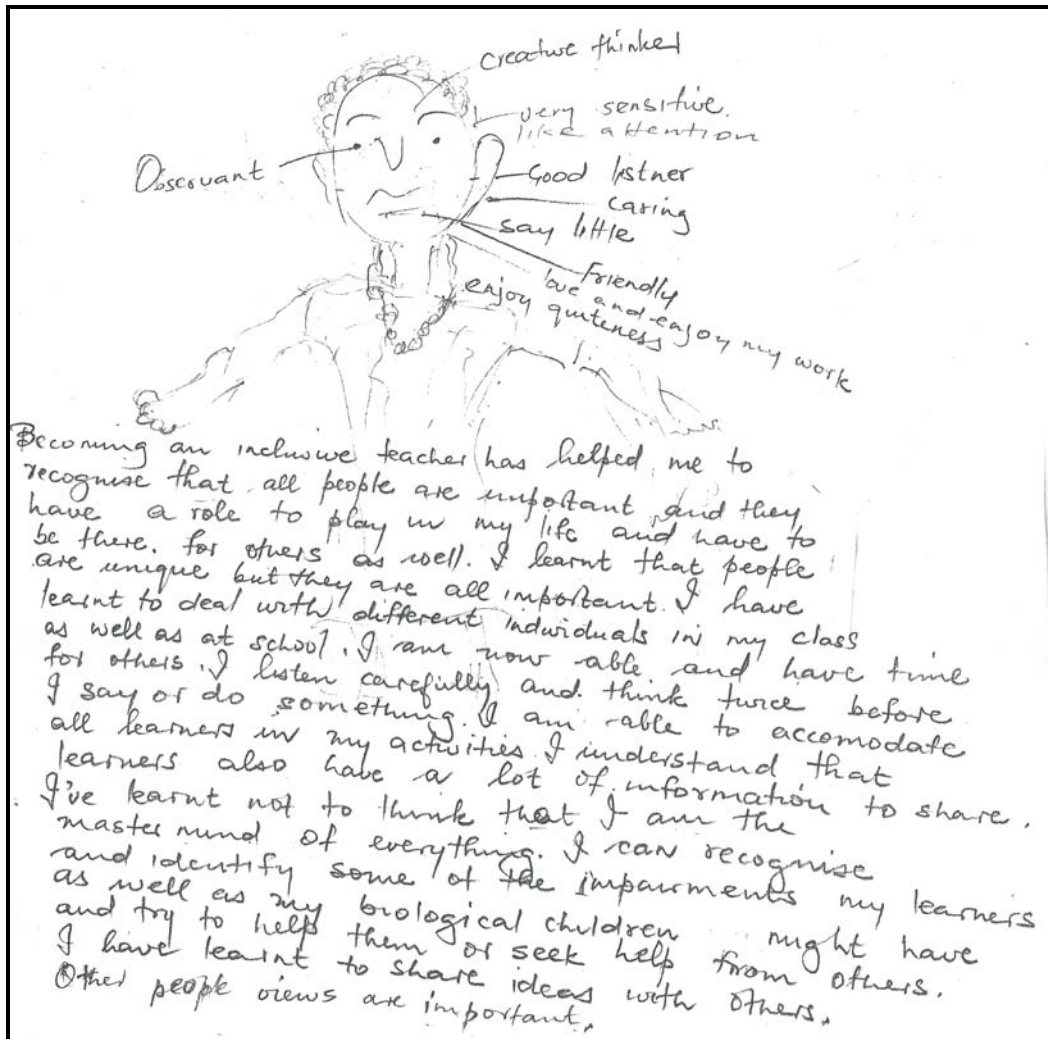# TEACHERS IN TRANSITION
- BECOMING INCLUSIVE PRACTITIONERS

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother, a remarkable woman

FRANCES ELLEN BOTHA

6 December 1921 – 11 April 2009

Frances Ellen Botha was born on 6 December 1921 with a hole in her heart, and the medical prognosis was that she would not survive. She was brought home from the hospital, her little body so small that she fitted into a size four shoe box. Miraculously she survived, and at the age of 32, underwent the necessary surgery to repair her heart – the first operation of its kind in South Africa – and then went on to live a long and full life. She was a great testament to overcoming the challenges that life handed her and coming out victoriously. She has been an incredible role model for all who knew her, taking hold of her life boldly and courageously, and appreciating and savoring each moment of each day. She was truly a remarkable woman.

But the most important legacy she leaves … is one of love. She had an enormous ability to love, spreading her warmth and love far and wide, touching everyone she crossed paths with in an unforgettable way. In spite of being born with a hole in her heart and the scars of such a major heart operation, she had a big heart, a strong and abundant heart. In spite of her size – she was a small and petite woman –she was a big person with a remarkable presence. She always chose life and living, showed her mettle in all she undertook, and had an enormously positive impact on all those she met.

She died on 11 April 2009 while I was on sabbatical intent on writing up this thesis. Despite the forty year age difference, she was my best friend – a privilege not many mothers and daughters experience. She will always be a huge part of who I am and the life I live. She will be with me in all the choices I make and the paths I walk on. Her memory and her love of life and people will continue to inspire me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

BY CANDIDATE

I, Antoinette D'amant, declare that:

- the research reported and the data presented in this thesis 'TEACHERS IN TRANSITION – BECOMING INCLUSIVE PRACTITIONERS, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work

- that all sources and citations from literature have been acknowledged in the text and referenced in full

- this thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university

Signed: ………………………………………………….

Date: 1 December 2009

Ethical considerations and concerns involved in the inclusion of photographs

At the outset of this thesis, I would like to highlight the issue of ethical considerations and concerns of research which utilises a visual methodology such as photo-voice. Such concerns and considerations are of paramount importance, as photographs clearly do not allow for anonymity of the subjects in the images. This issue was discussed with the groups of teachers who participated in this research, and they were instructed always to ask the permission of potential photograph-subjects before taking the photographs. The majority of photographs taken by participants were staged for the express purpose of representing an issue relevant to their journeys of transition from exclusion to inclusion. The photographs included in this thesis and taken by participants therefore, do not represent any real or actual situations of isolation, exclusion, discrimination or marginalization. The issue concerning the ownership and dissemination of the photographs was also discussed with participants. It was agreed that I could use, include and disseminate any of the photographs taken by the participants, even where participants clearly appear in the photographs. Where they appear in any negative situation, such as administering harsh words or corporal punishment to learners, it should be remembered that these were staged photographs and do not represent these teachers' actual classroom practices. Where I have included photographs that I have taken, I have done so merely to illustrate typical scenes in the researched , and to enable readers to 'see' the context referred to in the thesis. Where these images include recognisable people, this has not been done with the intention of presenting them in any negative, harmful or destructive way.

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ABSTRACT

Teachers in transition: Becoming inclusive practitioners

Despite the international shift to inclusive education, fundamental tensions and contradictions exist in most countries between stated policy and actual practice. An immediate concern is whether South Africa will add to this trend of adopting the rhetoric of inclusion at the expense of real reform.

Implementing inclusive education policy involves not only redefining teaching practices, but requiring teachers to develop an alternative sense of themselves, not only professionally, but also as individuals. This research investigates how 20 African rural KwaZulu-Natal teachers construct their personal and professional selves in the light of inclusive education, and how they negotiate the tensions and contradictions which emerge in the process of becoming inclusive practitioners. The use of authentic narratives as the main strategy of inquiry is an attempt to better comprehend the subjective, context-specific, lived experiences of teachers in transition.

Using an eclectic conceptual framework, my research leads me to recognise the complex and contingent nature of identity within the dynamic and highly complex character of the politics of difference and the politics of the personal. As teachers inhabit the murky terrain of transition, and negotiate their own transformative capacity, I am reminded of the unevenness of change, the multiplicity of factors which impact on identity construction, the diversity within and between individual teachers, and the necessity to resist reductionist, one-dimensional and linear assessments and interpretations of teachers in transition.

While some teachers are beginning to rethink the role of education in emancipatory terms, and take seriously their responsibility as change-agents in creating greater social and educational equity and inclusion in schools and classrooms, thereby suggesting a renewed hope in the development of a vision of the world which is not yet, other teachers are choosing to avoid the risks of engaging with inclusion on any deep level, and are simply adopting a thin veneer of inclusion in order to appease the expectations of inclusive policy. What emerges strongly is the realisation of the powerful influence of traditionally dominant, unequal relations of power in communities at large, and within the Department of Education itself, which disempower, demobilise and discourage teachers from challenging existing social and institutional

structures, embracing transition and renegotiating what they might become – teachers for greater social and educational equity and inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

During my seven years of working as a free-lance education consultant, my involvement in the teacher development components of various intervention programmes and pilot projects, enabled me to work very closely (predominantly hands-on and school-based) and consistently (for extended periods of time) with African teachers and Department of Education officials across three provinces of South Africa, the focus of which fell into the broad 'basket' of teacher transformation in the light of new education policies.

Most literature on inclusive education reveals a fundamental contradiction between stated policy and actual practice in classrooms and schools. It is my concern that transformation and transformative policy towards inclusion and social justice in South Africa's education system be not simply reduced to the dreaded status of dry rhetoric, and this led to my focusing this research on the murky terrain of contradictions and tensions between the 'real' - what is, and the 'ideal' - what could be.

Because implementing inclusive education policy involves not only redefining teaching practices, but that teachers develop an alternative sense of themselves, not only professionally but also as individuals, criticism has been levelled against policy initiatives which overlook the highly personal element of transition, which do not take into account the context and the agents of transformation (Harley, Barasa, Bertram and Pillay, 1998), and which do not pay sufficient attention to the current practices, realities, subjective experiences, personal beliefs and needs of the very individuals who are expected to bring changes into effect (Wearmouth, Edwards and Richmond, 2000). This research is an attempt to gain a better understanding of teachers in transition, by focusing on a sample of 20 African rural KwaZulu-Natal teachers' subjective understandings of themselves, their work, their lives, and the contexts in which they live and work. It aims to see teachers as people, rather than simply seeing them in terms of their roles as teachers (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Goodson, 1992). It is hoped that such an understanding will provide a basis for the planning and delivery of teacher development and support programmes which could marry the 'real' and the 'ideal', and perhaps begin a process of plotting a pathway towards successful transformation towards inclusion and inclusive education. Although my sample of participants comprises African

rural teachers, and the findings are therefore specific to "*these* people, in *this* place, *this* landscape" (Sacks, 2000, p.50), they reflect much of what other national and international research studies have found and concluded. To a large extent, my research reflects the experiences of a much broader spectrum of teachers, from South Africa and other countries, as they make sense of and attempt to adopt new inclusive education policies.

Chapter one serves as a review of the emergence of inclusion and inclusive education in South Africa, and literature related to how teachers respond to inclusion and the implementation of inclusive education. It traces the emergence of the liberal and progressive thinking attached to notions of inclusion and inclusive education, from the historical discourse of apartheid, which created a social landscape based on oppressive and exclusionary systems of social organisation, to the discourse of transformation, democracy, social justice and inclusion. It comprises a critical investigation of the role of inclusive education in transformation, in particular heeding the warnings of current international critiques of inclusion and inclusive education; reviewing research which highlights the contradiction between stated policy and actual practice; and understanding more clearly and critically what is needed for a pedagogy and politics of ethics, difference and democracy to be successful in South Africa. The chapter also explains my interest in the issue under research and outlines the purpose and significance of the research endeavour.

Chapter two focuses on the politics of the personal - teachers as the agents of change on the 'front-lines' of transformation (Mitchell, DeLange, Moletsane, Stuart and Buthelezi, 2005) towards inclusion and inclusive education. The chapter takes particular cognisance of the individual contexts of teachers, and presents an eclectic conceptual framework with which the complexity of factors which serve to hinder and facilitate transformation in teachers can be identified and understood. The sources, concepts and authors that I include in this conceptual framework are those I consider relevant to this particular research endeavour, and which inform my interpretation and understanding of the issues under investigation and have emerged from the data generated.

Teachers' journeys of transition, from roots of exclusion to fruits of inclusion, are indicative of social movements, which result from the interplay between policies of transformation, educational institutions and the power of identity. While it does not comprise a comprehensive review on

identity theories, this chapter highlights the pivotal role that the processes of ongoing identity formation, creation and construction, play in teachers' transitional journeys.

Adopting a politics of difference and individualisation is central to the intention to investigate how teachers inhabit this space of transition from exclusion to inclusion, and clearly speak out against homogeneity on all levels, including narrow essentialist and reductionist approaches to the study of identity and culture in contemporary postmodern times. It examines how and to what extent teachers have adopted, and are engaging with, inclusive attitudes, principles and practices. This research endeavour gives out a clear message that emphasis needs to rest on recognising and identifying the plurality of teachers' experiences of transition and their individual avenues of transformation, with all their contradiction, ambiguity, disconnection, fragmentation and incoherence.

The findings are reported in chapter four, the multi-vocality of the text comprising predominantly participants' narratives. Photographs and drawings punctuate the voices of the participants, but serve mainly to illustrate the stories and the reflections of the participants.

While wanting to present authentic voices and narratives of participants, my voice as author, as social critic and as a teacher and educator developer, must necessarily intrude. As much as this research is a tribute to the personal and individual journeys of my participants, it is also an intellectual and academic journey through this multi-perspective landscape of contemporary social struggles and conflicts (Castells, 1997). Chapters five and six therefore consist of my voice, in the discussion and interpretation of the data generated, and the theorising of this against a broader context and backdrop.

My interpretation of transcripts involves a search for thematic patterns which were allowed to emerge from the narratives themselves. Rather than using data to inform a codified pre-determined and pre-selected set of conceptualisations, my intention is that participants' narratives inform the conceptual framework. The process of reflection, interpretation and discussion of the textual data therefore directly inform the selection of theories and concepts, which comprise the conceptual and theoretical framework for this research. This allows a layer of intertextuality that would not be

available if I was grounded in a preconceived particularistic theoretical construction. I therefore had the freedom to experiment with a variety of different theories, concepts and modes of analysis, and with providing theoretical justification for what emerged from the narratives (Anijar, in Jipson and Paley, 1997).

Despite my personal affiliation with championing the cause of individualisation, challenging conventional boundaries of research, and using creative methodologies and analytical practices which invite independent thought and individual imagination, I employ a relatively conventional and standard format to the presentation of my research. The chapters therefore appear in a linear, familiar form - beginning with an introduction, background, and conceptual orientation to the area of research; moving on to outlining the methodological considerations, presentation, discussion and interpretation of findings; and finally concluding with a discussion of conclusions reached, and theorising about future recommendations and prospects. Each chapter therefore serves as a building block, with each chapter dependent on the previous chapters. Readers are therefore compelled to obey the authority of the development of the text, despite the research itself following a different, and to some extent, unorthodox, path of development. Presenting and reporting my research in a conventional format is an intentional strategy. The choice to use the anchor of a familiar format, attempts to convey a message of the validity of the research itself. A possible limitation of presenting the chapters in this conventional way could be that readers may have a sense that a set of theoretical positions have been developed independently of the empirical work, rather than being used interactively to explain and explore the data. In response to this possible interpretation, I emphasise that data is not used to inform a codified pre-determined and pre-selected set of theoretical conceptualisations, but in fact, that participants' narratives inform the conceptual framework, and that the interpretation and discussion of participants' narratives directly inform the selection of theories and concepts, which comprise the conceptual and theoretical framework for this research.

The concluding chapter draws on the key findings of this research, to explore implications these have for further research and teacher development and support initiatives; considers what contribution this research makes; and, attempts to look at what hope South Africa has for the successful implementation of inclusion and inclusive education.

The concluding remarks in this chapter are a reminder that the research did not reveal uniform and even evidence of transformation towards inclusion, within the sample of participants. However it did reveal evidence that some participants are in the process of transition and change, and that this research facilitated and possibly began a process of reflexivity in some participants, which may lead to a continued commitment to inclusion. The chapter leaves the reader with some reason to hold on to a politics of hope.

CHAPTER ONE
INCLUSION - A POLITICS OF HOPE

Hope leads… to courage… Hope… is what empowers us to take risks, to offer commitment, to give life… to comfort the afflicted, to lift the fallen, to begin great undertakings, to live our ideals… It is the best way, perhaps the only way, of retaining our sense of the underlying goodness of the world and the miraculous gift of life itself (Sacks, 2000, p.267).

1.1.   TRANSFORMING SOUTH AFRICA'S SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

It was clearly evident by the last decade of the twentieth century, that the politics of the past had run its course and that South Africa needed to search for a way to repair the damage to its social ecology and to begin to chart a way through the walls of separation created by the indoctrinations and exclusions of the past. In the endeavour to transform the social landscape to one that would redeem individuals from solitude, isolation, alienation, marginalisation and exclusion, it was essential to reconstruct a society that would hold high the values of equity and non-discrimination; integrate and include those social groups traditionally defined as other (Gillborn, 1995); encourage equal and meaningful participation for everyone; and create a good society (Sacks, 2000) based on respect for both the differences and the dignity of all human beings. A new vision for South Africa was needed: a vision based solidly on the belief of the inalienable worth of all individuals - a vision which viewed all human beings as valuable resources, which actively encouraged every individual to make their personal and unique contributions, and which acknowledged and valued these contributions for their richness and diversity.

The introduction of the notion of valuing diversity is intended to allow
> "for the reconceptualization of (pathologized) 'difference' and for the production of non-hierarchical plural identities," offering "the possibility of reconceptualizing human difference as something to be celebrated in a plural society" and presents "a departure

from the categorical thinking that has resulted in the separation and hierarchization of particular groups" (Benjamin, 2002, p.9).

Such liberal and progressive thought emerged against the international background of a call for a wider notion of inclusion in a participatory democracy and a more critical recognition of the inequalities and discriminatory practices still prevailing in Western societies. Transition in South Africa therefore reflects a global move towards a radically inclusive and participatory form of social discourse in which diversity is celebrated and equality of opportunity promoted (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht, 1999; Skrtic, 1995).

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996), emerged as a beacon of hope towards transforming the scope of human possibility for all peoples and social groups in the new South Africa - ideologically abandoning the exclusion and segregation of the past and giving priority to the ideals of democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. The fConstitution aimed to transcend the divisions of the past by institutionalising tolerance between different social groups and the rights of individuals, thus offering an alternative framework of coexistence for the diverse peoples and social groups in South Africa. The advent of a new South Africa, flying the banner of the Constitution, set a path towards the goal of democracy, social justice and inclusion; pointing the way towards the good society (Sacks, 2000). From a history of discrimination, neglect and marginalisation, a new ethos was in the making.

Historically, the good society has defied a universal definition (every society bringing its own understanding of what the good is, depending on the context, the social conditions and political issues of that time). Despite this fact, present concern for the common good can generally be agreed on as based on the importance of always meaningfully including the other in the whole. It is based on this understanding that Sacks (2000) views the good society as one that offers its members equal access to hope. Similarly, while the concept of social justice has eluded a single or universally accepted meaning, (manifesting diverse orientations and competing political endeavours reflecting various historically and culturally constituted discourses), the primary objective of social justice is generally agreed on to involve the good of *all* human beings. The goal of social justice is understood as the full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is

mutually shaped to meet their needs (Adams, Bell and Griffin, 1997). The good society and social justice can be considered one and the same vision for the new South Africa.

The Constitution did indeed lay the foundation for South Africa to transcend the divisions of the past, by offering an alternative framework of coexistence for its diverse peoples and social groups. However, the development and maintenance of a democracy depends on more than legislation and the verbal affirmation of democratic principles (Green, in Ayers, Hunt and Quinn, 1998). The Constitution alone cannot be accepted as the central repository of power which will bring about a new inclusive social order. The moral vision of any policy merely serves to set the compass and set the course of a journey; a compass bearing indicating the direction of an envisaged destination. Thereafter there is a need for this vision to become a reality.

The discourse of apartheid was a calculated and systematically constructed and imposed system fof social organisation, the intended outcome of which was the underdevelopment and subordination of non-white social groups, and the establishing of the white social group as an explicit political and social power and authority within the country. The apartheid state created "huge gaps between the wealthy and the poor, the educated and the educationally deprived… the direct result of an oppressive control of power" on the part of the dominant social group (Prozesky, 2007, p.11). There is no doubt that the vision of developing and maintaining social justice and democracy - the good society in the new South Africa, depends on more than the Constitution alone. Such an undertaking requires a carefully calculated route map; a radical restructuring of society in order to build a landscape of hope for all its members. Restructuring society and building a democracy requires the development of attitudes, forms of consciousness and commitments that allow a re-shaping of the world. The development and maintenance of a democracy requires informed citizens who possess certain virtues and habits of heart and mind that are conducive to the healthy functioning of a democratic system (Green, in Ayers, et al. 1998). These include how people regard others, how they make choices, how they commit to, and foster more widely-shared decision-making, and thus work towards diminishing historical inequalities of power and influence. Democracy requires a commitment on the part of each individual to a deep sense of common good - a genuine commitment to a sense of community and equality between all members. As South Africans embracing democracy and social justice, South Africans need to demonstrate an active commitment to embrace diversity and rid themselves of exclusionary attitudes and practices. They

need to find ways that bring them out of their isolation; ways of confronting and breaking down the old myths, ignorance, suspicion, prejudice, fear, and fundamental disrespect of those they have been socialised to see as others. South Africans need to find ways to relate to each other without suppressing their differences, while sustaining social cohesion and co-operation. The challenge is to cultivate a social landscape that values diversity and tolerance and appreciation of differences, while joining together widely differing individuals to the greatest mutual benefit within a single society.

1.2.   THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN TRANSFORMATION

1.2.1. The new curriculum

New education policies are intended to pave the way for significant curriculum reform in South African education and are accompanied by high expectations for both educational and social transformation. Curriculum 2005 was seen as a bold and revolutionary innovation which was intended to bring an end to the legacy of apartheid education and propel South Africa into the next century. As the first major curriculum statement of a democratic government it signaled a dramatic break from the past.

Outcomes-based education (OBE) (Department of Education, 1995; 2000) was envisioned as a useful vehicle for supporting the implementation of inclusive education (Naicker, 1996), due to the primary focus being on principles of expanded opportunities and high expectations which was believed would lead to the creation of opportunities for all learners to achieve success in relation to their own pace and style of learning.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education of South Africa, 2002) builds on the vision and values of the Constitution through a clear alignment with the principles of social justice, human rights and inclusion. The belief is that the curriculum can play a vital role in creating awareness of the relationship between these principles and the commitment to these principles, and the educational practices that emerge out of these, are reflected in all Learning Area statements. The Revised National Curriculum Statement attempts to embody and uphold a

democratic, inclusive and socially just vision of our society and the citizens that our education system creates. Its intention is to ensure that all learners are able to develop to their fullest potential and achieve to their maximum ability. Its challenge is to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa. The type of learners that such an education system is intended to develop is outlined in the Revised National Curriculum Statement overview document, under the heading "The kind of learner that is envisaged":

> "The promotion of values is important not only for the sake of personal development, but also to ensure that a national South African identity is built on values very different from those that underpinned apartheid education. The kind of learners that is envisaged is one who will be inspired by these values, and who will act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice. The curriculum seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate, multi-skilled, compassionate, with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen" (Revised National Curriculum Statement, Department of Education of South Africa, 2002, p.8).

Despite much criticism of the new curriculum and its foundational principles of OBE,

> "many commentators agree on the fundamental shifts that the new curriculum brings to the South African education system that has been characterized by traditional approaches to teaching and learning … The new curriculum calls for different relationships between teachers and learners on the one hand, and learners and knowledge on the other hand, based on what has been commonly referred to as a 'transformational' model of learning", which "refers mainly to the need for classroom processes of teaching and learning to be aligned with the overall agenda of social transformation currently underway in the country" (Jita, 2004, pp.11-12).

1.2.2. The project of inclusion

Central to the emergence of inclusive education as a field of interest within the sociology of education, is the notion of dominant discourses of difference, which result in marginal social status being attributed to learners belonging to certain social groups. As an extension of critical

sociologies of education, inclusive education sought to advance the rights of all those learners rendered vulnerable or excluded. Despite the concept and movement of inclusive education being well established in Western and a number of southern African countries, it is still a comparatively fragmented field, and with no standard vocabulary, the risk for political misappropriation is increased (Slee, 2001). This is evident in the work of the various authors who have contributed to the field, suggesting a variety of stages of engagement with the principles and practices of inclusion (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007). While it is important to explore the meaning and intention of inclusion and inclusive education, Slee (in publication) believes that the project of inclusive education may not be best served "by pressing for intellectual foreclosure on its definition, but by a commitment to the ongoing exposure and dismantling of exclusions".

With the goal of social justice being full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs (Adams, et al. 1997), new education policies need to facilitate the process of building a culture of learning and teaching that is accessible to *all* learners, that offers a quality education for *all* learners, and that meets the needs of *all* learners. Inclusive education was a challenge to create a system of schooling that meets the needs of a democratic society and reflects a society that acknowledges the right to equal and full citizenship irrespective of individual differences, where emphasis makes the shift away from segregating, dividing and excluding learners on the basis of their differences, to ways in which learning environments might better respond to the diversity in school and classroom populations. An inclusive orientation to schooling and education was believed to be the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming societies, building an inclusive society, and achieving quality education for all.

This research adopts the concept of inclusion which positions it clearly and centrally in the arena of social justice, with the ideals behind inclusive education firmly rooted in liberal, critical and progressive democratic thought. It is the wider social concern about human rights and the notions of social justice and inclusion in society that has shaped the movement towards inclusive education. Inclusive education and education practicing exclusion and segregation are two approaches to education that have their roots in different paradigms, in turn creating and constructing different kinds of human relationships (Clans, Dyson and Millward, 1995). By adopting

an inclusive orientation to education schools are encouraged to make a difference in eradicating longstanding discrimination, stereotypes and prejudices by fashioning learning and teaching environments around a vision that takes the project of human liberation and social justice seriously, and by so doing present learners with the means to transcend the divisions of the past, and find an alternative framework for coexistence with diverse others – a framework based firmly on principles and practices of social justice and inclusion (Sands, Kozleski and French, 2000; Skrtic, 1995).

While such an understanding of inclusion as a social goal is desirable, "the form and practice of its implementation in educational settings is … the subject of continuing research and debate" (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007, p5). Even assuming widespread acceptance of the general concept of inclusive education, Slee (2001, p167-168) believes "that there is some work necessary to clarify its informing principles, to establish its epistemological precepts", and that "those arguing for social justice in education must continue to subject notions of justice in education … to explicit and sustained analysis". It is inevitable that such a radically different form of education will involve more than simple policy changes, but will involve an ongoing journey comprising many challenges, some common to many countries and others specific to particular contexts.

1.2.3. Integration and inclusion

"Access to education is only the first stage in overcoming the exclusion from education of learners. More challenging is bringing about a shift in perspectives and values so that diversity is valued" (Booth, UNESCO Education For All assessment report, 2000).

Due to the past inequitable delivery of education in South Africa new education policies need to reflect South Africa's commitment to democracy, human rights, social justice and inclusion. Against the background context of South African history the move to inclusive education is seen as vital, in ensuring an equitable and fair future for all, with clear commitment to equal access, non-discrimination and redress. Introducing inclusive education to South Africa intends that human rights issues are affirmed and that historical inequitable education practices are reversed.

The South African Schools Act (Department of Education of South Africa, 1996) was a necessary and important landmark in the early stages of South Africa's journey of social reconstruction towards the good society, signifiying the movement away from the segregation of learners on the basis of difference to the provision of education for *all* learners. The Act gives *all* learners the right of access to *any* school and prohibits schools from denying access to learners on the basis of race, language, religion, ability, disability, or any other form of discrimination. The Act serves as an important milestone towards the destination of equal participation on the part of previously marginalised and excluded learners. It is instrumental in challenging the old definitions and understandings; reversing the unequal power relations of the past; equalising educational opportunities for those learners previously excluded and marginalised; and, providing an alternative definition of education – one in which diversity is celebrated and equality of opportunity promoted.

While adopting integration into the South African education system may be an attempt to right the wrongs of the segregationist and exclusionary policies of separate development and special education, integration in and of itself needs to be extended to encompass a moral vision of inclusion. Such insight is gained from the international integration movement of the 1960's and later which increasingly became recognised for its limited attempts at accommodating diverse learners into schools which remained essentially unchanged. These limitations of integration brought about the establishment of the inclusion movement which articulated a commitment to create schools which were inherently capable of offering a quality education to all learners (Dyson and Forlin, cited in Engelbrecht, et al. 1999; Vlachou, 2004). Inclusion goes beyond just an issue of learner placement to whole school reform. The South African Schools Act needs to involve a movement which goes beyond merely integrating diverse learners into schools to accommodating and supporting them in the true spirit of inclusion – where all learners, regardless of their differences, are able to access equitable educational opportunities that will support them towards developing to their full potential. Schools may rest on the rhetoric of extending access of all schools to all learners and argue that they are implementing the principle of equal opportunity. However, vis-à-vis lessons from the international front, exactly what school practices constitute as equal opportunity is an issue of considerable debate. Schools that comply with equal opportunity laws may consider themselves equal opportunity schools, while continuing business as usual. A strong critique of inclusion is the adopting of a "one size fits all' approach, which assumes that social and

educational inequality can be overcome by providing the exact same opportunities equally for all learners. While this might correct historic imbalances and injustices to an extent, it is mainly viewed as short-sighted as it does not take into consideration the reality that learners do not all arise from positions of social, economic and developmental equality (Sayed, 2003).

1.2.4. Equal opportunities and access

Advocates of inclusive education and education for social justice do not see it as sufficient to simply remove legal barriers to access and participation in schooling. Simply integrating, assimilating or absorbing diverse learners into the curriculum *as it is* does not guarantee the effectiveness of the educational experience for learners. Equal opportunities and access extends beyond being integrated and assimilated into a physical teaching and learning environment. What goes on inside each classroom should also reflect the ideals of inclusion - equal opportunities for participation, growth and development.

However, schools can manifest many contradictions (May, 2003), which can occur at all levels within a school's culture. While a commitment to social justice and equality of opportunity may exist in a school, in direct conflict with this may also exist deep-rooted assumptions, beliefs and fears about intelligence, ability and social class, which inevitably influence a school's ethos, culture and curriculum (Clough and Corbett, 2000).

All levels of a school's culture and all aspects of the curriculum need to be adjusted to accommodate learners' diverse needs, and to offer every learner equal access to quality and meaningful learning opportunities. If learners are simply absorbed into the existing traditional ethos of an institution, and expected to fit in and cope as best they can with little or no conscious effort on the part of the school or teachers to change, or adapt aspects of cultural inclusion which comprise part of the deep texture of the school community in any meaningful way to accommodate their needs, the moral vision inherent in inclusive education and education for social justice will not be realised. Where the concept of 'inclusion' differs significantly from the concept of 'integration' is in its shift of emphasis from the individuals' efforts to integrate themselves into the mainstream culture to the institutions' efforts to create a climate of receptivity, flexibility and sensitivity (Clough and Corbett, 2000).

Clearly, inclusion is opposed to simply ensuring the smooth assimilation or integration of other groups into the dominant mainstream culture, but instead, focuses attention on changing the educational organisation of an institution; changing the curriculum to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners, thus minimising barriers to learning, development and participation. Viewing learner diversity as part of the reality of every classroom and accommodating each learner as a fully participating member of the learning community, are prerequisites for inclusion. Inclusion is about equal opportunities for participation at all levels of society. Adopting the limited interpretation of inclusion as a simple integration and assimilation of diverse individuals and groups, in the belief that the simple act of amalgamating and blending is enough to create an inclusive environment, is largely unrealistic, misguided and naïve. Kohli (1995) views such simplistic and superficial integration as marginalising and disempowering. So long as groups do not gain equal outcomes from social institutions, those institutions are not providing equal opportunity. Dyson's (1997) critique of integration rests on the argument that entitlement without access to genuine participation and quality education that caters for the individual needs of all learners, is inevitably a vehicle for the production of inequality of opportunity rather than a means to ensuring equality.

1.2.5. Heeding the warnings of current international critiques of inclusion

Given that South Africa is in the early stages of implementation of inclusion in schools, it may be difficult to arrive at any secure judgement or prediction with regard to the overall success or failure of inclusion in education. However, consideration can be given to the warnings that emerge out of current international critiques of inclusion, the most glaring being to guard against essentialism and reductionism, and to resist the temptation of lapsing into rhetoric at the expense of critical analysis.

- *Producing a general theory of inclusion*

Distinctive features of the new cultural politics of difference in the postmodern age are the discarding of the monolithic and homogeneous, in the name of diversity, multiplicity and heterogeneity; and to historicise, contextualise and pluralise by highlighting the provisional, contingent, particular, specific, variable, tentative, shifting and changing. Concern lies with charting the multiple fracturing of social relations and stressing the provisional nature of definitions of culture and identity which leads to the potential breakdown of assumptions about the homogeneity

of majority groups and the "otherness" of minorities. Artiles and Dyson (2005) emphasize the contextualised nature of inclusive education, "that, in any given form, it always reflects the outcome of historical and cultural choices" (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007, pv). It follows, then, that any universal understanding and implementation is impossible and that any attempt to produce a general theory of inclusion may itself be a misplaced and fruitless activity (McLaren, 1995). Like other grand narratives, such a general theory will be likely to fail in the face of the rapidly changing and multi-faceted nature of identity in contemporary society. Differences need to be viewed as precarious discursive constructions which are not necessarily fixed and permanent, and a sense of "a critical diversity" (Gillborn, 1995, p.19) needs to be adopted. Critical analysis has highlighted the dangers and pitfalls of token inclusion as a viable basis for action and signals the need for a more sophisticated approach, one that recognises the multiple sources and politics of identity, resists essentialist and reductionist analyses, challenges essentialist and deficit stereotypes, and engages with the reality of multiple exclusions and inclusions.

- *No single or homogeneous strategy*

According to Pijl, Meijer and Hegarty (1997, p3), attempts to realise inclusion and inclusive education have resulted in very different educational arrangements in different countries. This makes general conclusions from comparative research difficult to draw.

> "Practices in other countries may work in that particular context, but it is unlikely that these practices will work as well in a different context. Making use of experiences other countries have in integration [1] is very often not simply a matter of copying practices."

It is therefore understandable that context-specific studies are preferable – studies in which the historical, socio-economic, political, geographical, cultural and religious contexts are taken into account. This preference applies to studying the implementation of inclusive education within South Africa as well. A single, homogenous strategy cannot be suited to all South African schools, as there are so many varied contexts within the country.

South Africa's system of inclusive education, as described in White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), can be possibly positioned as a more nuanced inclusive system[2] (Hay and

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[1] Pijl, Meijer and Hegarty use the term 'integration' as a collective noun for all attempts to avoid a segregated and isolated education for learners manifesting any form of difference

Beyers, 2008), as it has not chosen to adopt full inclusion (as described by Kavale (2002) where all learners are in the same classroom and no special education is available on a separate basis). Fuchs and Fuchs (1994, cited in Kavale, 2002, p205) view full inclusion as a "big-tent philosophy" which adopts a romantic vision of being able to speak for all learners regardless of their specific needs and levels of support, and therefore exclusionary and not contributing to social justice.

The dynamic, complex and uneven character of inclusion and exclusion needs to be recognised. Multiple and contingent forms of differences and barriers to learning require multiple and contingent forms of addressing them. In the absence of one right way, responsibility rests with each teacher to work towards minimising and addressing barriers to learning, and to remain self-critically aware of the tendency for unintended consequences to reproduce the very inequalities that need to be dismantled. Furthermore, an effective strategy in one context may be ineffective in another context or at another time. Strategies that prove effective in practice may not be transferable elsewhere, or resistant to changing forms of discourse and interaction over time. There can be no single or homogeneous strategy; no set, given, formula against exclusion, because exclusion itself is never homogeneous. It varies, it changes and it is always uneven. It is for these reasons that Engelbrecht and Green (2007, p101) believe that "inclusive education must be approached as an ongoing and evolutionary process". This is also why Hay and Beyers (2008) prefer the term nuanced inclusion, as this allows the space for processes of more and even more inclusion to develop over time.

- *The need to restore integrity to inclusive education*

In Slee's survey of the field of inclusive education, he draws attention to the unintended and possibly destructive consequences that diminish the romanticised and overly simplistic belief that inclusive education brings about positive reform (Slee, in publication). He argues for a consideration of how the appropriation and popularisation of inclusive education by traditional special education and educational management has resulted in escalating levels of exclusion and increased educational vulnerability (Slee, in publication). Slee acknowledges that inclusive education has become "a catchall term describing divergent research genres and education practices and is a field full of contestations and contradictions, with many claims and counterclaims of theoretical authenticity" (Slee, in publication). Such interpretive latitude is clearly educationally

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[2] This refers to varied educational provision being made for learners who need different levels of support

dangerous. This has resulted in inclusion being proclaimed as a failed reform initiative and form of flawed politically correct educational thinking (Farrell, 2000) and may very well have the negative impact of unwittingly encouraging some in the field to retreat into traditional and exclusive attitudes, beliefs and practices. It is in light of these points of critique that Slee prioritises the importance of tracing the emergence of inclusive education as a field of research and policy activism and reform, identifying the consequences of its popularisation, and finding ways "to restore integrity to the field of inclusive education" (Slee, in publication).

Slee offers the sociology of education as a platform for restoring integrity to the field of inclusive education:

> "The longstanding preoccupation with the structural and cultural formation of disadvantage and privilege provides an opportunity for us to step to the side of the entanglements and vagaries of competing conceptions of inclusion to approach reform through the analysis and deconstruction of exclusion. It tackles the broader antecedents of educational disadvantage and failure to build a potential beyond functionalist entrapment in individual pathologies. … the sociology of education has broad theoretical shoulders thereby providing the range of analytic tools to engage with the complexity of exclusion. … Inclusive education that proceeds from a willingness to first understand the nature and forms of educational exclusion demands a more careful reading of social theory and critique and a commitment to extensive reform" (Slee, in publication).

- *Token inclusion: expressionist rhetoric and a fantasy narrative*

The ways that policies are developed and implemented under the inclusive banner raise important points about the future success or failure of inclusion. McLaren has a problem with forms of pedagogy that suggest that self-improvement and empowerment can exist without calling the existing social order into question – where issues of difference and inequality are never raised (McLaren, 1995). McLaren claims that it is important for a critical pedagogy to challenge what liberals have called the pluralist position – "to counter the essentialisation of difference which occurs in liberal humanism's facile tolerance of the multiplicity of the voices of the marginalised, the disenfranchised, the oppressed" (McLaren, 1995, p.19). Both Giroux and McLaren believe that a celebration of difference without investigating the ways in which difference or diversity becomes

constituted in oppressive unequal relations of power, often betrays a simple-minded romanticism and exoticisation of the other; and warn that this form of liberal, humanist pedagogy could very well serve to mask forms of domination, reducing the pedagogy to one "steeped in the romance of the word at the expense of the world" (McLaren, 1995, p.32) – what is referred to in McLaren (1995, p.32) as a form of "expressionist rhetoric".

