giroux proposed by developing macro-objectives to compensate for the limitations in the "micro-objectives only" approach of the behaviourist and humanist supporters. This suggestion was favourably received by the group and Carl added that the macro-micro model should be used as the basis for the approach because it contains, as a macro objective, an objective the group had agreed to in earlier discussions, namely, the development of political, critical consciousness.

At this point the participants were asked to consider a particular unit of work within the present curriculum which we could use as a focus for collective planning. The participants could not agree on a specific unit because they all taught different standards (grades) and Carl suggested that everybody be given the same reading (for use with students) to take back to their own classrooms and that we meet again to discuss a common approach or the different positions the participants decided to take. After they agreed to this suggestion, they were each given the same article, entitled, ESCAPING FROM A WORDLESS WORLD. ADULTS LEARN TO READ AND WRITE [APPENDIX 4]. This article was taken from a magazine called "Upbeat" which is aimed at students at junior and senior secondary level. Because the participants needed more time to investigate the two approaches to materials development, and to ensure that they contribute from an understanding gained through close investigation of the texts, it was decided to meet a week later to discuss the research question and a particular approach to classroom teaching. The article would only act as a common practical point of departure for the classroom activities.

At the follow-up session a week later the participants were asked to comment on, or raise issues that developed out of their rereading the articles and subsequent classroom activities.

> The important thing for me is whether through the materials, we can develop their critical consciousness, especially with English. [Phumla - 13/2/91]

Phumla found that she had difficulty relating specific or general reading found in textbooks to a critical consciousness that needed to be developed by the students. She found that she was giving her own critical understanding of the texts and that it did not help with the students developing their own understanding. She added that the fact that she was dealing with second language students made it more difficult because they have a problem with conceptualizing through that language. Edgar did not see the teacher expressing her or his opinion, be it critical or not as contradictory to developing a critical consciousness. He felt that using experiences close to the students would assist them to conceptualize the issues and develop their own critical skills.

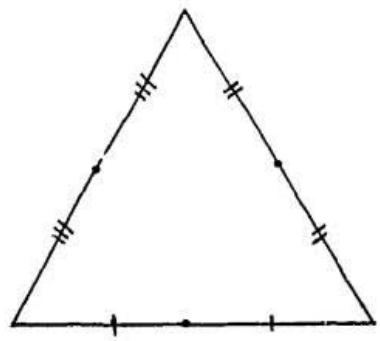
> Yes, I think the issue of students' experiences is important. We should start from their experiences and work towards the unknown otherwise we perpetuate the culture of alienation in formal learning that exists now. [Cecilia - 13/2/91]

On the issue of students' experiences, the participants were asked to consider the following mathematical problems and

exercises (worksheets), and suggest which one they considered to be the better of the two.

Worksheet One

For the next two days, arrange yourselves in groups of your own choosing,and see if you can make any theorems of your own arising from the diagram below:



Worksheet Two

<u>City Tramways</u> (The Bus service company familiar to the students)

You pay City Tramways every time you climb onto their buses. Have you ever thought of how much of the money goes towards the cost of taking you, and how much is used elsewhere?

* Go to the petrol station and find out how much petrol costs per litre.

* Get friendly with a driver and find out how many litres s/he uses from Guguletu to Mowbray.
* Do passengers' fares cover the petrol costs?
* If the company makes a profit, what percentage of the cost of a bus ticket is their profit?

(NB - Maybe not all of that is profit. Can you think of the other costs involved for the company?) Despite this, who wins, you or the City Tramways?

(NECC + UWC, 1988, p. 41)

Four of the six participants considered the second worksheet more valuable and suitable because it dealt with students' experiences. It also assisted the students in developing a critical awareness of the daily use of transport services. And they added that the exercise forced the students to search for answers outside of the classroom which promoted the idea that education can and does happen everywhere. These participants however, reconsidered their choice after they heard the motivation of the others for choosing the first worksheet. The first worksheet according to Howard, encourages a cooperative arrangement of the students' own choosing, not forcing them into situations where they do not want to be. The students are also asked to develop theorems (he took for granted that the teacher would have explained this concept before giving the exercise) of their own. This shows an appreciation and acceptance of students'

contributions. Edgar felt that by giving the students two days in which to do the work also suggests that they could consult each other outside of the classroom, even at home and there is no indication that they cannot bring their own experiences to bear on this task.

This exercise helped the participants to think about the issue of students' experience and how it can be used to broaden understanding as well as how it can act as a limiting factor. This lead to a discussion of the term "cultural capital" as used by Giroux. Cecelia understood it to mean students' experiences. This understanding was too limited for Howard who pointed to Giroux's definition which includes the cognitive, linguistic, and dispositional attributes of students. For Howard this meant that students brought more than just their 'experiences' to school but also how those experiences have shaped them and their understanding of the world around them. He added that schools have also been part of the students' experience and they have been changed through this experience. Teachers should then be aware of the school as just one of the environments that has an impact on students. Other 'environments', he added, would include the peer-group, family, community, church and so on. According to Howard the students are not encouraged, while in the latter environments, to develop a critical consciousness. This

understanding of students' experience helped with the refocusing on objectives when developing teaching materials.

> My point was also about developing critical consciousness but I feel that students need to be made aware of two levels of objectives. On the one hand we want them to acquire certain knowledge for exam purposes, but on the other hand they must view that knowledge critically. In the case of English they should write essays about why they are forced to write essays on topics that are so removed from their reality. [Carl - 13/2/91]

> When we look at material for use in the classroom or decide on classroom activities, we must investigate to what extent will the activity advance the students at an ideological level. By this I don't mean how well they can argue about politics, but to what extent they have committed themselves to use, English in our case, for their own purposes. [Edgar - 13/2/91]

Phumla felt that Carl's point was extremely important because as critical pedagogues teachers should not lose sight of the criteria set down for students to pass standards (grades). She expressed concern with the over-emphasis on critical consciousness which cannot ensure that the students will pass at the end of their academic year. Her concern was borne out

of bitter experience with students at her schools who complained that she was not helping them to pass the examination, they could not make the connection between what she was doing and the examination requirements. She added that they wanted to be entertained and shunned serious discussions. Teachers are held accountable through examination procedures, they find themselves in a win-lose situation where their goals do not coincide with that of the bureaucracy or of the students.

> We cannot forget that we're dealing with children in a technologically advanced world. This might not be a priority issue but we must make the material attractive and interesting. They must enjoy doing it. That might sound like a humanistic approach or else very patronizing, but I think it's important. [Tony - 13/2/91]

> I agree with Tony, but that can be incorporated into the micro-objectives. What we have to look at are the macro-objectives. For me the one on making the hidden curriculum more explicit is very important. We must be honest with the students about our own agendas, then they'll start trusting us. [Howard - 13/2/91]

At this point they were asked to submit their contributions in terms of lesson plans, unit plans based on the article. It

proved to be difficult to collectively go through all the contributions as they did not make copies. This was another example of the physical limitations the participants had to face, they had no access to photocopiers and manual copying would have been a tedious task. They had prepared units for different levels of students so this made a general discussion impossible. Only one person had copies prepared for most of the participants so we decided to jointly look at his contribution. The outline for lessons was prepared for a standard eight (grade 10) English Second Language class