Slee (2001, p167) warns that the schooling system and teachers firmly rooted in traditional values, attitudes and teaching practices, may "demonstrate a remarkable resilience through linguistic dexterity. While they use a contemporary lexicon of inclusion, the cosmetic amendments to practices and procedures reflect assumptions about pathological defect and normality based upon a disposition of calibration and exclusion." According to Gillborn (1995) any serious attempt to transform education towards the goals of inclusion and social justice must address the crucial conceptual issues raised by emerging critiques of token inclusion, window-dressing, a "coat-of-paint" (McLaren, 1995, p.74). A commitment to fighting exclusion does not require simplistic or patronising approaches which force people into neatly labeled boxes and deny the complexity of the real world, as this simply results in tokenism and a failure to address the key structural forces involved in shaping and sustaining exclusion. The critique on token inclusion pinpoints weaknesses in the kind of simplistic politicking that sometimes characterises local schools' and districts' attempts to challenge exclusion and implement inclusion. Constant themes in this critique concern the inability of token inclusion to reconstruct and oppose new forms of exclusion, and its apparent incapability of acknowledging how teaching for diversity may become a language of exclusion. Within this critique then, initiatives that may appear inclusive may in reality serve to reproduce classroom practices which result in exclusion, stigmatisation and marginalisation, thereby echoing traditional segregationist exclusive education and social arrangements and forms of organisation. Certain forms of classroom practices (under the guise of teaching for diversity and meeting the needs of all learners in the classroom) could in fact serve to inflame, and therefore perpetuate exclusion and exclusive practices. A pedagogy which does not seriously question the underlying assumptions or relations of power which inform it; a pedagogy that operates without consideration of how power works to privilege certain groups over others, stands accused of being a soft mode of resistance, easily co-opted by those forces it seeks to delegitimise (Gillborn, 1995). Token inclusion may very well sustain the very marginalisation and stigmatisation it seeks to oppose and

correct. It is with this critique in mind that McLaren asks the question: Has inclusion and inclusive education become simply a "fantasy narrative", "one in which the hegemony of the universalized and externalized language and tropes of the coloniser makes it easy to script" (McLaren, 1991, p.12)?

- *The constructive use of criticism*

Gillborn (1995) warns that although criticism is a vital spur to the development of both theory and practice, it must be used constructively. For those teachers struggling to make inclusion a reality, a critique on inclusive practices (if overstated or misrepresented) might forfeit gains that have already been won and paralyse future developments by undermining teachers' belief in their ability to do anything without falling foul of one theoretical position or another. The language of critique sometimes comes to dominate in a way that loses sight of being careful not to be an all-out attack on the totality of inclusive education theory. Although critique may be damning in its attack on superficial and token inclusion, Gillborn cautions for clarity in support of inclusion as a principle and an ideology. While important lessons can and must be learned, critiques should not spell the end of inclusion but rather, offer the possibility of a more critical and effective inclusion.

A constructive critique stresses the need for balance and a constant awareness of the realities of life in schools and classrooms. Instead of identifying groups as different and assuming these to be internally homogeneous; represented and understood as fixed and absolute; such simple essentialist and reductionist analyses and understandings need to be resisted in order to clear the ground for a more sophisticated recognition of the diversity within and between groups. (Imposing stereotypic notions of common learning needs upon heterogeneous groups with diverse learning needs, is in itself a barrier to quality education, and contrary to the heart-beat and spirit of inclusion and social justice in education).

The task of inclusive teachers and teachers for social justice is to be critical and to disrupt the authority of everyday practices in the interests of "what could be" (Gillborn, 1995, p.17). Gillborn believes that familiar rhetoric naturalises oppression and inequality and a lack of attention is generally given to the way teachers understand the way cultural context has been defined

(Gillborn, 1995). The process of developing teachers who are critical, inclusive practitioners, and teachers for social justice, needs to take Gillborn's arguments seriously.

- *Inclusive education – a sheer veneer hiding the constant feature of class*

Connell (in Slee, in publication) reminds us of the well documented link between poverty and school failure, and the longstanding complicity of schools in the production of inequality, exclusion, and social hierarchies. In his assessment of the impact of numerous policy reforms in England and Wales through the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Ball argues that class has remained a constant feature throughout periods of policy reform and demographic and infrastructural changes in education, and urges serious consideration of how "privilege, advantage and disadvantage assert themselves through the mixed markets of schooling" (Slee, in publication). "In its well-meaning interventions to support individual children inside and outside of the mainstream of schooling, [inclusive education] provides a sheer veneer to hide the deep cracks in the edifice of mass schooling in the twenty-first century" (Slee, in publication). Schools are not passive agents in the educational marketplace, simply reflecting social or cultural inequalities, but actively and "vibrantly involved in the production of social hierarchies … selecting and excluding their own clients … expanding credentialed labour markets … producing and disseminating particular kinds of knowledge to particular users" (Slee, in publication). "The causes of exclusion run deep in the architecture of schooling" (Slee, in publication). Just as educational disadvantage and exclusion exists in obvious forms, so it also operates through what Slee calls the "shadowy world of school cultures", which includes "an agglomeration of pedagogic practices, curriculum choices, assessment regimes, and the demographic and policy context of schooling" (Slee, in publication).

Seeing each school as integrated into a complex matrix of social relations necessitates looking further than simply the teacher, or even the school, as the sole source for effecting positive and enduring reforms. The identification, interrogation and interruption of patterns of exclusion "cannot be achieved by the classroom teachers alone, the introduction of a new phonics programme to increase functional literacy, or the addition of new ways of monitoring the performance of individual schools or local authorities" (Slee, in publication).

1.2.6. A pedagogy and politics of ethics, difference and democracy

> "All children and young people of the world have the right to education. It is not our education systems that have a right to certain types of children. It is the school system of a country that must be adjusted to meet the needs of all children." (Bengt Lindqvist, the opening paper on Policy and Legislation, The World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, June 1994, Salamanca, Spain).

A pedagogy grounded in a politics of ethics, difference and democracy suggests the recognition and acknowledgement of diversity, a respect for differences, and the right to experience a sense of belonging, and participate actively in all aspects of society without having to give up or deny one's unique identity. If an education system aligns itself with a politics of ethics, difference and democracy, education for social justice and true inclusion, school policies and practices should address how schools can learn to support and respect diversity rather then suppress and deny it. Attitudes and practices need to embrace the understanding that difference does not have to mean deficiency. These principles of ethics, difference and democracy, which uphold and support such a pedagogy clearly offer a politics of hope to those individuals and groups previously marginalised, stigmatised and excluded.

If education is to be radically fair and open to all, then what schools offer through their activities, curricula and teachers, need to respond to the needs of a diversity of learners. Emphasis needs to shift from segregating, dividing and excluding learners on the basis of their differences, to the ways in which learning environments might better respond to the diversity in school populations.

1.2.7. 'Inclusive Education' and 'Education for All'

Both 'Inclusive Education' and 'Education For all' recognise that *all* learners are entitled to an education that meets their needs and that the education system should be able to accommodate and deal effectively with a diversity of learners' needs. The Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education

of South Africa, 2001) arose out of the need for further changes to be made to the provision of education and training, so that it could be responsive and sensitive to a diverse range of learning needs. Framed by the Constitution of South Africa and supporting and expanding on all other education policies developed in the new South Africa, Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education of South Africa, 2001) reflects and supports international commitment towards the international enactment of the rights perspective and the move towards inclusive education. South Africa's education policy is therefore aligned with international declarations and recommendations, the most recent being the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which generated commitment from over 107 countries and states, 35 of which were signatories to the convention (Dyson and Forlin, in Engelbrecht, et al. 1999).

As a reflection of global developments in the wider social system of society in general, an inclusive philosophy has become central to the educational policies of both developed and developing countries and has emerged as an important aspect of international discussions about how best to respond to the diverse needs of all learners. Emphasis was placed on inclusive education at the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, and the resolution that has come to be known as the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education became the driving force for inclusive education. Endorsed by 92 countries and 25 international organisations, the Salamanca Statement clearly articulates inclusion as a universal right and the creation of inclusive schools vital to the creation of an inclusive society. It sees schools with an inclusive orientation as "the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all" (Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education, UNESCO, 1994, p.ix). The Salamanca Statement has become increasingly influential as a key document, guiding inclusive developments internationally.

1.2.8. Reconstructing notions of disability and special needs

Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education of South Africa, 2001) is often assumed to be concerned only with learners with special needs or disabilities, and inclusive education concerned only about the effective inclusion of learners previously labeled as such. This is too narrow an interpretation of inclusive education. Writing on an international perspective on inclusion, Dyson

and Forlin (in Engelbrecht, et al. 1999, p.24) suggest that two processes spurred inclusion's rise to prominence on the international education agenda:

> "a reconstruction of notions of disability, particularly as such notions relate to conceptions of human rights and social justice" and "wide social, economic and educational developments which are not tied specifically to disability but are much more concerned with the role of education in contemporary societies."

With the conceptual shift from labeling learners according to their special needs or disabilities to identifying the "barriers" which some learners experience, the notions of inclusion and inclusive education should concern and impact on *all* learners, including those in mainstream schools. Fisher, Roach and Freys' (2002) research, examining key elements of international inclusive practices, demonstrates that while there is strong evidence to suggest that the inclusive approach has much to offer in improving the outcomes of learners with disabilities and special needs, there is a significant body of literature supporting the belief that inclusion has beneficial implications beyond the perspective which considers inclusion as synonymous with learners with disabilities and special needs.

According to Slee, while "the exclusion of disabled pupils remains a key item in the broad agenda of inclusive education research … we aught to resist the reduction of inclusive education to a narrow concern to secure mainstream schooling for disabled pupils. All too often, in the minds of education policy-makers, researchers and teachers, inclusive education becomes a default vocabulary for 'the education of (so-called) Special Educational Needs pupils'" (Slee, in publication).

1.2.9. Responding effectively to the needs of all learners

With the shift in education from segregation and exclusion to inclusion, all aspects of schooling and education need to respond effectively and appropriately to the needs of *all* learners, especially those from various cultural, socio-economic and language backgrounds. Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education of South Africa, 2001) advocates a systematic move away from categories and labeling to a focus on identifying and minimising barriers to learning, development and participation that exist *within the system*. The term 'special needs' has been used to categorise and label learners who, for various reasons, did not fit in with the mainstream system and who

manifested disabilities or special needs of one sort or another. The aim of special needs education within the old traditional system of education, was to identify problems *within the learners.* Within this medical model educational difficulties are explained solely in terms of learner deficits and no attempt is made to look for the causes of learning problems *outside the learner,* such as those located in the education system or other factors in a learner's social environment that may be affecting his/her ability to learn. Problems relating to participation, development and learning were conceived of as an attribute of the learner and not as a social construct. A number of key barriers relating to learners' life histories and contextual circumstances can be identified in the South African context that may lead to learning breakdown and exclusion, some of which are: socio-economic barriers, such as lack of access to basic services, poverty and underdevelopment, the social and emotional well-being of learners, negative attitudes towards learner diversity, inflexible curriculum, language and communication, inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services, and disability. The shift away from the medical model to the social model suggests that progress will be much more likely when it is recognised that difficulties experienced by learners come about as a result of the ways in which schools are organised, and the forms of teaching that are provided (Ainscow, Farrell and Tweddle, 2000).

Inclusive education advocates the development of enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of *all* learners. The Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education of South Africa, 2001) stresses the need to shift from the concept of special needs, based on the rationale that an overemphasis on the notion of special needs has the tendency of labeling and marginalising certain learners and discouraging mainstream schools from developing an understanding of the diverse ways in which learners learn and need to be supported. If mainstream teachers do not think it is part of their day-to-day classroom obligation to extend themselves and their teaching methodologies to accommodate a diverse range of learning needs among their learners, it translates into the education system not meeting the needs of *all* learners. The creation of inclusive schools is believed to be a positive way forward for countries which have developed less-than-comprehensive systems of education for all learners (Dyson and Forlin, in Engelbrecht, et al. 1999). For developing countries, such as South Africa, the issue of inclusion is essentially one of extension and development (Dyson and Forlin, in Engelbrecht, et al. 1999) wherein the systematic inequities and segregation are eradicated in favour of a single

national core syllabus which is extended to a wider range of learners. Inclusion therefore extends beyond the narrow interpretation of reconstructing provision for learners with disabilities or special needs, to extending equal educational opportunities to the majority of learners, specifically intended to include a wide range of marginalised groups who had little or no access to quality schooling. Due to South Africa's history of apartheid, significant numbers of learners had little or no access to effective schooling. (Learners with special needs or disabilities may be included in those learners previously excluded from quality education, but are not necessarily the largest group). Inclusive education is therefore seen as a viable means of extending quality education to the population as a whole. It is for this reason mainly that South Africa has adopted a broad definition of inclusion, which extends beyond the issue of provision for learners with disabilities or special needs.

1.3. POSITIONING MYSELF

My involvement with the teacher development components of various intervention programmes and pilot projects, involved in raising awareness and supporting the implementation of inclusive education, between 2000 and 2008, has provided me much opportunity to work with teachers in rural areas across three provinces of South Africa. The nature of my work has been predominantly hands-on and school-based, where I have had the opportunity to work alongside teachers in a supportive role, as they have been faced with the challenge of transformation towards becoming inclusive practitioners. As a result of working closely with teachers I have developed a particular interest in their lived experiences – the tensions, the difficulties, the stressors, the contradictions and the dilemmas that face teachers on their journeys of transformation towards inclusion.

This research relies directly on the relationships I built with teachers who were participants in a resource and teacher development project in the Estcourt District in KwaZulu-Natal from June 2001 to September 2003. My work as field researcher and co-ordinator of the teacher development component of this initiative, afforded me time to work with and alongside these teacher-participants and get to know them as people and as teachers. The project was part of a national pilot project run in three provinces, through the National Department of Education, the aim of which was to create an awareness of, and facilitate and support the implementation of government policy on the

development of an inclusive education and training system: White Paper 6: Special Education – Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (Department of Education, July 2001) in pilot schools. The overall project was funded by DANIDA, and the School of Education, University of Natal, was the lead institution of the service provider consortium responsible for the KwaZulu-Natal pilot project.

The target region selected for the project in KwaZulu-Natal, by the Provincial Department of Education, was the Ladysmith and Estcourt District in the Ladysmith Region (predominantly rural). One of the reasons for the selection was that an inclusive education initiative had begun in the district in 1996 (a collaborative project involving the District Education office, an NGO in the District, Ladysmith co-ordinating committee on Disability (LCCD), University of Natal, Durban, and the Kwazamokhule Special School in the District). Using criteria laid down in the project proposal as guidelines, the Provincial Education Department undertook the selection of the sixteen schools.

The project emphasised teacher development through training and resource programmes, to enable teachers to see the need for inclusive education and to meet the diverse needs in the learner population. It also aimed to draw out the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies and initiatives employed by the pilot project, with a view towards informing and guiding the ongoing implementation of Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education of South Africa, 2001) in other districts and provinces; use insights gained through the pilot project to provide indicators for inclusive education in South African rural contexts; and, make recommendations on the sustainability of project initiatives in the pilot district.

By the end of the first phase of this project (September 2002), evidence suggested that the teacher development interventions had been successful at developing positive attitudes towards inclusion in the majority of the teachers, and a willingness to adopt inclusive practices in most schools. However, one of the major concerns that emerged, on the part of teachers and researchers, was the sustainability of the project. The following quote from one teacher illustrates these concerns:

> I think this will be a waste of time because teachers will just forget about it. We
> would like this thing to continue and not forget about it. But I know that many
> teachers will just forget about it after it has stopped.

Initial findings of the second phase (January 2003 – September 2003) of the pilot project seemed to support the concerns illustrated by the above teacher quote. Many teachers had forgotten what had been covered in the project and seemed reluctant to continue with the workshops and the expectation to change. There was even evidence of the persistence of exclusionary practices within some of the pilot schools. These findings raised questions such as: Why had the project had little impact on some teachers? What would it take to get teachers to change? What had facilitated change in some teachers? What had militated against change in others?

There was obviously a personal and professional investment on my part to see the successful implementation of inclusive education become a reality in the schools I had been working with. It was clear that I believed in the ideal of inclusion, and that this passion had instigated and motivated my particular involvement with this project, but also that as one of the role-players and members of the consortium responsible for the service provision in KwaZulu-Natal, I had a further interest in seeing the project's intended outcomes met. I cannot deny feeling a certain level of disappointment and frustration when presented with evidence suggesting the possible failure of the project to meet all of its intended outcomes. These feelings soon gave rise to a sense of despair as I listened to many voices around me (ranging from a Provincial Minister of Education to principals and teachers from various schools in the province) which seemed all too eager to doom inclusion to failure. This is when I began reading literature around the field of implementation of inclusive education and exploring various researchers' findings and theorists' possible explanations.

This began me on a journey which in hindsight, started out with the universalising tendency on my part to view all teachers as somewhat homogeneous, and to assume that the knowledge claims inherent in inclusive education, transcended specific contexts and teacher-subjectivities – that the universal truths of inclusion (including equal rights and participation, empowerment and emancipation) could be transferred and disseminated successfully from any one individual and context to another. But as I opened my mind and exposed myself to new epistemologies and ontologies, I began to expand my understanding past an essentially liberal framework of viewing social justice and inclusion as a set of universal ideas that should be rationally accepted and

eagerly internalised by all individuals, to realising the deep complexity and the multi-layered nature of the issue. Part of this journey of enlightenment was realising the ripple-effect of such universalising - that it could so easily lead to a re-othering of teachers and the revival of the deficit or medical/pathology models (where failure to accept the rightness of inclusive ideals, principles and practices, was due to something wrong with the teachers themselves, something deficient in them). As my understanding of inclusion was firmly grounded in the rejection of the deficit and medical model of difference, in favour of the social model, and looking to identify and address barriers in the social environment, rather than locating blame within individuals, I was strongly prompted to critically uncover the hidden discourses which lurked within my current ways of thinking, and revise them.

I began to see teachers through a more complex lens and realised afresh, with growing insight, that we are all embedded in a history and a politics of individualisation, of difference, of location, positioning and situation, and of signification. I was learning to step out from a position of moral certainty to an ever-deepening understanding that human existence and experience cannot be separated from their contexts, that individuals are not detached from, but immersed and absorbed in, their realities, and that their reactions and responses, behaviours and practices, necessarily reflect all these factors. A more complex, nuanced and sophisticated investigation into teachers' lived experiences became the preferred path to follow.

1.4. THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN STATED POLICY AND ACTUAL PRACTICE

Literature on inclusive education mirrors to some extent the concerns raised by this pilot project. Despite the international shift to inclusion and subsequent major reforms on the international front over the last five decades towards equality in education for all learners, the stubborn issue of inequality still persists, with the prospect of widening educational inequalities in some countries (Armstrong, Armstrong and Barton, 2000; Zajda, 2002). According to Booth, cited in Clark, Dyson and Millward (1995), while the rhetoric of inclusion has been adopted, little has been done in many countries to reduce inequalities and the majority of education systems are not transforming into fully inclusive schools. While many countries espouse inclusion it seems that a fundamental

contradiction exists in most countries between stated policy and actual practice (Booth, 1999; Eleweke and Rodda, 2002).

An analysis of researchers' experiences (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2004) of exploring ways of developing more inclusive practices, as part of a collaborative action research network in England, highlights the nature of the tensions between national policies for raising standards, and policies for reducing marginalisation and exclusion within the English education service. The findings of a case study of an apparently inclusive school (Clark, Dyson, Millward and Robson, 1999), reiterates these enduring dilemmas faced by teachers. In light of these tensions, contradictions and dilemmas, Booth (cited in Clark, Dyson and Millward, 1995) concludes that government documents in England use the rhetoric of inclusion, while pursuing policies that will do little to reduce inequalities. Clark, et al. (1995) view the movement of inclusion as beset with dilemmas arising from contradictory principles, two of which are equity and excellence.

A similar dominant trend towards greater levels of standardisation and the pressure for testing to provide evidence of improvement exists in Australia, thus placing an inclusive education agenda at the margins of education policy (Slee cited in Armstrong, et al. 2002). Those policies which seem to pursue inclusive education are mostly concerned with the technical requirements for managing difference in largely unchanged schools and do not seem very concerned with changing school cultures to meet the challenge of learner diversity (Slee, cited in Armstrong, et al. 2000). Previously in Australia, change in the form of systems initiatives and departmental mandates have been imposed on teachers and schools resulting at best, in superficial reforms and passive resistance and alienation (Carrington and Robinson, 2004). The move towards more inclusive schooling in Queensland recognises that effective change occurs when it happens from within (Hughes and Andreas, cited in Carrington and Robinson, 2004) and that teachers are the most critical agents of school reform (Hattam, cited in Carrington and Robinson, 2004). The model of professional development described by Carrington and Robinson (2004) acknowledges the needs of individuals as well as the needs of the learning organisations.

Across the 16 000 school districts in the United States of America various responses to inclusion have been reported. While education regulations are permissive of inclusive education, they do not

require inclusion, leaving the degree of implementation of inclusive practices very much to the discretion of the individual state, the school district, and individual principals of schools. On the whole inclusive education in the school context is neither uniformly understood, readily accepted, nor willingly acted upon, and, while adopting the rhetoric of inclusive education, official policy documents do not include any concrete proposals of re-assessment or restructuring existing education systems, with the aim of transforming them into truly inclusive schools (O'Rorke-Trigiani, 2003; Pally, 2003).

It seems that most international literature on inclusion highlights fundamental contradictions and tensions between stated policy, the rhetoric of inclusion, and actual practice. A similar scenario seems to exist in developing countries. Although evidence suggests that inclusion has been adopted as an important educational policy on the basis of social justice and equality, in many developing countries this commitment is not being turned into effective and meaningful inclusive action and practices (Eleweke and Rodda, 2002). Inclusion may be included in a country's education policy but it is often not with the conceptualisation of inclusive education as a vehicle for social justice or political action, in schools and society. The fact remains that there exists the reproduction of systems perpetuating exclusion, injustice and inequality in education, despite the so-called shift to inclusion (Ware, 1995, cited in Armstrong, et al. 2000).

Although South Africa has a comprehensive and ambitious set of educational policies, "admirable in their sentiments and elegant in their formulation" (Jansen and Christie, 1999, p.281), change in policy is "only the first and easiest step in the change process" (Saranson, 1991, p.101). There seems to be wide agreement that, in itself, policy is not a guarantee that attitudes and practices will change and that policy has to be affected in the *real* world rather than an *ideal* one.

With regard to inclusion in the South African situation, Artiles, Harris-Murri and Rostenberg (cited in Hay and Beyers, 2008) adopt a perspective drawn from Dyson's distinction between two discourses of inclusion – the justification discourse and the implementation discourse. They believe that South Africa has passed the stage of the justification discourse, as South African policy and model of inclusive education is based on relatively sound social justice principles and the abstract issue of inclusion enjoys considerable support, with few arguments against the general principle

that schools should seek to cater for all learners (Ainscow, et al. 2000). They believe that South Africa is at present firmly situated in the implementation discourse, the stage where the country is endeavouring to implement inclusion and trying to address the various challenges that arise (Hay and Beyers, 2008). Several challenges to the effective implementation of inclusive education in South Africa exist, one of these being the attitudes and experiences of teachers (Fullan, 1993; Kalabula, 2002). This section comprises findings from literature and research related to teachers' experiences and attitudes towards inclusive education policy.

1.4.1. Teachers' attitudes

Available research concludes that teachers' attitudes are the most important factor in the successful implementation of new policy (Fullan, 1993; Kalabula, 2002). For this reason a number of studies on the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education have been conducted internationally and within South Africa (Bothma, Gravett and Swart, 2000; Davies and Green, 1998; Engelbrecht, 2003; Engelbrecht, Oswald, Swart and Eloff, 2003; Harris, 1998; Wessels, 1997). Research evidence demonstrates that many teachers feel threatened and overwhelmed by the various practices that are being introduced through new education policy initiatives (Davies and Green, 1998; Engelbrecht, 2003) and that the necessary attitudes, accommodations and adaptations are not yet in place in mainstream education to realise inclusion (Kavale, 2002; Mrsnik, 2003; O'Dell, 2003; Opdal, Wormnaes and Habayeb, 2001; Pally, 2003; Singal and Rouse, 2003; Szecisi, 2003). The general low morale of teachers became apparent through the Danida project (Department of Education, 2002), the Education Labour Relations Council study (Education Labour Relations Council Integrated Report, 2005) and the Educator School Survey (Shisana, Peltzer, Zungu-Dirwayi and Louw, 2005). Key issues contributing to this low morale and job dissatisfaction among teachers included high workloads and having to perform new, additional and unfamiliar tasks and roles, and the stress associated with the introduction of new education policies and the subsequent expectations of teachers to implement new practices. Research findings include: teachers often have misconceptions about inclusive education policy and therefore manifest negative attitudes to inclusion (Bothma, et al. 2000); despite a predominantly positive attitude on the part of many teachers towards integrating learners with disabilities and differences, classroom observations reveal a general lack of good practice for meeting a diversity of needs (Arbeiter and Hartley, 2002); and, a dominant shared belief exists, that learners need to fit into a school, rather

than the school make changes to accommodate them (Hay, Smit and Paulsen, 2001; Marshall, Ralph and Palmer, 2002).

An obvious attribute of an effective inclusive school is the positive attitudes towards inclusion of teachers, to the extent that the overall ethos of the school can be characterised as inclusive. While findings from an in-depth case study of a secondary school in the south-west of England identified as inclusive by a local school authority (conducted by Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000), revealed a strongly positive school ethos and attitudes on the part of teachers toward inclusion, there was also evidence in the data, that suggested that participants were more enculturated into the integration model than into the inclusion model. The placement of a learner in a mainstream class was viewed as dependent on the feasibility of such a placement and wherever integration did not impede the education of other learners. This lead to the conclusion that there was no recognition on the part of teacher-participants of the heart-beat of inclusion - that all learners should be included (Avramidis, et al. 2000).

Other attributes of an effective inclusive school which emerged from the findings of the Avramidis, et al. (2000) study, include a restructuring of the physical environment, resources, organisational changes and instructional adaptations. Evidence suggested the prevalence of inadequate differentiation on the part of teachers to ensure that all learners participated in the curriculum and benefited from the teaching and learning experience.

1.4.2. Teachers' preparedness

The research conducted by Darling-Hammond, Chung and Frelow (2002) explored the relationships between teachers' perceptions of their preparedness and their sense of teaching efficacy. Their findings suggested a significant correlation between the extent to which teachers feel well prepared and their confidence in their ability to achieve various teaching goals. Teachers who felt better prepared were significantly more likely to believe they could successfully reach all learners, handle problems in the classroom, and make a difference in the lives of their learners. Those who felt under-prepared were significantly more likely to feel uncertain about how to teach their learners and more likely to believe that factors other than classroom practices influenced learning more. Research has linked teacher efficacy to teachers' enthusiasm for teaching and their

commitment to teaching, the findings of which can be translated to the issue of teachers' preparedness and willingness to implement inclusive education policies and practices. Reduced teacher efficacy and confidence with regard to becoming inclusive practitioners will necessarily have implications for their effectiveness and their commitment to implementing inclusive education policy.

It is clear from the studies and surveys already mentioned that the stress teachers are experiencing as a result of new education policies initiatives, presents as a major challenge. If teachers are feeling overwhelmed and disempowered by education reform, incompetent and ill-equipped to implement these effectively, the dream of inclusive education will likely remain a dream (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007).

While research shows that most teachers generally give policy their support, when it comes to actual implementation, teachers are faced with massive contradictions. Naicker (1996, p.22) concludes that while inclusive education policy may reflect the views of the majority of South Africans, "the actual implementation... will not be easy ... The rationale for such a position is associated with the difficulty related to reversing established notions of teaching and learning that have been inherited from a very conservative system of education".

1.4.3. Practice remains largely unchanged

Vayrynen's (2003) ethnographic study in Finland and South Africa revealed that although schools may adopt the correct rhetoric of inclusion, practice remains largely unchanged. It is interesting that the South African school which Vayrynen conducted part of this ethnographic study in was one of the schools that requested to be part of the pilot project. The school leadership and management had proven eager to participate in the pilot project and committed to the various teacher development and training programmes which the project initiated. Her study revealed that "the transformation towards an inclusive school seemed to stagnate at a certain point: the rigidity of teaching/learning practices. This was not related to lack of skills or knowledge in participatory learning approaches – all teachers used a variety of teaching/learning methods" (Vayrynen, 2003, p.6). Vayrynen found that "schools will need to make further efforts in tackling the core of inclusion – the attitudes and beliefs that impact on practice and develop new ways of doing things, i.e. create

a culture of meaningful participation for all learners in an environment that welcomes and values different contributions and achievements" (Vayrynen, 2003, p.6). She focuses on the defining principle of participation in her understanding and investigation of inclusion. Inclusion in learning relates "to the extent to which each learner is 'participating' in the learning process, i.e. how s/he can access the curriculum, experience meaningful learning and construct knowledge according to her/his individual characteristics and learning styles" (Varyrynen, 2003, p.3).

Her findings suggest that generally, learners played rather a limited role in the learning process. Classroom observations revealed that teaching and learning consisted of mainly teacher-led activities with an over-reliance on a traditional emphasis on getting answers right. Why, despite training and support towards inclusion, had practices remained largely unchanged in this school? Varyrynen (2003) suggests that the important factor rests on individual teachers' understandings of the curriculum principles, as well as local meanings of participation.

1.4.4. Language and terminology

Language and terminology is viewed as more than merely a reflection and verbal expression of reality (Giroux, 1988), but as serving as the foundation for systems of power. It is with this thinking in mind that new language and terminology has been introduced, to signify a break with past attitudes, policies and practices and to facilitate and lay the foundation for the growth of inclusion and inclusive education. However, whilst changes in language can be important, they are not enough to shift meanings on their own. When practices remain relatively unchanged, then new terminology and forms of language run the risk of becoming merely a set of euphemisms.

> "One way in which dominant influences within society and the field of education maintain their hegemony is to usurp the meaning of new words and phrases that gain a certain degree of popularity and threaten the status quo … By removing the political and cultural contexts from which terms emerge, conservative and traditional teachers can effectively cripple them as effective expressions for critical change" (Giroux, 1988, p.148).

New concepts and notions may end up serving as simply a veneer of social justice and inclusion if traditional relations of subordination and domination are untroubled. Critical concepts which the influence of inclusion and inclusive education has popularised are not immune to cultural and

linguistic power maneuvers, and new terms and language will be empty and neutralised unless reconceptualisation extends past rhetoric and euphemisms, to actual practices (Benjamin, 2002; Giroux, 1988).

1.4.5. Professional and personal ability and coping skills

According to the findings of a study conducted by Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff (2001), teachers' stressors and coping skills appear to be related to their perceived professional and personal ability to deal with the realities of inclusion. Engelbrecht, et al. (2001) claim that teachers' stressors, needs and coping strategies have taken second place to the development and implementation of educational policy in South Africa. If the effectiveness of inclusive education practices were seen as revolving around teachers' stress levels and coping skills (Petty and Sadler, 1996), then the single greatest challenge facing the new education dispensation is the need to train and empower teachers to think and work in a new frame of reference (Prinsloo, 2001). Ntombela (2007) seems to concur with this belief when she stresses the need for a re-culturing (Doyle, 2002) of schools and teachers where the focus needs to be on changing the ways in which teachers think about schools and learners. This change of vision and commitment to a new set of collective values necessarily emphasises a changed mind-set; a paradigm shift that seeks to improve current practices. Evidence of such transformation emerges when teachers realise that there are old beliefs and assumptions that may have given meaning to their practices in the past but which do not fit comfortably within the new paradigm, and which are not compatible with the social rights paradigm.

1.4.6. An absence of support services

Evidence also suggests that factors such as the absence of support services, relevant materials and support personnel; inadequate personnel training programmes, and poor infrastructure, are major obstacles in the effective and meaningful implementation of inclusion in developing countries (Ainscow, et al. 1995; Eleweke and Rodda, 2002; Muthukrishna and Sader, 2004; Muthukrishna and Schoeman, 2000; Wildeman and Nomdo, 2007). Wildeman and Nomdo's work (2007, p1) tracking the funding and service delivery challenges of implementing inclusive education and training policies, highlights that should one or both of these conditions be less than optimal, effective implementation of inclusion would be seriously disrupted, the net result being "a situation

where service delivery becomes a function of available 'capacity' instead of delivering on the actual demands of policy".

While it may be easy to accuse teachers of non-co-operation and resistance to new education policies, a closer look at some of the conditions research reports as having significant impact on teachers' ability to implement inclusion, (such as: class sizes, workloads, physical conditions and layout of classrooms, equipment and learning support materials, additional duties and roles teachers are expected to perform and play, and lack of effective support and training from the Department of Education), highlights the main barrier to effective policy implementation as "the lack of political will on the part of the government to improve the conditions and context within which reforms have to take place" (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007, p63).

However, how does this explain the concern for sustainability of inclusive attitudes and practices amongst teachers who have been trained and supported towards their implementation (as were those teachers who participated in the pilot project)? Wildeman and Nomdo (2007, p1) agree that even when "sufficient funding has been secured and the implementing agencies have the capacity to deliver … the presence of both conditions does not guarantee actual implementation". Becoming inclusive practitioners assumes an integral relationship between theory and practice. There are obstacles to inclusive policy becoming a reality – while most teachers agree with inclusion in theory they are finding it difficult to put it into practice.

Literature on educational change states that simply supporting teachers in the early and initial stages of the implementation of new education policy and practices is insufficient to ensure the sustainability of new innovations (Fullan, 1991; Saranson, 1991), but that what in fact is needed is the provision of continued support and technical assistance. The assumption we are left with from such research is that if teachers receive effective and continued assistance and support in mastering the skills required to implement an innovation such as inclusion, they become more committed to the transformation as more effective inclusive practitioners.

1.4.7. The need for more training

Findings from the research conducted by Avramidis, et al. (2000) suggested there was a perceived need for more training by the teachers who participated in the study. Although they reported having sufficient subject knowledge, they felt that they needed more support in the development of generic teaching skills in order to enable them to cater for a diverse learner population (including teaching strategies, differentiating the curriculum and managing challenging behaviour). What is apparent from the Avramidis, et al. study and the pilot project is the apparent need for more consultancy from external specialists (such as educational psychologists). It is important to stress that adopting and implementing inclusive education requires complete restructuring of the provision of teacher training, support and resources, to effectively address diversity and difference. The implication for policy-makers is therefore to make sure that effective and ongoing consultancy, support and resources are in place.

1.4.8. Aligning personal and professional identities

Research into the policy/practice gap provides insights into the strategies teachers adopt "in their attempts to engage with a policy system that is not aligned with their personal and professional identities" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.298). They draw heavily on the argument that schools function primarily as "signals of modernity on the African landscape" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.298) – displaying imported western ideals and symbols, in the attempt that "looking modern" will encourage foreign capital and investment and thereby strengthen the economic growth of third world countries. In their application of this idea to South African education's policy reformation, Chrisholm and Fuller (1996, p.698) make the observation that South Africa must "mimic the tools and means of policy implementation borrowed from the western state or run the risk of not looking modern". It is suggested that this "broader pattern of mimicry adopted by the state and policy-makers in their attempts to make South African education 'look modern'," translates to teachers' adopting the primary strategy of mimicry, in the attempt to look competent (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.298). Hargreaves (cited in Purvis and Hales, 1983, p.32) believes that teacher strategies arise in response to constraints that are generated structurally within the wider society; and that the particular constraint of "the generation and proliferation of differing educational ideologies" is a constraint particularly relevant during this time of radical transformation. The old, conservative, traditional ideology is being replaced by a new, modern, progressive ideology, which "contains

definitions of correct practice" thus representing "a clear constraint to which teachers feel they must respond through the construction and maintenance of appropriate displays of educational imagery" (Hargreaves, in Purvis and Hales, 1983, p.32).

Such an attempt "to reform teachers' identities in the image of a first world, modern global citizen or "universal subject" rather than attending to their more pressing and practical needs", serves to reinforce teachers' strategies of mimicry (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.298) – "the blind following of procedures without understanding how and why these work". (Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999, p.160). Research is consistently finding that while teachers seem to support the ideals advocated by education policy and may model the outward, superficial forms of principles and practices, they fail to really understand the ideological premises on which they rest and the learning theories underlying them, resulting in meaningful learning often being severely compromised (Mattson and Harley, 2001). Such theorising offers an understanding of the apparent reality of superficial and nominal reforms with regard to recent transformative policy.

1.4.9. Rural schools and traditional values

The contrast between policy and practice is particularly apparent in rural schools. Cochran-Smith (2001) foregrounds the issue of the status of teacher quality in rural areas, highlighting the disparities between the qualifications of teachers in high and low poverty schools (where high-poverty school districts are more likely to employ unqualified people to take teaching positions than more affluent districts), as a major social issue for South Africa. Cochran-Smith warns that continued unequal distribution of resources across the urban-rural divide will result in a two-tier education system, wherein the worst prepared teachers teach the learners in most need. Impressions formed by research conducted by Harley, et al. (1998) and Mattson and Harley (2001), support the view that better resourced, historically privileged schools are more likely to be able to manage the new policies than historically disadvantaged, mainly black schools, and particularly the poor, rural and marginalised among them. If recent education reform presents as a "script for modernity: (Baxen and Soudien, in Jansen and Christie, 1999, p.138), "implemented in all schools, from modern urban institutions to the poorest farm schools in traditional areas" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.299), then surely adopting such radical rhetoric and symbolism is setting some schools up for failure from the outset.

Another contributing factor to the policy-practice dilemma in rural areas may very well be the fact that the fundamental principles underpinning policy are in stark contrast to traditional values held by most rural communities. Furthermore, apart from community values, teachers' personal values are often at odds with policy. For many teachers, then, implementing policy does not simply represent a new approach to pedagogy – it is also a profound challenge to their values and beliefs, and those of their community. Teachers are required to undergo fundamental changes that threaten the foundations on which their cohesion and effectiveness is built, and signify "a fundamental dislocation with the past" (Parker and Harley, 1999, p.190).

According to Mattson and Harley's critique, the development of education policy can only achieve both international credibility and local legitimacy (looking modern) "by highlighting the ways in which these two imperatives correspond with each other, and by playing down the ways in which they contend with each other" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.299). "In this way, policy falls into the trap of social meliorism, where commitment to a vision of *what should be*, clouds the ability to seriously consider *what is*, so that the good intentions of social reconstructionism have more influence on the policy agenda then social and school realities" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.299). "Policy's failure to represent and address marginalised teachers, is yet another reason why the project of social justice, equity and democracy, might well lose out to the increasingly exclusive project of modernisation and globalisation" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.300).

Literature warns that as long as factors militating against the implementation of inclusion remain unaddressed, equal educational opportunity will remain a myth (Kavale, 2002; Zajda, 2002). An immediate concern is whether South Africa, with its comprehensive policy and commitment to inclusion, is to add to the statistics on the failure of reform? Whether our policies will realise a politics of hope for South Africa? Or whether they will remain mere political symbolism; rhetoric for the good society?