Immediate objectives

1. Improving reading skills
2. Understanding the written word
3. Vocabulary expansion
4. Using the dictionary

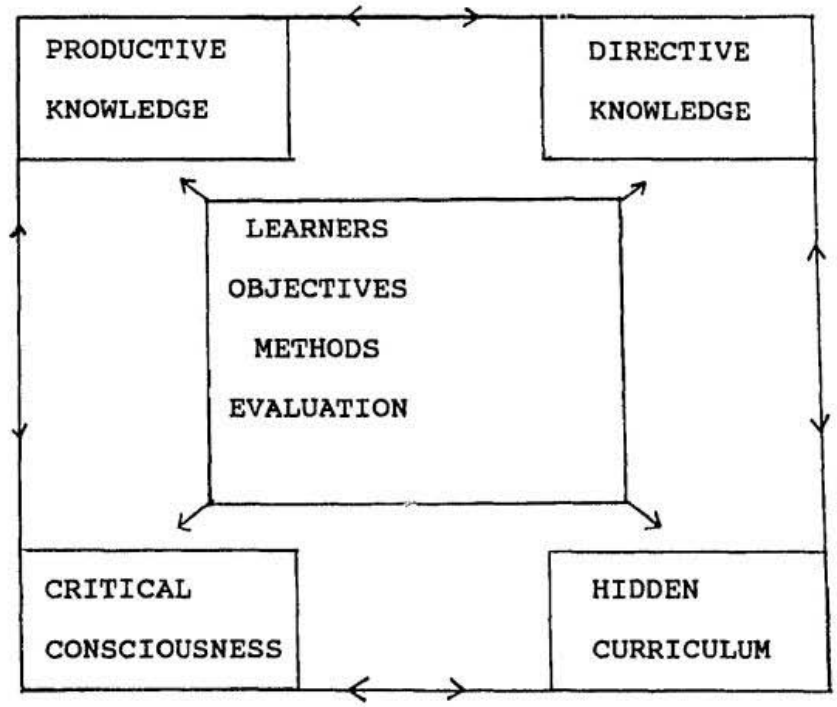
Other objectives

1. To introduce/inform students to the problem of illiteracy. eg. who, why, where, etc.
2. To make them aware of what is being done by, i) government, ii) NGO's
3. To make them aware that they too have a role to play in combatting illiteracy. (Carl - 13/2/91)

The participant admitted that he had neglected to explain how the objectives would be attained, for example, how he intended to improve the reading skills of the students or how he was going help them understand the written word. It was also pointed out to him that he did not explain why he chose these particular objectives above others. He explained that time constraints allowed him to only give a brief outline of his intentions but that the 'immediate objectives' covered the language skills needed by students in their daily experience as well as being requirements of the present curriculum. These can also be considered the micro-objectives. The macro- or 'other objectives' are aspects that would benefit the students by them gaining an understanding of the socio-political implications of illiteracy. He felt that the last of the 'other objectives' is an empowering one where students are made aware that they can contribute something. With regards to the 'how' these objectives would be attained, he responded by saying that his actual methodologies would be influenced by the different classes he taught and that over the years he had worked on a number of ways to, for example, improve reading skills or encourage people to use a dictionary. He felt that just as methodologies are influenced by students, they are also used differently by different teachers in different situations with various sets of students.

The other participants all had questions related to their individual concerns. For example, Cecilia asked how students' experiences would be used in the first instance and how this would be broadened. Edgar wanted to know in what way the ideological perceptions of students would be developed. The answers to these questions were very interesting but it was obvious that not enough thought was given to these broader questions. We then decided that it would be more constructive, while still using the above outline, to collectively work on a schematic representation of our view of the macro-micro model as this would create a visual image that we could develop for further use. The participants felt that this would make it easier for them to take back to their schools and classrooms.

Teachers' Micro-Macro Model



As the schematic representation indicates, the macro-objectives remain constant while the micro-objectives can be changed to suit the particular learners and the knowledge and skills that need to be acquired. The arrows also indicate the inter-related of these objectives. The participants felt that this kind of model allows for innovation and deals with important issues that should not be left out of materials development.

We should only use this as a start for further discussion. This model includes the important aspects we

feel should be included, but we must not be rigid about this. When we take it to other teachers for discussion we must allow them to change it to suite their objective conditions. [Edgar - 13/2/91]

REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

This reflective action stage was important because it allowed the participants to make concrete connections between theory and practice. In general, the practice that teachers are involved in is more than mere transmitting particular bodies of knowledge. This realization made the participants question the concept of 'instruction' in the instructional design model. They however did not directly comment on the issue of what kind of knowledge they thought would be useful to their students nor did they comment on the value of the content in the reading (Upbeat) they were asked to prepare lessons around. Only indirectly did one of them say that the knowledge should advance students at an ideological level and indicated that this did not mean the content should be of a political nature. An example of making the theory-practice connection is the acceptance of the development of a critical consciousness as a macro-objective. This acceptance did not mean that all the participants knew how they would go about achieving this. One of them was particularly concerned with the fact that teachers convey their own critical understanding

of texts and neglect the development of the critical skills of students. Although people responded to this concern, they did not raise the issue of the imbalance in the power-relationship between teachers and students which was discussed at an earlier stage.

Linked to the question of power-relationship is the issue of students' experiences. Before the intervention, the mathematical exercise, the participants held to a narrow view of the experiences of students. They neglected to mention that as much as students possess a certain amount of 'cultural capital', so do teachers. Aspects of teachers' cultural capital influence the way they operate at schools. Harris (1977) points out that,

> the lack of a disposition towards collective action is a serious impediment for teachers, and one which shows little sign of being easily overcome. (p. 150)

Teachers will have to come to terms with and understand their own cultural capital in order for them to understand their students better. One of the participants mentioned that individual teachers respond differently to methodologies and make the methodologies their own by changing them to suite their own styles and objective conditions. This is another example of teachers exercising their diversity of cultural

capital. If teachers can accept this then they should not readily favour a process of routinization of classroom activities, but recognize the diverse cultural capital of their students.

Although the participants did not prepare and submit lesson plans of the unit requested, they made valuable contributions towards answering the research question. The macro-objectives, as outlined earlier by Giroux suited their requirements but they reserved the right to have them changed and allow them to be changed when discussing it with other teachers. Besides looking only at the primary concerns for dealing with teaching materials, the participants also recognized the importance of the physical appeal of the materials. The participants showed an awareness that they were in competition with the mass-media and other forms of 'popular culture' that held the attention of young people through new and innovative gimmicks. This discussion ended on an important note and it showed that the participants had come to realize the importance of ongoing debate, discussion and experimentation.

It is hard to say if the critical discourse developed by the participants will lead to critical practice. What can be be said is that, whatever the practical outcome of their deliberations, they will be able to look more critically at

what they do inside their classrooms. The next chapter will provide a more comprehensive analysis and reflection on the entire process.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

DEVELOPING A CRITICAL DISCOURSE

The previous chapters formed the core of the process towards developing a critical discourse. It is necessary at this stage to reflect on how this was achieved and the extent to which the process had succeeded.

What I did first was to encourage the participants to tentatively reflect on various aspects of their work. These aspects included curriculum content, teaching methods, materials, students and teachers' attitudes towards subject, teacher innovations, and the physical conditions of schools and classrooms. This was followed by a more specific concentration on language in education and the role of teachers. Various articles were introduced during this stage to stimulate the discussions and encourage a broader perspective on educational issues. The last stage of this process was the reflective action stage where the participants were asked to apply some of the insights gained through the previous discussions. An underlying strategy in this study was to take a journey with the participants through the

familiar and introduce unfamiliar, yet related, concepts and to allow them t· discover and make the links themselves.

This chapter focuses on the discourse that was generated through this process and turns to the research questions to assess to what extent the approach I used did contribute to the development of a critical discourse. What follows is a summary of the discourse from which I will draw conclusions and make inferences. I will rely on the transcripts of the deliberations and analyses made during the study and the literature that informed the study. I will also look at an evaluation done by the participants. At the end of the study the participants were asked to fill out an 'evaluation form' [APPENDIX 5].

This is followed by reflections on Participatory Research where I consider the usefulness of the methodology for this process. I also assess and comment on some of its claims and problems in the light of my own experiences, focusing particularly on the participatory and emancipatory nature of the research methodology and my role as participant researcher. Recommendations regarding the use of Participatory Research in educational settings are given at the end of this section.

Finally, I conclude this chapter and the study with general conclusions and recommendations for further research and discussion.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

How do we as teachers address the inter-relatedness of language, education, culture and economics when confronting teaching materials?

a) How do these issues manifest themselves as aspects of our experiences?

b) What are the primary concerns that need to be addressed when developing materials for use in the classroom?

SPECULATIVE REFLECTION STAGE:

The participants in this study were fully aware of the extent and nature of the hegemonic control existing over the formal educational process in South Africa. The inroads made by organized opposition to the present status quo by, for example, the National Education Coordinating Committee, encouraged them to volunteer their time and effort to investigate an alternative view and approach to curriculum

materials. When asked to respond to the research questions above the participants displayed a remarkable insight into matters pertaining to their occupation.

They were able to identify those aspect of schooling which frustrate teachers and make concentration on liberatory or revolutionary activities difficult. These aspects include overcrowded classrooms, lack of resources, the hierarchical nature of schools, and the redundancy of the curriculum content. The participants felt that they were reduced to managing a process over which they had very little control. This echoes what Freire (1972) criticizes as 'banking education' and Giroux (1985) calls 'management pedagogics'. The participants also recognized that teachers make certain choices when confronted by the need to change, that ignorance on the part of individuals can be regarded as an ideological choice. This recognition displayed an insight about "ignorance" which is shared with Aronowitz and Giroux (1985), quoted earlier. Teachers also perpetuate a self-fulfilling prophecy while merely managing the pyramidal nature of the 'success-rate' at schools. Another important point made by the participants was that politically active teachers are not necessarily progressive teachers. Politically active teachers often divorce their outside involvement from their classroom and school activities. By doing this they deny the political nature of schooling which is emphasized by, amongst others,

Giroux (1983, 1985, 1988), Apple (1988), Freire (1985, 1986), McLaren (1986, 1989), Popkewitz (1981), and Harris (1982).

In the absence of staff support for innovations and the constraints put on teaching through examination requirements, teachers are forced to deal with making the curriculum materials relevant on their own. Teachers are generally not expected by the education departments to be innovative. This total control over the work of teachers is what Apple (1980) calls the "factory" model which separates the conception from the execution and results in teachers being mere instruments in the hands of obscure curriculum planners. Making the materials relevant also requires a good knowledge of the students and the communities from which they come. The participants indicated that second language acquisition is influenced by the dominant language spoken in the communities. Although there was no unanimity on the assertion, almost half of the participants suggested that English second language speakers come from poorer socio-economic areas. This, coupled with a school language policy that perpetuates a minimal communicative competency in English, made the participants suggest that a particular ideological strategy was at work. One where children from a black, working-class background are trapped within a poverty spiral and excluded from job opportunities because of their lack of proficiency in English. Added to this is the fact that the teachers are offered very

little, if anything, in the form of "competent" or "efficient" in-service training programmes.

SPECIFIC REFLECTION STAGE:

This, the second stage dealt with two areas, namely language and teachers. The articles presented and read during this stage were used as a basis for discussion and to broaden the fields of reference of the participants. Although the first article focused on teaching English, an important theme emerged, that of power and empowerment. One of the participants changed her initial view that she 'respected' her teachers to that she 'feared' her teachers because they had the power to fail and to physically assault her. The participants agreed that they were in an imbalanced power relationship with their students. They however felt that the power they possess need not necessarily be one of domination but that they share their power with their students in order to empower the latter. As we read earlier, Lazarus (1990), there is a recognition of the imbalance in the power relationship and the contradiction inherent in that relationship should incorporate both control and responsibility.

Besides realising that political changes would be necessary in order to deal with the complex problems related to teaching English and the use of English in South Africa, the

participants also admitted to the importance of their involvement, as teachers, in a language policy group that would work on a language policy that would benefit the majority of the people in the country. One of the articles in this session prompted the participants to suggest that an English Teachers Journal would be necessary in order to promote and stimulate English teachers' knowledge. They felt that such a journal was needed because educational journals are often written for other academics and not teachers who would probably benefit much more if they were not excluded from the audience through the language used in those journals. One of the participants even suggested that this phenomenon, the inaccessibility of educational journals, could be described as one of the causes of the breakdown between theory and practice. English, they concluded, should be allowed to be influenced by the various cultures in South Africa just like all the other languages have been influenced. English cannot be regarded as the sole property of the "imperialists" or the first language speakers. A journal to which English teachers should contribute will facilitate a process where the use of colloquialisms can act as a counter-hegemonic strategy to the literature forced upon students. Contributions would also rely on the lived experiences of those who need to use English to convey their needs and requirements.

The participants however insisted that the promotion of a 'People's English ' would have to be a process. A process that involves not instant solutions but a calculated response to the legitimate demands and needs of the people. Even the concept "people" was interrogated until they were satisfied with a broad understanding of the concept, namely that it recognizes the reality of classes and class differences which were exacerbated by the racial-capital divisions within South Africa. By situating English in its broader contextual use in South Africa, and suggesting that teachers should be involved in language policy development as well as educational journals, the participants were espousing a project of possibility.

From a focus on language the attention of the group discussions shifted to teachers, i.e. the class positions of teachers and teachers as intellectuals. The participants admitted that traditionally teaching had been viewed as a private 'isolated' activity and this should be changed. Teachers also actively support the present hierarchial nature of schooling by clamouring for and working towards the attainment of senior positions, not to change conditions but to reinforce them. By opening up the classrooms and setting up support networks for teachers, the participants felt that more teachers would be encouraged to act in the interest of their students and not themselves. They stressed the

importance of winning over 'reactionary' teachers by engaging them at the level of their interests. This they regarded as necessary because conservative teachers who are isolated, form their networks and organise themselves against change initiatives. They were aware, as is Warren Little (1990), quoted earlier, that 'collegiality' is an instrument for promoting change but also one for conserving the present. It was suggested that only if teachers regarded themselves as intellectuals will they be able to develop the necessary critical skills needed for analytical thought and the ability to respect, appreciate and even welcome constructive critique from colleagues. This notion seemed acceptable only in a limited sense because the participants felt that although all teachers and for that matter all people, could regard themselves as intellectuals, not all of them could lay claim to being critical or transformative intellectuals. The idea of teachers becoming transformative intellectuals, as suggested by Giroux (1988), found support with the participants who added that teachers should make their students and parents aware that they are engaged in a struggle with corporate interests. Of primary concern for them was the alliance that needed to be created with parents and students. Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) promote this kind of alliance strategy where teachers, as transformative intellectuals, take the issues of community and liberation seriously. It was added that as transformative intellectuals,

developing and educating critical citizens, teachers would be investing in the future. Not just making people critical of political issues but also of environmental issues and social choices that will face them.