1.5.   THE CRISIS OF RADICAL AND DRAMATIC CHANGE

Engelbrecht, et al. (1999) do not find it surprising that restructuring and redesigning of education in South Africa may be received with misgiving by some teachers, as a dramatic change can often be experienced as a crisis. A series of radical changes have thus transformed expectations of teachers and their working environments, causing confusion, insecurity, a sense of powerlessness and loss of control over their situation, and a lack of motivation and enthusiasm to meet the needs of all learners. This has subsequently resulted in some negative attitudes towards the implementation of new inclusive education policies. The Quarterly Review of Education and Training in South Africa (15 September 2001, pp.6-9) refers to teachers at the centre of all recent policy shifts and developments in education, as "strangers in their own territory searching for a path in a complex terrain of ongoing changes".

1.5.1. Teachers' changing roles and identities

Samuel (2008) traces the changing roles and identities of teachers from the 1960's, where the role of teachers was interpreted as that of "instrument technicians to enact the expressed goals of the authorities", to the expectations underlying present transformative education policy, of teachers as agents of change. The 1960's view of teachers was influenced by the international trends of behaviourist scientificity and human capital theoretical models and the Nationalist government's ideology of apartheid. Segregation and exclusion along racial lines was therefore infused into the social engineering trends in education. "Teachers within this era came to be constructed as technicians of the state-driven agendas and the role of the 'good teacher' was interpreted as one who adhered both ideologically and politically to the goals of the State education authorities" (Samuel, 2008, p.3). With the rise of the teacher movements and teacher unions in the 1980's, teachers began asserting themselves beyond superficial mastery and transference of content subject matter, and establishing a more critical presence in opposition to the apartheid education authorities. During the transformation of education policy and the reformulation of the school curriculum in the 1990's, the role of teachers came to be interpreted as 'reconstructionists' and agents of social transformation.

1.5.2. Schools as democratic spheres and teachers as transformative intellectuals

Teachers have been increasingly required to take on new responsibilities: from the traditional view of teachers as uncritical transmitters of knowledge, to teachers as critical practitioners, agents of change, heralds of a new and better order – potential key players in the transformation of education, and agents in the transformation of society. In his endeavour to establish a critical discourse in order to help teachers better understand the nature of schooling and the possibilities for liberatory change, Giroux (1988) presents the image of schools as democratic spheres and teachers as transformative intellectuals, in the struggle to bring about a new vision of schooling. The image of schools as democratic public spheres offers an alternative to the view of schools as merely institutions that prepare learners for their place in a market economy, and, the vision of teachers as transformative intellectuals means that they are able to identify and overcome the constraints that hamper the democratic possibilities of schooling (Giroux, 1988).

"Teachers need to develop a discourse and set of assumptions that allow them to function more specifically as transformative intellectuals. As intellectuals, they will combine reflection and action in the interest of empowering students with the skills and knowledge needed to address injustices and to be critical actors committed to developing a world free of oppression and exploitation. Such intellectuals are not merely concerned with promoting individual achievement or advancing students along career ladders, they are concerned with empowering students so that they can read the world critically and change it when necessary" (Giroux, 1988, p.xxxiv).

"Viewing teachers as intellectuals also provides a strong theoretical critique of technocratic and instrumental ideologies underlying an educational theory that separates the conceptualization, planning and design of the curricula from the processes of implementation and execution. It is important to stress that teachers must take active responsibility for raising serious questions about what they teach, how they are to teach, and what the larger goals are for which they are striving. This means that they must take a responsible role in shaping the purposes and conditions of schooling … If we believe that the role of teaching cannot be reduced to merely training in the practical skills, but involves instead, the education of a class

of intellectuals vital to the development of a free society, then the category of intellectual becomes a way of linking the purpose of teacher education, public schooling and in-service training to the very principles necessary for developing a democratic order and society" (Giroux, 1988, p.126).

1.5.3. Reconceptualising the meaning of teaching and restructuring the roles of teachers

In presenting the image of schools as democratic public spheres and teachers as transformative intellectuals, Giroux (1988) implies a comprehensive and radical restructuring and reconceptualising of the new roles of teachers and the way in which both teachers and learners are educated. Similarly, Parker and Harley (1999) see the challenge of the new curriculum framework as requiring teachers to take on entirely new roles and reconceptualise the whole meaning of teaching itself. The Norms and Standards for Teachers (Department of Education of South Africa, 2001), outline seven roles which teachers are expected to fulfil: learning mediator, interpreter and designer of learning programmes, learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist, assessor, leader, administrator, scholar, researcher and lifelong learner, and a community, citizenship and pastoral role. These clearly expand far beyond teachers' former classroom responsibilities and extend to extremely important social responsibilities. Cochran-Smith (2001) expands on these important social responsibilities of teachers by stressing that the importance of teaching for social justice lies in their challenging the inequities that are deeply embedded in systems of schooling and in society. Gramsci (cited in Cochran Smith, 2001) argues that action towards establishing social justice has to be every everyone's responsibility and that each individual has to be accountable for the role s/he plays, or fails to play, in the larger struggles of the day. Therefore teachers are required to think deeply about social justice issues and deliberately claim their role of teacher as well as activist, based on political consciousness and ideological commitment to combating the inequities of life and establishing democratic and inclusive attitudes and practices. New roles of teachers create a far-reaching, comprehensive set of expectations, associated with a social reconstructionist orientation that seeks to change classroom attitudes and practices and provide an impetus for social change (Beyer, 2001; Freire, 1973; Liston and Zeichner, 1991) – an educational endeavour involving meaningful work which extends far beyond the four walls of a classroom (Whang and Waters, 2001).

1.6. POLICY IMAGES CONFLICT WITH PERSONAL IDENTITIES

Policy images of teachers (the official projections through various policy texts of what the ideal teacher looks like) make demands that conflict with their personal identities as practitioners (the way teachers feel about themselves professionally, emotionally, politically, given the conditions of their work) (Jansen, 2001). It is believed that the dislocation of the vision of policy and practical realities is problematic to educational change and that this conflict might lie at the heart of the implementation dilemma in educational reform (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Jansen, 2001; Sayed, 2003). Given the complex problems associated with education reform, in the context of South Africa as a developing country, Jansen (2001) stresses the need to understand the identity dilemma faced by teachers by exploring their personal identities. Similar notions are stressed by various theorists and researchers – Carrim, 2002; Fullan, 1993; Fullan, 1999; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Goodson, 1992; Harley, et al. 1998; Kalabula, 2002; Mattson and Harley, 2001; Soudien, 2002; Soudien, 2006; Wearmouth, et al. 2000; Wickham, 1997.

1.6.1. The centrality of teachers' identities

Profound and meaningful pedagogical transformation involved in implementing the new curriculum and inclusive policy involves not only redefining teaching, but also seriously challenging the prevailing system of social relations. Such fundamental changes also challenge teachers' own values and beliefs and those of their community, signifying a fundamental dislocation with the past (Parker and Harley, 1999).

Changing classroom practice

"demands that teachers re-examine their own relationships with their learners and the knowledge they seek to present and the context in which they seek to do this. It involves a fundamental interrogation of themselves" (Jita, 2004, p.12).

He goes on to say that although South African reform efforts

"are commendable, they will continue to have mixed success primarily because they pay less attention to other critical factors that influence teachers in shaping their practices", and that "the construction of a teacher's classroom practice is contingent on

more than just what they know or believe about teaching and learning" (Jita, 2004, p.12).

He believes it also depends on who they are and how they see themselves in relation to other people in general. Changing classroom practice is shaped, then, by teachers' identities. The concept of teachers' identities is therefore central to any investigation involving teachers in transition.

Post-apartheid teachers are increasingly being constructed by state authorities as incapable of adequately realising the goals of the new education and training system (Carrim, 2001; Carrim, 2002), incompetent and deficient in relation to their new roles as agents of change and meeting the expectations of policy images of teachers (Sayed, 2003; Jansen, 2001). In its enthusiasm to ensure that the transformation of the education system occurred, the new education bureaucracy simply demanded that teachers transform without taking into consideration or adequately acknowledging and recognising where teachers are (Samuel, 2008). This echoes many researchers and theorists who caution against policy initiatives which do not take into account the context and the agents of transformation. Such profound and meaningful changes involving redefinition of teaching and of teachers as people are more likely to be sustained because they are personal, and because they look squarely at what is (Harley, et al. 1998).

Given that inclusive education means transformation of the education system and the way teachers understand and make sense of their lives, Naicker (1996) admits the enormity of the task at hand, and further acknowledges that change of this nature surely results in widescale scepticism. In an attempt to chart a realistic way forward for inclusive education, his particular concern was the need for a realisation around what needs to be done for the concept to enjoy the support of the majority. Issues of concern and questions which are posed by teacher developers and inclusive education policy implementers include: How do we bring about long-lasting and genuine change in teacher attitudes and classroom practices? How do we build a community of practice, a collective sentiment, a shared determination among educationists? How do we inspire collective action towards developing a truly inclusive system of education at all levels?

1.6.2. Teachers' subjective experiences and personal beliefs

The conclusion reached by much policy analysis and classroom-based research is that education policy in South Africa is distressingly out of touch with teachers' realities. If teachers' subjective experiences and personal beliefs are not taken into account these could militate against the successful implementation of inclusive education policy, and effective and appropriate transformation may ultimately be jeopardised.

It has been suggested that if policy is to move beyond political symbolism, it must look squarely at what is (Harley, et al. 1998). It is assumed that policy makers have not taken account of the context and the agents of implementation – that while policy describes the ideal inclusive teacher with clarity and precision, it does not see the real teacher and the cultural and material constraints which make up these teachers' realities, clearly enough to understand what must be involved in achieving this ideal (Harley, et al, 1998).

According to Jita (2004),

> "changing classroom practices of teachers will continue to elude even the most sincere reform efforts. This is in part because the reformers have not paid sufficient attention to the personal aspects of teacher change. That is, how a teacher's sense of self has to change in order to enable the required changes in their teaching" (Jita, 2004, p.11).

Harley, et al. (1998) caution against policy initiatives which do not take into account the context and the agents of transformation. Too often, change in education fails due to insufficient attention given to the current practices, realities, experiences and needs of those who are expected to put the changes into effect (Wearmouth, et al. 2000). The concern raised is that oversight in these areas might ultimately impede transformation.

There seems to be a need for research focusing on teachers' subjective understandings of their work. Goodson (1992) argues for the need to shift from seeing teachers in terms of their roles as teachers, to seeing them as people. According to Fullan and Hargreaves (1992), there is a need to consider the teacher's purpose, the teacher as a person, the real world context in which teachers work, and the culture of teaching and learning in that context. Investigating teachers' realities and

experiences of transition towards inclusion cannot be adequately understood unless understood in the social context in which they occur. From this perspective it is clear that the different levels of systems, in the whole social context, influence one another in an ongoing "process of dynamic balance, tensions and interplay" (Engelbrecht, cited in Engelbrecht, et al. 1999, p.4).

1.7. THE PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Most literature on inclusive education reveals a fundamental contradiction between stated policy and actual practice, and highlights individual teachers' realities and experiences as an important factor in understanding this contradiction. It seems that in developed and developing countries alike a discrepancy exists between the ideal of inclusion, and what teachers see as realistic practice (Lewis, 1999). Lloyd (2000) warns that as long as factors militating against the implementation of inclusive education policies remain unaddressed, equal educational opportunity will remain a myth.

Although there is a growing body of literature on how schools and classrooms can become more inclusive, Ainscow, et al. (2000) suggest that an understanding of how to effect this needs to include a closer look at what is needed to manage change. According to Brookfield, cited in Grace and Benson (2000), the influences that shape teachers' lives and move teachers' actions are likely to be found in a complex web of experiences and perceptions.

> "In order to accomplish systemic change… both the practical and personal components of change should be developed. The values, opinions, attitudes and concerns of teachers … are deeply embedded in the systemic structure of schools in communities… The origins of issues around the discourse… cannot be separated from the context and systems in that context… and requires a clear understanding of how prevailing values and ideas within the entire social system influence all levels, from the wider community to schools and individuals" (Engelbrecht, et al. 1999, pp.9-10).

The above authors and theorists strongly encourage a focus on understanding the contextual realities and experiences of teachers, as "context is a prerequisite for the understanding of

experience, behaviour, problems and phenomena. By taking a context into consideration, information is seen in a new light; it becomes understandable" (Engelbrecht, et al. 1999, p.5).

Literature cautions that if teachers' personal realities and subjective experiences are not taken into account these could militate against the successful implementation of inclusive education policy, ultimately jeopardising effective and appropriate transformation. The efficacy of pedagogical change and the effective implementation and outcome of inclusive practices In South Africa, therefore, will be largely determined by the investigation, understanding and addressing of teachers' realities and experiences.

According to Jita (2004, p.11), despite a

> "substantial build-up in the literature on identities, few of these studies have explored the identities of teachers in developing countries … fewer studies have explored the connections between teachers' identities and their teaching practices."

However, South African research in the area of the relationship between core classroom practice and teachers' identities is developing fairly rapidly, and, collectively, these studies are beginning to suggest a number of dimensions of teachers' lives that have an impact on their classroom practices – specifically how their lives outside school, together with their latent identities and cultures, shape their practice, and how changing practices may result from changing identities (Goodson, 1992; Jansen, 2001; Jita, 2004; Mattson and Harley, 2001).

My research investigates how the identities of teachers may influence their construction of an alternative practice in their classrooms - an investigation of the personal realities and experiences that may facilitate or impede teacher development towards building inclusive attitudes and practices, taking into account the context in which they occur. Through the narratives of teachers caught between the demands of policy and their contextual realities, between the ideal and the real, a clearer picture emerges with regard to how new roles and competencies prescribed in policy resonate with individual teachers' realities and contexts, and how teachers negotiate these inevitable tensions and contradictions.

When considering the relevance of this research to other contexts and countries, it is important to keep in mind that the field of inclusive education has evolved relatively unevenly in different parts of the world (Ainscow, et al. 2000), as it has within South Africa itself, resulting in uncertainties, disputes, tensions and contradictions, both internationally and nationally. Although Ainscow, et al. (2000) emphasize the importance of recognising the peculiarities of different contexts and national contexts, and warn against consequent transporting of conclusions from one context to another, they do concede that engagement with the experiences of teachers from particular contexts can provide a useful basis for reflection on teachers' experiences in other contexts and in other countries. Although my sample of teachers which participate in this research are African rural teachers, and therefore the context is predominantly specific to these teachers, I believe that the findings resonate with the majority of teachers within South Africa, and can extend to the experiences of all teachers anywhere in the world. These findings have similar implications for the national and international vision of inclusion and inclusive education policy implementation.

Investigating particular experiences of teachers in transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners, captures the tensions and contradictions, difficulties and dilemmas comprising their personal realities and illuminates how teachers make sense of these realities and construct their personal and professional identities accordingly. While a clearer understanding of teachers' experiences and the contexts in which they live and work provides a basis for the future planning and delivery of teacher development and support programmes, which could marry the 'real' and the 'ideal' (Harley, et al. 1998), the main interest which guides this research endeavour is the investigation of how teachers negotiate the tensions and contradictions between the 'real' and the 'ideal'. I am also interested in how teachers respond to the idealised policy image of the teacher as "a universal subject with universally good attributes...abstracted from the social conditions of poverty, historical oppression, pedagogical neglect" and continued inequality (Baxen and Soudien, in Jansen and Christie, 1999, p.138).

My research therefore explores the experiences of teachers in transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners with a view to understanding the tensions and dilemmas which exist in these teachers' realities. This places my research within the discipline of Educational Psychology.

Because transformation towards inclusion and inclusive education falls into the broader field of social change, my research is equally located in the discipline of Social Justice Education.

The research questions are therefore formulated as follows:

- **How do teachers construct their personal and professional selves in light of inclusive education?**
- **How do teachers negotiate possible tensions and contradictions which may emerge in the process of becoming inclusive practitioners?**

Authentic narratives of teachers' experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners, transports this research beyond merely reporting on transformation in the abstract, to looking squarely at what is. This could serve to highlight factors which may facilitate and militate against the process of internalising and implementing inclusion in South African schools and classrooms.

If South Africa is to succeed at moving beyond the mere rhetoric of inclusion, teachers' experiences and realities – the contextual tensions and contradictions that make up their realities and experiences - need to be investigated, understood and rigorously addressed.

My research endeavours to identify the highly textured nature of the construction of the personal and professional self, in a context of radical education and social transformation, in the hope that a more nuanced understanding of how teachers negotiate tensions and contradictions which may emerge in the process of becoming inclusive practitioners will shed light on some of the main barriers to the successful implementation of inclusive education.

Although I have drawn from the work of theorists and scholars who write from the situation of their own international contexts, the questions they raise and the thinking they propose undoubtedly contribute to the concern for furthering inclusive education practices in the South African context. In a similar vein, while it would be unrealistic to aspire to transport conclusions from the South African situation to other countries (due to the peculiarities of each national context) this study could provide a useful basis for reflection on similar processes elsewhere in the world. Thus, while this research in no way claims to present a complete engagement with issues of inclusion and inclusive

education across all contexts, it, hopefully, provides some contribution towards the local and international conversation concerning inclusion and inclusive education.

This research didn't start out with an argument or hypothesis, and the thesis does not present as logical formative steps towards proving or disproving this statement or hypothesis. Rather, the various chapters and sections should be considered "contributing to a set of overlapping conversations" (Young, 2000, p.14), the purpose of which is to advance and expand investigation, thinking and understanding about issues crucial to inclusive practice among teachers, which have not been attended to sufficiently by policy makers in the South African education system.

1.8.   CONCLUSION

Despite the contextually determined meaning of inclusive education in various countries, key elements which exist across all contexts include the core concepts of access, equity and quality: inclusive education is an ongoing process to finding strategies which effectively address diversity in schools and creating inclusive school communities. It is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers to learning, development and participation, and ways in which the full participation and maximum potential of marginalised groups of learners can be achieved (Ainscow, 2003; Booth, 1999; Engelbrecht, 2006; Engelbrecht and Green, 2007; Farrell, 2004). These core concepts are outlined in this chapter's presentation of the move towards inclusion and inclusive education as fundamental to the development of education policy and reform in the post-apartheid era in South Africa.

This chapter draws on the continuing conversation and critical debate which surrounds inclusion through its discussion of the challenges and barriers which exist with regard to the effective implementation of inclusion in the majority of South African schools. It also highlights the background of the issues which have prompted this research. It outlines the purpose of the research, delineates the questions that guide the inquiry, locates the research in specific disciplines, and presents the significance of this research.

The tensions and contradictions which exist between the idealism of education policy and reform initiatives, on the one hand, and teachers and schools being able to respond to the demands on them, on the other, will be further explore in the next chapter which focuses on teachers' experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners.

CHAPTER TWO

TEACHERS ON THE 'FRONT LINES' OF TRANSFORMATION

- a conceptual framework for investigating teachers' experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners

> Ironically, the one area of education that has received relatively little attention to date relates to teachers themselves, even though they remain on the 'front lines' when it comes to working with youth. Few policy-makers in education seem to see teachers as central to the process of change
> (Mitchell, et al. 2005, p.258)

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusion envisages a new social order of possibility and hope, in which exclusion in all its multiple manifestations is challenged and abolished. With the intention to turn its back on the inequalities of the past and build a democratic and inclusive society, South African education reform necessarily requires both a process of "educational reconceptualization" and "radical reconstruction" (Slee, 2001, p174), what Engelbrecht and Green (2007, p101) refer to as "reculturing and restructuring". The construction of a system of inclusive schooling is not measured through the effectiveness of its capacity to assimilate those learners previously marginalised and excluded, but "through evidence of the specific expressions and valuing of differences in a new set of social relations" (Slee, 1996, p27). Such change requires teachers (and all people) to think differently and reconceptualise who they are and who others are, to develop new ways of understanding, and to draw on a different 'set of tools' to make meaning of the world and the people and social relations within it. According to Engelbrecht and Green (2007), development of a new set of tools that will enable teachers to consider and interpret issues differently, and apply such changes to practice, involves more than simply changing attitudes and raising awareness. What is needed to build an effective inclusive education and training system, is "a form of change that enables attitudes to shift and awareness to deepen" (Engelbrecht and Green, 2007, p90).

The profound and meaningful pedagogical transformation involved in implementing inclusive education policy involves not only redefining teaching but also seriously challenging the prevailing system of social relations. Such fundamental change necessarily challenges teachers' own values and beliefs and those of their community, signifying "a fundamental dislocation with the past" (Parker and Harley, 1999, p.190). In the previous chapter it has been established that policy images of teachers make demands that conflict with their personal identities (Jansen, 2001) and that this conflict might lie at the heart of the implementation dilemma in educational reform (Hargreaves, 1992; Jansen, 2001; Sayed, 2003). This process of taking on the mantle of agents of change; transformative agents (Giroux, 1988); cultural workers (Freire, 1998); teaching for social responsibility, social change and social justice (Cochran-Smith, 1991), requires that teachers develop an alternative sense of themselves, not only as teachers but as individuals.

Some theorists believe that it is much easier to think about transformation in an abstract manner rather than dealing with reality and its various emotional tensions and stressors that face agents of change (Sayed, 2003). Teachers' identities are deeply implicated in their teaching. Any investigation into teachers in transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners necessitates a much closer consideration of teachers' identities. According to Mitchell, et al. (2005), teachers are on the 'front lines' of being able to make a meaningful contribution to change in the lives of learners, and yet few policy-makers in education seem to view them as central to the process of change. Theorists and researchers agree that the route to understanding the identity dilemma faced by teachers is an exploration of their personal identities (Carrim, 2002; Fullan, 1993; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Goodson, 1992; Harley, et al, 1998; Jansen, 2001; Kalabula, 2002; Mattson and Harley, 2001; Soudien, 2006; Wearmouth, et al. 2000).

The understanding of identity, which informs this research, draws firstly on the understanding that teachers' identities are socially constructed within social settings and shaped within multiple contexts which include schools, families, communities and cultures. Spillane's (cited in Drake, Spillane and Hufferd-Ackles, 2001) use of the term 'identity' as referring to teachers' sense of self has been useful in further informing this research. Teachers' sense of self includes not only individual teachers' ethnic, racial, gender, social class, and linguistic backgrounds, but also their knowledge and beliefs, disposition, interests, orientation towards teaching, psychological profile,

and their social and political identities. Jansen's (2001) conception of teacher identities also draws on these characteristics and organises them around the following three categories of analysis: how teachers feel about themselves professionally, emotionally and politically (Jansen, 2001). The professional basis for teacher identity refers to the ways in which teachers understand their capacity to understand and implement new educational policies; the emotional basis for teacher identity refers to the ways in which teachers emotionally respond to the demands of new educational policies; the political basis for teacher identity refers to the ways in which teachers understand and act on their value commitments, personal backgrounds and professional interests in the context of the demands of educational change (Jansen, 2001).

Recent developments in social theory challenge the most basic assumptions about the nature of human identity, thus offering a springboard for a new and radical critique of the way identity has been previously theorised. This chapter concerns itself with reviewing the theoretical arguments about the changing nature of teacher identity and teaching and learning practices in contemporary South African society. These new and radical approaches have the potential to provide a basis for a series of critical contributions to education policy debates; potentially offer a more sophisticated perspective on the development of a critical pedagogy of inclusion and social justice; and provide the conceptual framework for investigating teachers' narratives on experiences and realities of becoming inclusive practitioners, which will be further explored in subsequent chapters.

2.2.   TEACHERS IN CONTEXT – the politics of the personal

> "It is not enough to think about individuals in the abstract and planning regulations in general. Instead they have to think about *this* place, *these* people, *this* landscape, *these* opportunities" (Sacks, 2000, p.50).

A politics of inclusion inevitably takes as its starting point the exclusive structure of society – those power relations in which some social groups' interests are subordinated to the interests of others. Part of looking squarely at what is (Harley, et al. 1998) in the context of South Africa, sees the apartheid discourse as the calculated and socially constructed initiative that it was, the outcome of which was the underdevelopment and subordination of non-whites, leading inevitably to the

creation of marginal social groups, cultures and human beings. This ethnocentrism is reminiscent of "the invention of Africanism" (Mudimbe, 1998, p.9) and the discourse on "savages" – a mindset which named "savages" and "primitives" under imperialism and colonialism, and a discourse in which the classical tradition of European values assumed the exclusive monopoly over the power to define (McLaren, 1991, p.12). The dominant strains of Western rationalism have been historically infected by racism, xenophobia and misogyny (McLaren, 1991) thus rendering non-whites, foreigners and women not free subjects of thought or action, but rather an invention of the dominant social group (Said, 2003). Apartheid created the historical dimension of black people, naming their 'primitiveness' and assigning them to a position of inferiority and subordination and exclusion.

This deep culture (Clough and Corbett, 2000) of social exclusion and non-participation, with its fundamental value systems which formed (and perhaps still form) the very fabric of lives, cannot be overlooked - it must necessarily impact on the personal and professional identities of teachers. Apartheid is guilty of destroying the characteristics of true identity within authentic cultures, giving rise to a space of continuous disassociation between authentic identities and the imposed ideal of the superior race. This marginalised space is fraught with contradictions and disassociations, in which the many manifestations, effects and outworking of alienation, dismemberment, distortion and contamination of the true authentic identity, must necessarily exist.

South African teachers today are the selfsame people that are heirs to the inequalities of our past – they are inevitably shaped and socialised by this deep culture of inequality and social exclusion (Clough and Corbett, 2000). Many of these very teachers who are expected to develop learners within and according to the framework of this new pedagogy (grounded in a politics of ethics, difference and democracy) and therefore play an important role in the struggle for social justice, are a product of a society steeped in exclusionary and segregated forms of organisation, one which marginalised them in terms of full and equal participation in society. Their personal identities have been formed and developed within an historical experience of oppression. They have been socialised according to the power relations behind the organisational structure of the apartheid state which have structured and permeated all aspects of their lives, defining who and what people are and what they might and might not become. Taking into account the impact of this deep culture

leads inevitably to a research focus which starts from the politics of the personal, in which teachers' subjectivities and experiences of everyday life become the site of redefinition of exclusionary meanings and values, and of resistance to them.

A politics of inclusion and social justice necessarily pivots on the very issue of identity: how individuals' identities are defined for them and how they might begin to redefine them for themselves. This is clear in Engelbrecht, et al. (1999, p.4) where Engelbrecht states: "It is important to see how their values, etc, concerning the nature of the world have been shaped by the prevailing social contexts and debates that are part of the social context in which individuals have found themselves and the way in which individuals, in turn, have shaped the social context".

2.3.   THE 'TRAGIC DILEMMA OF THE OPPRESSED'

"The shackling of the subject is from within – this shackling is itself nothing less
than our very forms of subjectivity themselves" (Eagleton, cited in McLaren, 1995,
p.100)

2.3.1. Policy out of sync with teachers' personal, cultural and professional identities

Significant disparities between the abstracted "universal subject" constructed by policy, and the teachers who live and work in the rural and township schools of KwaZulu-Natal, were found in research conducted by Harley, et al. (1998). While policy constructs teachers in the roles of designers of learning programmes, lifelong learners, extended professionals with well developed reflexive competences (among others), research findings suggest that these are out of sync with teachers' daily experience and history, and personal and cultural identities. Findings further suggest that teachers "demonstrate a more restricted view of professionalism and are not highly skilled in the reflexive competencies" which "in most cases … can be clearly traced back to a materially and intellectually impoverished schooling and teacher training which … actively discouraged reflexive competence, coupled with a school and curriculum system that required teachers to limit themselves to the roles of a restricted professional" (Mattson and Harley, 2001,

p.301). These regional findings are echoed in national research findings, that draw "the distinction between the policy view of teachers as professionals, and the "civil servant" disposition which is more evident in practice" (Taylor and Vinjevold, cited in Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.301), and are reminiscent of earlier apartheid education policy.

> "It is a story told repeatedly in the many critiques of apartheid education policy that the teacher was conceived as a state functionary with limited autonomy. The sole requirement of teachers was bureaucratic and political compliance with state education. Compliance was ensured through a complex of instruments including a system of school-wide and individual teacher inspection, a rigid syllabus outlining official content, objectives and methods of teaching, and a hierarchy of internal (such as the principal) and external controls (such as routine visits by departmental officials). The teacher was an obedient civil servant that executed the well-defined instructional tasks per an official syllabus and a "moderated" examination…. these images were powerful and their legacy among teachers cannot be disputed as new policy images attempt to create greater autonomy among the same teachers within classrooms under apartheid" (Jansen, 2001, pp.242-246).

Traditional historic systems of South African teacher training created a situation for teachers in which "beyond … the self lies a world in which we are not the makers but the made" (Sacks, 2000, p.14) and has created teachers who are generally obedient, passive, non-critical and spoon-fed. Many are still stuck in this position of disempowerment and lack a sense of agency and autonomy with regard to their professional and personal identities.

Those teachers who experience radical change and transformation "must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were" (Freire, 1993, p.47). Freire refers to the "fear of freedom" which many previously oppressed individuals experience and manifest. Afraid to embrace freedom, (as this would require them to reject prescriptions and replace these with autonomy and responsibility), they prefer the "security of conformity" (Freire, 1993, p.32). They experience the conflict inherent in having been prescribed to and now having choices, between having been passive recipients of prescriptions, "being silent, castrated in their power to create and re-create, in their power to transform the world" (Freire, 1993, p.33), "in a state of submersion, impotent in the

face of oppressive reality" (Freire, 1993, pp.37-8) and now being encouraged to take active responsibility for creating transformed classrooms and new democratic citizens.

2.3.2. Products of historical circumstances of domination and subordination

According to Freire (1993, p.51), given the historical circumstances of domination and subordination which moulded and shaped, especially African teachers and their views and attitudes to teaching and learning, it is only natural that they may manifest a lack of confidence in themselves and their own abilities to implement new policies and practices – that they may have a tendency to react in a passive, dependent and alienated manner when confronted with the pressure to conform to new policy images of what teachers should be. While lacking confidence in themselves and their own abilities to implement new education policies is a characteristic of all teachers, it is especially prevalent in African teachers who were oppressed on the additional level of race by apartheid policies. Freire (1993) states that self-deprecation is characteristic of the oppressed – that the colonised mentality is prone to distrusting itself, its own knowledge, abilities and creativity; to lack self-confidence in its own abilities. This could explain why teachers, and more especially African teachers, may be perceived as always needing development, resources, etc from an outside source – they do not see themselves as competent agents of policy implementation.

This fear of freedom and self-depreciation is termed by Freire (1993) as "the tragic dilemma of the oppressed" and highlights that any education or development research and training must take cognisance of this.

According to research, teachers are compelled to engage with a policy discourse that does not represent them as they are, and one from which they necessarily experience exclusion. An example is offered by Mattson and Harley (2001, p.302): the education policy requirements of critical and creative thought around controversial issues, encouraging the creation of learning environments where conflict is handled through debate and argument; making the point that such policy requirements assume that cultural differences can be worked out with some tolerance and reasoning, but in reality, differences are not easily tolerated in rural, traditional schools where teachers would rather avoid conflict at all costs rather than instigate and participate in controversial

discussions. This is further impacted on by values and customs in KwaZulu-Natal having a historically strong political overlay, where differences have been proven to result in violence and death, rather than merely hypothetical issues able to be resolved through rational debate. Research experience of Mattson and Harley (2001, p.303) shows that "modernist, neo-liberal discourses cannot simply be integrated or "indigenised" into traditional settings, through policy edict, specification of teacher roles, and the good intentions of social reconstruction". Drawing on Giddens' (1984) work, consideration needs to be given to historical origins where "modernity arose *in reaction* to traditional thought systems … developed as a global mission bringing enlightenment to an irrational world" and they conclude that "modernity cannot be integrated with tradition in any symmetrical way; modernity can only displace and appropriate tradition" (Mattson and Harley (2001, p.303).

2.3.3. Modernity and tradition – two different ways of being

Modernity and the quest for progress requires that social practices are constantly reformed and re-examined, which contrasts with tradition which "is a self-validating system which does not open up its practices to doubt, but defends them unreflexively through appeals to ritual and authority in the interest of preservation rather than progress … tradition cannot enter into self-reflexive dialogue with modernity without radically altering its self-validating status" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, pp.303-304). According to Mattson and Harley (2001, pp.303-304), "the real conflict in South African education is not between the two modernist discourses … of globalisation and emancipatory pedagogy … but between two different ways of being – the traditional and the modern".

Their understanding of traditional values and practices in schools refers to practices such as sexism, authoritarianism, corporal punishment, rote-learning, ritual and routine, which they see as "direct legacies of colonial, missionary and apartheid education, imported from the west as a means of modernising and controlling "the traditional native" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.304). For them the notion of traditional values and practices in schools refers to "this collaboration between indigenous custom and early modern schooling methods, overlaid with the highly conservative philosophy of apartheid education."

While rural African schools and teachers have undoubtedly been subjected to historical disadvantage, Mattson and Harley (2001) think the problem goes deeper than simply this. Rural teachers, whose identities and roles were forged in the fires of apartheid oppression, are generally suspicious of the democratic and politically radical values that have accompanied the collapse of apartheid and the coming of modernity. Many experience difficulties in reconciling the ideological contradictions and tensions which emerge through the simultaneous breakdown of traditional values (generally viewed as negative) and the end of apartheid (generally viewed as positive), and further exacerbated by general positive attitudes towards the ideology of inclusion. They see schools and teachers as "caught between two irreconcilable social forces which clash and conflict with each other, giving rise to an edgy sense of displacement ... caught in the murky terrain between local forms of hybridised tradition and the globalised ideals of late modernity" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.305). Because South African policy is based on "an imported model which emerged in very different societies" (Harley and Parker, 2006, p.198), policy "assumes as already existing what it is intended to produce" (Harley and Parker, 2006, p.193) and fails to recognise that this shift and transformation for South African teachers is "a fundamental dislocation with the past" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.190). This state of dislocation and disjuncture promotes what Durkheim (cited in Harley and Parker, 2006), terms 'anomie' –

> "a break from the 'old' South African principles... but without sufficient subjection to new forms of moral obligation, rights, duties and responsibilities. This runs the risk of creating a sense of despair and powerlessness at the very moment teachers are being called upon to play a major role in transforming education and training" (Harley and Parker, 2006, p.197).

Traditional pedagogic practice relied primarily on a regulative discourse – a moral discourse concerned with character, manners and conduct which created order, and informed social relations and the formation of identities. Traditional classrooms have therefore been characterised by a regulative discourse which clearly defined conduct and roles in the classroom, favouring teachers' authority and control and setting strict limits and norms on learners' interaction and behaviour (Bernstein, 1996). Such traditional classroom discourses are discarded in transformative education policy which advocates a radical competence model of classroom pedagogy which favours a

democratic regulative discourse with minimal rules, free communication and negotiating shared meanings.

> "Just as traditional schools are required to revise the principles … on which their order and functionality rests, so teachers and learners in these schools must abandon the contextually authentic classroom relations and practices on which their confidence, ease and effectiveness rests" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.311).

The disjuncture between new classroom knowledge and competencies and everyday, culturally traditional knowledge and competencies is often overlooked in the debates and theorising around implementation strategies, and in attempts to understand teachers' experiences and realities of transformation. This traditional context of relying heavily on a regulative discourse "informs teachers' professional identities and their instructional discourse and practices far more powerfully than policy does" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.310).

2.3.4. Assuming the 'unencumbered self'

Inclusion and social justice is understood within an essentially liberal framework of universal ideas, individual freedom and rights-based morality (Griffiths, 1998, p.185). Significant across all meanings of liberalism is the overriding importance given to individual liberty, understood as the preferences and paths expressed and chosen, by an individual, rational chooser. This idea of an individual, rational chooser depends on the assumption of the "unencumbered self" (Griffiths, 1998, p.181). Another aspect of the problem arises in relation to the assumptions about the capabilities of the person in liberal theory, wherein the individual is assumed to be capable of making choices based on rational argument (Griffiths, 1998). Griffiths questions whether individuals are capable of acting out of purely rational thinking, engaging in rational debate over subjective issues such as cultural differences, and argues that liberalism is of limited help in educational practice, especially in conditions of increasing plurality and fragmentation (Griffiths, 1998).

The basic tenets of liberalism are challenged by Griffiths (1998), in that he argues that individuals are not unencumbered selves, but rather very much part of the community to which they belong, and derive their rationality, morality and sense of justice from their particular communities. The politics of identity are underpinned by theories that identities are both formed and authenticated by

race, class, gender, etc; and thus, so are rationality, morality and a sense of justice (Griffiths, 1998).

In the function of professional development, transformative education policy sets out to reform teachers in the image of the autonomous, self-motivated reflexive practitioner, through lists of specified roles and competencies. This Popkewitz refers to as an invasive form of "governing of the soul" which "inscribes the capabilities and sensitivities of liberal democracy as the identity of the individual", so that "the individual can be governed at a distance through self-motivation, self-actualisation and 'empowerment'" (Popkewitz, 1987, p.1). For those teachers that do not embrace democratic transformative policy completely, submission to the expectations may be at best dutiful, at worst mechanical, "and in both cases will rely on the outer symbols rather than the substance of transformed practice" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.312). It is no wonder that there is a growing disillusionment with new democratic, global education discourses, as well as the forms of mimicry they tend to inspire.

Once again, Bhabha's (cited in Rice and Waugh, 1984) thinking about colonialism and the colonial subject can be applied to teachers currently expected to transform. The ambivalence or forked tongue of colonial modernist discourse (or current democratic, global, progressive education policy, principles and practices) tells the colonial subject (or present teachers) 'you can be one of us' but actually means 'you can be like one of us', so that "mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same but not quite" (Bhabha, cited in Rice and Waugh, 1984, p.235). Current education policy, then, promises transformation, democracy, emancipation, social justice, equality and inclusion for all, while in fact specifying knowledges, attitudes, conditions, practices and relations that are often foreign to many teachers, and thus sets them up for failure by permitting "the subject to mimic alien form of autonomy, but not actually to exercise her own" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.313).

2.3.5. The 'marginal space' – the locus of paradoxes

The 'intermediate space' or 'marginal space' that colonial subjects are forced into as a direct result of the "colonising structure", is ultimately responsible for producing marginal societies, cultures and human beings (Mudimbe, 1998, p.4). This critique of colonialism can be extended to our present

critique of the global call for inclusion. Lifestyles and modes of thinking of the developed and therefore dominant nations impose themselves on the developing and therefore, in a sense, dominated nations, which in turn produce "alienating factors for the people who adopt them" (Bigo, cited in Mudimbe, 1998, p.5). We have already established that research suggests that teachers experience new education policy as marginalising and alienating. "Marginality designates the intermediate space" between the old and the new, and "despair gives this intermediate space its precarious pertinence and simultaneously, its dangerous importance … This marginal space has been a great problem since the beginning of the colonising experience; rather than being a step in the imagined 'evolutionary process', it has been the locus of paradoxes" (Mudimbe, 1998, p.5).