REFLECTIVE ACTION STAGE:

Two 'models' for approaches to curriculum materials development were introduced during this stage. The instructional design process and macro-micro objectives model. The participants were asked to comment on the approaches, and to add, disagree, reject, adapt them in the process of answering the research question. With regards to the first approach the participants had problems with the term "instruction" as it indicated a rigid transmission of set knowledge. This conception of teaching was contradictory to their own understanding of their occupation. They did not discard the instructional model completely as they saw use in particularly the learner analysis section of the approach. The participants however grappled with two concepts, that of critical consciousness and students' experience. The concern with critical consciousness was, 'whose critical consciousness?', that of the teacher or the students? They initially also had a limited understanding of students' experience. Subsequent discussion and debate resolved the misconceptions when they gained a clearer understanding of the

term 'cultural capital' as explained by some of the participants. While considering the important issues to be addressed when looking at materials development, the participants were also in touch with the reality of their endeavours. This reality included that there was a need for their students to be successful at the end of the academic year and that materials should be constructed in such a way that they would appeal to students.

The macro-objectives, as outlined earlier by Giroux (1988), which distiguish between productive and directive knowledge, insist on making the hidden curriculum explicit and developing critical consciousness with students. were accepted as the important aspects to consider when developing curriculum materials. They also noted, after developing a schematic representation of their insight into materials development, that it should be regard as a process, not an end product as this would allow other teachers to influence the design depending on their objective conditions.

CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE DISCOURSE:

If I look at the root question in the research questions, namely, how do we as teachers address the inter-relatedness of language, education, culture and economics when confronting teaching materials, I would be hard-pressed to find a direct

answer enmeshed in the discourse outlined above. To pose such a question to teachers would also take for granted that teachers agree that language, culture, economics and education are indeed inter-related. This study did not make that assumption, it allowed for teachers to discover the inter-relatedness themselves and give examples based on their own experiences. Hence the importance of the sub-questions in the study.

Using the sub-questions as a guide and developing our own questions [APPENDIX 1] as a basis for discussion, I can conclude that the participants did show that language, education, culture, and economics are inter-related. The disparity in the amounts spent on the education of blacks and whites in South Africa is a direct cause of the lack of resources and overcrowded conditions mentioned by the participants. With a much higher overall drop-out rate than their white counterparts, students at the schools included in the study also register a low pass rate at the end of their school careers. These students are then required to compete with white students who: 1) have had more resources available to them, 2) grew up in supportive environments with English as home-language, 3) grew up in an economic environment that favours the person with a good command of English. Instead of the critical emphasis being on the above disparity and basic inequalities extant to

the South African educational context, the focus of the discourse was on searching for alternatives. There was agreement with Hartshorne (1988) that apartheid education has failed the white community as well. The debate therefore did not centre around a call for "equal education", but on a conceptualization of "People's Education for people's power" within the limits of their own experiences as English Second language teachers at high schools based in two different apartheid created education departments.

It is within this context that the participants recognized the inter-relatedness of language, culture, education, and economics, not as information gathered through readings, although this contributed a great deal in directing the thoughts of the participants, but through a process of critical reflection. They also realized that although they work in different departments, supposedly to serve different needs of different communities, they had a lot in common. They reverted to similar strategies of crisis management in order to make their teaching relevant and worthwhile to their students. More importantly, they realized that their feelings, thoughts and aspirations are well documented in the literature to which they have limited access.

I would argue that through their reflections, the participants raised several issues which directly and indirectly answered the research questions. By pointing to the hierarchial nature of the education system with which they are involved, they were questioning, like Giroux (1983), the very nature of schools which have become mere instructional sites. They are seen as instructional sites because teachers have been removed from the arena of conception and asked only to execute the dictates of administrators through 'curriculum packages', deskilling teachers in the process (Apple, 1988). Their disempowerment within this process reminded them of the imbalanced power relationship existing between teachers and students. This insight was informed by Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) who view power as both a negative and positive force. This led the participants to reflect more deeply on a process of empowerment. One where mutual transformation occurs within the learning-teaching environment and student empowerment becomes an outcome of teacher empowerment (Yonemura, 1986: Lazarus, 1990).

As part of the process towards developing a critical discourse the participants critically reflected on student resistance. This they did by reflecting on the class positions of teachers and their role in society (Harris, 1982). The debate concerning teachers' class position helped develop a greater insight into the concept of cultural capital;

the cultural capital of students as well as teachers. That students should play an important role in the reformulation of the education system was indicated by the wish of the participants to consult with students in the form of the questionnaire. There was agreement to regard all teachers and students as intellectuals but that teachers should aspire to become transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1988). As transformative intellectuals teachers would be constantly aware of the non-neutrality of the curriculum (Apple, 1988). Their consciousness would interrogate the ideologically saturated nature of language (Ndebele, 1987; Alexander,1989; Connolly, 1983). Becoming transformative intellectuals would change the way teachers look at themselves and their work. This notion extended to deliberations above participants changed views regarding "respect" for teachers which was in fact fear. Another necessity realized through the discussion was that of forming alliances with parents and students (Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985). As transformative intellectuals teachers would contribute a great deal to initiatives within the National Education Coordinating Committee, particularly in the language policy commissions which have been set up already.

The participants felt that the primary aspects to consider when looking at materials for use in the classroom would be the interrogation and critical evaluation of the knowledge

itself. The knowledge found in such materials should not be accepted as given. They were in agreement with Giroux (1988) who suggests the concepts of productive and directive knowledge, explicating the hidden curriculum and developing the critical consciousness of students. With the understanding however, that 'more political' does not necessarily mean 'more progressive'. Teaching methodologies should reflect the needs and interests of the students and attempts should be made to make materials as presentable as possible. I want to argue that the participants were indeed empowered through this process. The discourse that was generated provided them with a conceptual understanding of their work environment and provided the critical groundwork necessary for further research work. They could do the research themselves, as collective groups within their classrooms, or schools as part of the ongoing work of the NECC, or assist researchers and academics at other institutions. They will be able to read or interpret educational research with the critical understanding necessary for such a task.

THE CRITICAL DISCOURSE AND PEOPLE'S EDUCATION:

An example of empowered discourse which reflects the insight of the participants and their ability to locate language

within its broader political context is to be found in the following quotation which was used before:

> English is not the property of the imperialists only. We also use it. I don't envisage a situation where we're going to sit together at a table like this. What is going to determine the English that's going to be spoken is to be linked to the whole power relations. [Howard - 15/11/90]

Mashamba (1990) makes an important point that is related to Howard's comment above. For Mashamba, 'people's power' is not equivalent to 'political power'. The latter can only be reached through

> national liberation from apartheid rule and national oppression. People's power in this sense refers to the control and authority that people strive to achieve and exercise during the process of struggle for national liberation and social emancipation. (p. 13)

People's Education therefore promotes a situation where people engage in the seizing and taking control of their lives in the process of struggle even <u>before</u> liberation. He says that people who "seize and exercise people's power in this sense are pioneers of freedom". It is within this context that the

question of power relations is raised alongside the notion of a 'project of possibility' where empowerment is understood to be "enabling those who have been silenced to speak" (Simon, 1987). This study has enabled the voices of a few teachers to be heard. Voicing their opinions not in a void but grappling with concepts such as "people", "empowerment", "power" and "ideology". This is probably where the strength of studies of this nature, within the context of the People's Education discourse, lies. Teachers should be equipped to, not only talk sense <u>with</u> concepts, but also how to talk sense <u>about</u> them.

This study has also started a process where teachers can consider the development of a People's English that will help to expose the inequalities and also explore alternative possibilities (Peirce, 1989) in the pursuance of a just, non-racial, non-sexist, and democratic society. A teachers journal, as suggested by the participants, that can act as one particular vehicle in this process, has the possibility of contributing to the creation of a critical culture within the ranks of teachers. The participants now also see the necessity of building alliances and operating within existing structures of the National Education Coordinating Committee. Teachers' input at the level of policy formation is now regarded as imperative.

In terms of developing a conceptual understanding of People's Education, the participants have started a process of grappling with the concepts that are frequently used within such a framework. In order for People's Education to take proper root at school level, in a way that would benefit everybody involved, teacher, students, as well as parents, teachers should develop a type of collegiality where schools discuss, design, conduct, evaluate, and experiment with their teaching. This study was an attempt to initiate such an environment and based on the reactions of the participants, it seems possible to reach this goal as long as we are aware of the pitfalls of "collegiality" which can act to transform conditions as well as maintain the status quo.

The discourse has also shown how People's Education in South Africa is developing into a particular "critical pedagogy", where schools are recognized as political sites. It is within such a critical pedagogy that this study, I want to argue, makes its contribution. A contribution towards developing People's Education into a pedagogy that will be a strategic and practical task.

One very encouraging aspect, emanating from the process of the study, is the commitment of the participants to a continuation of this process. They indicated this during the debates and

discussions as well as at the end of the project when they filled out an evaluation form [APPENDIX 5].

EVALUATION BY PARTICIPANTS:

I will comment on the nature of the evaluation form in the next section when I discuss the research methodology, for now I will limit my comments to the 'what' they indicated on these forms. Half of the participants found the sessions interesting and helpful and the other half found them exciting and educational. Although they assessed the study differently, the general evaluation was positive. Additional comments to the question of how they found the study in general included, "an awakening experience", "thought-provoking", and "enriching".

The second part of the evaluation form was directed at the articles which the participants were asked to read. Two of them felt that all the articles were interesting and relevant. Others were partial to the ones focusing on teachers and on objectives model to materials development. The only article they indicated to have had any difficulty with was the one on language by Ndebele (1987) for the reasons stated in chapter six. They all indicated that they benefitted from being part of the process and the following comments are the reasons given by them. These comments were taken from the evaluation

forms and the participants were not asked to write their names on the forms.

> I never thought that English Second Language Teachers shared the same problems and experiences.
>
> The process illustrated a way of setting up "subject groups" to tackle specific subject related problems as well as general problems.
>
> I feel that I have now been furnished with the tools so essential to discovering new methods and deeper objectives to pedagogics.
>
> The mere sharing of ideas with people who have the same interests is very enriching.

They were then asked to indicate what kind of changes they would make, assistance they would need, if they were asked to duplicate the study at their schools. All of them felt that more teachers should be involved in such a process because more people would benefit. Some of them indicated the need for an "outside" person to help with the planning and strategizing as well as with the work involved in such a project, for example, transcribing deliberations and getting copies to everybody. Another form of assistance asked for by

one of the participants, was 'guidelines' for local initiative. The participant felt that if an outline and general direction of such a study could be provided, teachers at schools could discuss and set up the study themselves. They also referred to the availability of time to engage in a study of this nature and deciding on the best time of the year to embark on such a project. Some of the final comments of the participants indicate their insight and commitment to future work in their field.

> Educational research often overlooks the primary schools. One gets the impression that the primary school is unimportant but many of the problems encountered by secondary school students have their origins in the primary schools.
>
> Time and other commitments played an important role in shaping the amount of input and preparation given to the different sessions.
>
> This process has certainly inspired me to emerge from my silent cocoon.
>
> More of these discussions are needed and should be an ongoing thing and whatever is shared in the meetings must

be circulated to other teachers in the form of an English Teaching magazine.

REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The focus of this research has been on exploring the development of a critical discourse amongst English second language teachers in South Africa, but participatory research as a research methodology also merits some concluding considerations. I will not try to critique or discuss participatory research in general, but will concentrate on those aspects which pertain particularly to the development of my own research. I will consider the usefulness of participatory research as a research methodology for the purposes of this study. I also will assess and comment on some of its claims and problems in the light of my own experiences, focusing particularly on the participatory and emancipatory nature of the research methodology and my role as participant researcher. This is followed by some recommendations regarding the use of participatory research in educational settings.

USEFULNESS FOR THIS STUDY:

This quote, previously utilized to explain why this particular research methodology was chosen, will restate the intention of the research. One of the aims of participatory research is;

> to produce a collective understanding of the local situation which can lead to action on problems directly and immediately affecting participants in the research effort. (Society for Participatory Research in Asia, 1982, p. 38)

This study has enabled the participants to develop not only a conceptual understanding of their immediate surroundings but also to produce knowledge. The production of knowledge is central to participatory research. This knowledge was gained not on the naive assumption that things will change merely because they participated, but the participants themselves indicated that change will only occur through their continued involvement in a "process" towards change. They were also volunteers engaged within an environment where they were free to reject theories that they disagreed with or objected to (Fay, 1987). The participants were not 'coerced' in any way to say the things they said during the discussions. The discourse also spurred the participants on to action such as using a newly acquired model for materials development,

future cooperation with other teachers, intended contributions to a teachers journal, and working in structures outside of the school setting. If that is the case then the study has fulfilled the requirement of "catalytic validity" as proposed by Lather (1986). The idea with pointing out criterias for "validity" is not an attempt to establish the "scientific" reliability of the study. The study did not set out to consider all the variables that might influence the outcomes of the deliberations and does not claim to be an empirical study.

Based on the contemporary contributions of participatory research as outlined earlier by Tandon (1989), I want to argue that the study has indeed contributed in the areas mentioned. The knowledge of the participants was what made the research possible and through the reflections they managed to refine their analytical capacities and apply that to their particular worldviews. The knowledge produced in this study will continue to remain their knowledge and their new found perspectives will be an asset to themselves, their students, and progressive organisations within educational arena in South Africa. The participants themselves concluded that they needed to be transformed in order to effect real change, this realization is both revolutionary and encouraging.

The collective nature of producing knowledge and insight is also what distinguished this process from other forms of research. In the People's Education discourse there is mention made of co-operative work and active participation. How this is to be done is often not clear and I want to argue that this study, using a participatory methodology, is one way of overcoming that particular problem. In terms of in-service work, teachers feel more comfortable knowing that they have contributed towards their own understanding of concepts and therefore become owners of innovations. This became clear in the discussions with the teachers who felt that they had much more to learn but that the way in-service programmes are generally run exclude them from the discovery process and expect them to adopt and implement new "pre-packaged" strategies for use in the classrooms. Another important factor that this methodology covered, is that of "demystifying" research. Traditional research methods which reduce those involved and being "researched" to numbers and conditions as variables have mystified the research process to a realm of "expert knowledge". It is this knowledge that they then expect teachers to accept as the "scientifically" correct information to utilize in the classroom.

The participants who volunteered to be part of this study feel empowered after having been part of this process. I refer here to comments they made at the end of the project. They

want the process to continue and not only be part of it but to include more teachers in further discussions. The methodology also introduced teachers to a form of dialogue, referred to earlier (Gitlin, 1990), where they were not asked to compete with one another but focus on the subject being discussed. With the emphasis shifting from the person to the topic under discussion.

Developing a critical discourse is a goal that can shift its posts if not tackled properly. One needs to consider questions like, whose critical discourse, critical of what and whom, as well as why a critical discourse? The participatory methodology enabled this process by allowing the necessary space for the above questions to be raised and addressed.

CLAIMS AND PROBLEMS OF PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH:

The research methodology used in this study, namely participatory research, which is located within a qualitative research tradition provided the study with the theoretical basis to explore the development of a collective discourse rather than feel compelled to isolate empirical data. But as Robinson (1989) puts it, "the characteristic features of qualitative research present their own problems with regard to the interpretation of data" (p. 203). The research dealt mainly with 'soft data', although it did not exclude the

possibility of using the questionnaire to gather more data to support or contradict the perceptions of the participants.