Transformational education policies, although intended as the next step in the imagined evolutionary process of teachers, have proved to give rise to a certain amount of 'despair' on the part of many teachers and position them in an intermediate or marginal space, in which alienation, ambivalence and paradoxes abound.

Recent education reform throws the former traditional structuring principles of identity into a state of flux and brings with it a 'crisis of representation' and a steady erosion of confidence in prevailing conceptualisations of what constitutes knowledge and truth, and their pedagogical means of attainment (McLaren, 1995, p.58). Researchers and education theorists have begun critiquing South Africa's new education policies, with their ideal and often unrealistic expectations for the roles teachers need to play, for creating a 'paradoxical site' in which teachers live out a difficult, if not impossible, relation to the future (McLaren, 1995, p.59). Also warranted, is the critique concerning whether the image of what 'should' be, and what is expected, now superseding reality, mirrors teachers' experiences; whether education policy implementation has become predominantly a terrain populated by simulations rather representation, wherein the model precedes and generates the real-seeming. This locating the subject within the surface meaning of the image undermines the exercise of power and contributes to the demise and depoliticisation of the historical subject – suctioning out its capacity for critical agency. The subject is unable to look to the past or the future to secure itself within a unified identity.

2.3.6. Universalising tendencies overlook specific contexts

Criticism is directed at such universalising tendencies which assume that current knowledge claims can transcend specific contexts and thereby profess universal validity – that universal truths can be transferred from one specific context to another. Applying Bhabha's thinking leads to the realisation that the same universalising impulse of colonial relations of power underlies current global practices of education, by naturalising, universalising and therefore de-politicising "the capabilities and sensitivities of liberal democracy as the identity of the individual" (Popkewitz, 2001, p.1).

"Given the radical disjuncture between the universalised abstract ideals of modernist policy and the traditional contexts of rural teachers" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.314), more consideration should be given to "theories that emphasise the situated nature of all forms of knowledge and the context-specificity of knowledge and skill acquisition and suggest that learning and knowledge cannot be considered in isolation from the everyday practices in which it is embedded" (Breier, 1998, p.73). Any critical pedagogy or research must focus on and develop strategies based on how teacher subjectivity is informed by culture and social contexts; how practical ethics with which teachers engage everyday life are inscribed within a politics of signification; how the politics of signification structure the problematisation of experiences; how the subjectivities of teachers are constituted by the effects of policy representations; and how teachers' needs and desires have been shaped in contradictory ways through dominant cultural forms, recent policy developments, modes of subjectivity and circuits of power.

A politics of location, positioning and situation is argued for by Giroux (1988) and McLaren (1995), where rational knowledge claims are based on partiality and not universality –"the view from a body" – always complex, contradictory, structuring and structured. In order to decode the conflicting discourses operative in such a space (or to liberate such a space), McLaren (1995, p.66) argues that an approach must be sought that "is always interpretive, critical and partial… a ground for conversation and objectivity which is power-sensitive" (McLaren, 1995, p.589). What this implies for the researcher is sensitivity to the agency of the subjects. They are not passive resources to be mapped and manipulated from a subject position of moral certainty that exercises an authoritative closure on their meaning-generating abilities in the name of inclusive discourse.

What is not needed is a criticism which re-others those voices which were and are marginalized and disempowered by dominant discourses. Rather, ways need to be found, in which attentive can be given to difference, while sharing a common ethos of solidarity, struggle and liberation.

2.4. THE POSTMODERN AGE AND THE 'DEATH OF THE SUBJECT'

"If we are entering a postmodern age, then one of its most distinctive characteristics is a loss of rational and social coherence in favour of cultural images and social forms and identities marked by fragmentation, multiplicity, plurality and indeterminacy." (Thompson, cited in Hall, Held and McGrew, 1992, p.227).

The term 'postmodernism', although elusive and difficult to define, is important because it highlights a number of changes and challenges that are part of the contemporary age (Giroux, 1992) and has become a major influence in contemporary social science.

2.4.1. Modernist grand narratives rejected and previously dominant and privileged positions annulled

In this postmodern age, modernist grand narratives are rejected and all privileged points of view are annulled, along with the dominant position which allowed the establishment of hierarchies of interpretation. Postmodernism's general characteristics can be applied to contemporary South Africa which has seen the problematisation and dismantling of the historical claims to truth that characterised the traditional dominant discourse of apartheid, thus paving the way for major fundamental changes in all areas of South African life, including education and the nature and meaning of the social world. Since the advent of democracy in 1994 South Africa has witnessed changes so fundamental, that society for South Africans has entered a substantially new period - a cultural transformation and a change in sensibility.

The grand narratives which contained previous subjectivities are splintering and cracking apart (McLaren, 1995, p.21); basic assumptions about progress, structure, social organisation and power relations, previously taken for granted, are being brought into question; and, attention is being

drawn to the changing nature of social formations and the shifting of previously accepted boundaries. Cultural trends in the postmodern age involve a multiplicity and mixing of styles and codes; a plurality of power-discourse formations; and paying close attention to other worlds and other voices. The new social epoch of post-modernity, heralds a pluralist, post-industrial, post-class society of multiple lifestyles and multiple power-discourses wherein a plurality of cultures is recognised, difference is preferred over uniformity, and emphasis is placed on looking for local factors or partial explanations in an attempt to forsake and oppose all forms of metanarratives, unifying and overarching metatheories.

The vision of inclusion and inclusive education form part of social, cultural and educational trends in this age of postmodernism. The grand narratives of the past, which were based on principles and practices of exclusion, segregation and marginalisation of some social groups, are being dismantled in favour of a vision which recognises, accepts and legitimises difference and multiplicity in all forms. Values of inclusion and social justice are based on the firm belief that all individuals have equal rights to be accepted and respected, and to reach their full potential in a society that caters for their individual needs. Inclusive education is based on the firm belief that all learners should have equal access to quality, meaningful education which is tolerant and accommodating of individual differences among learners. Inclusion and inclusive education emphasises the mainstreaming of previously excluded and marginalised groups of learners who represent other worlds and other voices.

Also characteristic of the postmodern age is a dislocation from the past, a fragmentation and discontinuity of social life as individuals knew it, which leads to the experience of instability, disjointedness, disorientation, the fragmentation of meaning, an inability to think things through and to unify past, present and future, a mutation of truth and the ways things were, and a schizoid experience of the loss of self – what Giroux (1992, p.21) refers to as "the fragmentary and the chaotic currents of change".

2.4.2. Fragmented subjectivity re-constructed in a plurality of discourses

Although there is no unified theory that can be labelled postmodern, certain threads of similarity link different postmodern theorists. The proclamation of the death of the subject features strongly in many of them, and is based on the argument that

> "there is no possibility of the existence of a central theoretical construct of the Enlightenment, the humanist subject: the bearer of the Rights of Man; the universal citizen with his equality of access to the public sphere, to rational discourse and to the fruits of education; and the holder of privileged knowledge of his own wants and beliefs" (Griffiths, 1998, p.184).

The success of these arguments has resulted in the side-lining of old universal, humanist, liberal certainties of modernity, in favour of analyses which are grounded in the plurality and fragmentation characteristic of social groups. The notion of the 'death of the subject' paves the way for the introduction of the notion of a fragmented subjectivity, constructed and re-constructed in a plurality of discourses.

With the problematisation and dismantling of historical claims to truth, that characterised traditional dominant South African discourse, it might appear as if postmodernism reformulates the old dependencies between the centre and the periphery, between progress and backwardness, in a way that creates a new hierarchy. For almost the first time, those social groups previously excluded find themselves in a position of privilege - now affirmed and legitimised. Postmodernity is therefore referred to as a crisis of meaning and feeling; a "growing distance, an expanding series of ruptures or gaps, between … various aspects of everyday life, between the available meanings and values which socially organise our existence and identity"; an age where our "mattering maps" no longer correspond to any available maps of meaning (Grossberg, cited in McLaren, 1995, pp.39-40).

Research findings and literature on teachers' responses and attitudes to the introduction of inclusive education policy reveal that teachers harbour initial negative attitudes towards inclusion. Although most teachers eventually give inclusion their support, they experience the change as a radical disrupting of old and familiar mattering maps. Any change is difficult to accept and embrace, especially change which shatters the foundations of what teachers have been traditionally and historically socialised to accept as the way things are and the way things should be. The

introduction of inclusion and inclusive education to teachers presents as a new way of teaching, learning and making sense of the world, classrooms, others and themselves – a way of thinking, being, relating, understanding and working which does not correspond to teachers' available mattering maps of meaning.

2.4.3. Inhabitants of an interstitial space, structured by ambivalence

Not only are teachers hard-pressed to cope with ever changing conditions and turbulent times, they are also caught between the demands of policy and the realities of their lives as archetypal postcolonial subjects, thus forced into a situation where of inhabiting "an interstitial space, structured by ambivalence" (Bhabha, cited in Fanon, 1986, p.100). It is this reasoning and insight which leads to understanding teachers' identities as forged in a force field of competing and converging influences (Samuel, 2008) and teachers' strategies as arising within sites of contradiction and constraint that are generated within the wider social structure. The need "to study the nature of social relations beneath the 'apparent' nature of the problem by regarding the way in which dominant articulating principles do in fact articulate with other factors of social injustice" is stressed by Sayed (2003, p.9). The radical politics of inclusion is directed at changing historically unequal power relations between previously privileged and dominant social groups and those who have been marginalised, excluded and constructed as subordinate.

Undoubtedly teachers find themselves in a complex situation where elements of contradiction, ambiguity, disconnection, fragmentation and incoherence abound. Understanding the context in which the movement towards inclusion is developing is essential as a foundation for investigating teachers' personal and professional experiences and realities of this period of transition, in all their complexity and multiplicity. The call for inclusion must necessarily be sensitive to all such issues, while continually investigating the experiences and realities of the excluded and marginalised and silenced, on the journey towards inclusion and social justice.

2.5.   POWER IDENTITIES

"Power produces certain forms of knowledge and such knowledge is used to legitimate and extend the interests of those served by the effects of such power and to justify the subjection of certain groups on the basis of transcendent norms. Power therefore subjectivises (permits us to speak and desire) and also subjugates (by empowering certain discourses over others and thereby constraining the way we can think about our own subjective formation and act to reshape those cultural forms and social practices which constrain and disrupt our narratives of and paths to liberation and freedom)... All discourses bear the effects of power" (McLaren, 2001, p.17)

In seeking to understand the effects of educational change on the people in the change environment, Pillay (2004) focuses on an interrogation of the concept of the micropolitics of change and contends that an "understanding of micropolitics... necessitates an unpacking and interrogation of the conceptualizations of power" (Pillay, 2004, p.133).

Central to teacher change and development, then, is the notion of teachers' power identities. If power is associated with altering the behaviour of others and exists only where there are opportunities to exercise influence on others, then becoming agents of change to make a difference, therefore translates as an exercise of power. This, Giddens (1990; 1991) refers to as the transformative capacity of the individual. To be an agent of transformation requires that teachers have a powerful identity – the capacity to change their historical position and to make changes in the social arena. It is largely the individual's capacity for reflexivity (Giddens, 1990; 1991) that constitutes the power of that individual to challenge the social structures which shape attitude and behaviour. Developing a more complex view of teacher identity needs to take into account the close links between professional identity and other aspects of identity (personal, political), and realise that the links between the different facets of identity are complex and shifting. The development of teachers' power identities involves daily struggle in action within conflicting relations of force (Foucault in Gordon, 1980). This echoes similar sentiments expressed by Samuel (cited in Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.306) when he states that teacher identities are forged in a

"force field of competing and converging influences", and Hargreaves (cited in Mattson and Harley, 2001) when he proposes an understanding of teacher strategies, arising as within sites of contradiction and constraint. These concepts remain central to this research.

Power is described as relational and regional, circulating and operating in multiple sites through the actions and practices of individuals within many sub-cultures, through multiple agendas within social factions of movements, and a multiplicity of relations within and among groups (Popkewitz, 2001; Wickham, 1997). The relational and regional nature of power, then, is best understood in terms of multiple sites of micropowers, rendering the dynamics of power anything but constant. These understandings contribute to the view of power as processual, and identity as fluid and unstable – it is through engagement in processes that power is struggled for, and either diminished or retained. This resonates with the transformatory postmodern view of change, which acknowledges and emphasises complexity and chaos, discontinuities and disruptions, indecision and indeterminacy.

Teachers' power identities may be understood as teachers' capacities to use components of power as resources, which enable them to develop greater control over the relationship between new inclusive education policy and its effective implementation; to attempt to marry the 'ideal' and the 'real'; and reconcile 'policy images' and 'personal identities'.

The possibilities for the success of systemic change are undermined by the micropolitics at play in the agents of change (Haag and Smith, 2002). Teachers' lack of capacity and inability to use components of power as resources, functions as a constraint and weakens the power identities of those teachers, and a lack of capacity over extended periods of time, will result in teachers feeling disempowered, confused and frustrated and therefore more likely to experience greater dissonance between policy images and personal identities, the ideal and the real, inclusive policy and its implementation. This echoes the fragmented and fractured identities characteristic of the age of postmodernism, where multiple political identities are compressed or released on the archeological landscape (Jansen, 1999), resulting in micro-territories of voices and a plurality of meanings.

2.6.   SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW HISTORICAL SUBJECT - border-crossing and the need to form hybrid identities

"The current historical juncture can be described as a site where grotesque and sublime hybridisations of our social worlds and identities compete for the political and moral space opened up by the erosion of certainty, the shifting paradigms, the degenerating borders, and the increasing contestability of familiar dichotomies of thought brought on by the dawning of a portentous postmodern epoch" (McLaren, 1991, p.9).

Given the postmodern era with all the changes that it brings, teachers find themselves in a complex and stretching position, where simply describing themselves in new ways is insufficient. The fragmentation of social life has direct consequences for the way individuals think of themselves and others. The concept of a stable, unified, centred human subject (Hall, cited in Hall, et al. 1992) whose inner core, centre of self, individual sense of identity remains stable, unchanging and continuous throughout their existence, becomes progressively harder to sustain in an age of postmodernism. Individuals find themselves caught between two worlds (the old and familiar, on the one hand, and the new and unfamiliar, on the other), and are forced to adjust their knowledges, their meaning-making or mattering maps, the very essence of who they are and how they fit into this new state of flux and chaos. This age of postmodernism highlights the multiple forces at work *on* and *through* the individual subject, increasingly fracturing and dislocating the familiar and the traditional (Laclau, cited in McLaren, 1995). Individuals may see themselves through a variety of lenses, in ways that are not always consistent.

"The fully unified, completed, secure and coherent identity is a fantasy. Instead, as the systems of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multipliciy of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with – at least temporarily" (Hall, in Hall, et al. 1992, p.277).

In order to make critical judgements about what is possible outside existing configurations of power and privilege – in order to rethink the relationship of self to society, of self to other, and to deepen the moral vision of the social order, teachers need to form hybrid or hyphenated identities. This social construction of a new historical subject – this hybrid identity, McLaren (1991) also refers to as border-crossing, where teachers have to find a path of meaning and identity between the contradictions in postmodern society, among the meaning of freedom, the demands of social justice, and the obligations of being agents of change, on the one hand, and the structured silence that permeates everyday life as an teacher, on the other.

> "Postmodernity demands that one live schizophrenically, trying, on the one hand, to live…inherited meaning and, on the other hand, recognizing the inability of such meanings to respond to one's own affective experiences" (Grossberg, cited in McLaren, 1995, p.148).

Regardless of a history of being shaped and formed into passive individuals, McLaren (1995) believes that it is wrong to assume that individuals remain passive within such a process of subjective formation and stresses that a critical pedagogy needs to counter the tendency to dissolve agency. For McLaren (1995) a critical pedagogy opposes the claim that people are produced and finalised as subjects within a discourse – to mistake people as merely products rather than producers of subjectivity. An individual is not simply the product of a homogeneous totality of discourses but rather a site of struggle, conflict and contradictions. Resistance is connected to the formation of will, agency and the construction of meaning. Conflictual social relations are actively inscribed in human intentionality and agency, without reducing individuals to simply the static outcomes of social determinations. While human beings are constituted by background beliefs (which primarily lie outside of consciousness), McLaren (1995) disagrees that the self is created only through background beliefs and believes instead that subjectivities are also informed by individuals' self-consciousness.

For McLaren (1995), it is necessary to recognise that the capacity of individuals to recognise, at least partially, the constitution of self, is what makes liberation possible. It is also a precondition for forming a space of desire, where individuals can assume, self-consciously and critically, new modes of subjectivity – a praxis of self- and social empowerment, where they realise that they can

act in ways other than they do. This necessitates a language that speaks to the lived experiences and felt needs of teachers, and also a critical language that can problematise social and power relations that are often taken for granted. It needs a non-totalising language that refuses to strip experience from its contingency and open-endedness, or textualise oppression, or dehistoricise or desexualize or degender the body, or to smooth over the difference in the name of justice or equity (Giroux, 1988).

This process of forming hybrid identities, while assuming an active resistance against "the malignant hierarchies of power and privilege and its defining pathologies" (McLaren, 1995, p.10), the development of teachers into 'transformative intellectuals' - mobile subjects sensitive to the shifting contexts of contemporary social life, Giroux equates with the contingency of the social and relational character of all identity, engaged in the act of cultural struggle, in which new forms of identity and subjective formations are sought, in the context of a deepening democracy (McLaren, 1995, p.22).

2.7.   TOWARDS A CRITICAL THEORY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

> "The concept of critical theory refers to the nature of self-conscious critique and to
> the need to develop a discourse of social transformation and emancipation that does
> not cling dogmatically to its own doctrinal assumption*s"* (Giroux, 1988, p.8).

Critical theory rejects all forms of rationality that "subordinate human consciousness and action to the imperatives of universal laws" and stresses the necessity of ongoing critique that opposes all theories that celebrate social harmony "while leaving unproblematic the basic assumptions of the wider society" (Giroux, 1988, p.8). The thinking of the Frankfurt School provides fuel for education theorists who are critical of theories of education which are "tied to functionalist paradigms based on assumptions drawn from a positivist rationality"; "offers an historical analysis and a penetrating philosophical framework that indict the wider culture of positivism"; and, provides "insight into how the latter becomes incorporated within the ethos and practices of schools" (Giroux, 1988, p.34).

The importance of historical consciousness was seen to be a fundamental dimension of critical thinking, thereby creating "a valuable epistemological terrain upon which to develop modes of critique that illuminate the interaction of the social and the personal as well as of history and private experience" (Giroux, 1988, p.35). The Frankfurt School stressed the importance of critical thinking by arguing that "it is a constitutive feature of the struggle for self-emancipation and social change" (Giroux, 1988, p.8) and that it was in the contradictions of society that "one could begin to develop forms of social inquiry that analysed the distinction between what is and what should be" (Giroux, 1988, p.9).

Fundamental to understanding the Frankfurt School's support of critical theory and its critique of instrumental reason is its thinking in relation to the heritage of Enlightenment rationality. With the promise to "rescue the world from the chains of superstition, ignorance and suffering" (Giroux, 1988, p.11), Enlightenment rationality took on "the goal of developing forms of social inquiry patterned after the natural sciences and based on the methodological tenets of sense observation and quantification" (Giroux, 1988, p.14). The legacy of scientific rationality came to represent one of the central themes in Western thought, where emphasis and focus was on objectivity - that which could be "expressed, measured, and calculated in precise mathematical formulas" (Giroux, 1988, p.16). Within the confines of such a limiting quantifying methodology, there was no place for the notion of subjectivity, the value of historical consciousness or critical thinking. In its critique of this positivist view of knowledge and science, the Frankfurt School makes clear that both knowledge and science are stripped of their critical possibilities, and highlights the "specific mechanisms of ideological control that permeate the consciousness and practices of advanced capitalist societies" (Giroux, 1988, p.13). This critique clearly warns against "modernity's unswerving faith in the promise of Enlightenment rationality"; "humanity's unbounded faith in reason" (Giroux, 1988, p.11) – referred to by Wellmer (cited in Giroux, 1988, p.12) as "the fateful process of rationalisation".

A critical theory replaces positivist forms of social inquiry (where the logic of predictability, verifiability, transferability and operationalism reign) with dialectical thought, wherein the historical, relational and normative dimensions of social inquiry and knowledge are stressed, and the notion of dialectical thinking as critical thinking is central. Dialectical thinking is "thought about thinking

itself" (Jameson, cited in Giroux, 1988, p.35), where thinking not only deals with content and material, but the thought process itself which is involved in this thinking (how the mind is thinking about the content and material).

Critical theory puts forward a radical view of knowledge wherein the knowledge gained from dialectical thinking serves to enlighten the oppressed, about how their social group is situated within specific relations of domination and subordination. This is knowledge which is intended to illuminate how the oppressed could develop a discourse, free from their particular distorted patterns of socialisations and cultural inheritance, thus encouraging and empowering them to move beyond their internalised states of disempowerment, marginalisation and subordination – a knowledge which is linked to "a radical decoding of history", to a vision of the future that longs for a new society and new forms of social relations (Giroux, 1988, p.35). Critical theory therefore links historical analysis to the notions of critique and emancipation, as well as politicises the notion of knowledge. History, in critical theory, is viewed as an open-ended phenomenon (Giroux, 1988; 1992).

> "It is this aspect of knowledge that needs to be developed as part of a radical pedagogy. Unlike traditional and liberal accounts of schooling, with their emphasis on historical continuities and historical development, critical theory points teachers toward a mode of analysis that stresses the breaks, discontinuities and tensions in history, all of which become valuable in that they highlight the centrality of human agency and struggle while simultaneously revealing the gap between society as it presently exists and society as it might be" (Giroux, 1998, p.36).

Having moved into a postmodern age does not inherently imply the existence of critical thought and critical theory. Some versions of postmodernism, in their tendency to democratise difference, and conclude at an 'anything goes' level, are rightly attacked as devoid of real substance. The danger in this discourse is that of affirming difference simply as an end in itself, without acknowledging how difference is formed, "erased and resuscitated within and despite unequal relations of power" (Giroux, 1992, p.72); where a critical social science is reduced to a reading of surface features, emphasising change and diversity, while denying any deeper insights. Giroux

(1992, p.63) warns that "modernism is far from dead – its central categories are simply being rewritten within a plurality of narratives that are attempting to address the new set of social, political identities that constitute the current age". A critical approach to postmodernism represents an important development in contemporary theorising. It is an approach that acknowledges the importance of new cultural, social and political formations, and instead of downplaying continuities and links with the past organisation, is ever mindful of it. Such an approach may offer a means of addressing changes without losing sight of the operation of power and oppression.

A critical awareness of the postmodern situation is therefore vital for teachers embarking on a journey of transformation towards becoming inclusive practitioners. Developing a knowledge and understanding of difference and diversity that goes beyond simply a reading of surface features to include a deeper insight into historical relations of power and dominance in society, community, schools and classrooms which have created and perpetuated such differences, results in teachers' deeper understanding of the need for inclusion and social justice and education policies, principles and practices, which challenge traditional historic forms of exclusion, segregation, marginalisation, silencing and subordination.

2.8. TEACHERS AS CULTURAL WORKERS FOR SELF AND SOCIAL EMANCIPATION

"A critical pedagogy needs to develop a praxis which can empower teachers to take responsibility for history and for developing a vision of the world which is not yet. A praxis that recognizes teachers as "capable of seizing the stage of history …and bringing forth a new world at the command of our own voices and with the strengths of our own hands" (McLaren, 1995, p.77).

As the focus of this research is on teachers, it follows to ask the questions: what does this mean for teachers? What do teachers need to understand in order to engage in such a struggle? How do teachers find ways of creating spaces for mutual engagement of lived difference, that does not require the silencing of a multiplicity of voices, nor the singling out of particular groups as marginal, exotic, or 'other'? How do teachers get to a place where they can reveal and unsettle the ways in

which the inequalities of power and privilege exist in the classroom, as an extension of the conditions which prevail in the larger society? How can teachers contest and question what they themselves may conventionally accept as the normal, the mundane and the everyday, the way things are, destabilise its dominant assumptions and pave the way for new forms of social analysis? What forms of learning and teaching are required by such a pedagogy? What notions of knowing are required?

When considering how to define the ground on which teachers' voices become possible in pedagogical encounters which are rooted in a view of human freedom, Giroux and Simon (1988) stress that teachers should not be required to suppress or abandon what and how they know, but should be encouraged and supported towards critically examining how social injustices work, through the discourses and experiences that constitute their own daily lives, and the subjectivities they themselves invest in; perceiving the struggle for critical knowledge and the struggle for democracy as inescapably intertwined (McLaren, 1991); uncovering ways in which domination and exploitation have become systematised in social relations and cultural practices; and naming injustices for what they are (McLaren, 1991). It is only through such a process that teachers may examine what the moral and political commitments of such practices are and how these relate to their own commitment as teachers.

> "This is what the pedagogical struggle is all about: testing the ways we produce meaning and represent ourselves, our relations to others, and our relation to our environment. In doing so we consider what it is we have become, and what it is we no longer want to be. We also enable ourselves to recognise, and struggle for, possibilities not yet realised" (Giroux and Simon, 1988, p.17).

It remains a necessary part of critical pedagogy to construct a praxis which can empower teachers in reclaiming the body and formulating strategies of opposition; where teachers are able to distance themselves from their own "social present" (McLaren, 1991, p.11), where their own practical consciousness is "radically dismembered" (McLaren, 1991, p.11); where the individual and personal is always situated in relation to the collective and communal; where teachers feel a solidarity with all victims struggling to overcome their exclusion, powerlessness and alienation. Such a critical praxis would work towards an informed movement of revolutionary and social

transformation, create a language of possibility, and help to transform critical pedagogy into a pedagogy of hope.

The argument for schools as sites of struggle, and for pedagogy as a form of cultural politics is made by Giroux and Simon (1988), who believe that schools should be places that expand human capacities to develop critical subjectivity. This critical subjectivity should lead to individuals being able to "intervene in the formation of their own subjectivities" and to "to exercise power in the interest of transforming the ideological and material conditions of domination into social practices which promote social empowerment and demonstrate democratic possibilities" (Giroux and Simon, 1988, p.10).

Insofar as constructing a critical pedagogy recognises that meaning is produced through the construction of forms of power, experiences and identities, and the need to analyse these in terms of their wider political and cultural significance, Giroux and Simon (1988) argue that to propose a pedagogy is to construct a political vision. Proposing and constructing a critical pedagogy aims to challenge, deconstruct and transform the taken-for-granted; reject the previously accepted givens; contest the prevailing definitions of the way things are; and, raise questions of how schooling practices can work for the reconstruction of social imagination in the service of human freedom, "to envisage a world which is "not yet"" (Giroux and Simon, 1988, p.13). It is in such a critical pedagogy that "teachers become transformed into cultural workers for self and social emancipation" (McLaren, 1995, p.22).

Curriculum should be seen as a terrain of struggle, and any thinking about teaching and curriculum should consider history, power and politics, as the culture of any school "is often representative of those features of the dominant culture that it affirms, sustains, selects and legitimates" (Giroux, 1988, p.36). We are therefore encouraged to realise the importance of linking all aspects of schooling to the complex political, cultural and economic relations that structure any school.

> "Schools can not be abstracted from the larger society where histories mix, languages and identities intermingle, values clash, and different groups struggle over how they are represented and how they might represent themselves. Questions of

representation, justice and power are central to any critical theory of curriculum … The issue of representation … suggests that meaning is always political, actively involved in producing diverse social positions, and inextricably implicated in relations of power." (Giroux, 1988, p.36).

Critical pedagogy stresses the importance of understanding knowledge and meaning as social, historical, and cultural constructions. We are further encouraged not to simply speak of 'knowledge' and 'meaning', but of 'knowledges' and 'meanings', since all knowledge and meaning "is relational and can only be understood within the context of its production, its distribution, and the way it is taken up or consumed by different individuals and groups" (McLaren, 1995, p.27); that knowledges and meanings "are invariably mutable, contingent, and partial", their authority "always provisional as distinct from transcendental"; "historically contingent rather than inscribed by natural law"; and emerging "out of social conventions and sometimes in opposition to them" (McLaren,1995, p.27).

Critical pedagogy provides teachers with

"modes of self-critical reflection through which they can make the transition from seeing what they do in the classroom as isolated, individual concerns to profoundly social matters requiring a pedagogical praxis that is able to reflexively change the knowledge-base of their classroom teaching" (McLaren, 1991, p.11).

Such a renewed understanding of culture can assist teachers to situate their own classroom practices within larger structures of power and privilege, so that they are better able to acknowledge the interest served by their own ideological predilections, and such a critical perspective on culture enables teachers to see culture "in its diverse pieces of shifting perspectives and untold possibilities" (McLaren, 1991, p.17) According to McLaren, taking up work on context and culture, will better equip teachers to become levers of history by resisting and transforming (McLaren, 1991).

There are many similarities between inclusive education and a critical pedagogy. In essence, the ideology of inclusive education dares to transform teaching practices, by encouraging their refusal to sustain codes of the dominant culture and existing relations of power, and has as its objective,

the enhancement of human capacities and social possibilities. Both inclusive education and a critical pedagogy advocate a pedagogy of difference, which aims to reverse the tradition of demonising the 'other'. Such a pedagogy of difference cannot be equated with a call for a unifying ideology, but "a call for a politics of difference and empowerment as the basis for developing a critical pedagogy through and for the voices of those who are often silenced" (Giroux and Simon, 1988, p.10). A critical pedagogy is a particular form of teaching and learning that affirms the lived reality of difference and everyday life, as the ground on which to pose questions of theory and practice (McLaren, 1991); a form that claims the experience of lived difference, as an agenda for discussion and as a central resource for a pedagogy of possibility (Simon, 1992).

Such a discussion of lived difference within a critical pedagogy, necessarily implies a particular tension and a struggle –

> "ultimately a struggle over multiple and even contradictory versions of self… it is this struggle that makes possible new investments and knowledge beyond individual experience and hence can redefine the possibilities we see both in the conditions of our daily lives and in those conditions which are "not yet" (Giroux and Simon, 1988, p.16).

Such a critical pedagogy calls teachers to a co-suffering with the oppressed as they struggle both to transcend and transform their disempowerment, and challenges teachers with the task of empowering the powerless from states of dependency and passivity. Similarly, teacher development and support initiatives, towards new inclusive education policy implementation (the ultimate goals of which are social and pedagogical transformation), should follow a similar path of challenging and disrupting the discourses that create the space for subjectivity, and enable new modes of subjectivities to be formed based on compassion and reciprocity.

Instead of simply accepting arguments put forward by many, that inclusive education will never work, especially in the rural and traditionally African schools, due to teachers' inability to implement new education policy, new ways need to be found to empower teachers, to ask questions that underpin classroom and schooling practices such as: Whose interests are being served through different pedagogies? Where is the process situated, ethically and politically, in matters of social

justice? What principles should structure pedagogical endeavours? What is our vision of the future? What is our vision of social justice? What model of the individual subject are we working on and basing our teaching practices on? What suppositions involving democracy and inclusion inform who we are, and our work as teachers?

> "To avoid asking such questions is to run the risk of enlisting our services as teachers in such a way as to demote our critical faculties to custodians of sameness and system-stabilising functions which serve the collective interests and regimes of truth of the prevailing power elite." (McLaren, 1995, p.18).

A critical pedagogy and a praxis, with its foundation on attitudes, principles and practices of inclusion and social justice, therefore needs to be developed that enables teachers to situate themselves as active social, cultural, and historical agents; and that enables them to take on the responsibility of remaking schools and classrooms into sites for greater social equity and inclusion.

2.9. DEVELOPING A POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE AND A LANGUAGE OF HOPE

> "We need to transform preset social practices and relations because history compels us to do so, because the present historical juncture … necessitates it. History compels us because our subjectivities are forged in it; it is where the furnace of our will lies buried, igniting both dreams and desires. For in the iron womb of history we cast the shape of our longings, and to reclaim history is to be fully present in its making … We need to stare boldly and unflinchingly into history's grim visage and assume our narrative space within the very contours of its flesh, a space where we can speak our own stories, listen loudly to the stories of others, and dream our own dreams" (McLaren, 1995, p.28).

Such a critical pedagogy and praxis should attempt to redress ideological shortcomings so often found in education systems, institutions and teacher training and development programs and initiatives, where a limited, one-dimensional conception of schooling and education is often

presented, and schools presented as free of all ideological contestation and struggle. Schooling is often encountered as a set of rules and regulative practices; teaching practices and methods often linked to a menu of learning models employed in stipulated conditions; conditions and issues of culture and power overlooked and relegated to the margins; and emphasis given instead to procedural issues, learning strategies, developmental theories and behavioural outcomes.

Critical pedagogy and praxis, in contrast, views schooling as an essentially political enterprise, and emphasises the centrality of politics and power in understanding how schools function within the larger society. Such a perspective sees schooling as representative of forms of social life and therefore undoubtedly implicated in relations of power, social practices, and the privileging of forms of knowledge; as sorting mechanisms for human capital, in which groups of individuals are privileged on the basis of race, class, gender and ability (McLaren, 1995) . More than simply instructional sites, a critical perspective sees schools as firmly involved in a political and cultural enterprise, which has at its heart the construction of individual subjectivities. Such a perspective views schools as never innocent of social, economic and institutional contexts, but instead as facilitators of a cultural and historical process, in which select groups are positioned within asymmetrical relations of power, and which operate mainly to reproduce the discourses, values and privileges of existing elites (McLaren, 1995).

Fundamental to the principles that inform critical pedagogy and praxis, is the conviction that schooling for self- and social empowerment is ethically a priority; that schools need to be terrains of contestation, and agencies for a cultural politics dedicated to self empowerment, emancipation and social transformation. Critical pedagogy and praxis demands that schools function as major mechanisms for the development of a democratic and egalitarian social order, and show commitment to social transformation, in solidarity with subordinated and marginalised groups. Such a pedagogy and praxis should develop a critical discourse that provides the theoretical basis for alternative approaches to school organisation, curricula, classroom pedagogy and social relations, which in turn, should lead to redefining the purpose of public schooling, and rethinking the role of teaching and learning in emancipatory terms. Critical pedagogy and praxis is concerned with constructing a language that empowers teachers to take seriously their responsibility to remake schools into sites for greater social equity; a language of analysis and hope that is able to uncover

and transform the constructions of subjectivity, and empower teachers to challenge traditional and dominant definitions of truth, and structures of power.

The purpose of a critical pedagogy and praxis should be to outline and articulate a social vision of, and for, the future that is unashamedly utopian; to construct "an arch of social dreaming" (McLaren 1995, p.81); a "doorway to hope" (McLaren, 1991, p.9).

> "Constructing an arch of social dreaming means developing a politics of difference which actively contests the devaluation of those whom we have relegated as the 'other'" (McLaren, 1995, p.29).

Developing a language of possibility and a language of hope which will allow teachers to speak outside the terms and frames of reference provided by the coloniser; a language that permits teachers to speak their narratives of liberation and desire (McLaren, 1995, p.80), would require that teachers develop a language of representation; a language which enables them to situate themselves as active social, cultural, and historical agents; that enables them to understand the processes through which they have been formed (McLaren, 1995, p.20). The need for teachers to explore and understand how their experiences and subjectivities are produced, contested and legitimated at schools, is highlighted within such a perspective, along with the need to redefine teachers (social actors) as constituting multiply organised subjectivities, that are both gendered and discursively embedded in complex and contradictory ways (McLaren, 1995).

There is a need to: acknowledge the heterogeneous, multilayered and often contradictory processes of subject formation; explore the interface between teachers' immediate lives and the constraints and possibilities, and elements of discontinuity and indeterminacy within the wider society; and, analyse how the discursive mediations of culture and experience intersect to constitute powerfully determining aspects of human agency and struggle (McLaren, 1995). We are encouraged to see how the subject itself has become a site of struggle, an ongoing site of articulation with its own history, determinations and effects (McLaren, 1995).

> "It is a space that must be fought for and defended, a contestatory terrain where hope will always remain the enemy of despair. I call this building an arch of social dreaming" (McLaren, 1995, p.28).

Adopting a politics of difference that resists homogeneity on all levels, is fundamental to the critical pedagogy and praxis that is being argued for. Encouraging teachers to embrace the role of agents of change; facilitating the reshaping and renegotiating of their individual identities; and, supporting them towards reclaiming, reshaping and transforming their own historical destinies, is necessary to the process of developing a critical pedagogy and praxis. However, the process of developing critical inclusive practitioners, needs to avoid relying too heavily on prescriptive standards and theoretical formulations, that do not take into consideration issues of human struggle and historical inquiry. It is important to recognise the complex and contingent nature of culture and identity within the fluid, dynamic and highly complex character of the new cultural politics of difference, and actively develop a tolerance and appreciation of how teachers negotiate their own transformative capacity (Giddens, 1984). Cultural and identity discourses and encounters,

> "have a tendency to be contradictory and ambivalent in character. These internal complexities are contextually produced and differentially deployed in particular situations and institutional locations. These discourses and encounters are also inevitably suffused with elements of sexual and class difference and therefore fractured and criss-crossed around a number of axes and identities" (Rattansi, cited in McLaren, 1995, p. 37).

Recognition of the multiplicity of ideological, cultural and structural factors which impact on identity, helps break down narrow essentialist and reductionist approaches to the study of identity. An awareness of the complex, dynamic and heterogeneous nature of identity and culture in contemporary postmodern times, is essential (Gillborn, 1995), as such an awareness leads to the recognition of the reality of the process of transformation – the unevenness of change, the insecurity of transition, where different frames of understanding exist side by side, where contradictions exist simultaneously, and perhaps where new ones can evolve. Such a mindset may seek new distinctions and categories of right and wrong, acceptable and not acceptable, appropriate and inappropriate, to transform present social practices and relations, and so enable the creation of new subjectivities, new social spaces, new communities – spaces and communities of possibility. Engaging in such a critical praxis may address "the transformation of dreams and desires in the search for what we might already be and in the struggle for what we might become" (McLaren, 1995, p. 34). Hopefully, such a mindset and praxis may lead towards developing a

better understanding of how teachers find ways of making sense of and living and teaching purposefully amongst a mayhem of competing knowledges and influences; and may prove to be more liberating and appropriate of the current age of post-modernism, than more static prescriptive conceptualisations which predetermine how teachers should undergo transformation.

Adopting a politics of difference is central to the intention of this investigation into how, and to what extent, teachers are making sense of transition, and the challenges, tensions and contradictions it brings; how they inhabit this space of reclaiming, reshaping and transforming their identities and destinies. By providing a space for teachers to speak their narratives, this research acknowledges them as active agents in their own transformation towards becoming inclusive practitioners. The participants' narratives offer important perspectives and insights into teachers in transition towards embracing inclusion and becoming inclusive practitioners, and developing a space of hope with a view to what we might become.