I have indicated at the outset of this study that my experience as a teacher has influenced my decision to embark on this kind of study and I am convinced that I had contributed to a large extent towards the outcome of the deliberations. This kind of intervention on the part of the researcher is open to accusations of being "subjective". I do not regard this as a weakness in the study, nor a weakness that is particular to qualitative research. As participant researcher I have attempted to direct the discussions in a particular way, but the overall nature of the deliberations was characterized by input from the participants and them deciding on the direction of the debates. The study was also based on the premise that just as there is no neutral education there is no neutral research and supported Lather (1986) who argues that theories with social transformation as a goal should be open-ended, nondogmatic, informing, and grounded in the circumstances of everyday life.

What is of some concern in the study, and of participatory research as well, is the question of interpreting the data. The inclusion of a section called "reflections on reflections" was an attempt in this study to involve the participants in the interpretation of what they had said. I would have

preferred to use this procedure throughout the study but it was found to be a time-consuming and lengthy measure to involve the participants. Another attempt was made to invite an outsider to act as "triangulator" and comment on the nature of the discussions. This was impractical because of the times the group met and the availability of people qualified to do this. The reality of the field research was also evident in the inability of the Language Commission, where this study was based, to include a review of this study on their agenda. This commission, which as indicated in Chapter Three, is divided into five interest groups, has a broad agenda but the crisis in education within the country often dictates the immediate focus of its attention and action.

Participatory research promotes a collective approach to interpretation of the data. It does not state clearly how this is to be done or if it is always possible. Collective interpretation of data depends largely on the capabilities and willingness of the participants as well as time needed to do it. Time, academic and financial constraints prohibited the direct involvement of the participants in the analysis of the data but it was agreed that should any part of this study be written up in another form, other than for academic purposes, they should be consulted. Documentation to this regard (APPENDIX 6) was signed by the participants.

The following comment from my field-notes helped as a guideline for my conduct through most of the discussions. After the first session, one of the participants said the following;

> What I liked about our first meeting was the fact that you let the discussion flow. You rarely interrupted us and only pointed out the crucial issues. [Edgar - 13/10/90 - fieldnotes]

This comment, made early in the study, cannot account for my conduct throughout the process but as I stated before, I tried to use it as a yardstick for the rest of my involvement. The closest any of them came to evaluating the study was through the evaluation form they had to fill out. This form (APPENDIX 5) had several limitations. Limitations in that it did not ask them to explain in any detail <u>what</u> they had acquired through the process. It also did not ask them to comment on my role in the study nor did they have to state the follow-up steps they were going to take in consolidating what they had learned and developed. In retrospect, I can now say that I could have utilized the evaluation form more fully by including the aspects alluded to above.

Participatory Research encourages a collective and collaborative action that can lead to the empowerment of the

group as well as individuals. This study took its lead from that notion and monitored the contribution of the collective rather than individuals. There was however the tension during one stage when two of the participants were absent, they happened to be the only females in the group and this resulted in a lack of discussion on the gender aspect of teachers. This would indicate that as individuals, participants make particular contributions because of the different cultural baggage they bring to the setting. None of the participants in this study dominated the discussions at any point but they fed off each others' contributions in a way that can only be described as positive. However, I would be the first to recognize that as individuals the participants had certain convictions, feelings, values, ambitions and passions. Whether these thoughts and emotions were shared by the other participants cannot be established as they were not monitored as individuals.

I would recommend, in light of the above comments, a practical strategy for allowing participants to assist in the analysis process. This might mean extending the research period in order to accommodate reflections after every session. The involvement of a "triangulator", who would observe and comment on specific issues such as the role of the participant researcher and general participation within sessions could be helpful. This person or people need not be present at all the

sessions. Lastly, it would be important, as mentioned earlier, to use the evaluation form/questionnaire or some other method of evaluation at the end of the process to its full potential.

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION:

Participatory research, with its roots in Adult Education, is not often utilized in the formal education setting. Qualitative methodologies which are more common in this setting are Case Studies, Ethnographic Observation, Action Research, Field Studies, and Participant Observation Research. There are also a growing number of teacher-researcher "movements" developing across the world. These are encouraging developments but I want to argue that researchers, and more so those involved in the teacher-researcher movements, often do not allow enough time for general reflection and developing the discourse of teachers to a level where teachers can interpret and act critically in not only classroom activities, but also in the broader environment of school and community. Participatory Research, in my view, with its empowering focus and potential, is an important process needed before embarking on a particular Case Study or Action Research that is focused on a specific learning or teaching strategy. The empowered participants will be able to contribute more meaningfully once they have conceptualized

their own human potential and the contradictions abound in education and society.

Those who promote, for example, Action Research as a methodology for addressing "technical" problems in classrooms at schools say that its (Action Research) best chance of survival is if the "technical" rather than "emancipatory" possibilities are stressed. Who should make this decision? How are participants empowered to come to such a decision? How would the technical possibilities of any type of research benefit teachers more than its emancipatory potential? These questions can be practically addressed through a participatory process where the results are owned by the collective rather than the individual researcher.

As indicated earlier, there exists the potential for tension between the needs of the individual and that of the collective in a participatory process. This tension should be identified early in the process through a form of dialogue that will address and confront those issues rather than deny its existence. In the South African educational context where teachers are more often than not involved in "crisis-management", a participatory methodology could be found to be time consuming and not focused enough on an immediate problem. Time has also been a limiting factor in this study. However, I am convinced that it is possible that schools, especially

those in South Africa, where in-service training policies seem not to exist, could arrange its schedule in such a way to accommodate a participatory reflection process as part of their staff development initiatives. While recommending this kind of initiative at school level I wish to emphasize the importance of the critical nature of such a process. I am therefore not merely promoting a kind of collegiality that is set up to help the status quo function more efficiently. The process must lead to an awareness of the necessity to link up and form alliances with other groups at other schools or institutions so that ideas and information can be exchanged.

At the level of teacher education, institutions can make a start with this process by exposing students to collective work. The debate regarding the relationship between theory and practice should be initiated at that level and the students equipped, if not with the answers but with the critical skills necessary to discuss and develop with other teachers the concept of "a praxis".

Lastly, I wish to recommend to those who would be interested in embarking on Participatory Research in education, to find ways of incorporating the voice of students. The questionnaire should be considered as only one of the ways to do this. Another possibility could be a to organise a group

of students into a parallel research group which would focus on the students' perception of school and society.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This research began with the general idea that teachers are capable of generating a critical discourse that will enable them to develop their own understanding of the work teachers engage in every day. The nature of schooling does not normally provide for the development of such a discourse and the intention of this study was to explore the possibilities of a process that could achieve this.

My interest in exploring such a process stems from a personal as well as a shared concern about the nature of education and schooling in South Africa. My teaching experience challenged me to reconsider my perceptions of teaching, the latter having been inherited primarily from my own learning experience at school, and to seek alternatives that would help me and my colleagues appreciate ourselves more in terms of the role we can play in the transformation of the country. The assumption that formal education can be used as a transformative agent is rooted in an understanding of the work of critical theorists like Freire, Giroux, McLaren, Shor and others as well as active involvement in the struggle for change in South Africa

where schools and educators have forced the regime to retreat and make concessions. This assumption is also saturated with the realization of the limitations embedded in such a transformational process. It takes cognizance of the warnings of Brosio (1990) and Senese (1991) who prescribe caution in the empowerment project.