2.10.   CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a conceptual framework of how this research understands teachers in transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners, and in the process of doing this, draws on theoretical arguments about the changing nature of teacher identity and teaching and learning practices. With its pivotal consideration of a politics of the personal, this research emphasises the importance of investigating and researching teachers in context, and closely considering teachers' identity and sense of self. This necessarily involves considering how teachers' identities were defined for them as products of historical circumstances of domination and subordination, and how teachers are experiencing and responding to being forced into a marginal space of displacement, as traditional and familiar, dominant and accepted meanings, understandings, knowledges and subjectivities are annulled and teachers are expected to take on the mantle of change agents of a new inclusive social order and system of education. It also makes an argument for the development of critical thinking among teachers, towards establishing a critical theory and pedagogy of inclusive education, which establishes teachers as cultural workers for self and social emancipation. The conceptual framework adopted outlines a vision for teachers to draw on their own transformative capacity and begin to redefine themselves, thereby developing a critically inclusive politics of difference and a language of hope. It is through the lens of such a framework of

conceptual understanding that the findings of the research are interpreted and discussed in chapter five.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In the pluralism of approaches, diversity of perspectives and frameworks within which research is constructed, each with its own set of philosophical assumptions and principles on how research should be constructed, no *one* approach has been "written in stone or handed down as a sacred text" (Neuman, 2000, p.64). If "there is no simple recipe for conducting social science research" (Babbie, 2002, p.49), an approach (or mix of approaches) should be selected and adopted because it (or they) provide the researcher with the conceptual tools to generate and make sense of the data. Conceptual, theoretical, and methodological coherence is paramount in ensuring that key principles run through every vein of the research process, from the overarching theoretical affiliation selected by the researcher, through to the choice of research paradigm and approach, selection of individual data generation methodologies, to how data is analysed, interpreted and presented. A researcher's selection, therefore, involves an active matching process between all aspects of research methodology and the purpose, participants and context of the research, including the personal and theoretical affiliation(s) of the researcher.

Plummer (2001, p.xi) makes an argument for adopting an interdisciplinary approach: "I am convinced more and more that whilst disciplines are much needed (each bringing their own special understandings), they must also be porous: seeping into each other to weaken boundaries and broaden understandings". Instead of gravitating towards a singular theoretical standpoint, I found myself aligning my research to various theoretical stances: qualitative, interpretive, postmodernist, humanist and critical. I have therefore allowed my journey to travel through a selection of approaches, allowing them to "seep into each other", thereby locating myself and my research within a broader understanding. According to Neuman (2000), "in practice, few social researchers agree with all parts of an approach" and "often, they mix elements from each". This is quite possible and acceptable, as "the linkage among the broad approaches … is not strict" (Neuman,

2000, p.65). I therefore explore some critiques of the approaches I have selected to frame this research, and outline the points in the various approaches with which I do not align myself or this research.

This chapter locates the research within qualitative research and traces my journey through my consideration of various approaches, to my final selection of a critical interpretive approach. It describes the selection and exploration of narrative inquiry, reflexive personal writing, visual methodologies and conversational interviews as the research methodologies that were adopted in prompting and generating the data. Important research issues, such as ethical issues, validity and the role of the researcher, are outlined and discussed, and the role of participation and individualisation through representation of participants is foregrounded as much as possible.

I use archaeology as my frame of reference for the research process of this particular archaeological foray. As the expedition leader and main archaeologist, I outline the process of selecting and preparing the excavation sites, of recruiting my archaeological team, and selecting and designing the methodologies which serve as self-discovery tools across the various seasons of data generation. Regarding my archaeological team, it is intended that participants do the fieldwork, the digging and excavation into their experiences, memories, identities, pasts and histories, as these relate to their engagement with inclusion and inclusive education. Although the word 'archaeology' translates from Greek as 'the study of the ancient', it has come to denote the investigation of the remains of the past from ancient times to yesterday (Ban Breathnach, 1999). The episodic ways in which human beings' lives evolve, with each life experience or episodic event leaving a mark on individuals' sense of self and layers of memory like deposits of sediment, amount to the realisation that people have all lived many lives. The reflection and excavation required through the various seasons of data generation, by means of the use of the various tools designed for such self-discovery, both complemented and facilitated participants' excavation of their experiences of inclusion and inclusive education, and how their identities are involved in becoming inclusive practitioners.

The principles of individualisation and participation are central principles on which most aspects of this research are based, and underpin most aspects of this endeavour. The principle of

individualisation incorporates concepts such as the celebration of diversity, the accommodation of difference, the importance of context specificity, situated complexities, emphasis on the particular, a move to include the other, authentic representations of participant voices, understanding issues of multiplicity and complexity. The principle of participation directly relates to the principle of individualisation insofar as research methodologies have been selected which draw on the voices of the participants, resist re-othering those voices which have been marginalised and disempowered by dominant discourses, consider subjectivity, context-specificity and the situatedness of participants, and which are sensitive to the agency and autonomy of the participants.

The qualitative research design and interpretive approach are aligned with the principles of individualisation and participation in the following ways: they emphasise understanding human lived experience from participants' own perspectives and situated knowledges; they articulate a view of knowledges as social constructions; and they rely on the central premise that human existence cannot be separated from its context, that people cannot detach themselves from reality but are immersed in it. Given this interdependence between participants and their world, reality as a separate entity cannot be observed, but is rather interpreted. A flexible, multi-perspective approach is therefore preferred, which typically employs a wide range of strategies of inquiry, and does not aim to interpret data in terms of universally valid laws of generalisation.

The conceptual framework includes the consideration of a postmodern lens which stresses a critical approach. A postmodern lens relates to the principles of individualisation and participation in the following ways: it heralds a pluralist society; prefers difference and plurality over uniformity; is attentive to difference, other worlds, other voices and local factors; acknowledges participants as sites of struggle where contradictions, constraints, complexities, ambivalence, partiality and fragmentation abound; and acknowledges the heterogeneous, multi-layered processes of subject formation. A critical approach relates to the principles of individualisation and participation in that it is aligned to a politics of the personal; a politics of location, positioning and situatedness; a politics of signification which emphasises teacher subjectivity, the situated nature of all knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviour, practices and identity construction.

In addition to the research design and the conceptual framework, aspects of the methodological design relate to the principles of individualisation and participation. The selection of personal narratives as the broad strategy of inquiry contextualises participants, making them present and real in all their humanity; shows human beings in the process of constructing and negotiating meaning in a changing world, including their own identities; captures the situated complexities of participants' realities and experiences; and promotes the understanding of the meaning-making processes in which individuals engage. The use of visual methodologies enables the active, creative participation of participants in data generation; was designed to be context-specific, non-academic and non-threatening; and foregrounds the authentic voices of the participants. Conversational interviews value informality, naturalness and 'normalness'; comprise social interaction towards obtaining an insider's view from the perspective of the participants; and represent a reciprocal rather than hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the researched. The interpretation of data draws on authentic representation of participants; as far as possible resists a universalising, naturalising impulse which reduces individuals to simply static outcomes of social determinants; draws on the utilisation of a number of data generation methods and criss-crossed reflections and interpretations; and attempts to resist criticism which re-others participants.

The following diagram is a visual presentation of the above discussion. It shows how the principles of individualisation and participation are central to much of the research process, and illustrates the coherence that exists between these key principles, the conceptual framework and research design and methodology.
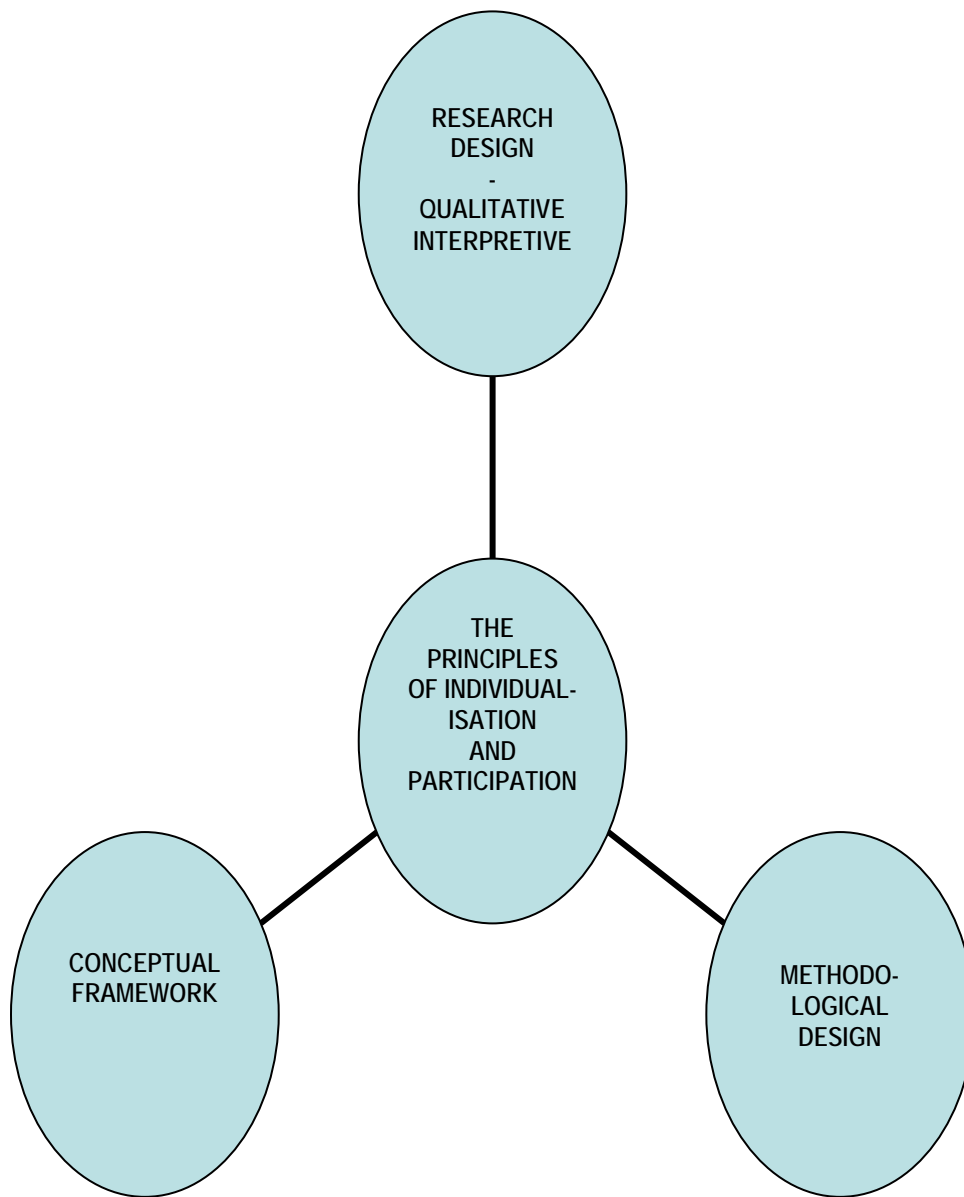
Image 3.1.   Diagram – the interrelationship between aspects of the research and the centrality of the
key principles of individualisation and participation

3.2. LOCATING THE STUDY WITHIN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

3.2.1. Understanding versus explaining

A major difference between quantitative and qualitative research lies in the distinction between 'explanation' and 'understanding' as the purpose of inquiry (Huysamen, 2001). While the foundation of quantitative research is the scientific search for cause and effect, that of qualitative research is the search for an understanding of human experience. Qualitative research permits researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of social realities, human endeavours, interactions and individuals' experiences. Another major difference between quantitative and qualitative research is the distinction between knowledge 'discovered' and knowledge 'constructed' (Huysamen, 2001). While quantitative research understands truth and knowledge as an external reality, separate from the knower, qualitative research articulates a view of knowledge as a social construction and of situated knowledge. This perspective is significant in that it takes into account both the importance of meaning and the knowledge of situations, contexts and particulars – a world constructed in and through individuals' discourse and actions (Jipson and Paley, 1997).

3.2.2. Investigating lived experience

The central focus of the qualitative researcher lies in the humanist commitment to study the world always from the perspective of the interacting individual. From this simple commitment flow the liberal politics of qualitative research - the belief that a politics of liberation must always begin with the perspectives, desires and dreams of those individuals and groups who have been oppressed by the larger ideological, economic and political forces of a society or historical moment (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

A qualitative research approach best suits the purposes of this research, as it investigates the lived experience of teachers implementing inclusive education policy and becoming inclusive practitioners, and has the specific goal of achieving an understanding of human experience (Huysamen, 2001; Schurink, Schurink and Poggenpoel, in De Vos, 1998). Such an investigation necessarily relies on the experiential, embodied and emotive qualities of human experience. Adopting a qualitative research approach facilitates the investigation of teachers' experiences from

their own perspectives, and in terms of the meanings they attach to them and the way they make sense of them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Merriam, 1988; Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998).

3.2.3. A commitment to authentic representation

Qualitative research acknowledges the principle of individualisation (where every participant is acknowledged as an individual in his or her own right), and enables the generation of rich context-bound data (Creswell, 1998). Claims that researchers can simply "tell it as it is" or simply record people's experiences, are problematic (Plummer, 2001, p.9). The move to include the other in the qualitative research process of this research (Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998) is shaped by the assumption that qualitative researchers cannot directly capture lived experience, and should therefore gather and present data in such a way that the participants speak for themselves (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). It is a priority in qualitative research that the other is represented in as authentic a way as possible. This ensures a degree of participation not possible within a quantitative research perspective.

3.2.4. A greater degree of flexibility

A qualitative research design allows for a greater degree of flexibility, in that it does not usually provide the researcher with a step-by-step fixed plan to follow, but instead allows the researcher to create the research design best suited to the research (De Vos, 1998). Czarniawska (2004) supports this notion that a researcher needs constantly to make decisions as to the next step to take, and stresses that the most important general rule is that, whatever direction is taken and technique/s utilised, they must be context-sensitive, "and there is no authority in the academic world who could foresee all contexts and all occurrences" (Czarniawska, 2004, p.44). The form therefore evolved during the research process (Ellis and Bochner, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), in keeping with the view that the research is an "evolving human creation" (Neuman, 2000, p.64).

The recognition and acceptance of the uniqueness of each participant implies that there are no strict rules or blueprints that have to be followed in the research process. "The world is constituted through multiple refracted perspectives: it is indeed a 'plural world', one that is constantly changing and never fixed, and one where meanings are always being negotiated. In such a world, meanings and truth never arrive simply" (Plummer, 2001, p.xi). Qualitative research is complex and nuanced,

and therefore requires a degree of flexibility, creativity and imagination throughout the entire process of data generation. Qualitative research is concerned with the process of how individual lives and identities are given meaning. There is, therefore, no fixed hypothesis. This impacts on this research design, in that it is not limited by specific variables, factors and outcomes, but allows far greater flexibility concerning design, data generation and interpretation. With the abandoning of a universal structure, the researcher is free to utilise various techniques and contextually relevant strategies in order to generate data and permit its novel reading and interpretation (Czarniawska, 2004).

3.3. CHOOSING AN APPROACH

3.3.1. The beginning of my journey: adopting an interpretive approach

Interpretivism and qualitative research are often used interchangeably, maintaining that qualitative research is itself characterised by an interpretive approach (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Given that neither qualitative research nor interpretivism are precise or agreed terms, I found myself drawn to considering certain characteristics of interpretive inquiry, which are discussed below.

Initially, my intention in embarking on this research and the way I investigated and interpreted the data, was to give participants' voices centre stage, and avoid drawing theoretical conclusions on a grand scale or making theoretical claims of generality (Huysamen, 2001; Mouton and Marais, 1996; Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998). An interpretive stance seemed to be an appropriate match for the purpose of my research, insofar as interpretive inquiry suggests that no *one* single method of inquiry, or specific group of methods, delivers absolute truth and knowledge.

An interpretive approach is also concerned with understanding psychological and social phenomena from the perspectives of the people involved (Huysamen, 2001). The distinctive psychological feature of 'understanding' in interpretive inquiry, is understood as a form of empathy or re-creation of the mental atmosphere, thoughts, feelings and motivations of participants' realities and experiences (von Wright, 1971), thereby learning "the personal reasons of motives that shape a person's internal feelings and guide decisions to act in particular ways" (Neuman, 2000, p.70). Such research endeavours to establish, through description, an empathetic understanding of

participants' realities, experiences, thoughts and feelings, conveying to the reader an experiential understanding (that which experience itself would convey) (Huysamen, 2001) and acquire an in-depth understanding of how people create meaning in everyday life.

Central to the interpretive approach is the premise that human existence cannot be separated from its context. If people cannot detach themselves from reality, but are immersed and absorbed in it, reality cannot be researched as an entity separate from or independent of participants, but rather, interpreted (Huysamen, 2001). Such an approach aims at allowing the participants' experiences of and insights into their journeys of transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners to speak for themselves (Huysamen, 2001) thus affording the researcher the opportunity to enter the participants' world, and place herself in the shoes of the participants (De Vos, 1998).

3.3.2. Realising the limitations of an interpretive approach

The question of generalisation in interpretive research lies at the heart of an ongoing debate on the limitations of interpretivism. Interpretive inquiry is concerned with the understanding of an individual or instance in a unique context. This generally means that interpretive data cannot be generalised to other instances. This relativity of perspective is one of the main critiques levelled at interpretive inquiry, and is seen as one of its limitations as a research approach. My interest extended beyond individual accounts of a relatively small sample of teachers, to wanting to find broader relevance from these specific instances that would relate to teachers in general in South Africa, and perhaps even teachers in other countries, as they strive towards embracing inclusion and becoming inclusive practitioners. If I wanted to contribute something of relevance and importance to the process of teachers implementing inclusion and inclusive education in schools, and produce research which would ultimately lead to meaningful action in this field, it seemed that my research would need both the richness of interpretation and the ability to move beyond isolated accounts to make claims about processes and structures

I therefore needed to examine how my data would allow the possibility of some level of generalisation from specific situations to involve a broader audience, as this would be necessary to enable me both to make claims about how teachers experience and deal with the transition

towards becoming inclusive practitioners, and provide a basis for any policy implementation and teacher development action.

I found Williams' (2002) argument both convincing and helpful for reconciling interpretive inquiry with the need for a level of generalisation. He believes that generalisation is commonplace in interpretive inquiry and that denials of its possibility arise from a misunderstanding of what the term can mean. Williams highlights cultural consistency as an important characteristic of the social world – that between and within groups of people there exist levels of shared reality, or shared underlying structures; that individual realities are often the result of processes of interaction between the structures that exist beyond the individuals themselves. If characteristics point to particular structures in one situation, then one can generalise, to some degree, that the existence of such structures in another situation could lead to similar characteristics. According to Williams, "the complexity of these structures and the possibility of agency to transform them, means that generalisations can only be moderate ones" (Williams, 2002, p.138). While generalisations under interpretive inquiry will not equate with the abstract, pristine generalisations of conventional scientific modes of inquiry, the moderate generalisations Williams advocates, provide a bridge between abstract generalisations and specific individual concrete realities. Williams believes that methodological pluralism can exist in interpretive inquiry – that interpretive inquiry can include both dimensions of specific individual realities, on the one hand, and broader generalisations, on the other (Williams, 2002).

Adopting Williams' proposal of a methodological pluralism within interpretive inquiry, with regards to the issue of generalisation, would mean that I could retain the location of my research within an interpretive stance, without having to compromise on my interest in pursuing a broader relevance for the research and a moderate generalisation of my data.

Adopting an interpretive stance involved the conscious decision to reposition myself outside the role of teacher developer working towards the implementation of inclusive education. Instead of approaching teachers from this position of expert authority and superior knowledge (unavoidable in the role of a university employee with a masters degree in inclusive education and working under

the mantle of teacher development co-ordinator), I wanted to approach my research from the perspectives of those not dominant.

However, the limitations of this approach became increasingly apparent as I worked more and more with the participants and the data, and I realised how complex this process of repositioning myself actually was. I was constantly reminded of how thin, and oftentimes ineffective, my veil of neutrality was while investigating and describing the actions, experiences, perceptions and practices of teachers, in the light of inclusion. I saw that I was positioned by the logic of teacher development towards inclusive education and, as a consequence of my deep concern with seeing the successful and effective implementation of inclusion in teachers' lives, my research was a direct effect of this logic. Remaining neutral, in spite of my commitment to the ideals of inclusion and inclusive education, was becoming an ever more complex issue, which required serious reflection on my role as researcher.

As interpretive researchers, we develop an empathetic understanding of everyday individuals' lived experiences and place ourselves in others' shoes. It is humanly impossible not to take on and internalise some of the feelings and experiences of participants. Furthermore, we can never remain neutral amidst the multiple axes of power in which we all participate. When I witnessed the continuation of exclusive practices to the detriment of individuals or groups of learners, and was faced with the tenacity of traditional attitudes which directly contradicted inclusive ideals and principles I needed to acknowledge my disappointment in these selfsame teachers whom I was developing empathy for. I experienced feeling torn between two orders of thought, separate and starkly opposed – the chasm between an empathy for teachers caught between what *is* and what *could* be, and a neutrality towards them, wherein I could not help making some judgement as to how inclusive their practices and attitudes were.

I was not comfortable with aligning myself with the traditional logic of the positivist research paradigm, where the researcher is positioned as value-free. Everyone is subjective, even the best trained and most experienced researcher. In view of this, I thought it better to build this subjectivity into my research, describe it and consider it as part of the research findings. I "acknowledged the need for the inner to be scrutinised with the outer, and the unique with the general" (Plummer,

2001, p.9). I began to realise that I needed to embrace the fact that I was a socially committed researcher, concerned deeply about social and educational inequalities, the nature of social structure, power, culture and human agency, and committed to working towards positive social and educational change in the form of inclusive education. Such an orientation underpins a critical approach to research, and I realised I would need to consider locating myself in such a research approach.

3.3.3. Considering a critical approach

Adopting more of a critical research approach would therefore extend to utilising critical theory and critical pedagogy as essential parts of the broad conceptual framework in which I would locate my research, and as an important lens through which I would be able to map the topography of the specific concepts and issues which the research intends to explore and investigate.

- *Engaging value judgements*

Interpretive social science and critical social science hold a common criticism of positivism – that positivism fails "to deal with the meanings of real people and their capacity to think or feel", and that it ignores the important role of social contexts (Neuman, 2000, p.76). Critical social science takes this criticism further in its critique that positivism "defends the status quo because it assumes an unchanging social order instead of seeing current society as a particular stage in an ongoing process" (Neuman, 2000, p.76). Critical researchers criticise the interpretive approach for being amoral and passive - overly concerned with subjective reality, therefore being too subjective and relativist, viewing all points of view as equal, and people's ideas as more important than actual contextual conditions. While recognising that people create and use meaning systems in their everyday lives, research within this paradigm is limited to only *describing* such systems and not making value judgements about them. According to this critique, interpretive inquiry ignores the broader context within which people's lives, ideas, experiences and understandings exist, and fails to take a strong value position or actively facilitate and support people towards autonomy, critical thinking and emancipation. The overall aim of the research, to better understand how teachers construct a sense of self in the light of inclusion, inherently suggests levels of conflict with traditional value systems and processes of socialisation. Engaging with value judgements on some level seemed inevitable and necessary if the research was to go beyond simply describing teacher

practices and behaviour, and if it was to make any valuable contribution to the field of inclusive educational research.

As the commitment to inclusive education (as far as it is aligned with the broader ideologies of inclusion and social justice in society at large) is the value orientation at the foundation of this research endeavour, the research design and methodology would therefore need to be aligned with the value orientation of critical research. My research would need to employ cultural and social criticism - to some degree, challenge the overt and the subtle inequalities and faces of oppression which characterise contemporary societies, by uncovering the subtleties of oppression. It would need to support efforts for change, by working towards empowering subordinate individuals and social groups to recognise and challenge their own positions of internalised subordination. My research should also not contribute in any way to the perpetuation of cultural oppression, by supporting or expanding any form of discrimination or unequal power relations (Carspecken, 1996).

- *Research as a transformative endeavour*

A critical process of inquiry is thus preferred, wherein research "goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves" (Neuman, 2000, p.76). In that critical science "demystifies illusion, describes the underlying structure of conditions, explains how change can be achieved, and provides a vision of a possible future" (Neuman, 2000, p.79), critical theory, then, "does more than describe the unseen mechanisms that account for observable reality; it also critiques conditions and implies a plan of change" (Neuman, 2000, p.76). The purpose of critical research is to empower people to change the world for themselves, through uncovering myths, revealing hidden truths about the underlying nature of social relations – "to explain a social order in such a way that it becomes itself a catalyst which leads to the transformation of this social order" (Fay, 1975, p.27).

McLaren (1995, p.140) states that "critical research can be best understood in the context of the empowerment of individuals. Inquiry that aspires to being critical must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society or sphere within the society. Research thus becomes a transformative endeavour unembarrassed by the label 'political' and unafraid to consummate a

relationship with an emancipatory consciousness". A critical approach is therefore interested in facilitating and instigating the development of new social relationships and facilitating major social change.

- *Foregrounding macro-level historical contexts*

While interpretive social science and critical social science both see social reality as dynamic and always changing, the critical approach criticises the emphasis which the interpretive approach places on micro-level interpersonal interactions and its acceptance of any meaning system. While the critical approach acknowledges the importance of subjective meaning, it also recognises that there are real objective relations that shape social relations, thus questioning social situations and placing them in a larger macro-level historical context.   So while interpretive research would provide accounts of individuals' behaviour, mechanisms of interpreting the world, critical research would foreground issues which interpretive research ignores, such as: why unequal power relations exist between different individuals and groups of people in society or in institutions, how these unequal power relations came about historically, how these power relations impact on the everyday lives of individuals, and how these could be changed.

A critical approach also recognises that change is rooted in the very tensions, conflicts or contradictions that are inherent in the way social relations and institutions are organised. Giroux (1988) and McLaren (1995) argue for a politics of location, positioning and situation, where rational knowledge claims are based on partiality and not universality – what they call the view from a body – always complex, contradictory, structuring and structured. A critical position believes these conditions reveal much about the nature of social reality and that, in order to decode the conflicting discourses operative in such a space (or to liberate such a space) we must adopt an approach that "is always interpretive, critical and partial" (McLaren, 1995, p.66).

- *Investigating deep structures and subtle mechanisms*

A critical approach notes that social change and conflict - the illusion, myth and distortion that the critical approach recognises as part and parcel of individuals' lives - are not always apparent in the surface reality and reading of data. Participants' renditions of narratives and researchers' initial interpretations of data may, therefore, only be partial and often misleading. Critical research

recognises that the immediately perceived characteristics of experiences, perceptions, events and social relations in data rarely reveal everything, and argues that social reality has multiple layers – that behind and beneath the immediately observable surface reality of data, lie deep structures and unobservable subtle mechanisms which are responsible for the events and relations of superficial social reality. The limitations of interpretive research render it unable to uncover and expose such mechanisms. Intense and directed investigation, a clear commitment to a value position, and an historical orientation enable the critical researcher to probe beneath the surface reality and discover the deep structures hidden and veiled in the data. "The structures that critical researchers talk about are not easy to see. Researchers must first de-mystify them and pull back the veil of their surface appearances… A researcher must use theory to dig beneath surface relations, to unearth periods of crisis and intense conflict, to probe interconnections, to look at the past and to consider future possibilities. Uncovering the deeper level of reality is difficult, but it is essential because surface reality is full of ideology, myth, distortion and false appearances" (Neuman, 2000, p.79).

- *A sensitivity to participants' agency*

Critical research believes in the unrealised potential in all people, recognising that they are creative, adaptive and capable of changing the social world, but that being trapped in webs of social meanings, obligations, relationships, and internalised patterns of domination or subordination, can easily blind individuals to see how change is possible, thus causing them to lose or never claim their independence, freedom and control over their lives – their autonomy and agency. What this implies for the researcher is a need for sensitivity to the agency of the participants and not to see them as passive resources to be mapped and manipulated from a subject position of moral certainty that exercises an authoritative closure on their meaning-generating abilities in the name of inclusive discourse. "What we do not need is a criticism which re-others those voices which were and are marginalised and disempowered by these dominant discourses" (Porter, cited in McLaren, 1995, p.78). Rather, critical researchers would need to find ways in which we can be attentive to difference, while sharing a common ethos of solidarity, struggle and liberation.

- *The researcher as transformative intellectual*

The aim of neutrality in any research denies choices among political and epistemological positions, and, by investigating participants as 'out there', unconnected to 'self' or to political contexts, leaves little room for the researcher, except that of a vehicle of transmission (which Fine, cited in McLaren, 1995, p.17, refers to as "ventriloquy"). Even the aim of allowing the voices of participants, previously marginalised, to be foregrounded as the vehicle for social representation, results in the voice of the researcher as 'self' often remaining unarticulated (McLaren, 1995).

The interpretive approach is criticised for its relativism – the idea that everything is relative and nothing is absolute. In the interpretive approach, the realities of the inclusive teacher and that of the teacher practising traditional exclusionary classroom pedagogy, are equally important, and there is little basis for encouraging any sort of judgement between these alternative realities and conflicting viewpoints. A critical approach would have to declare that an inclusive viewpoint is the correct and desired viewpoint, as all critical social research necessarily takes as a starting point a value or a moral point of view. It is clear that the critical approach has an activist orientation, and that any critical inquiry is necessarily a moral-political endeavour that requires the researcher to commit to a value position. The critical approach rejects the interpretive approach both of being detached and overly concerned with *studying* the world instead of *acting* on it, and of taking information from the people being studied without involving them and liberating them. The critical researcher's role is therefore to be the "transformative intellectual" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.115).

In adopting a critical approach, my (the researcher's) epistemological and political stance frames the study and carves out the space in which data is generated. I am then able to position myself as a political and interrogative being, up-front and honest about my moral and value positions, about changes in these positions, and about where my research is taking me as an investigator, political actor and agent. However, critique has emerged about the dangers of a position that effaces any distinction between political agendas and the protocols of research (Patai and Berger Gluck, 1991), and it is clear that the entire area of critical research is subject to intense debate. However, such critique and debate may be viewed as the potential for real vitality, as researchers struggle with their own voice and come to grips with what their research is for and who benefits from it.

3.3.4. Adopting a critical qualitative approach

The issues explored above lead me to the realisation that adopting a critical approach to my research allows more possibilities than remaining within an interpretive approach, and points to the conceptual and methodological richness of critical qualitative research. I, therefore, make use of a combination of interpretive and critical research in my research, and interpret and analyse the data accordingly.

Considering the critiques of a critical approach, I would need to:

- be careful not to abandon methodological rigour or the need for a coherent social theory to guide my research

- design and select methods of data generation which will prioritise the affirming of teachers' voices to the extent that they are part of the dialogue, and allow me to act as a resource for teachers that will facilitate their understanding and changing of their world

- ensure that the "global" is not abandoned for the "local"

- 'respect the specificity of difference, while simultaneously articulating 'differences' within a politics of liberation

- remember that critical research is always investigating more than experience, always employing a language of analysis which has serious political implications – remembering that experience should never be celebrated uncritically (Giroux, 2001; McLaren, 1995)

- make careful reflection on how to conduct critical qualitative research in a disciplined and caring way

- avoid a neutrality that fails to recognise the role of the researcher and the society in which she or he lives both in constructing the lenses through which research is accomplished and the social role of the researcher in accomplishing it

- guard against the essentialism that privileges any one site, that provides us with a claim to being more radically authentic or pure (Giroux, 2001; McLaren, 1995) – an essentialism which 're-others' teachers

- introduce coherence as the criterion of evaluation – the degree to which the paradigm, purpose, techniques and contextual arrangements match each other and fit together to form an integrated whole.

3.4. PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

When considering the selection of the sample, the aim was to investigate teachers who have been introduced to inclusion and inclusive education policy, and who had undergone some training and development in this area, and would therefore have some knowledge and understanding regarding attitudes, principles and practices of inclusion in schools and classrooms. It was considered important to select a sample of teachers who were more likely to be undergoing transition to becoming inclusive practitioners, as they would present as information-rich cases (Patton, 1990) when trying to uncover and understand the challenges teachers face, and the ways they respond to these challenges. Such a sample would provide valid and meaningful insights into teachers' experiences of implementing inclusive education policy. For this reason, the research uses purposive sampling to identify especially informative participants who had participated in the training and development offered by the pilot project. A purposeful, non-random sample (Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff, 2001; Merriam, 1998) of 20 teachers was selected from 16 schools in the Estcourt District, who had participated in the National Department of Education pilot project, which aimed to create an awareness of Inclusive Education policy and practices, and to facilitate the implementation of WP6 on inclusive education. The project ran from 2000 to 2003 and involved various teacher development and capacity building initiatives. I drew my sample of 20 participants from the total number of 70 teachers who had participated in the pilot project. My initial and obvious reasoning for this was that I wanted to investigate teachers who had been introduced to the notion of inclusion and inclusive education, and had been given the opportunity of exposure to training and development towards the implementation of inclusive education in their schools and classrooms.

The pilot project, therefore, established the boundaries of the excavation site that would comprise this archaeological foray and charted the site topography. The schools and teachers who had participated in the pilot project made up the site map of the expedition, delineating the scope of the dig.

I could not use all 70 teachers, firstly because a sample of 70 participants would have been far too large a sample and secondly, their commitment to being developed in the area of inclusive

education was not uniform across all 70 teachers. High levels of absenteeism at the school-based workshops on the part of teachers and principals, was an ongoing concern during the pilot project. Many teachers and participants were clearly not committed to the training being offered and did not see how attending or participating in these workshops could help them develop into better teachers or principals. There were about ten teachers and principals who had not even attended one workshop. I clearly would not consider selecting any of these as participants in my investigation.

Furthermore, although the majority of teachers and principals may have attended the training workshops, they did not all actively participate in the discussions or issues with which the various workshops were engaging. The assumption at the time was that they had not bought into the aims and objectives of the pilot project or inclusive education as a whole, and were simply attending the workshops because they felt they were obliged to. I wanted to investigate teachers who could be described and identified as on their journey of transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners, and therefore needed to be at least attempting to embrace inclusion and inclusive education. In other words, they needed to have shown evidence of some level of commitment to the concept and notion of inclusion and to be engaging with inclusive issues and attempting to implement inclusion in their classrooms and schools, to some degree. In the case of certain schools and teachers, initial positive attitudes towards inclusion, and a willingness to implement inclusive education during the pilot project, waned considerably between the end of the pilot project and the beginning of my research – an unhappy reminder of one of the strong concerns voiced at the end of the project, that without continuing school-based support, characteristic of the pilot project, teachers and principals would forget about inclusion.

For the purposes and benefit of my study, participants would need to be considered as teachers in transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). My sample of 20 teachers therefore needed to be compatible with the following criteria:

✓ they had undergone the training as part of the teacher development component of the pilot project
✓ they had attended training workshops on a regular basis and displayed a commitment to learning about inclusive education

- ✓ they had participated actively and contributed to discussions on the issues raised and engaged with, during training workshops
- ✓ they displayed an understanding of inclusive education and its implementation
- ✓ the researcher had established a good relationship with them
- ✓ they were willing to participate in my study

From the following table which presents the biographic information of the participants selected, it can be seen that the sample consisted of 20 teachers, 3 of which were principals. There are 15 females and 5 males in the sample, whose teaching experience ranged from 8 to 28 years. Eight teachers have an M+3 level qualification (Matriculation or Grade 12 + 3 years of tertiary education); another 8 teachers have an M+4 level qualification (Matriculation or Grade 12 + 4 years of tertiary education); and 4 teachers have an M+5 level qualification (Matriculation or Grade 12 + 5 years of tertiary education).

PARTICIPANTS	TYPE OF SCHOOL	GENDER	YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE	LEVEL OF QUALIFICATION
1. Principal	Primary school	Female	20	M+4
2. Teacher	Primary school	Female	11	M+4
3. Teacher	Primary school	Female	11	M+4
4. Principal	Primary school	Female	20	M+5
5. Teacher	Primary school	Female	8	M+3
6. Teacher	Primary school	Female	24	M+4
7. Teacher	Primary school	Female	28	M+5
8. Teacher	Primary school	Female	26	M+4
9. Teacher	Primary school	Female	25	M+5
10. Principal	Primary school	Male	18	M+5
11. Teacher	Primary school	Female	11	M+4
12. Teacher	Primary school	Female	25	M+3
13. Teacher	Primary school	Male	9	M+3
14. Teacher	Secondary school	Male	13	M+3
15. Teacher	Secondary school	Male	11	M+3
16. Teacher	Secondary school	Female	10	M+3
17. Teacher	Special School	Male	15	M+4
18. Teacher	Special School	Female	11	M+4
19. Teacher	Special School	Female	16	M+3
20. Teacher	Special School	Female	16	M+3

Image 3.2.   Table - biographic information about teachers in the sample

3.5.   UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

The sample of schools and teachers who participated in this research are part of the 232 public schools and approximately 2800 teachers that comprise the Estcourt District. The Estcourt district is one of five districts in the Ladysmith Region, which, in turn, is one of eight regions comprising the province of KwaZulu-Natal.

The participating teachers and schools are from the rural part of Estcourt district. The home language of the area is isiZulu with English as the second language. While in most schools the medium of instruction is officially English, in practice, both languages are used in the classrooms. Poverty and unemployment are major social problems in the communities around the schools; it is

not an uncommon sight to see groups of men sitting at local 'drinking spots' or milling around the township during the day.

Image 3.3.   Researcher's photograph - typical scene in the Wembezi township [3]

The majority of employed residents from the area work in Johannesburg and surrounding towns, leaving many of the children to be cared for by a single parent in predominantly female-headed households (and in many cases children are cared for by a grandmother, and are often left to survive on her monthly pension). A critical concern in these communities is the high incidence of substance abuse amongst the youth ('dagga' is commonly grown in the area as a source of income), the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in the province, and the relatively high percentage of youth who do not attend school.

The town of Estcourt lies approximately 157 km from the city of Durban and is about a two-hour drive by car. Estcourt is situated in the general area of the southern Drakensberg, the largest mountain range in Southern Africa. The climate of Estcourt comprises very cold winters and hot, rainy summers.

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1   The researcher's own photographs are included merely to illustrate typical scenes in the researched areas and to enable readers to 'see' the context referred to in the thesis. Where these images include recognisable people, this has not been done with the intention of presenting them in any negative, harmful or destructive way.

Image 3.4.   Researcher's photograph - the geographic area, showing White Mountain
as part of the southern Drakensberg mountain range

The majority of the learners and teachers from the participating schools live in the surrounding rural township areas. Homes are an equal mix of bricks and traditional building materials, and the majority of the access roads to houses are dirt roads, often in very poor condition (especially in the rainy season).

Image 3.5.   Researcher's photograph - typical dirt road in the rural areas outside Estcourt

In the period 1992 to 1996, the Estcourt District was wracked by political violence as a result of friction between the rival African political parties, i.e. the ANC (African National Congress) and the IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party). The area was divided into two separate zones according to political affiliations, strongholds and influence, and many residents lost their lives in the ensuing violence. This had a serious affect on access to schooling for learners in the area. Children of IFP supporters, and teachers who were IFP supporters who attended or worked at schools in ANC zones, faced great risks. This resulted in interrupted schooling, with schools standing empty for significant periods of time.

In 1996, the community instigated various peace campaigns to address the issue of political violence in the area. Organisations such as the Peace and Reconstruction Foundation (PRF) have been working in the area to support the community and sustain developments. One of the primary schools in the district, which was made up of a series of metal containers as classrooms, has recently been built anew, as a result of PRF sponsorship. Although the community has been able to restore peace in the last decade in the area, the issue of political dominance between political parties continues to impact developments in the area, and an undercurrent of mistrust still runs deep among community members.

3.6.   THE RESEARCHER AS RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

In order to understand people's realities, it is vital that the researcher undergoes a learning process, whereby an understanding of the interactive processes that shape human perceptions of realities and experiences is acquired. This translates as participating in the daily lives of the participants, observing things that happen and listening attentively (Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998). The qualities and processes that lead archaeological excavators to their finds are very similar to the qualities and processes that researchers need to have in the field. The process of gathering data in the field for both archaeologist and researcher requires time and a deep personal involvement (Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998). Both need persistence, patience, and a passion for the undertaking at hand. My involvement in the National Department of Education pilot project, to create an awareness of, facilitate and support the implementation of government policy on the development of an inclusive education and training system (in my capacity as field researcher and

co-ordinator of the teacher development component of the project) allowed me the opportunity of working closely with the participants for the three year duration of the project, learning about rural and cultural realities and protocols, and fitting in with and being accepted by the community as best as I could.

Image 3.6.   Researcher's photograph - the researcher participating in the daily school life at an African rural school during her involvement with the project

The project adopted a participatory, interactive and collaborative approach, which translated into participants always feeling that their experiences and perceptions, beliefs and concerns were valued as important components of the evaluation process. This helped when challenging any expectations of traditional power relations between project employees and participants. Emphasis was on coming alongside participants in a supportive role, and participants were constantly encouraged to see themselves as important resources in the project.

It is widely believed that, as gaining entry is shaped by the characteristics of the setting, so the personality of the researcher and the participants' feelings and responses to the researcher

influence the research process (Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998). In qualitative research, the researcher, herself, acts as the research instrument, which requires self-examination and the mastery of interpersonal skills (Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998). My personal work ethos on the project always involved the building of strong personal relationships with teachers, principals and Education Support Service personnel, therefore resulting in the establishment of excellent personal and working relationships between the participants and me. The following comments from teachers and principals of the project schools serve to illustrate participants' feelings and responses to me as the researcher:

> *"She values everybody's contribution – very important."*
>
> *"Despite our cultural, racial, physical differences we feel we are all the same*
>
> *- she has become part of our family."*
>
> *"We refer to her as the white black."*
>
> *"We feel loved and accepted by her."*

During the pilot project, I was always frank, honest and sincere in my dealings with the participants, and treated them at all times with respect, dignity and courtesy. In my working capacities within the project, I always endeavoured to be accepting and understanding of participants at all times, and always treated all participants as equals, viewing their input as valid and necessary for the process of assessing the project initiatives. I made every attempt to carry this personal work ethic across to my position as researcher on this research endeavour. Participants were never made to feel inferior. Patronising and superior attitudes were avoided at all costs. These comprise important basic principles of methods of data generation as outlined by Schurink, et al. (in De Vos, 1998). Establishing rapport with participants has been paramount to the data generation process of my research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The advantage of having already established solid interpersonal relationships with participants, has served to neutralise any distrust that might have manifested (Mouton and Marais, 1996).

According to Schurink, et al. (in De Vos, 1998), establishing a relationship of mutual trust, would not only ensure the co-operation of participants, but would also improve the quality of the data generated. It was important to ensure that participants were convinced of the sincerity of my intention to generate data in a trustworthy manner, and establish a sense of partnership between

participants and me. I was transparent with regard to the aims of the research, the intended methods of data generation (including permission to record interviews, etc), and the envisaged utilisation of the results.

Succeeding in my role as 'research instrument' paved the way for me to extend my role to that of 'transformative intellectual'. Establishing relationships of mutual acceptance, appreciation and trust with the participants, ensured that my activist orientation and clear commitment to a value position aligned to principles of inclusion and social justice would not be viewed by participants as challenging in a negative, derogatory or prescriptive way. Coming alongside participants in a supportive but nevertheless challenging way, ensured that they did not feel too uncomfortable with being probed on certain issues, and encouraged them to critically reflect and examine sensitive and personal issues which arose in the process of generating data. Participants' trust in me not to cause them harm, allowed them to feel comfortable with me to carve out the space and decide on the methods of data generation for the study. I was constantly aware that it was as important for me to do this as it was to simultaneously facilitate their constant engagement with their everyday experiences in critical and reflexive ways.

3.7.   ACCESS AND ENTRY

Permission to pursue the research was obtained from the Department of Education provincial and district office. Thereafter, teachers and principals of the schools involved in the pilot project were approached with regard to their willingness to participate in this research. Their response was positive, in that they expressed that they felt valued and confident, comfortable and relaxed, with regard to participating in this research endeavour.

In favour of my having continued access and relationship with the settings and the participants, is the fact that I have continued my involvement with many of the schools in the Estcourt District on various levels since the end of the pilot project, playing an instrumental role in accessing funding from a visiting group of school children from Saudi Arabia for a generator for one of the pilot schools, and, in the case of another two schools, negotiating intercultural events between the local schools and visiting learner-groups from the UK, where sports events were organised and the host

schools prepared local food and entertainment for the visitors. In one of these cases, my involvement further facilitated the purchasing of potato seeds, which I and the UK visitors spent a day planting, together with local learners and community members. On a more informal level, I have kept up friendships with many of the teachers and principals.

I am aware that gaining entry into the setting through the pilot project and any further involvement, did not automatically guarantee later access to these settings. In some cases, conditions for access needed to be renegotiated at various intervals during the research process. Constant informal fieldwork was necessary, allowing the opportunity for relationships to be re-established and strengthened in terms of mutual trust.

3.8.   ETHICAL ISSUES

Durrheim and Wassenaar, in Terre Blanche and Wassenaar (2002, p.66) outline three broad ethical principles which all research should consider: "the principle of autonomy", "the principle of nonmaleficence", and "the principle of beneficence".

3.8.1. The principle of autonomy

The principle of autonomy requires the researcher "to respect the autonomy of all persons participating in the research work, requiring the researcher to address issues such as the voluntary and informed consent of research participants, the freedom of participants to withdraw from the research at any time and the participants' rights to anonymity" (Durrheim and Wassenaar, in Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002, p.66).

Consent obtained from participants was voluntary and informed, in that participants received a full and clear explanation of the tasks expected of them, so that they could make an informed choice to participate voluntarily in the research. Intended formats of publication of the research were specified; participants were told how the data would be generated and recorded, stored and processed; and were informed that anonymous quotations would make up the bulk of the chapter reporting on the findings of the research. In no way were participants coerced, manipulated, rewarded or promised any benefits to secure their participation in the research. The employment of

such tactics would have limited the voluntary and autonomous choices of individuals. Participants were only encouraged to share information that was central to the study and that they were clearly comfortable sharing, hereby reducing the risk of invasion of privacy and inadvertent disclosure of confidential information. The rights of participants were foregrounded, and I ensured that all research participants were treated in a professionally acceptable manner with respect and consideration.

Informed consent requires two-way communication between the researcher and participants. Open lines of communication were ensured throughout the research endeavour. I ensured my availability to answer participants' queries or interests throughout the entire process of research and data generation. All participants were given my cell number and could text me or miss call me and I would call them back to avoid any costs on their behalf.

3.8.2. The principle of nonmaleficence

The principle of nonmaleficence means that "the research should do no harm to the research participants or to any other person or group of persons. This obligation to do no harm requires the researcher to consider potential risks that the research may inflict physical, emotional, social or other forms of harm on any person … involved in the study" (Durrheim and Wassenaar, in Terre Blanche and Wassenaar, 2002, p.66).

Qualitative research has, at its heart, an intense interest in personal views and circumstances. Teachers whose personal narratives are portrayed in research, may feel that they risk losing standing, respect, status, even employment, and may therefore be reluctant to talk honestly and openly about their experiences, perceptions and feelings if they fear that the information they disclose may harm their reputation or jeopardise their employment. If teachers are to share their meanings of experience they need to be assured of safety and privacy, and that their ideas and explorations will be respected and be kept confidential (Lyons and Kubler LaBoskey, 2002).

I was aware that, as a narrative researcher, I needed to ensure safe storytelling places where teachers could narrate the rawness of their experiences, reveal tensions, negotiate meanings, share their own interpretations of situations, and explore the positives and negatives of

experiences. Personal exchanges might very well include emotional aspects of struggle, negotiating identity and meaning-making (Lyons and Kubler LaBoskey, 2002).

I was constantly aware of the vulnerability of participants and concerned with protecting their identities and well-being. According to Stake (in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), it is important that researchers exercise great caution to minimise potential risks to participants and that participants are not simply nameless, faceless, unidentifiable 'subjects', therefore they must not be treated as such. A verbal contract existed between me and the participants, one which was regularly reviewed and discussed. Issues of reportage were discussed and agreed on in advance of any data being generated (Stake, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Employing the principle of confidentiality implied that the dignity of participants would be respected (De Vos, 1998). Participants were assured that their identities and any situations, experiences or interpretations of these, which may emerge through the data, were in all circumstances treated as confidential. This would indirectly affect the nature, quality and richness of the data generated because, if participants felt secure that the offered information would be treated confidentially, they would be freer in their interactions with me, more willing to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings in a more honest fashion, thus maintaining the relationship of trust.

3.8.3. The principle of beneficence

The principle of beneficence requires that the researcher design research that will be of benefit – if not directly to the research participants, then more broadly to other researchers and society at large. The potential of this research as a transformative endeavour lies in facilitating the empowerment and liberation of participants to change their conditions and renegotiate their personal and professional identities and thus allow for the building of a better world. The methods of data generation are designed to encourage the active, creative, imaginative and authentic participation of participants, thereby affording them the space for critical self-reflection on internal and external structures and systems, which may be keeping them trapped in traditional, unequal and harmful power relations. In this way, this research has the potential to benefit both the participants, and the readers who engage with this thesis.

Although the narrative data clearly pertains to the individual teachers within the research sample, elements of these individual stories and accounts, and the interpretation and discussion which emerged from these, are able to highlight important issues and learning about how teachers in general are dealing with the advent of inclusive education, and how they are negotiating their personal and professional identities in the light of inclusive principles and practices. These will be of significance and benefit to other teachers faced with the challenge of transformation towards becoming inclusive practitioners, and to teacher developers and policy implementers. Through linking the specific research questions of this research to larger theoretical constructs and national policy issues, this research, therefore, can be extended to the larger phenomenon of the relationship between South African teachers and inclusive education policy – while, at the same time, focusing at the individual level, the particulars of this research endeavour serves to illuminate larger issues. Herein lies the broader significance of this research.

3.9.   THE PRINCIPLE OF PARTICIPATION

This research may be described as participatory in that it attempts to break down the distinction between the researcher and the researched, the subjects and the objects of knowledge production by the participation of the people in the process of gaining and creating knowledge, and in that it is a person-centred inquiry which does research *with* people, not *on* them or *about* them. In keeping with developments away from expert-centred approaches, towards person-centred approaches, my research invites teachers to become participants in this research process, active partners and not passive subjects.

An alternate approach to traditional research was utilised whereby there is a separation between the role of the researcher as expert knower, and the subjects of research as suppliers of knowledge. Instead of the traditional vertical relationship, the relationship between myself as researcher and teachers took on more of a horizontal nature. This aligns my approach with participatory research which encourages interaction, collaboration and co-operation between researchers and those researched, thus enabling an equalisation of role players to take place. It is further aligned with participatory research, in that it is carried out at grassroots level, thus ensuring that local teachers have their say and that local conditions and contexts were taken into account.

However, although this research utilises strong participatory methods of data generation (by actively involving participants in the process of data generation), it cannot be classified fully as participatory research, in that it does not fulfill the aspect regarding the participation of participants in the decision-making and planning process of what they are going to research, and how they are going to do this (Collins, 1998). These decisions have been my decisions, as researcher. Participatory research involves an emancipatory approach to knowledge production and utilisation, its main aim being to actively involve marginalized people in the investigation of reality in order to transform their reality. This view is similar to Reason's (2001, p.48) belief that the objectives of participatory research are "to produce knowledge and action directly useful to a community", and "to empower people through the process of constructing and using their own knowledge".

My aim in this research is to work from a strong foundation of participation, in that I am committed to foregrounding the voice of teachers who have been historically silenced and disempowered, due to the broader socio-economic unequal power relations within South Africa under apartheid, and as a result of being "locked in a hierarchical system in which they were treated as hirelings whose work was mandated by … an administrative elite" (Grant and Murray, cited in Lyons and Kubler LaBoskey, 2002, p.17). The obvious and natural consequence of teachers being treated as functionaries and not as professionals who are capable of independent judgement, and bureaucratic and hierarchical relations that declare who knows, what should be known, and what constitutes good teaching and good schools, is that their narrative authority is thwarted or silenced completely (Lyons and Kubler LaBoskey, 2002). This has resulted in teachers in general not readily or easily engaging in reflection.

I am committed to designing a research methodology that is aligned to a new, robust epistemology – a view of knowledge that did not privilege traditional theory and techniques, but would instead support teachers in claiming legitimacy of their own investigations (Lyons and Kubler LaBoskey, 2002), and that would value and take seriously the kind of knowledge they offered and the data they generated. This research worked on the premise that individuals can be self-determining, self-directing and the source of knowing. Furthermore, the data generation exercises are designed to provide spaces which facilitate the active articulation of subjective experiences beyond the mere description of these, towards engaging in active critical analysis, self-reflection and meaningful

conversations among participants. Such an endeavour could potentially encourage the construction of new ways of understanding and making sense of these realities and themselves, and thus, hold great promise for making a positive contribution to the lives of teachers, personally and professionally. Lyons and Kubler LaBoskey (2002) believe that engaging in narrative inquiry seems to be a good starting place for empowering participants to build a better life for themselves and others. These narratives in this research are offered as just that – a beginning.

I cannot claim that this research will transform participants' realities or that it will prove to be directly useful to the communities in which they work and live, neither can I claim that it will mobilise participants towards action any different from that in which they have always been engaged. This was never the stated intention of this research endeavour, and could prove to be a worthwhile investigation for future research. Research can only be considered as a tool for development if it enables participants to go beyond critical analysis of their situation, to planned action of a transformative nature. There can be no hard proof of this in the scope of this research. What can be claimed is that participation in this research, and the critical reflection it required, definitely involves participants in developing a consciousness of critical issues that perhaps they have not been given the opportunity to develop before. This development of consciousness may very well mobilise them to future action which will transform their reality and be directly useful to themselves and others in their communities. This research encourages teachers in the sample to participate in their own learning processes, thereby having control over what was learned and how it was learned. Collins (1998) believes that education and knowing are intertwined, and that people are emancipated by their education. Having control over what is learned and how it is learned is, therefore, assumed to be empowering. It is this reasoning, the belief in participatory research as a tool for developing knowledge and emancipation, which, in turn, has the potential to lead to transformative action.

While this research may not fit all the criteria for many of the forms or labels given to participatory research (participatory action research, co-operative inquiry, collaborative research and appreciative inquiry), it does draw on many of the principles which constitute these approaches.

3.10. PERSONAL NARRATIVES AS A STRATEGY OF INQUIRY

"If we want to find out how people make identities, make sense of the world and their place within it – if we want to find out how they interpret the world and themselves – we will have to attend to the stories they tell" (Lawler, in May, 2002, p.255).

The use of personal narratives is selected as a strategy of inquiry, as this method resonates with the purposes of a critical approach within a qualitative research design. The perceived power of narratives to capture the situatedness of teachers, and their capacity to convey the subtleties and complexities of contexts, cultures, and the processes of meaning-making in which teachers engage in the light of inclusion and inclusive education, makes adopting narrative inquiry as a strategy of inquiry favourable and attractive.

Although narratives are most closely connected with life history research, they can be an extremely useful way of conceptualising, more generally, the kinds of accounts people produce in qualitative interviews, (Lawler, in May, 2002). For the purposes of this research, personal narratives of participants will not be all-encompassing, as is the case in life histories, but will focus on their experiences and realities of becoming inclusive practitioners, and how they construct and negotiate their personal and professional sense of self, in the context of their transition towards inclusion.

3.10.1. Attending to the stories they tell

Narratives have the capacity to provoke readers to enter empathically into worlds of experience that are different from their own, and afford readers the opportunity to engage in experiential understanding regarding the perspectives, realities and experiences encountered. People understand their own lives in terms of narratives, therefore making narratives appropriate for understanding others' lives (Ellis and Bochner, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Jipson and Paley, 1997).

Personal narratives contextualise participants, making them present and real in all their humanity (Jipson and Paley, 1997). Texts produced through narrative inquiry would be:

"stories that create the effect of reality, showing characters imbedded in the complexities of lived moments of struggle, resisting the intrusions of chaos, disconnection, fragmentation, marginalisation and incoherence, trying to preserve or restore the continuity and coherence of life's unity in the face of unexpected blows of life that call one's meanings and values into question" (Ellis and Bochner, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.744).

Although fragmentary and partial, people use personal narratives: as a central means of connecting past and present, self and other; to interpret the social world and their place within it; and further, to construct a sense of self. Attending to the stories teachers tell can therefore reveal a great deal about them and the social, contextual world they inhabit (Lawler, in May, 2002).

Narrative, as it is utilised in this research, is more than simply storytelling. It is a mode of inquiry (Lyons and Kubler LaBoskey, 2002). Narrative inquiry offers an important and legitimate way of knowing, in that teachers' narratives capture discourses of meaning and interpretation, providing a distinctive way of ordering experience and of constructing reality around the broad and more inclusive notions of context-specific and particular meanings (Lyons and Kubler LaBoskey, 2002). The decision to adopt personal narratives as a strategy of inquiry reflects an appreciation for personal experience and the intention of reflecting individuals' complexities. It is a genre of research that displays multiple layers of experience and consciousness (Ellis and Bochner, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), thus contributing to the understanding of multiple realities (Lincoln and Guba, 1995). Narrative inquiry focuses attention on diversity and difference, and places emphasis on the particular, individual, unique and complex, and on issues of multiplicity. Furthermore, the focus and orientation of narrative inquiry resonates with the principles of individualisation and participation, giving further impetus to the decision to adopt personal narratives as a strategy of inquiry.

3.10.2. Seeing the value in particular perspectives

"Systems of representation are the most inclusive...when they encourage the particular perspectives of relatively marginalised or disadvantaged social groups to receive specific expression" (Young, 2000, p.8).

The inspiration for the narrative turn has its roots in the crisis of representation – the choice not to silence subjects, the move to include the other, privileging the voice of participants, and giving a platform to the voices of teachers whose lives have been underrepresented or not represented at all. This orientation is shaped by the assumption that qualitative researchers cannot directly capture lived experience, and should therefore gather and present data in such a way that the participants speak for themselves. Forms of inquiry that ask teachers to tell their stories in one form or another, value what teachers experience and know. Narrative inquiry provides teachers with the opportunity to be acknowledged and their experiences, perceptions, thoughts and feelings, recognised as relevant and important (Lyons and Kubler LaBoskey, 2002). Participants "occupy a unique, dynamic, holistic and engaged perspective" (Ellis and Bochner, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.760). Participants' personal and professional identities are deeply affected by inclusive education policy, and as narrators and storytellers, they offer valuable insights into those of their experiences that are associated with the implementation of inclusive policy, and of inclusion.

It is a priority of this research to represent participants in as authentic a way as possible and value their individual and particular perspectives. The principle of individualisation comprises one of the cornerstones of this research endeavour - the belief that individuals need to be recognised and accepted as persons and individuals in their own right, and that every participant needs to be viewed and approached as the individual that s/he is, and not merely a subject. Narrative inquiry resonates with these concerns and commitments. Narrative, as a form of communication, therefore functions to foster democratic and inclusive deliberation.

In categorising research methodologies, the assessment of whether they are more top-down or more participatory can be used. Top-down methods are those in which most of the essential decisions, about what issues will be addressed and how the information will be used, are made by specialists and experts. The role of participants is generally limited to answering questions that are designed by outsiders. Methods become more participatory as participants play a greater and more active role in the process of data generation. Although this research cannot be considered participatory in its absolute form in that it does not engage participants in levels of participation, such as setting the overall agenda for the study or being integrally involved in the analysis, it does adhere closely to the principle of representation and democratic and inclusive deliberation. It may

often be difficult to state categorically that a given methodology is or isn't participatory. In light of this, it may make more sense to think of a method as being applied in a more or less participatory way.

3.10.3. Negotiating and constructing an identity

Personal narratives show human beings "in the process of creating, negotiating and performing meaning … making their way through a world that poses obstacles, interruptions, contingencies, turning points, epiphanies and moral choices" (Ellis and Bochner, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.748). Personal narratives "seek to express the complexities and difficulties and coping and feeling resolved, showing how they change over time as they struggle to make sense of their experience" (Ellis and Bochner, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.748).

Although participants' identities are undoubtedly related to the social contexts they inhabit, the process of constructing and negotiating identity is seen as more complicated than simply an identification with single, externally imposed categories (Lawler, in May, 2002). Identity cannot be understood as a pre-given entity onto which narrative structures are imposed, but, rather, constructed over time and *through* narrative (Lawler, in May, 2002). Working from the assumptions that identity is produced *through* narrative, and the self and identity is constantly and always in the process of being formulated (Lawler, in May, 2002), each session of story-telling engages participants in the process of identity-construction. "Through such narratives (and within social and institutional constraints) people produce identities (however fragmented, multiple and contingent)" (Lawler, in May, 2002, p.254).

Narrative inquiry takes the view that "the human being is an embodied, emotional, interactive self, striving for meaning in wider historically-specific social worlds" (Plummer, 2001, p.255). Narrative can be considered as a category by which individuals make an identity - an identity which is not isolated from the social world, but intimately bound up with it. Texts produced through narrative inquiry would be "stories that create the effect of reality, showing characters embedded in the complexities of lived moments of struggle, resisting the intrusions of chaos, disconnection, fragmentation, marginalisation and incoherence, trying to preserve or restore the continuity and coherence of life's unity, in the face of unexpected blows of life that call one's meanings and values into question" (Ellis and Bochner, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.744).

Issues of ontology and identity are the issues with which studies of narratives are typically concerned. Individuals construct identities (however multiple and changing) by locating themselves or being located within storied accounts of phenomena. Narrative identity (a term coined by Ricoeur, in Wood, 1991), refers to the process by which individuals construct identities that are relatively coherent and stable, through using stories. As the past is remembered, it is interpreted and reinterpreted in the light of the individual's present knowledge and understanding. The past is constantly worked and reworked to provide a coherent sense of the individual's identity. There is, therefore, no unbiased access to the past.

Narrative inquiry has many possibilities. Not only is story-telling imperative in the process of teachers constructing meaning, and preserving what it is they know and how they think, but, furthermore, functions as a means of teachers fashioning new perceptions and new meanings, and engages teachers in deliberate consideration and imagining that makes possible new perceptions. The very act of narrating lives, telling stories, sharing narratives, inserts individuals as active agents in history, "living historically in the politics of (their) daily existence" (McLaren, 1995, p.34). By opening up a space for teachers to tell their stories, this research encourages them to think and act from the margins.

Various methodological strategies are developed in connection with research that utilises narrative inquiry. For the purposes of this research, personal narratives of participants are developed through a series of creative prompts under the umbrella of visual methodology, and are expanded through in-depth, unstructured, interactive and conversational interviews.

3.11.   MY JOURNEY OF DATA GENERATION

Qualitative research is defined as a multi-perspective approach, wherein the researcher is able to employ a wide range of strategies of inquiry (Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998). It is preferable that more than one method be used to generate data, since the different methods provide facets of the same reality, thus resulting in more valid results (Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998). It is also important to note that the qualitative research process is not a linear process and, although various steps in the generation of data may be identified at the outset of any research, this may not mean that all methods are, in fact, utilised; nor does this mean that one stage will follow the other sequentially (Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998).

The process of data generation followed stages and cycles of data triggers and prompts, story telling and reflection. I refer to these cycles or stages of data generation as 'seasons' (as archaeological forays were known during the 1920's and 1930's). Just as the excavation process on archaeological digs requires several seasons, I allow for cycles or seasons of data generation in this research endeavour. Adopting the overarching paradigm of qualitative research allows me the flexibility to allow these seasons to emerge, unfold and develop in response to emerging issues, as the research progresses.

What follows is a description of and rationale for the exploration and selection of methods of data generation across the various seasons.

3.11.1. School visits

On all archaeological forays, excavation sites need to be selected, marked out, and meticulously prepared before the dig begins. As the expedition director of this particular archaeological foray, I needed to do the necessary preparation of the various excavation sites and groundwork towards recruiting my archaeological team. School visits served as informal preparatory fieldwork, with the intent of re-establishing relationships with principals and potential participants, reacquainting myself with the contexts that are relevant to the research and the participants, and recruiting my participants.

As the expedition director or researcher, I could not afford to be impatient about beginning the archaeological dig. Excavation processes cannot be rushed, and time needed to be invested in re-establishing and re-acquainting myself with the schools, principals and teachers, just as an archaeologist has to invest endless time in preparing excavation sites. As already mentioned, gaining entry into the setting through the pilot project and my further involvement with some of the schools and teachers, did not automatically guarantee my continued access to these settings. Conditions for access had to be renegotiated at various intervals during the research process. Constant informal fieldwork was still necessary, allowing the opportunity for relationships to be re-established and strengthened in terms of mutual trust. In some cases, teachers did not participate in all the data generation activities, due to their unavailability, for various professional and personal reasons. Professional reasons included teachers being on study leave or attending Department of Education training, and personal reasons included teachers' illness (and even the very sad death of one of the original participants) and teachers leaving the school to take up other positions outside the Estcourt district.

3.11.2. Reflexive personal writing

This method of data generation comprised season one of my archaeological foray into excavating participants' narratives.

My original plan was to include reflexive personal writing as a self-discovery tool for participants and a method of generating relevant data, where a series of sessions would be organised and participants given the opportunity to write about their experiences, perceptions and thoughts around the implementation of inclusive education.

I set up the first writing session in two of the schools as a trial run, through which I could assess the viability and effectiveness of reflexive personal writing as a method of data generation. Teachers were supplied with writing materials and asked to document their written responses to the following two issues:

- their reasons for becoming a teacher
- their initial response to inclusive education

While a few teachers diligently documented their responses, it became clear that, in general, teachers were not all equally committed to writing. A few gave their excuses at the outset of the writing session, and a few left early due to other commitments. A further plan to write these responses in their own time and post them, was suggested. While I did receive a few completed responses in the post, this plan did not prove to be successful. During subsequent informal school visits with these teachers, the feedback from this writing exercise was useful. Teachers generally reported not feeling comfortable and confident in their writing ability, and stated their preference for verbal exchanges of information.

My overall assessment was that reflexive personal writing would not be a viable or effective method of data generation. Although I include the data generated from these written documents in my interpretation and analysis, I made the decision to abandon reflexive writing as a data generation method, and realised that I would need to be more creative in designing activities that would serve as prompts, triggers and excavation tools for the generation of rich data for my research.

3.11.3. Visual methodologies

The realisation of the need to be more creative in designing activities and exercises that would serve as excavation tools, prompts and triggers, led me to consider visual methodologies. This choice was further informed by the philosophy of Participatory Rural Appraisal, which is carried out in a context of rapport with rural participants, in a relaxed way, with creatively devised, predominantly visually-based methods for generating data (Collins, 1998, p.102).

Visual methodologies can be conceptualised in terms of key principles, such as participation, ownership, active engagement, and context specificity. They provide opportunities for investigating how the creative process can itself be a key feature of engaging the active participation, and, therefore, ownership of context-relevant and specific data. The strengths and advantages of the use of visual methodologies lies in their participatory, creative, fun, open-ended and non-threatening characteristics. The prompts given to participants were simple and non-threatening in that they were not academic, and allowed space for experimentation, open-interpretation, creative and imaginative presentation and playfulness.

Gideon Mendel's (2001) book, *A broken landscape: HIV and AIDS in Africa,* (cited in Mitchell et al, 2005) documents a study which set out to explore the ways in which participatory visual methodologies could contribute to teachers seeing, for themselves, what the issues are, seeing each other's work in a new light, and, most importantly, learning together. These methodologies are selected for this research because they allow for the possibility of critical reflection and self-reflection on the part of teachers, during the seasons of data generation. Not only is this my field work as the primary researcher, head archaeologist and expedition leader, it was also the recruitment team or participants' field work, as the seasons of data generation required them to be archaeologists of themselves and their lives, and engage in some digging and excavating. Through talking to their self-drawings and photographs, participants were constantly engaged in the process of making sense of their own authentic interpretations. They necessarily were involved in thinking about themselves and their lives, where they were, and how they positioned themselves on their personal and collective journeys towards becoming inclusive practitioners.

Participants were encouraged to go beyond mere description of their self-drawings and photographs during the conversational interviews which followed each data prompt or trigger activity, to include engaging in critical reflection and adopting a self-reflexive stance. The exercises, therefore, go beyond merely depicting and documenting superficial experiences, but offer the potential to become processes of knowledge production.

- *Self-drawings and depictions*

Season two of the data generation process involves a very simple drawing activity, where participants were each given an A4 page and asked to draw the answer to the question "Who Am I". It was stressed that there could be no right or wrong drawings, and that depictions were open to individual creativity and expression.

The drawings were intended to be used as data triggers. Teachers were encouraged to speak to their drawings in a group situation. This activity was conducted at each school, working with the teachers from that school together in a group situation. Using the drawings as starting points for verbal explanations of the various depictions offered teachers a non-threatening and non-academic

opportunity to talk about who they are. Story telling is culturally relevant to the African culture and knowledge of who they are as individuals set each participant up as the expert in that field. Participants were also encouraged to communicate in their first language if they did not feel confident in their English proficiency, and then other teachers in the group could translate for them.

Participants were then given an A3 sheet of paper and asked to glue their A4 drawing in the middle of this new sheet. They were then asked to extend their original drawing, to explore and depict the relationship between aspects of their identities and inclusive education. The specific prompt for this level of data generation was "Who am I in the light of inclusive education?" Again, participants were encouraged to speak to what they had added onto their original drawing.

The sessions where participants spoke to their drawings ranged from between one to two hours each. All participants' verbal reflections were recorded and transcribed. These transcriptions comprised participants' personal narratives which were investigated and interpreted. Participants' drawings were scanned and stored on computer disks for later use – inserting them at relevant points in the thesis.

These seasons or cycles of story-telling and reflection were designed to give participants the opportunity to reflect critically on the broader social implications of their individual narratives, and served to get them thinking about inclusion and inclusive education in relation to their identities. The application of this visual methodology of self-drawings and depictions can be assessed as participatory, in that participants were actively involved in the data generation.

This exercise also provided a useful entry point to working symbolically (Mitchell at al, 2005), something that would also be critical in the planned photo-voice activity.

- *Photo-voice*

Season three of data generation included a photo-voice exercise, where one or two groups of teachers at each school were each given a camera and a spool with 24 exposures and asked to: "stage and take photographs of significant events, developments or moments that have shaped you, defined you, enabled you, and hindered you on your journey towards becoming an inclusive

practitioner". As very few of the participants had ever had any experience with cameras, I spent some time with the teachers at each school showing them and allowing them to practise taking photographs with them. I then left each group of teachers with a camera and spool to discuss and plan together the images that they wanted to construct and capture. Participants were given about two weeks to plan, stage and take their photographs, after which I collected the cameras and had the spools developed.

Ethical considerations and concerns of a visual methodology are always of paramount importance, as photographs clearly do not allow for anonymity among the subjects in the images. These considerations and concerns were discussed with the teachers, and participants were instructed to always ask the permission of potential photograph-subjects before taking the photographs. The majority of photographs taken by participants were staged for the express purpose of representing an issue relevant to their journeys of transition from exclusion to inclusion. The photographs I include, therefore, do not represent any real or actual situations of isolation, exclusion, discrimination or marginalisation. The issue concerning the ownership and dissemination of the photographs was also discussed with participants. It was agreed that I could use, include and disseminate any of the photographs taken by the participants, even where participants clearly appear in the photographs. Where they appear in a negative situation, such as administering harsh words or corporal punishment to learners, it should be remembered that these were *staged* photographs and do not represent these teachers' actual classroom practices.

Participants were then given the opportunity to sit in groups, look at the photographs and 'speak to them', or explain what the photographs were depicting and what the intention behind each planned and staged photograph was. These verbal responses were recorded during a session of about one and a half to two hours in duration. The recordings of the participants' verbal responses were then transcribed, comprising participants' personal narratives, which would be interpreted by the researcher at a later stage in the research process. Photographs were scanned and stored on computer disks for later use – inserting them at relevant points in the thesis.

The application of this visual methodology of photo-voice can be assessed as participatory, in that participants were actively involved in the data generation.

3.11.4. Conversational interviews

These cycles of reflection and explaining their self drawings and photographs to the group and me were informal rather than formal, and open questions phrased as "tell me about what you have drawn/depicted here…" gave each participant the freedom to describe his/her drawing and the group's photographs in his/own words, rather than closed questions which would have set relatively tight limits on the content of the participants' responses.

I choose to call these data generation sessions 'conversational interviews'. Such encounters between researcher and participants formulate the purpose of the session, as if they are social visits and simply conversations, and shift the construction of the researcher away from an overt authority and expert in the field, to an ordinary person, genuinely listening and interested in participants' individual stories about themselves and their lives.

A movement has recently emerged among qualitative researchers regarding the controlling role of the interviewer. This concern has led to a new direction in unstructured interviewing which includes personal narratives, lived experiences and autohistories. When conducting this form of interviewing, the role of the researcher/interviewer is to introduce the general theme on which information is required, thus providing participants/interviewees with the opportunity to speak for themselves (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Adopting conversational interviews resonates with this trend in devaluing professional elitism and, instead, sets a high value on informality, naturalness and normalness.

Conversational interviewing is regarded as synonymous with terms such as in-depth interviewing, free interviewing, narrative interviewing, creative interviewing and unstructured interviewing (Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998). Unstructured interviewing is described as social interaction between equals, in order to obtain research-relevant information (Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998), or the establishment of a human-to-human relationship with the participant, with the desire to understand rather than to explain situations, experiences and phenomena (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The advantages of unstructured interviewing are closely related to the objectives of qualitative methodology (Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998), in that the unstructured interview best

enables the researcher to obtain an insider view of participants' realities and experiences, thus allowing the opportunity for individual experiences and lives to be understood from the perspectives of the participants.

However, there are no entirely unobtrusive methods when researching the social world (Czarniawska, 2004). I cannot claim that I did not have a definite research agenda, and it would be difficult to be completely non-directive in approaching data generation. Using teachers' drawings as data triggers aided in locating participant responses within my specific research agenda, and served to direct the data in the preferred direction. This enabled me to retain the conversational tone and form of the encounter. Even if I needed to motivate teachers to elaborate on a response, to enhance and stimulate data generation through further probing on my part, or steer them back to the general topic when there was digression, this could all still be accomplished while maintaining the flow, friendliness and informality of a conversation.

Interactional control was therefore maintained through the activity being specifically designed to elicit particular information from participants; clarifying exactly the purpose of the session, and outlining what was required of the teachers in each activity and exercise; initiating and terminating the encounter; keeping participants to their agendas; and outlining future action. There is a need for the researcher to exercise control at some level, (even if in the paradoxical form of ceding control). Where these control features are maintained by the researcher, they are realised in an indirect and mitigated form under the influence of the informality, naturalness and normalness. Interviews in such a context become more like "manipulated conversations, where the manipulation is acknowledged and accepted by both parties" (Czariawska, 2004, p.50)

Although conversational interviews offer the potential to produce narratives that are rich sources of information and knowledge for the particular area of research, this does not ensure that such conversational interviews always evoke narratives. As much as there are undoubtedly specific positives of conversational interviews, they are not spontaneous conversations, but clearly set up by an interviewer for the explicit purpose of the research. Given the history of the relationship between participants and me, it is worth considering that participants may have provided stories and accounts which they thought I wanted to hear, and which would sit well within the overall

intention of inclusion and inclusive education. Towards this end, they may have relied on the use of jargon and constructs familiar to and in keeping with inclusion, and may have described or rationalised certain of their actions, attitudes and practices as inclusive, rather than providing meaningful insights into their subjective view. In order to probe beneath the surface veneer of inclusion that may have been presented in these encounters, it was my task as researcher to "activate narrative production" (Holstein and Gubrium, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.123). In order to understand innermost feelings, attitudes, behaviour and experiences, participants were encouraged to speak as freely and reflexively as possible regarding these deep structures of meaning-making. Questions were not deliberately formulated but, instead, developed spontaneously during the course of each conversational interview. Motivating and probing questions would necessarily be unique to each individual participant.

The use of conversational interviews to generate discussion and exploration of the visual methodologies selected, facilitated the active participation of the participants. Such interactions allowed them to express themselves in their own way in connection to their self-drawings and photographs. This part of the methodologies can, therefore, be viewed as participatory.

The fact that conversational interviews took place in each school with a group of teachers present, openly discussing their personal and collective narratives, leads to the realisation that a process of shared inquiry was adopted.

3.12. INTERPRETATION

There is no right or wrong approach to interpreting data in qualitative research (Schurink, et al. in De Vos, 1998), and no particular tradition has a monopoly on text analysis, in an inquiry investigating personal narratives. Just as there is coherence between the overall openness and flexibility of the research design and the methods of data generation, so the techniques of interpretation of the data need to reflect the same openness and flexibility.

Participants themselves engaged with the data generation techniques and exercises, and provided drawings and photographs. Participants then engaged directly with these images when required to

'speak to' their drawings and photographs; this comprised the first layer of interpretation. These verbal reflections, responses and explanations formed the conversational narratives (which were recorded and transcribed) with which I engaged directly with in the second layer of interpretation. Participants were therefore engaged in the initial level or layer of interpretation, in line with the intended critical and participatory aspect of the research.

Free-flowing texts, such as narratives and responses to open-ended prompts, are best suited to whole-text analysis, where chunks of texts are analysed. Units of meaning and categories were identified in the free-flowing texts of the transcribed narratives. Chunks of text that reflected a single idea were referred to as units of meaning. Whenever different units of meaning were identified, statements were compared with one another in order to establish whether there were underlying similarities and unifying concepts (De Vos, 1998). This stage of data organisation and interpretation, where units of meaning and categories were identified, required creative organisation and interpretive thinking (Poggenpoel, in De Vos, 1998). The process of generating units of meaning, and grouping these into categories, required sensitivity and openness to the data and to the undercurrents of participants' realities, experiences and processes of meaning-making and identity construction. Units of meaning, patterns and categories were uncovered through inductive analysis, and logical analysis was utilised to cross-classify categories with one another.