I did not begin the research with a particular hypothesis which needed "supporting". Based on readings, discussions and my own teaching experience, I felt that a collective effort on the part of teachers would facilitate a process of discovery, sharing, and mutual stimulation. I wanted to explore this process more deeply, and did so by monitoring the development of the discourse. My experience as a teacher also informed me that my involvement in such a project would have to be central as teachers would not allow mere observation by an outsider. If teachers had been asked to do this on their own they would lose interest, not because of a lack of concern on their part, but because of the many demands that are put to teachers. Hence the choice of a participatory research methodology. Although the study found a commitment with the participants, it is mindful of the paradoxical nature of educational change. As Fullan (1982) puts it.

> Being deeply committed to a particular change in itself provides no guidelines for attaining it ... Having no

vision at all is what makes for educational bandwagons. (p. 88)

This process, I want to argue, is a possible way of developing a vision. In order for it to be continued and broadened to include more teachers it must have a vision of where it is going to, but more importantly, it must also be rooted in the reality of the present. There are immediate challenges that need to be faced in terms of classroom activities as well as longterm strategies that need a strong foundation on which to build an education system which responds to the needs of the people and not of the bureaucracy.

IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES:

Several recommendations have been made earlier regarding the research methodology on how to refine the process and allow for more participation. An interesting follow up to this study, would be to monitor the participants' use of the knowledge produced here. Classroom interaction with students should be prioritized as this would not only strengthen the position of the participants in their various settings, but also potentially draw in more teachers. What is basically suggested here is the formal application of the 'modified' macro-micro objectives model in the classroom setting. The participants should be encouraged to experiment with the model

by using several "teaching" strategies or methodologies such as the interactive method, group-work, and the transmission mode. These 'experiments' should then be discussed in an organized way within, for example, the Language Commission of the NECC or the Teachers' Union. In this way the focus will be on real classroom needs of teachers.

Teacher Training institutions could play an important role in this process. By providing broader forums for debate - the emphasis here is on debate because too often the 'experts' from these institutions provide only pre-packaged ideas - with stimulating inputs, these institutions can play an important role in establishing an in-service culture that is non-existent at the moment.

LONGTERM CHALLENGES:

The building of a new education system is not an easy task. Nor should it be a task left to the politicians, 'experts' at universities, and administrators only. This is important because policy change does not mean that change will naturally occur in practice. It is important that teachers become involved in policy decisions, not only as practitioners, but as transformative intellectuals, so that informed policy is based on the reality of practice. To this end there should be

an ongoing process of developing a critical discourse amongst teachers towards the creation of transformative intellectuals.

The Teachers Journal, alluded to earlier, should be critically investigated before using it as a vehicle for change because it can also become an elitist instrument that will exclude the very audience it wants to reach. More importantly, at this stage in the building of a People's Education for people's power, is the creation of alliances between all institutions and individuals who share an interest in education. The National Education Coordinating Committee with its various regional structures can facilitate this process and teachers should be invited to participate either as organized groups or individuals. The teachers should be equipped to develop collectively a critical pedagogy that will translate into a People's Education for new, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa.

CONCLUSION:

This study has been a challenging one for me. Both in terms of the real political issues that were addressed and the particular methodology that was chosen to develop the research. By locating the research within the educational struggle in South Africa and the National Education Coordinating Committee in particular, the potential exists for

an organized development towards a critical pedagogy based on a critical discourse that is not only shared by "practitioners" but grounded in their experience. I am also aware of the scope of such an undertaking and the array of challenges which teachers face in South Africa. It is within this "crisis" situation however, that I feel teachers to be the biggest resource on which to build our hopes and our future.

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APPENDIX 1

WORKSHOP/SEMINAR 1 + 2

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE "SUGGESTED" QUESTIONS AND ISSUES WHICH WILL BE DEALT WITH DURING THE FIRST TWO SESSIONS. PEOPLE SHOULD FEEL FREE TO ADD TO OR ALTER ANY OF THE QUESTIONS.

THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE FIRST STAGE IS; TO ALLOW FOR A BROAD TENTATIVE REFLECTION ON CURRENT/PRESENT CONDITIONS AT THE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS. THIS IS TENTATIVE, BECAUSE WE WILL BE REFLECTING CONTINUOUSLY DURING THIS PROGRAMME, BUT THIS WILL GIVE US AN IDEA OF THE DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES IN OUR VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS.

[1] School/Setting

(a) What physical limitations do you have at your school? e.g. textbooks, large classes, teaching load etc.

(b) Is staff generally supportive of innovations?

(c) Is language (English) regarded as an important subject?

(d) Has there been any "across the curriculum" involvement with teachers of other subjects?

[2] Teaching English

(a) What are the major concerns/problems with regards to teaching English?

(b) What are some of the innovations/if any/ you have implemented or experimented with?

(c) How would you describe your teaching methods?

(d) Have you ever discussed or workshopped the English curriculum with colleagues?

(e) Do you follow the recommendations/suggestions supplied by your department?

(f) How many in-service programmes have you attended? What was the nature of these sessions?

(g) Are the textbooks in any way related to the requirements of the curriculum?

(h) Do you use textbooks (language/grammar)? If yes, how do you use them?

(i) What problems do you encounter that are specifically related to literature?

[3] Students

(a) What are students' attitudes towards English - as school subject?

(b) Are their attitudes formed by their learning experiences? e.g. exposure/non-exposure at primary school or present conditions and experiences at secondary school?

(c) Is there a tendency to fall back to 'mother-tongue' communication? If so. why do YOU think this happens?

(d) How do students view the role of English in the broader society?

FORMAT

Everybody will be asked to comment on some or all of these questions: People will then be allowed to ask questions for clarification, which would be followed by general discussion on chosen issues.

Please remember that you can add to these questions. If you wish to do so, or get clarity before the first session, call me at least 3 days before we meet.

MARK.

APPENDIX 2

INFORMATION SHEET

NAME : .....

ADDRESS : .....

.....

.....

PHONE : .....

SCHOOL : .....

PRINCIPAL : .....

PHONE : .....

TEACHING EXPERIENCE (YRS) : .....

ENGLISH (YRS) : .....

PRESENT CLASS(ES) : .....

TEACHER TRAINING

TEACHERS' COLLEGE \ \

UNIVERSITY \ \

TEACHERS COLLEGE + UNIVERSITY \ \

NONE OF THE ABOVE \ \

I THE UNDERSIGNED, HEREBY AGREE THAT THE ABOVE INFORMATION CAN BE USED IN A PUBLICATION, REFERRING TO ME BY MY (1) FIRST NAME \ \ (2) FULL NAMES \ \ (3) PSEUDONYM \ \.

SIGNATURE .....

APPENDIX 3

LANGUAGE COMMISSION - RESEARCH PROJECT

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

1. Name in full:.....

2. Date of birth:.....

3. Place of birth:(Town/City):.....

4. School:.....

5. Standard:.....

6. Previous Standard:.....

7. Name of Parent/Guardian (Mr.....

(Mrs.....

8. Is your father actively employed? (Yes.....|No.....)
Is your mother actively employed? (Yes.....|No.....)
Is your guardian actively employed? (Yes.....|No.....)

9. Other members of your family (brothers' names)

.....

.....

.....

.....

10. (Sisters' names)

.....

.....

.....

.....

11. In which suburb/town are you

resident?.....

12. Is it a rented dwelling/house or purchased? (R.....¦P.....)

13. How many bedrooms does the house contain?

.....