From the numerous methods which have been documented (Ryan and Bernard, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000), I have utilised Tesch's approach to organise and interpret data (Poggenpoel, in De Vos, 1998). The broad steps followed in this approach include:

- Transcribing the recorded conversational interviews myself and repeatedly reading through all the personal narrative texts carefully, thus enabling me to become immersed in the data and therefore familiar with it.
- Actively looking for generative, emerging units of meaning and categories during the process of reading and rereading the data. These units of meaning that 'jumped out' for me were captured by underlining key words or phrases, and writing codes next to appropriate chunks or segments of text. This process is also known as manual, open-coding.

- Compiling a list of the unique categories that were emerging and reducing this list into themes (that related to each other).

- Assembling the chunks of texts that fell under each category in one place and conducting continuous analysis and interpretation (involving an analysis of the relationships between the categories and themes). Cyclical levels of interpretation and analysis occurred after data was generated from the various data trigger activities. Each level of interpretation and analysis informed further levels of data generation.

- Data analysis and interpretation sought to identify and weave together concepts, categories and interrelationships from the different sources of data. These themes were then analysed in terms of the extent to which they supported, modified or contradicted the existing literature relating to the area of research and the theoretical approaches which form the framework of the research.

- The authentic voices of participants were constructed using their direct quotes, photographs and drawings. This is also known as thick description of the data generated.

According to Tolstoy (1961, cited in Ban Breathnach, 1999, p.44), "it is only with infinitesimal change, changes so small no-one even realizes you're making them, that you have any hope for transformation." Authenticity and meaning is often found hidden in the small details of daily experiences and realities. Archaeologist James Deetz (cited in Ban Breathnach, 1999, p.33) refers to the archaeological excavation process as searching for "small things forgotten". It is then the archaeologist's task to "decode those messages and apply them to our understanding of the human experience" (Deetz, cited in Ban Breathnach, 1999, p.33). The narrative is therefore written everyday in the small, the simple, the common, and often "in the unconsidered, the overlooked, the discarded, the reclaimed" (Ban Breathnach, 1999, p.34). For this reason, I did not only focus on the large, seemingly most important events in the trajectory of participants' experiences and encounters with inclusion and inclusive education, but also the everyday small incidents and experiences, in the belief that these would unearth authentic and meaningful insights into participants' narratives in the light of inclusion.

3.13. VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Constructs, such as internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity, used to defend the value and the logic of research within a conventional positivist paradigm, would be inappropriate for qualitative inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Marshall and Rossman, 1989). However, even qualitative research must aim for some level of validity and trustworthiness, in the attempt to support the argument that research findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.290). Guba (in Lincoln and Guba, 1985) proposes four issues which demand attention in any qualitative research endeavour: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These issues are concerned with: evaluating whether or not research findings represent a credible, conceptual interpretation of the data; the degree to which findings can apply or transfer beyond the bounds of specific research endeavours; assessing the quality of the integrated processes of data generation and interpretation; and measuring how well findings are supported by the data generation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). These concepts will be discussed in relation to how and to what extent they have been enabled in the research.

3.13.1. Subjective, particular and constructed views of reality

The growing trend towards postmodernism emphasises the social construction of social reality, identity as fluid as opposed to fixed, and the partiality of all truths, thus overtaking modernist assumptions of an objective reality. Rather than understanding truth and knowledge as external reality, thus separate from the knower, qualitative, interpretive, postmodernist research needs to understand truth as subjective, actively constructed and co-created by individuals within their specific personal histories and social contexts. An investigation into the realities and experiences of individuals necessarily relies on the experiential, embodied, emotive qualities of human experience that contribute the narrative quality to a life, and which capture those elements that make life experiences conflictual and problematic (Lincoln and Guba, 1995). Ellis and Bochner (in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.746) believe that "we need to question our assumptions, the meta-rules that govern the institutional workings of social science – arguments over feelings, theories over stories, abstractions over concrete events, sophisticated jargon over accessible prose". Plummer (2001, p.6) warns that "championing system over agency, discourse over doing, structure over consciousness, runs the risk of developing accounts of the world that are simply wild and wrong,

untempered as they are with the concrete historical yet human experiences out of which societies are invariably composed".

With the turn of the social sciences towards more qualitative, interpretive, postmodern and critical theorising and practices, inquiry methodology can no longer be understood or treated as a set of universally applicable rules (Lincoln and Guba, 1995). This postmodern turn suggests that no *one* method of inquiry delivers absolute truth, and, while it may be argued that some methods are more suited than others for investigating the realities and experiences of individuals, no *one* single method, or specific group of methods, can be proposed as the only, correct road of inquiry to absolute, ultimate knowledge and truth (Lincoln and Guba, 1995). When employing qualitative and interpretive methods of inquiry, the researcher cannot know at the outset what the issues, perceptions, and commonalities will be as the content of narratives evolves as the research progresses.

3.13.2. Adopting a transgressive form of validity

Triangulating multiple sources of data is said to enhance a study's validity, dependability and credibility, in that triangulation is the act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point, where data from different sources can be used to corroborate, elaborate or illuminate the research in question (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Marshall and Rossman, 1989). Designing research, in which multiple participants and data generating techniques have been included, can greatly strengthen the usefulness, significance and transferability of this research to other settings.

To add validity, dependability and credibility to this research, a number of techniques are used to generate data. These include a reflexive writing exercise, a self-drawing exercise (which itself involved two layers of data generation), a photo-voice exercise, and conversational interviews. The intention here was to generate multiple layers of data, thus providing a multi-layered, richer and more credible data set, than simply using a singular method of data generation.

Richardson (cited in both Lincoln and Guba, 1995, and Maree, 2007), proposes a deliberately transgressive form of validity, one which deconstructs the traditional idea of validity (one single truth), and provides a deepened, more complex, yet simultaneously partial understanding of the

issue under research. He proposes that "the central imagery for "validity" for postmodernist texts is not the triangle – a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather … the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter … Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves … Not triangualtion, crystalisation" (Richardson, cited in Lincoln and Guba, 1995, p.181 and Maree, 2007, p.41). According to Richardson (cited in Maree, 2007, p.41) "crystalisation provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic". This metaphor for validity recognises multiple layers of meaning and elements of truth which reflect the meaning and sense-making processes of each individual. This metaphor further helps "writers and readers alike see the interweaving of processes in the research: discovery, seeing, telling, storying, re-presentation" (Lincoln and Guba, 1995, p.182).

Both triangulation and crystalisation refer to the practice of validating results by using multiple methods of data collection and analysis, considering processes of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning and verify the repeatability of an interpretation. This verification and clarification process is employed in this research throughout the process of investigating and generating personal narratives of participants. Data collection methods include more than simply one method. Many sources and levels of participants' narratives are investigated, through a cyclical series of generating narratives through reflexive writing, visual methodologies and conversational interviews. This engagement in multiple seasons, routes and layers of interpretation and meaning-making, and continual reflection, revision, clarification and verification throughout the exercises and conversational interviews, is in keeping with what Stake (in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000) says, that in qualitative research, data is continuously interpreted, and researchers engage in crisscrossed reflection, continually reflecting and revising meanings.

Such a deliberately transgressive form of validity recognises that it is impossible to eliminate the influence of the researcher on the researched, and that, therefore, no theories or findings could ever be completely free of human values and subjective interpretations. The investigator and the researcher, then, is always implicated in the product. The researcher is viewed not as an impartial, objective receiver of participants' subjective experiences and realities but, through the very

practices of engagement and reflexivity, is recognised as a presence which necessarily impacts on the product. "The way we [researchers] know is most assuredly tied up with both what we know and our relationship with our research participants" (Lincoln and Guba, 1995, p.182). The researcher thus plays an important role in the research process. The approaches selected, the techniques used, and the ways of recording information, all influence the results of the study. Additionally, data must be interpreted, and the researcher has a great deal of influence on what part of the data will be reported and how it will be reported (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). (c.f. 3.6. Researcher as Instrument).

> "Even when empathic and respectful of each person's realities, the researcher decides what the case's own story is, or at least what will be included in the report…. Even though the competent researcher will be guided by what the case somehow indicates is most important … what is necessary for an understanding of the case will be decided by the researcher. What results, may be the case's own story, but the report will be the researcher's dressing of the case's own story" (Stake, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.441).

3.13.3. Conveying both the particular and the generalisable

Narratives are not neutral attempts to mirror the facts of participant's experiences, realities and meaning-making processes. Narratives can be judged and contrasted against each other, but there can be no right or wrong narrative, and no standard by which to measure any narrative against the meaning of events themselves, because the meaning of narrative experience is constituted in its narrative expression. Narrative pathways do not present, and cannot therefore be interpreted or represented, as abstract or linear. Experience and life is a fluctual praxis, always in flow, fragmented, partial and ever messy. "The social terrain is criss-crossed with pathways … but it is not given to the social scientist to say which path is to be followed. Nor is it given to anyone to say what another shall make of the journey" (Borenstein cited in Rapport, 1997, p.30).

However, while each individual and personal narrative is particular, and while "the particularities of individualised experiences cannot be eclipsed by generalisation, or otherwise abstracted, reduced, or typified by totalisation" (Rapport, 1997, p.29), they can hold elements of the typical and generalisable. The research text can and should convey both the particular and the generalisable.

"Generalisability is constantly being tested by readers as they determine if it speaks to them about their experience or about the (experiences) of others they know" (Ellis and Bochner, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.751).

It is intended that this research be used in the immediate context for the consumption and reflection of indigenous audiences (teachers teaching in similar contexts and experiencing similar realities), in addition to Department of Education officials, allowing them to really 'hear' the participants. While it may be unrealistic to aspire to transport conclusions from the South African situation to other countries, or conclusions from the rural KwaZulu-Natal situation to other areas in the country, this study provides useful insights into teachers' transition to becoming inclusive education practitioners and hence, provides relevant and important contributions towards the local and international conversation concerning inclusion and inclusive education. Although findings pertain to a specific and particular sample of teachers, it is possible that these research findings can be transferred beyond the bounds of simply this research, to inform the broader area of education policy implementation in South Africa and in developing countries.

3.13.4. Narratives as authentic, trustworthy and valid

Following on from the belief that criteria for judging reality or validity cannot be absolutist, a strong argument exists for the radical reformulation of validity, if it is to serve qualitative and interpretive research well (Schwandt, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Smith and Deemer, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Although there is no final conclusion with regard to the issue of validity, authenticity is offered as the criterion which might inform judgements of the validity of research work (Lincoln and Guba, 1995).

Authentic, trustworthy and valid research needs to engage with the issues of voice (the extent to which a research text draws on the voices of participants), critical subjectivity (self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher), and reciprocity (the extent to which the research relationship becomes reciprocal rather than hierarchical).

The authentic voices of participants are apparent and represented in the text, through the use of teachers' narratives. The use of authentic narratives allows participants to speak for themselves in

representing their personal realities and experiences. The presentation of the research features the extensive use of the voice of teachers, namely the narrative voice. While the researcher's analytical, interpretive and reflexive voice will necessarily be featured, the thesis cannot lose sight of the voices of the participants.

The extent to which these personal narratives evoke in readers a feeling that the experiences described are believable and possible, will allow the research to achieve some level of validity and trustworthiness. If readers experience the text as believable, authentic and possible, readers will then be thinking *with* stories instead of *about* them, and thinking *with* a story means that readers allows themselves to resonate with the story, reflect on it, and become a part of it (Ellis and Bochner, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). The crucial issues here are assessing what narrative research can do, what consequences it has, to what uses it can be put and what new possibilities it may introduce. In that authentic personal narratives allow readers to look through participants' eyes, and empathise with their specific contextual experiences and realities, then this research achieves credibility, validity and trustworthiness - affording readers the opportunity to reach a better subjective understanding of teachers' lives and challenges, from the inside out.

The intention of this research is not to produce abstracted realities of teachers' experiences of inclusion, written solely for a scholarly and academic audience; nor to stand in judgement of teachers, while attempting to measure how inclusive or exclusive their attitudes and practices are. Rather, the intention is to emphasise concrete expressions over abstractions; stress the journey rather than the destination; have authentic voices of participants represented; offer lessons for further conversations rather than absolute conclusions; have the research text present as readable, engaging and personally meaningful for readers. Personal narratives of participants are largely free of academic jargon and abstracted theory, leaving readers to feel the truth of their stories.

Participants themselves stand to benefit from this research, in that the data generation exercises have facilitated their active participation in personal critical reflection around issues on which the research has focused. This relates to having adopted a critical approach to this research, wherein tensions, constraints, contradictions and misunderstandings can be uncovered through critical reflection, providing a catalyst which has the potential to lead to change and development in

participants – empowering them to change the world for themselves, through facilitating the development of an emancipatory consciousness. (c.f. 3.3.3. Considering a Critical Approach: *Research as a transformative endeavour*).

Reflexivity on my part, as the researcher, is essential to the overall validity of this research endeavour, and involves the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the human as instrument, and the inevitable role which the researcher plays in any research. Writing does not merely involve the transcribing of participants' realities, but involves a process of discovery - of the participants, of the problem and of the self. Researchers, therefore, also become storytellers, experimenting with personal narratives and reflexive investigations. The researcher needs to be mindful of conducting subjective, yet disciplined, interpretation, remembering that the goal is not to portray the facts of what happened, but instead to convey the meanings participants attach to their experiences. Remembering Plummer's statement, that in a plural world constituted through multiple refracted perspectives, constantly changing, never fixed, and where meanings are always being negotiated - "meanings and truth never arrive simply" (Plummer, 2001, p.xi) - such a process needs to be critically reflected on from all angles and on all levels, including the human factor of the researcher herself.

3.14. CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined my search for an approach to inquiry that would: allow me as the researcher to get close to, and come alongside, the teachers in my sample; help me understand the world as they saw it (as it pertained to inclusion and inclusive education); offer me a flexibility in the overall research design; and lead me to locate the research within qualitative research. The chapter has traced my journey through considering and selecting elements of an interpretive approach and a critical approach, and outlined the process of selecting and designing effective trigger and prompt exercises which were used to generate narrative data. Archaeological excavation has been used as a reference towards a richer understanding of the process of the research. It was deemed vital that methods selected would: value participants' perspectives on their worlds and seek to discover these perspectives; view inquiry as an interactive participatory process between the researcher and the participants; generate thick description (quality, depth and

richness); and rely on participants' authentic voices and words as the primary data. While the techniques of narrative inquiry, visual methodologies and conversational interviews are increasingly being incorporated into research designs, these are still considered relatively new and 'cutting-edge' methodologies. It was the intention of this chapter to develop a sound rationale for the choice of these methodologies, based on the foundational principles of participation and individualisation on which this research has been developed.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEACHERS BECOMING INCLUSIVE PRACTITIONERS
– A PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1.   INTRODUCTION

Just as archaeology is an attempt to reveal and understand past civilizations and cultures, so narrative research is an attempt to investigate and make sense of the human lives and identities behind these narratives. Just as archaeological digs are ancient sites of unearthed treasures of past human existences, so narrative texts are rich and fertile sites which have the potential to reveal evidence of the many aspects of a person's life experiences, personal journey and complex identities. Traditionally, narrative texts trace the trajectory of peoples' lives, denoting the episodic ways in which participants' lives evolve from early childhood, and highlight life experiences which leave indelible marks on their memory and identity. Although the transcripts of participants' narratives do not offer comprehensive texts which specifically and systematically cover participants' entire development from early childhood to the present, they do, however, offer narrative moments which draw on specific experiences which have had an impact on the formation and reformation of their identities. The process of data generation, investigation and interpretation of participants' narratives in this research, is likened to the process of excavating and unearthing relevant moments and insights from participants' experiences of inclusion and inclusive education.

This chapter will present the findings of the research – participants' narrative moments and insights, which have been selected from the transcripts of the data generated during the various seasons of data collection, as they directly relate to the focus of the research. These narrative moments rely on direct excerpts or quotations from participants' narratives, in keeping with the intention to privilege the authentic voices of the participants, give a platform to the voices of teachers. (Although visual methodologies were used as prompts and trigger exercises, research findings are drawn from the data generated during the conversational interviews which followed the trigger exercises – these conversational interviews therefore comprise what I refer to as the participants' narratives). Tesch's approach to data organisation was utilised (Poggenpoel, in De

Vos, 1998). As outlined in the previous chapter, this method of data organisation involved identifying key words, phrases or main issues from the transcripts (those that jumped out for me as meaningful units in relation to the research focus). These meaningful units were then identified and labelled as codes indicated in the margins of the transcripts. Codes that described similar ideas or concepts were grouped into categories (c.f. image 4.1).

I began by trying to isolate key words and points from the transcribed narratives into various units of meaning. But, as I began searching and sifting through the text, isolating units of meaning into separate piles, I realised that these key words and points could not be entirely and neatly isolated from each other, later to be labelled, examined and understood exclusively under separate and tidy headings. The more I searched and sifted through the layers of sediment, the more I realised I was, in fact, at the beginning of an exploration and excavation of a labyrinth of words and points that were intertwined and fused together, each one in relation to the others, each a part of one large convoluted underground narrative.

However, to excavate and understand the whole, I would need to persevere with unearthing the emerging shards and label them according to units of meaning. However, the mind is neither one-dimensional nor linear. While operating on this initial, somewhat simplistic level of identifying units of meaning, my mind was simultaneously ramifying and seeing these overlapping and interdependent units of meaning as embedded in a complex, contextualised matrix of meaning. The process of identification, categorisation, investigation and interpretation needed to bounce and zig-zag, in and out, back and forth, through this multi-dimensional matrix of words and phrases. The collection, organisation and interpretation of data are never separate processes in qualitative research, but processes which occur simultaneously (Mertens, in De Vos, 1998) and continuously (Rossman and Rallis, in De Vos, 1998). However, for the sake of imposing some structure and order on the data, findings are presented in this chapter according to specific, generative, emerging categories which were actively looked for and identified. These were informed by the part of the research focus which intended to investigate teachers' experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners, and facilitate and uncover their reflections regarding their personal and professional identities in light of inclusion.

As discussed and outlined in chapter three, data was generated from stages or cycles (which I refer to as seasons) of exercises and activities utilising various data triggers and prompts, and layers of storytelling and reflection. Although these are discussed in detail in the previous chapter, I revisit the salient points of these two methodologies and seasons of data generation in the following paragraphs.

Season one generated data from participants' written responses to the prompt questions: what were your reasons for becoming a teacher and what were your initial responses to inclusive education?

Season two of data generation followed the process of data triggers, cycles of story telling and reflection. Self-drawings were used as data triggers. This involved a very simple drawing activity where participants were each asked to draw the answer to the question "Who Am I?" This activity comprised two layers: the first layer required participants to draw on an A4 page their representation of who they believed themselves to be; and the second layer required participants to stick their A4 drawing onto an A3 page and expand their response to presenting themselves in relation to, and in the context of, inclusive education. Participants were asked to 'speak' to their drawings after both layers of this trigger activity, verbally elaborating and reflecting on what they had drawn (and written in some cases). This trigger exercise generated twenty self-drawings. I have sometimes used a whole self-drawing and sometimes relevant parts of participants' drawings, to illustrate certain narrative excerpts and interspersed them throughout the chapter. The prompt given to the participants was simple, unthreatening, and allowed space for experimentation, open-interpretation and playfulness, while simultaneously allowing for the possibility of critical reflection during the process of talking to and interpreting their drawings in an authentic way, and also taking a self-reflexive stance. Not only was this *my* field work as the primary researcher, in a sense it was also *participants'* field work. As intended, this exercise offered participants the opportunity to be archaeologists of themselves and their lives, and engage in some digging and excavating. The trigger exercise and conversational interview which followed required that participants be willing to think about their lives and themselves in new ways in light of inclusion and inclusive education; to think about where they were, and how they positioned themselves on their deeply personal journey towards becoming inclusive practitioners. The sojourn to self-discovery is not a new one, but an

ancient quest, and this process of data generation was specifically designed to facilitate this process of self-discovery among participants.

Season three of data generation included a photo-voice exercise as the specific trigger activity where participants were asked to take photographs representing significant moments, events or developments (enabling or hindering) that impacted on their becoming inclusive practitioners, and then elaborate and reflect on these photographs in the subsequent conversational interview. This process was designed developmentally, with the intent of facilitating the process of self-reflection and authentic interpretation on the part of participants. It was hoped that the conversational interviews would: illuminate and uncover what has shaped and is shaping teachers' sense of themselves; what has defined and is defining them; what is binding and restricting them, emancipating them and empowering them, with specific regard to their becoming inclusive practitioners; and what their experiences have been regarding their particular situations, as this relates to inclusion in general and inclusive education. Participants generated a total of 134 photographs, twenty of which I have used to illustrate certain narrative excerpts and interspersed them throughout this chapter at relevant points.

The data generated from the three seasons of data generation offered a selection of authentic narrative moments or excerpts which collectively provide sufficient data which speak to the focus of the research pertaining to teachers' experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners.

4.2. FINDINGS

The following figures provide a visual consolidated summary of the path of data organisation and initial interpretation that I travelled with regard to teachers' experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners. Figure 4.1 is a representational summary of the three seasons of data generation, and the categories which emerged from this data. As outlined in chapter three, categories emerged during the data organisation and interpretation stage and were identified through inductive analysis of units of meaning which emerged from the transcripts of participants' narratives. Figure 4.2 is a representation of the overarching themes which emerged from these categories. They were identified while piecing together concepts, categories and interrelationships from the different

sources of data. These themes were identified from the consideration of all the categories which emerged from the three seasons of data collection, as outlined in chapter three, and through the lenses provided by the evolving and emerging conceptual framework.

This chapter presents the data under these five overarching themes and comprises the authentic voices of participants in the form of direct quotations. Direct quotations of participants are presented in their original, authentic form. The language is therefore unaltered. Participants' drawings and photographs are interspersed throughout this chapter, as they represent and illustrate the narrative moments of the participants as they were 'speaking' to their drawings and photographs. Photographs were staged in response to the photo-voice exercise.

More detailed investigative and interpretive discussion of this data through the lens of the conceptual framework is presented in the next chapter.

Image 4.1   Teachers' experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners

– categories which emerged from the three seasons of data generation

Seasons of data generation	Categories identified
Season one: Reflexive writing • Why participants became teachers • Responses to inclusive education	• Contributing to the greater good of society • The positioning of self in society • Initial attitudes and responses to inclusive education • Focus on disability and special needs • Roots of exclusion and segregation • The hope of transformation
Season two: Drawings • First layer: "Who Am I?" • Second layer: "Who Am I in relation to inclusive educcation?" • Speaking to the drawings (transcriptions)	• The kind of teacher participants perceived themselves to be • Extending traditional roles • Transforming our curriculum, transforming ourselves • Tensions and contradictions which emerge in the process of teachers becoming inclusive practitioners • Teachers' experiences of the institutional culture (at the level of school leadership and at the level of the Department of Education)
Season three: Photo-voice • Photographs of significant moments, events or developments that impacted on transition to inclusion – enabling and hindering factors • Speaking to the photographs (transcriptions)	• Initial attitudes and responses to the idea of inclusion • Catering for diversity within the classroom • Including the previously excluded • Labelling and discrimination • Corporal punishment • Building a culture of sharing and collaboration

Image 4.2   Teachers' experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners
        -    overarching themes which emerge from the categories

Theme 1
Teachers on the front lines of creating the 'good society'

Categories from season one:
(Why participants became teachers)
- Contributing to the greater good
- The positioning of self in society

Categories from season two:
- The kind of teacher participants perceived themselves to be - *I am the mother to all*

Theme 2
Teachers caught between a policy and a history

Categories from season one:
- Initial attitudes and responses to inclusive education
- Roots of exclusion and segregation
- The hope of transformation

▲

Categories from season three:
- Initial attitudes and responses to inclusive education

Theme 3
Redefining teaching:
A 'fundamental dislocation with the past'

Categories from season one:
- Focus on disability and special needs
- Roots of exclusion and segregation

Categories from season two:
- Extending traditional roles

Categories from season three:
- Catering for diversity within the classroom
- Labelling and discrimination
- Corporal punishment
- Including the previously excluded
- Building a culture of sharing and collaboration

Theme 4
Developing an alternative sense of self

Categories from season two:
- Transforming our curriculum, transforming ourselves

Categories from season two:
- Tensions and contradictions which emerge in the process of teachers becoming inclusive practitioners

Theme 5
Teachers experiences of the institutional culture

Categories from season two:
- The institutional culture at the level of school leadership

Categories from season two:
- The institutional culture at the level of the Department of Education

4.2.1. Teachers on the front lines of creating the good society

The belief in the responsibility of the formal education system to influence and promote the fostering of democratic virtues (Green, in Ayers, Hunt and Quinn, 1998) is reflected in the decision to restructure and redesign South Africa's education and training system (South African Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy, Department of National Education, 2001). The struggle to create a good society (Sacks,2000) that would hold high the values of equity and non-discrimination, and equal and meaningful participation for everyone, regardless of individual differences, is seen as a struggle which is "fought first and foremost in the classroom" (The Minister of Education, Professor Sibusiso Bengu, in the foreword to Education under the new Constitution in South Africa, 1996).

Teachers are therefore on the 'front lines' of being able to make a meaningful contribution to and impact on change in the lives of learners" (Mitchell, et al. 2005). Teachers need to create, strengthen and maintain a culture within their classrooms, based on the new social contract. Classroom communities need to be warm, welcoming environments that value all members, and facilitate equal and full citizenship and participation of all members, irrespective of individual differences, thus playing a vital part in developing the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa.

- *Contributing to the greater good*

It seems that all participants placed great value on developing and building a good society, and on its potential to offer all members equal access to hope (Sacks, 2000). Participants also believed in the value and potential of education to influence and promote the fostering of necessary values and virtues which contribute to the greater good in a society, and believed teachers to be important agents of change and vital role players towards uplifting the standard of the community and the nation, as illustrated in the following quotation.

> *Teachers have the potential to bring tremendous change; make key contributions to the transformation of education and people's lives; build up the nation and contribute to changing history.*

Participants expressed the personal desire to take up this mantle of responsibility towards building up the nation and helping to change history. While the majority of participants expressed in more abstract terms what they understood this contribution to be, such as to help the youth to be better citizens of tomorrow, one participant more specifically perceived a teacher's responsibility to be to help eliminate illiteracy from South Africa, while another linked a teacher's responsibility directly to facilitating the much needed transformation of the social landscape in South Africa in relation to existing unequal power relations. A quotation from this teacher follows.

> *I grew up in a rural area where people did not recognize the importance of education. I wanted to become a teacher, so that I would be able to educate many people, thus enabling them to have a different experience of life and opportunities from what black people were used to under apartheid.*

Participants were clear in their belief in the power of teaching and teachers to build a better future and create a good society. Teachers' sense of self and positioning of self in society linked to the important role they perceived teachers to play in moulding future citizens. The following image (Image 4.3) portrays the teacher's role in terms of extending light, guidance and hope, as she brings the candle of education to her learners. The image clearly shows an unhappy learner (on the left) before receiving the hope and light of education, in comparison with the happy learners (on the right) receiving the hope and light of education.

Image 4.3.a.   Teacher drawing – bringing the candle of hope and education to learners

Image 4.3.b.   Teacher drawing – bringing the candle of hope and education to learners

- *The positioning of self in society*

Many of the participants' explanations of why they wanted to become teachers linked to issues involving the positioning of self in society. They recognised that teachers have something of value to offer the community and the nation as a whole. Evidence exists that participants' professional identities play an enormous part in defining them as people, providing strong evidence of a link between these two identities, as is clearly shown in the following quotation.

> *Teaching is the most important part of who we are.*

Working from the premise that participants' identities are deeply implicated in their teaching, and the understanding that teachers' identities are socially constructed within social settings and shaped within multiple contexts, which include schools, families, communities and cultures, participants clearly believed that taking the path of becoming teachers facilitates the construction of a positive sense of self. Participants generally saw teachers as fulfilling a vital need in the transformation process, and explained their choice of teaching as a career in terms of an affinity with children, their wish to be part of building a better world and helping children grow and develop, as is suggested in the following quotation.

> *I always had a love for children. I can make changes and differences in children's lives as a teacher. I want to see others achieve because of my contribution.*

Another dominant rationale for their selection of teaching lay in the perception that teachers play a special role in being good, positive role models. Participants recognise the dignity and the value in teaching and believe that the community respects a teacher and sees a teacher as a vital instrument of hope for the youth. Being a teacher is associated with personal benefits such as giving a person a sense of expertise (*I thought teachers knew everything*), dignity and value, and gaining a position of respect and status in the community (*I saw myself as a leader*). Clearly participants saw becoming a teacher as a means of constructing a positive sense of self, both professionally and personally. The following drawing (Image 4.4) is a depiction of a participant as a priest holding the Bible in his hands and bringing the Word of God and Christianity to the people and his learners. From this depiction it is clear that participants equate their roles as teachers with

being spiritual leaders of children and the community as a whole, presenting themselves as a role model of good and just character and behaviour, and answering a higher call to lead, guide and nurture their learners and members of their community.
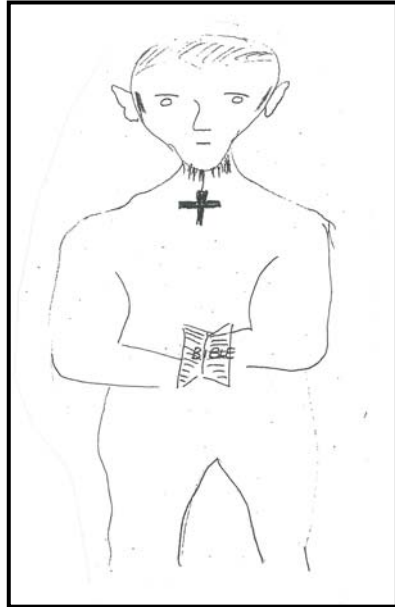
Image 4.4.   Teacher drawing – teacher as priest and spiritual leader

Although participants, in general, reflected on the important role of teaching and teachers in building a good society, they tended to see themselves as predominantly aligned to the role of primary care-giver to many of their learners. This nurturing, pastoral role was therefore foregrounded, while less importance was attributed to more professional facets of teaching and being a teacher.

- *The kind of teacher participants perceived themselves to be - I am the mother to all*

The kind of teacher participants perceived themselves to be involved playing the role of parent and counsellor, and offering guidance and pastoral care to their learners, as is illustrated by the following drawings (Images 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, and 4.8) and quotations.
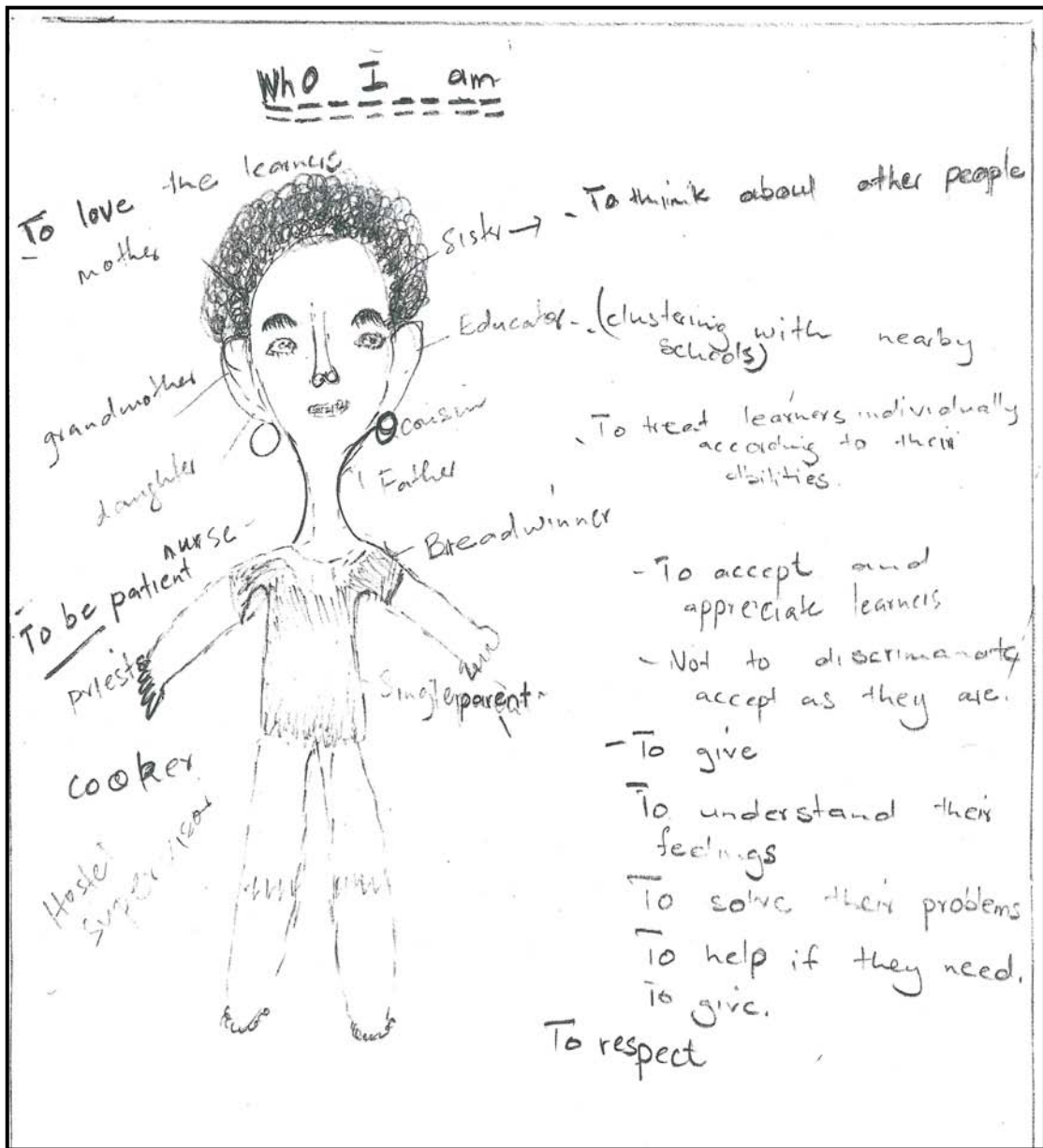
Image 4.5.   Teacher drawing – to love… to accept… to give… to respect

In my drawing there are tears in my eyes. These tears are for when I'm looking at the situations that our children are facing now. It seems as if it's not a good condition.

Image 4.6.   Teacher drawing - tears in my eyes

These days people are stressed. These days people are sick. No-one is closer to them, but I have given myself as a counselor to them, someone who is caring, loving, comforting. As teachers we are having to support these children. We must give them emotional support.

Image 4.7.   Teacher drawing – I am the mother to all

And these learners who have no parents, I take care of them by giving them food and used clothes. If you look at this learner, she is also not happy because maybe at home they are poor. They don't have food to eat when they are coming to school.

I am a mother to the motherless and try to act like a mother to those who haven't had the opportunity of having mothers. So if there is something that I need to rectify as a mother, I will do that as a mother, in order to accommodate that child to be helped.

As a hostel supervisor, I try to accommodate the learners for who they are and help them where I can. If there is something that I have to correct, I do that, to help them realize that that is not right, and what is the right thing to do to improve, bearing in mind that they do not have their parents here. I'm playing the role of a parent.
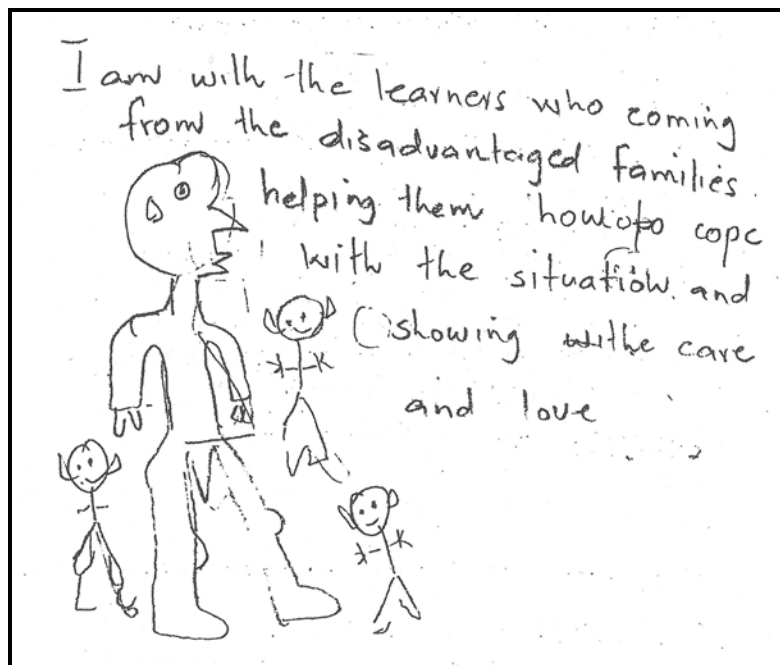
Image 4.8.   Teacher drawing – caring for the children from disadvantaged families

This predominant focus on the nurturing and pastoral role of teachers is linked to the dominant perception of what participants understood teaching to be a calling, as working for the community and society. If the construction of teachers' professional practice was shaped largely by what they knew or believed about teaching and learning and by their identities, it seemed clear that teachers

were most comfortable with aligning themselves with the role of nurturer, parent and counsellor. However, it is clear that the restructuring and redesigning of South Africa's education and training system goes beyond requiring teachers to take on the role of surrogate parent. The call to create a culture of learning and teaching that is accessible and responsive to all learners, that offers all learners a quality education and provides curricula which aim to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa, necessarily involves revising, not only classroom practices, but traditional power relations in the educational setting and in society at large. It seems that many teachers have not yet made this adjustment to their personal or profession of identities, and have not moved beyond the role of surrogate parent to take on the mantle of being an agent of change, as is envisioned by the radical politics which inform a transformation to inclusive education and education for social justice.

Regardless of participants' grand belief in the importance of teaching and teachers in bringing tremendous change by enabling learners to have a different experience of life and opportunities (a more socially just and inclusive experience), and in building up the nation and making a worthwhile contribution to changing history, it seems that, in reality, teachers are becoming predominantly engaged in offering pastoral and parental care to the majority of their learners. While offering comfort, care, guidance and food to learners is essential, in that these are basic needs of all children, more is required of teachers if they are to succeed in helping youth to be better citizens of a democratic country, and offer them the academic tools and opportunities to develop to their fullest potential. Teachers' preoccupation with being a mother to all may prove to limit their sense of self to being a more personal influence on learners' lives, at the expense of recognising the more professional influences which they are required to have on learners.