14. Do you have a study? (Yes.....¦No.....)

15. What is your home language?.....
English/Afrikaans/Xhosa (Other)

16. What language do your parents' friends

speak?.....

17. What language do your friends

speak?.....

18. What language do you speak to your friends at school?

.....

19. What language do you

prefer?.....

20. Do you read the newspaper daily? (Yes.....¦No.....) if yes (21)

21. Is this an English/Afrikaans/Xhosa

newspaper?.....

22. Have you/family started a library (collection of books)

at home? (Yes.....¦No.....)

23. If (22) is Yes. How many books have you collected for

your library?.....

24. Are the books mostly

English/Afrikaans/Xhosa?.....

25. Why the particular language preference?

.....

.....

26. How many books do you read per month?.....

27. How many of these books are in
English.....

Afrikaans.....

Xhosa.....

28. How often do you visit the cinema?.....

.....

29. Which is you favourite English T.V. programme?.....

.....

W h y ?
.....

.....

.....

30. Do you often listen to political discussions on T.V. ?

(Yes.....¦NO.....)

31. What is your language preference for (31)?

.....

W h y ?
.....

.....

.....

32. What aspect of English do you enjoy <u>most</u> at school?

Written Work:..... Oral:.....

Language Study/Grammar:..... Literature :.....

33. Why do specifically enjoy this/these aspects(s)?

.....

.....

.....

.....

34. Why do you <u>not</u> enjoy the other aspects so much?

.....

.....

.....

.....

35. What <u>don't</u> you like about the teaching of English at your school?.....

.....

.....

.....

36. Should you have children one day, what language (s) would you like them to speak?

.....

.....

37. Why do you prefer the languages stated in (36)?.....

.....

.....

.....

38. People who try to pronounce words the "English" way when speaking English are called "snobs". Do you agree with this?
(Yes.....|No.....) If you agree, why?

.....

.....

.....

39. Is it true that many people speak a localized English - Slang?

(Yes.....¦No.....)

40. Why do you think they prefer to speak slang?

.....

.....

.....

41. Would you say that you, including most other people in your area understand that slang?
(Yes.....¦No.....)

42. If yes, (41) Why is it easily understood?

.....

.....

.....

43. Do English Teachers discourage slang at your school, especially in the classroom? (Yes.....¦No.....)

44. If yes (43) Why do YOU think they do this?

.....

.....

.....

45. Is it more important, in your opinion, to speak fluently rather than grammatically correct English [.....] or to adhere to the grammatical rules of English at all times [.....]

46. Give reasons for your choice in (45)

.....

.....

.....

47. Which language (s) would you prefer to be the OFFICIAL language(s) in a NEW SOUTH AFRICA?

.....

48. Why?.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.

APPENDIX 4

ESCAPING FROM A WORDLESS WORLD

ADULTS LEARN TO READ AND WRITE

Lenyenye is a village near Tzaneen in the Northen Transvaal. It is very dusty and hot. In the shade of a maroela tree a group of women sit in a circle around a blackboard.

They have come to learn to read and write in Sepedi. One woman can't come to class toady. Her baby is sick. The women discuss the problems of the sick child and the teacher writes the word "ngwana" (child) on the board. The women look and together they learn a new word.

Like the women of Lenyenye, many adults cannot read or write. In South Africa more than eight million men and women are illiterate. Many cannot read or write in their own language, others cannot read or write in English.

These are the unlucky ones who could not go to school, or who dropped out early on. Poverty kept them out of the classroom.

FEELING POWERLESS

People who are illiterate have to rely on others. Being illiterate means being frightened of making mistake or losing a job. It is easy to be lied to, robbed, or misunderstood if you can't read your own form at the bank, read street names, prices of goods, warning signs or even your own letters.

'I am in charge of deliveries in a big company. I cannot read instructions, maps or invoices. I have managed so far but fear one day they will find out', said a worker who lives in the city. 'Whenever I have to write something at the post office or the bank, I have to ask other people to help me.'

'I cannot understand the kilos and grams on the scale', said a meat cutter who works at a steakhouse in Johannesburg. 'When I cut the meat I guess the right weight. I fear my employer will find out.'

LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE

The government does almost nothing to help adults who want to learn to read and write. But there are organisations who give literacy classes to adults. People learn to read and write in their own language, before they can learn to read and write in English. Some groups teach 'vernacular' literacy, others

English literacy.

Around the area of Tzaneen there are sixty classes teaching reading and writing to more than 600 adults. Most are learning to read and write in Sepedi and Tsonga, some to read and write in English.

These classes were started by a literacy group called 'Learn and Teach', who are in Johannesburg. They also publish a very good magazine for adult learners, called Learn and Teach.

EACH ONE TEACH ONE

Learn and Teach wants people in literacy classes to work together. They also want people to help each other in other ways. For example the women in Lenyenye who are learning to read and write Sepedi have also formed a creche.

CHANGING PEOPLE'S LIVES

People's lives change when the world of words is opened to them. Selema Malatji attends a Learn and Teach literacy class in Tzaneen. This is her story.

I came to Learn and Teach literacy classes because I travel around this area a lot. There is a white farmer nearby who has a notice on his gate warning that his dogs bite. Many people cannot read this notice and go in this gate. I could not read. I went in the gate and the dogs bit me and tore my skirt to pieces. There was nothing I could do about it.

Another problem is that people read your letters incorrectly. My husband wrote me a letter saying that he would send me money soon. I took this letter to a woman to read it to me. This woman told me that my husband was angry with me. He wrote I must pack my things, tale the children and leave the house ... My heart was very sore. When my husband came home he saw I was gone. He came to look for me. He asked me why I had left. I told him I was responding to his letter. He read the letter and told me the woman had lied. I was ashamed but there was nothing I could do. Now my eyes are open. I CAN SEE WORDS.

APPENDIX 5

EVALUATION FORM

Please be frank and honest when responding:

PROCESS

1. How did you find the discussion sessions?

   a) a total waste of time .....

   b) extremely boring .....

   c) fair but tedious .....

   d) interesting and helpful .....

   e) exciting and educational .....

   f) None of the above .....

   Own comments.....

   .....

   .....

2. Which of the articles impressed you the most/least

   a) Problems of teaching English in Soweto. ...../.....

   b) English Language (N. Ndebele) ...../.....

   c) People's English ...../.....

   d) Transformative Intellectuals ...../.....

   e) Class location of teachers ...../.....

   f) Revolutionary strategies ...../.....

   g) Instructional Process ...../.....

   h) Overcoming objectives model ...../.....

2.2. Why did you like that particular article and why did the other not impress you?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Do you feel that you benefitted in any way by being part of this process? Yes.....¦No.....

Why/Why not?.....

....

.....

.....

4. How would you suggest the process be changed, should it be repeated with other teachers?

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. Did you manage to read all the articles? Yes.....¦

No.....

6. Would you be able to run a similar programme at your school?

Yes.....¦No.....

7. If not, what would be the obstacles?

.....

.....

.....

8. If you need assistance (for above), what kind of

assistance?

.....

.....

.....

9. Additional comments:(attach page(s) if necessary).....

APPENDIX 6

RESEARCH PROJECT

CONSENT TO RELEASE INTERVIEW + DISCUSSION INFORMATION

I will allow Mark Abrahams to use the information from the discussions and interviews as part of the research project (academic) report (NECC) and publication.

I understand that I have a right to receive and review a written transcript of the proposed publication. After reviewing and discussing the transcript with Mark, I can suggest modifications for accuracy, clarity, or new information.

I wish to acknowledged/ not acknowledged as contributor to the publication.

Signature .....

Date .....