4.2.2. Teachers caught between a policy and a history

Inclusive education, and education which practises exclusion and segregation, have their roots in different paradigms. These, in turn, construct different kinds of human relationships and social understandings (Clark, Dyson and Millward, 1995). Transformation towards inclusion means transcending the divisions of the past and moving away from traditional definitions and understandings of who should be included and excluded. Participants' narratives reflected varied initial attitudes and responses towards inclusion, inclusive policy and the implementation of

inclusive education, reminiscent of the fragmentations and contradictions which occur at all levels, not only within the cultures of different schools (Lawton, in May, 2003), but between and within individual teachers. Individuals necessarily respond differently to any given situation, and more especially a situation of radical change, thus giving rise to the fragmenting and fracturing of sensibilities and identities. Such a situation is characteristic of this age of postmodernism, where multiple political identities are released on the archaeological landscape (Jansen, 1999), resulting in micro-territories of voices and a plurality of meanings.

- *Initial attitudes and responses to inclusive education -*
  "NO" to inclusive (education)! Say "NO"

Most participants reported having an initially negative attitude to inclusive education and WP6, and highlighted teachers' general insecurity over, and mistrust of, new policies. This sentiment is illustrated through the following quotations, drawing (Image 4.11) and photographs (Images 4.9 and 4.10).

> *We are saying "No" to inclusive. This inclusive education – when it started, we didn't know what was it, we didn't know what was going to happen with it, so most of the staff we had this negative attitude towards it. The word inclusive education was like a "monster" to us.*

Image 4.9.   Teacher photograph – Say "No!" to inclusivity, say "no!"

Image 4.10.   Teacher photograph – Away with inclusive education, away!

To our school, this looked like a dark cloud hanging over some teachers. Teachers felt that WP6 was a mechanism brought in by the principal to remove them from the education system.
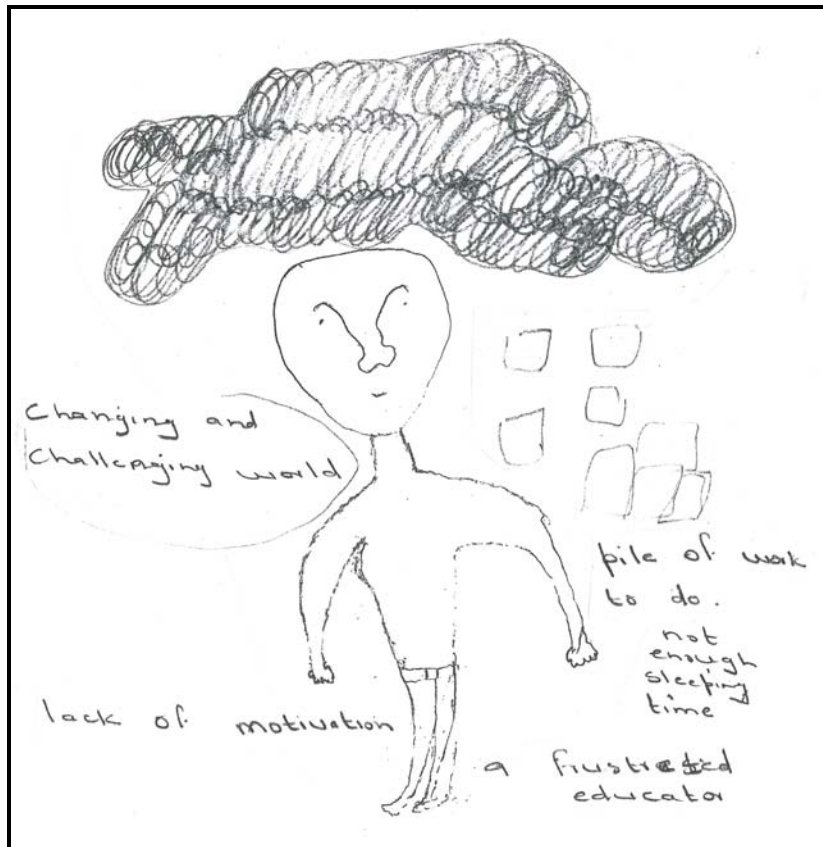
Image 4.11.   Teacher drawing – inclusion experienced as a dark cloud hanging
over teachers' heads

The problem in the beginning, was that if something is new, most of us feel uncomfortable about it – we have that unknown fear about the new things.

In addition to initial attitudes and responses of negativity, which had their roots in ignorance, insecurity and a general fear of change, teachers' narratives also foregrounded their feelings of being overloaded and confused with a number of new policy changes in education, as the following quotations reflect.

This teacher is confused. There are so many changes in the department which started with OBE, then it was inclusive, now it is RNCS, now its inclusive education. So teachers are complaining. Some of them do not want to change to accommodate this inclusion because they see inclusive education as something new and different from the OBE education. Maybe it would've been better if there was just one policy that accommodates everything. The common principles that belong to all these policies. So that teachers didn't have to think that all these were different things.

The challenges here in teaching are too much because things are changing all the time. Now we must keep the records, lesson plans – there is an attitude that now there is too much work and that is why they do not feel that positive towards new policies.

Change in any form is often resisted, as it brings with it natural human reactions such as insecurity, fear, distrust, and lack of confidence in individuals' abilities to grow and succeed in adopting the new skills to implement the necessary changes effectively. The fact that inclusive education was largely resisted when it was first introduced to teachers, seems a very natural human response to their being expected to change and adapt to a new way of being, thinking, working and understanding the world. The expectation of gaining fruits of inclusion from a historic/traditional root of exclusion necessarily takes time as this challenges deep rooted beliefs in exclusion, and disrupts a familiar, comfortable way of being and understanding the world.

- *Roots of exclusion and segregation*

Notwithstanding teachers' belief in nurturing and caring for children, the overemphasis on disability on the part of the Department of Education, when initially introducing the notion of inclusive education, tapped into teachers' traditional roots of exclusion and the historical belief in segregating disabled children with special needs. The belief that teaching is a calling, teachers being important agents of change in building a better future, were in direct contrast with deep-rooted assumptions and beliefs about intelligence, ability and disability – a deep culture of inequality and social exclusion - which inevitably influenced teachers' initial attitudes and responses to the notion of inclusion. This is highlighted in the following quotation.

WP6 was not introduced by the Department in its correct perspective. It was put across as if inclusion pertained to the handling of handicapped children. This aspect of inclusive education was overemphasized at first.

Some participants reflected that:

… it was initially very difficult to accept or implement inclusive education with our general lack of tolerance and interest in accepting difference in South Africa. Before, if you are disabled or if you have a learning barrier, you were useless, there is nothing that you can do; you don't think as others do, you don't have any skills, you can't work. There is nothing that I can do to help you. It was OK that they just sit at home not doing anything because that was just the way they are, because of the stigma from the community. If you get a child who is disabled, even the parent of that child, says that child is a curse. It's something that goes a long way back.

Some participants reported being impressed with inclusive education and WP6 from the outset. The main reasoning behind this positive attitude related to attitudes towards disability and how disabled children have been treated in the past, as the following quotations portray.

My sister's child is deaf and dumb. She attended school but encountered difficulties… We decided to take her from school and she remains at home. We were not aware of inclusion and its strategies.

It hurt me that children with disabilities were kept at home. They are also human beings, still capable of doing things.

Government's intention is clear – to be more responsive to learners whose needs had not been met in the past. Inclusion is a good thing.

It seems that participants who had had some direct personal experience with disability and the effects of exclusion, were more accepting of inclusive education than participants who had not been exposed to disability and exclusion. These findings point to the negative and alienating impact that segregation has on people in general. When people are separated and isolated from those who are different in one way or another, this provides a seedbed for mistrust, misconceptions, intolerance, prejudice and discrimination to grow and develop. As participants were exposed to more information on inclusive education, general consciousness was raised and eyes were opened with regard to the benefits of inclusion; attitudes began to change, thus feeding the hope of transformation.

- *The hope of transformation: opening our eyes*

The development of a more positive attitude is attributed to factors such as the realisation that: inclusive education was not only about the inclusion of disabled learners; inclusive education involved catering for all learners' diverse needs; factors other than the learners themselves may have been responsible for creating barriers to learning, participation and development; an attitude change towards learners 'differentness' is necessary – there is a need to treat every learner without discrimination; and the project workshops play an intrinsic role in facilitating this attitude change. The following quotation highlights this.

It became clear when our school was chosen as a pilot school for inclusive education and we began training workshops, that inclusive education does not have to do with the inclusion of disabled children only, but entails far more than that. Inclusive education workshops opened my eyes to the fact that learners who do not learn are not always the cause of that, but the teachers, the school curriculum, text books being used, methods

used and other barriers can be the cause of learners failing to learn – all these factors
need to be investigated before labelling a learner a failure. The workshops highlighted that
all learners in our classrooms need varying levels of support, and as teachers we must be
able to offer them the support they need.

Participants reported undergoing an attitude change and a raising of consciousness, which was reflected in their realisation that all children must learn, and all learners must be accepted and treated equally, without discrimination, stigmatisation or marginalisation on the basis of difference. This change in attitude is reflected in the following quotation and photograph (Image 4.12).

 Now, our eyes are opened and we are now interested in it. Even if the learner is disabled,
we just take him or her - the same as those who are normal. I came to realise that
inclusive education is not a monster, but here to help our community.
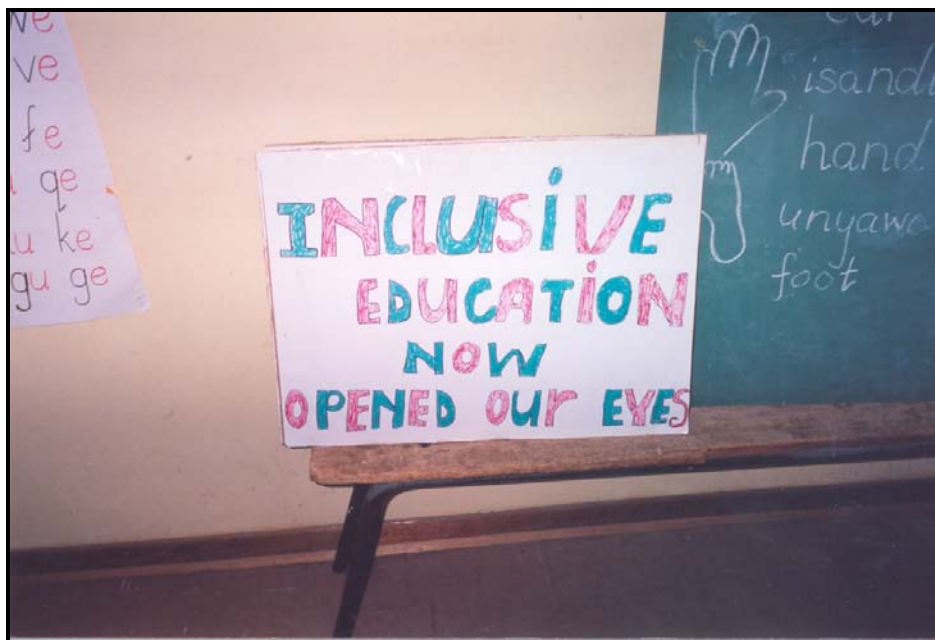
Image 4.12.   Teacher photograph – inclusive education now opened our eyes

Participants reported that, with more information on the notion of inclusion in schools, they had become more familiar with the concept, and the more familiar they became with this new ideology,

the more they became accepting of it and open to implementing it in their schools and classrooms. This leads to the deduction that, with dissemination of the relevant information, and ongoing training and support, there is hope that teachers will move towards becoming inclusive practitioners. This deduction is reflected in the following quotation.

> *When time passes, the people change their mind. After they get more information about how they are going to deal with the demands this new thing places on us. And so with this inclusive education, we learn to adapt what we know and think.*

When considering future professional development and growth, the following narrative excerpts reflect some participants' positive attitudes:

> *It's a teacher's responsibility to grow professionally - teachers' development is an ongoing process.*

> *I am so positive about and interested in inclusive education, that I have enrolled myself in an ACE (Advanced Certificate in Education) course in Special Needs Education through the University of Pretoria.*

There is no unanimous response to the introduction of inclusive education on the part of teachers and participants. A better understanding of each participant's response to this new policy initiative is gained from taking the time to examine their specific individual contexts. Inclusive education is interpreted in different ways by individual participants and poses slightly different challenges to each of the participants, resulting in micro-territories of voices and a plurality of meanings. Despite the overall trend towards accepting the rightness of inclusion and inclusive education, it is important to take heed of the reasons for teachers' initial negative attitudes, as these serve to highlight possible obstacles and barriers which face teachers in their journeys of transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners.

4.2.3. Redefining teaching – a fundamental dislocation with the past

The task for inclusive teachers is to disrupt the authority of everyday practices in the interests of adopting a more inclusive pedagogy. These everyday practices are deeply embedded in the fundamental value systems which have formed the very fabric of teachers' lives, both personally and professionally. An awareness of this deep culture (Clough and Corbett, 2000) leads to considering the politics of the personal in the call to redefine teaching, wherein teachers' subjectivities and historical experiences of everyday life and teaching become the site of redefinition of exclusionary meanings and values, and of resistance to them. This shift and transformation represents a fundamental dislocation with the past (Mattson and Harley, 2001) and a breaking from the old traditional principles, understandings and ways of being. It is natural that many teachers experience difficulties in reconciling the ideological contradictions and tensions which emerge between the old and familiar, and the new and unfamiliar. There is evidence that moments of inclusion emerge in this space of transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners.

This site of redefinition is very often experienced by teachers as a marginalised space, a murky terrain (Harley and Parker, 1999), which is fraught with the contradictions and disassociations inherent with transition between two different ways of being, and feeling caught between two opposing social forces. Participants' narrative moments reflect the varied manifestations, effects and outworkings in the attitudes and practices of teachers in transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners, showing that there are seldom simple understandings and implementations of inclusion in its pure and ideal sense, but rather fragmented, distorted and contaminated practices - moments of inclusion existing side by side with moments of exclusion. These findings are reminiscent of those from a small-scale ethnographic study of two inner-city classrooms in England, wherein processes of inclusion and exclusion were examined and found to be complex processes, re-negotiated moment by moment, revealing moments of inclusion and exclusion (Benjamin, Nind, Hall, Collins and Sheehy, 2008). The path of transition towards inclusion does not appear as a linear, one-dimensional movement from exclusion towards inclusion, but instead is multi-dimensional.

- *Extending traditional teaching roles*

Participants' narrative excerpts reflected their experiences of how their traditional boundaries and roles as teachers were challenged, due to extended expectations of what teachers should be in relation to becoming inclusive practitioners who have to cater for a diversity of learners' needs. They expressed experiencing frustration with always having to adapt themselves to new policies, as the following quotations reflect.

> *I'm frustrated as a teacher because there are a lot of things that are changing, so quickly in education and there are a lot of things to do to accommodate the new system in a very short time. It seemed we are always having to adapt ourselves. There is a transformation in such a way that sometimes we feel that we are getting lost somewhere, somehow as teachers.*

> *Even the idea of inclusion itself is sometimes challenging. You have to shift focuses from the way we have been thinking before and adapt ourselves to a new system of accepting, thinking and doing things. We as teachers have had to learn to love the learners, to be patient, to accept and appreciate, to give, to respect, to understand their feelings, to solve their problems, to treat each individual according to their abilities, to think about other people.*

Participants also expressed experiencing feelings of fear and anxiety and a lack of confidence in their skills and abilities to cope with implementing inclusive education effectively. This is reflected in the following quotations.

> *I was fearful and anxious about am I going to be able to make it? It was very difficult because I sometimes did not understand. I was lost. I did not even know where to start.*

> *This makes me to lose confidence in myself sometimes. I feel not good enough, not skilled enough to deal with these children who have barriers to learning. We were not trained to teach learners with different difficulties.*

It is a very natural human response that teachers question their ability to cope and succeed with the change and growth necessary in becoming inclusive practitioners. It is perhaps the first step in reflection that requires teachers to hold in their mind an understanding of how traditional teaching roles are extended in the context of inclusion, and also to begin to measure their own personal and professional skills and abilities against the requirements of change.

From the following narrative excerpt, it is clear that participants perceived themselves as needing to become more accepting of diversity and to adapt and extend the curriculum to accommodate learners' differing learning needs.

> *As an inclusive teacher, I must try by all means to accommodate learners according to their level of development, and try to remove all the barriers that might be there so that every child can learn. Sometimes the learners are very weak – when you try and teach them something, you see that you cannot help them.*

The following drawing (Image 4.13) reflects this participants' awareness that she needed constantly to adapt and extend herself and her knowledge, by accessing more information on how to cater effectively for the different needs of diverse learners in her classroom. She stated in her drawing that she wished to associate herself with an eagle so that she could go out and look for information from other sources which she could then share with her colleagues, with the intention of making a better school.
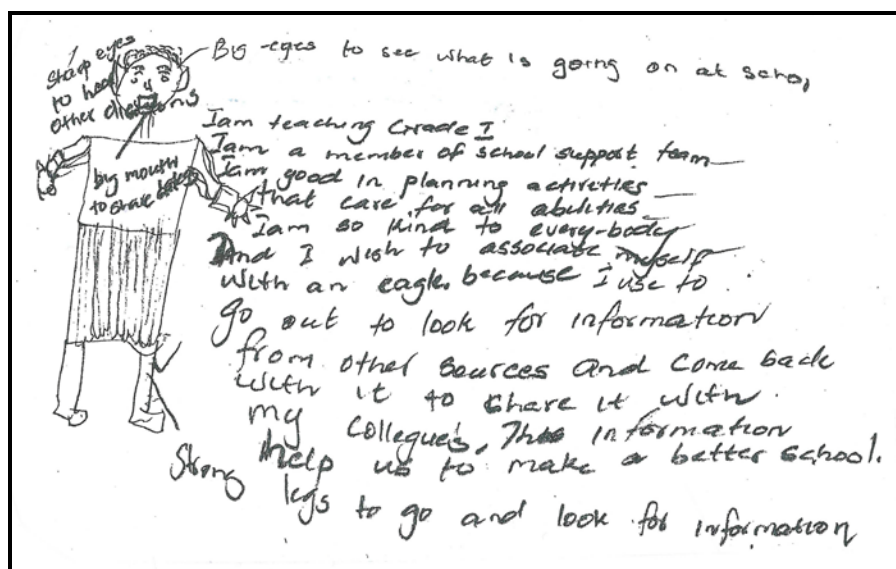
Image 4.13.   Teacher drawing - the qualities a good inclusive teacher needs

Participants reported that having their awareness raised of the diverse needs of learners encouraged them to be more observant with regard to identifying barriers to learning in their classrooms, as the following quotation illustrates.

> *Inclusion has made us more observant, more aware to look for barriers and then do something about them. For example, if a learner can't see what is on the board, we must change that learner's position and move forward, so that they can see.*

The following quotations reflect participants' new-found tolerance and change in attitude towards learners with disabilities and HIV / AIDS.

> *I accept these learners who are disabled by giving them education as normal learners, and to support learners who have HIV and AIDS.*

> *Inclusion influenced me more positively. This inclusion promotes my spirit of caring and teaches me not to discriminate. I also learned to accept them according to their level and also to prepare the lesson according to their level. It also teaches me to be patient and helpful.*

> *I also prepare different notes for these learners and also I'm assessing them differently. I've learned to teach them according to their level. Previously I just taught them according to one lesson.*

> *Inclusive education made me realize that I have to treat my children in the class all the same without discriminating. Those that have barriers we do not have to discriminate them anymore. When I get into the class, I bear in mind that children have barriers from time to time because of some problems – everybody has these. It helped me realize that people are born differently, and also made me realize that people perceive information differently, at different levels. I am a much better teacher now. That is why I want to know more about inclusive education, as to how to give my children the correct work for their needs.*

The following image (Image 4.14) depicts a teacher introducing the notion of inclusion and inclusive education to the learners in her mainstream classroom. Participants reported that they discussed this issue with their learners, with the intention of encouraging an attitude of tolerance and acceptance among mainstream learners towards learners with disabilities and other barriers to learning.

Image 4.14.   Teacher photograph – introducing the notion of inclusion and one school for all

The following quotations reflect participants' reflections on how they have been encouraged to change their attitudes and teaching practices in order to be more in line with inclusive principles.

Inclusion influenced me more positively. This inclusion promotes my spirit of caring and teaches me not to discriminate. I also learned to accept them according to their level and also to prepare the lesson according to their level. It also teaches me to be patient and helpful.

Inclusion taught me to accept that there are slow learners and active learners, and I need to work with them together.

I also prepare different notes for these learners and I'm also assessing them differently. I've learned to teach them according to their level. Previously I just taught them according to one lesson.

Inclusive education made me realize that I have to treat my children in the class all the same without discriminating. Those that have barriers we do not have to discriminate them anymore. When I get into the class, I bear in mind that children have barriers from time to time because of some problems – everybody has these. It helped me realize that people are born differently, and also made me realize that people perceive information differently, at different levels. I am a much better teacher now. That is why I want to know more about inclusive education, as to how to give my children the correct work for their needs.

The following quotation portrays participants' realization that consideration should be given to school environments and buildings, as they also need to be adjusted to cater for the individual needs of all learners, especially those with physical disabilities.

It is very important to see that buildings of the school must accommodate all learners of the school, including those with physical disabilities.

The following images (Images 4.16 and 4.16) portray participants' awareness of both the need for the school environment and buildings to cater for learners with physical disabilities, and the need for other learners to be encouraged and developed to be more accepting of learners with physical disabilities, instead of discriminating against them and excluding them from social and sporting activities.
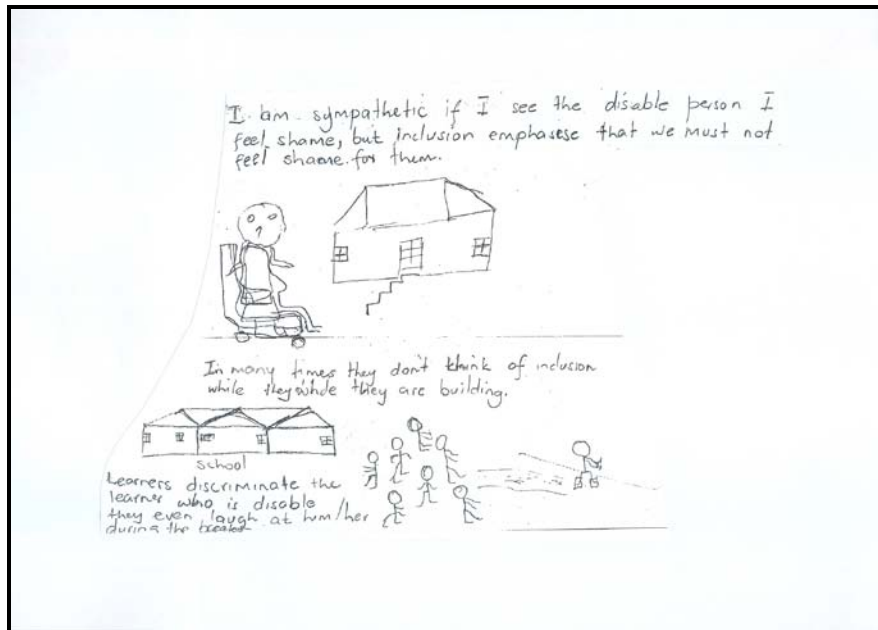
Image 4.15.   Teacher drawing – exclusive buildings and attitudes present as barriers to learning

Image 4.16.   Teacher drawing – learners discriminating against and excluding a learner with one arm from playing netball with them
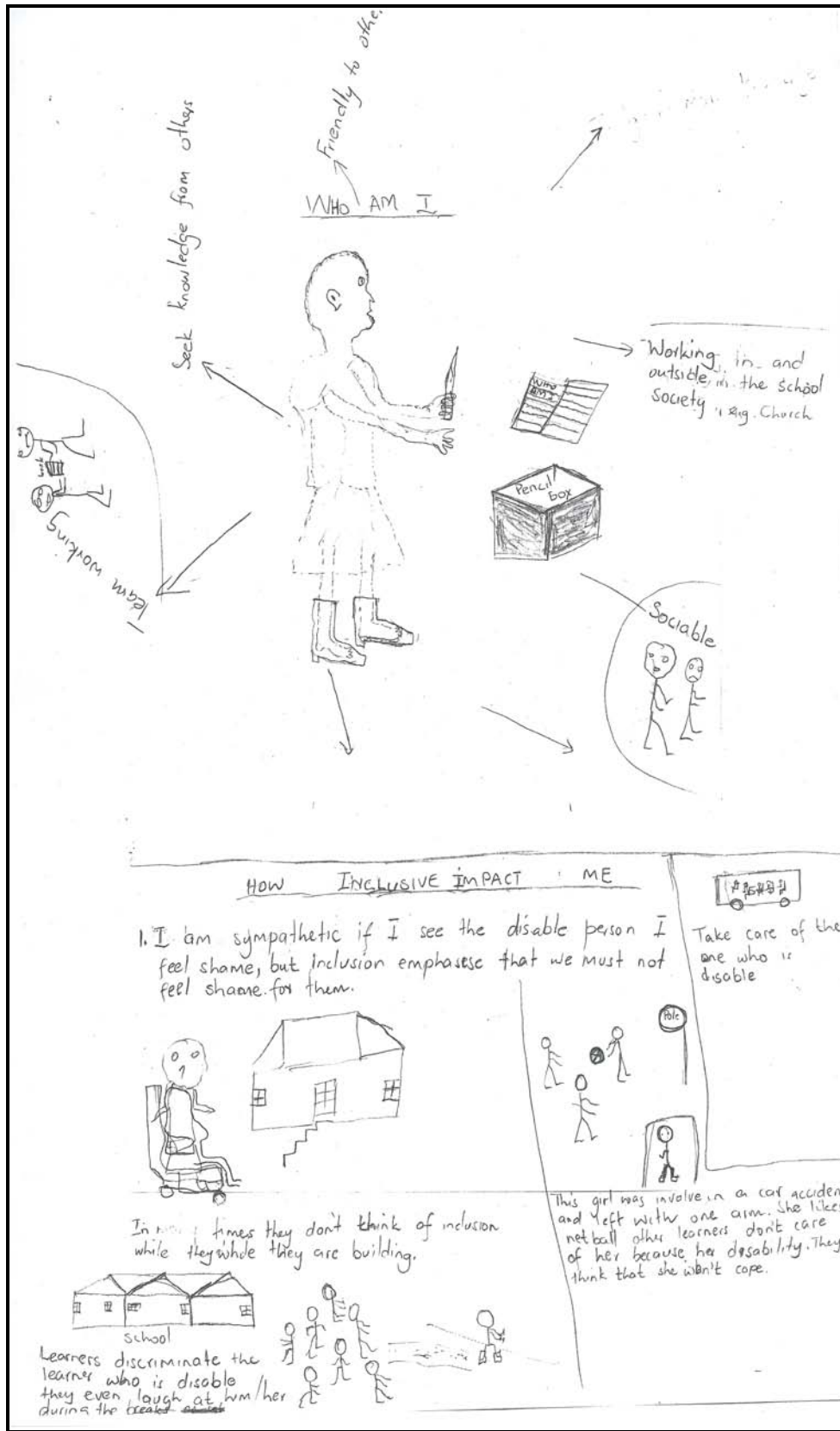
Image 4.15/16.   The bigger teacher drawing

The following image (Image 4.17) portrays a learner in a wheelchair as integrated into a mainstream classroom, equally participating in the teaching and learning process with able-bodied learners. The image is also intended to portray the importance of creating, encouraging and nurturing a classroom environment and culture that accepts all learners as an integral part of the classroom community, which extends a feeling of belonging to all learners, regardless of their differences.

Image 4.17.   Teacher photograph – one classroom for all

The awareness that traditional teaching roles needed to be extended to encompass the new roles required of inclusive practitioners, was based firmly on the growing realisation of the heart-beat of inclusion – the need to include those learners who had previously been excluded due to difference of one sort or another.

- *Including the previously excluded*

Participants reflected on being part of a process where those learners who were previously excluded from mainstream schools, due to disabilities of one sort or another, could be included. Their narrative excerpts made references to how they were experiencing growth and development

as teachers. Participants also highlighted their increased awareness of some of the challenges and barriers faced by learners who had been previously excluded. These reflections are portrayed in the following quotations and photographs (Images 4.18, 4.19, 4.20, 4.21 and 4.22).

My heart has got an attitude that has totally changed towards the physically challenged. I now take them as normal people and not to over-emphasize their physical disability.

I see people who are physically challenged as people with a brighter future now, as any other people who have a vision, to dream, rather than somebody who needs provision from others always.

I believe that all learners have a right to learn and that it is up to us to do this the right way, irrespective of gender and other differences, after being involved in that project. I believe that all learners, whether they are disabled or not, should have equal access to a good education.

I didn't always have this way of thinking. I developed it through attending inclusive workshops. I have drawn a house and this house has the steps. And my disabled child here is in the wheelchair. She is not able to go in the house because of these steps. I have put this in order to show that we can accommodate these learners. I'm having a child who is disabled so I have the experience of this, but learning about inclusion has just opened my mind. She is at this school now. What I have discovered is that it is much better to have this child at a mainstream school, because at a specialist school, they feel isolated. They also get encouraged to do as the able learners can do. She couldn't write her name, but within a month of being at this school, she could write her name. She has improved so much since she has been here, even in her appearance.

We had a learner last year who came from [name of school] Special School and we managed to work with her because of this inclusive education. This teaches me that any child can learn on her or his own pace. Sometimes if we had slow and active learners, and we encountered some problems, we used to think of sending them outside the system,

which is wrong. Before we used to just say "This child cannot cope" but because of inclusion, I now know that is not true. After getting information from this project on inclusive education, it has assisted us to see how we can offer support to that child and help that learner to cope.

Before, we used to discriminate the ones who were disabled, the ones who have got a certain disability, and we would let the able-bodied ones participate in sport, and these ones they just sit and are spectators. They would be taken as kind of useless when it comes to sport, that they couldn't do anything. But now with inclusion, we see that they can take part. Now they are included and their self-esteem has been boosted because they see that now they can do it.

Image 4.18.   Teacher photograph – including learners with disabilities in sporting activities

As an important part of including previously excluded learners, teachers reported on the importance of adjusting the physical environment to accommodate and include these learners, as the following quotations and photographs portray.

This is before inclusion. We had steps and it was not easy for disabled learners to walk on the steps. Now have done away with the steps and we have the ramp.
We also got now a toilet for those people who are disabled, because it is not easy for them to use the same toilet the normal children.

Image 4.19.   Teacher photograph – steps pose barriers to learners with physical disabilities

Image 4.20.   Teacher photograph – building ramps ensure equal physical access and inclusion of learners with physical disabilities

We have the rails so that everyone can walk around properly.

Some leisure games are exclusive because if you are on a wheelchair, how can you get up there? So you need to just sit and watch those ones enjoying being up there. You can't even get into the swing. They are not participating. There is no recreation for them. But now it has changed. Our jungle-gym has been accommodated. You can see that you can just put your wheelchair near the swing and just get in. They can even get onto the jungle-gym structure by kneeling. Everyone can be here and they do, as you can see there are some crutches lying on the ground here and their owners are up there. Those who are able help the others.

Image 4.21.   Teacher photograph – the school playground can serve to exclude some
learners

*Even if you are on the wheelchair, there is a plan made for you so that you can wash your
hands as well as the others.*

Image 4.22.   Teacher photograph – adapting the environment to allow learners with disabilities
to wash their hands

Issues relating to access and admissions emerged as important in participants' reflections on their experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners, as the following significant narrative moments illustrate:

> *This is the admissions committee. We want to admit all learners who apply to the school but we cannot take those learners whom we cannot help. We look at the need of each child and we decide if we can or cannot help them at the school, depending on the skills of the staff. We cannot help those learners who are blind or those that cannot talk, because we don't have the staff who can deal with that and help that child properly. It's not because we don't want those children. It's because we cannot help them. We will need to be developed in these areas first.*

> *In the hostel, we cannot take these severe ones who cannot do anything for themselves, because of the shortage of staff. The house mothers are struggling with the ones we have in the hostels right now. We have ones who need to be washed, who need to be dressed, everything must be done for them. If the department can employ more staff in the hostels, we can take more severely handicapped children into the school.*

While transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners necessarily begins with raising teachers' consciousness about the negative effects of exclusion, and encouraging a change in their attitudes towards accepting the rightness and benefits of including those learners previously excluded, transition needs also to engage with a deeper professional understanding of how to cater for the diverse learning needs of all learners. While schools and classrooms may open their doors to learners who have been previously excluded, extending this access does not, in and of itself, guarantee learners equal opportunities. A deep understanding needs to be fostered in teachers, that integration itself does not constitute inclusion, that continuing business as usual and adopting a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching all learners, amounts to merely the rhetoric of extending equal opportunities, but may very well fall short of true inclusion.

- *Catering for diversity within the classroom*

The issue of catering for diversity in the classroom was interpreted and reported by one participant as removing gender bias from how the various classroom chores and duties were divided amongst learners. Traditionally, duties have been rigidly divided between boys and girls according to stereotypes, socialised messages and expectations of children on the basis of gender discrimination – girls engaged in cleaning and cooking, boys engaged more in outdoor activities and chores. The following drawing (Image 4.23) portrays this teacher's interpretation of catering for gender diversity in the classroom.
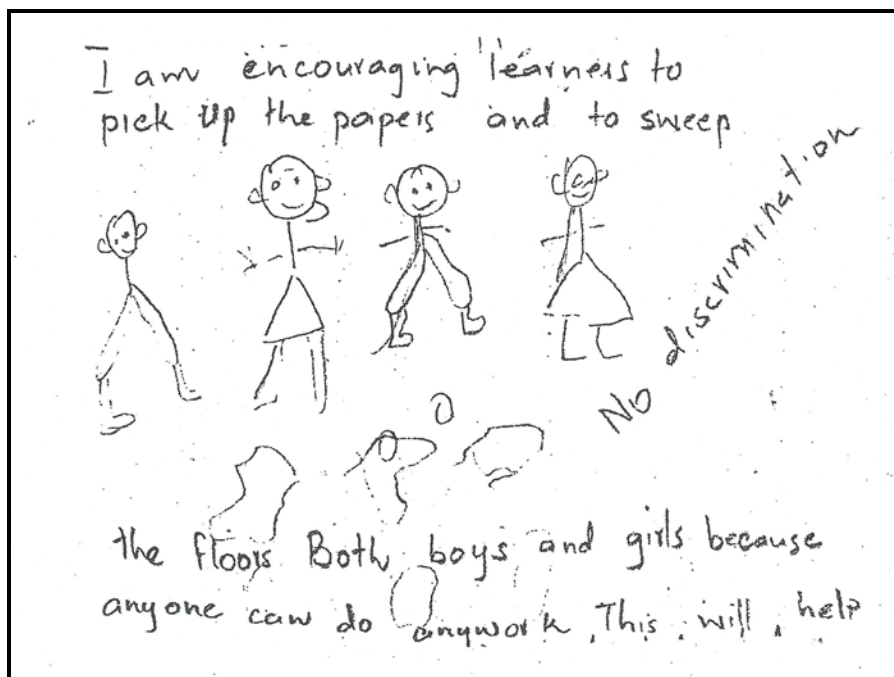
Image 4.23.   Teacher drawing – both girls and boys pick up papers and sweep the floors

The following excerpts are narrative moments in teachers' experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners which reflect differentiation within lessons in order to cater for individual learners' needs.

Differentiation according to the physical ability/disability depends on the activity. If you need them to draw and there is someone who can't draw, then you draw for that person or make a copy for those that can't draw. But we don't just say these ones can't draw. They

need to try and have that confidence about how it's done. We have those that use the computers because they can't use their hands, so they do it on the computer. Even in maths and geometry, you need to measure and draw a lot. They have to have an idea how it's done and you can't expect them to be perfect. As long as they have an idea how squares and all these shapes are drawn and how to measure. They use their hands to show us – even if it's crooked, you can see that this is a square – it's not a round. Then we can see that they've got an idea, then they can do it on the computer. Even if they measure angles, even if it's crooked, you can see that they are wanting to show it's a 90 degree angle.

Some of them they can't read but they do understand. They've got the intellect but they can't read. And we've got to be there every time if there is something that needs to be read. We have to also adjust the pace according to the learners' needs in the classroom. There are those that are easy to catch up and those that are slower, so we have to work with both groups. We accommodate them all. We give this one group work while we are going to attend those who are slower learners – to explain to them carefully.

Sometimes they are not good in all learning areas, but good at some.
The learners who cannot do it in the classroom, they are doing the skills. There is brick-making, cooking, baking, weaving, fence-making, gardening. We do what we have according to our resources.

While all participants no doubt considered themselves to be inclusive practitioners, only a few of them showed deeper reflection on what catering for diversity in the classroom entails, and on how integration of previously excluded learners needs to be extended to encompass the moral vision of inclusion. An important foundational understanding of this moral vision is a sensitivity to the negative, excluding effects of labelling and discrimination.

- *Walking away from labelling and discrimination*

The following narrative and staged photograph (Image 4.24) reflect how teachers were used to labelling and discriminating against learners on the basis on differences, and how many believe

their attitudes towards these learners are transforming, since being introduced to inclusion and committing to becoming inclusive practitioners.

Before, I used to label children. The teachers who taught us, were used in labeling us. Inclusion taught us that labeling is not a good thing, because it makes the learners feel ashamed of themselves. When you are in the classroom, you begin to see that this one is clever and this one is "dom" [an Afrikaans word meaning 'dumb' or 'stupid'] *– we used this kind of words. And you forget about those ones that are struggling and concentrate only on those ones that are sharp.*

So now, we realize that maybe that one that was not clever, maybe it was because they were struggling We didn't take the time or care enough to ask about the background and all that. Now we are interested to know about the background of the learners so that we can see that he or she has got a problem.

Before, we would shout at the child in front of the class. We didn't have the idea that we were not respecting the child's feelings. But now we understand there must be some kind of privacy. We were ignorant. Now we realise that we need to give that child individual attention, so that maybe we can find out what the particular problem is that he or she is having.

Image 4.24.   Teacher photograph – shouting at a learner in front of the class
                   (a staged photograph)

We don't give enough time to understand our learners. Sometimes we judge the children because they cannot concentrate in the classroom. We just think straight away that he is lazy. Instead of trying to get the cause we just fight with them. Then they feel afraid of us and they cannot come and open up as to what is wrong, the problem they have.

However, as reflected in the following quotation, there are still situations with teachers in some schools, where it is evident that a clear, deep, meaningful understanding and implementation of inclusion and inclusive principles was lacking. From the following narrative excerpt, it is clear that some teachers all too readily fell back on the traditional deep culture of exclusion. (I have removed the name of the learner and have not included the photograph which participants took of the learner, for ethical reasons).

This is [learner X]. *Since he was born he had no anus. For excretion, he's using a 'bag'. I've got that problem with him because when that 'bag' is full I'm supposed to send him home because I can't…. I'm afraid even to see that problem. He's excellent academically. The problem's only that 'bag'. He should be at that special school. There are teachers there who are trained and used to helping children in this way. But not here.*

- *The end of corporal punishment - throwing away the stick*

The systematic use of corporal punishment in society can be historically associated with both authoritarian and non-democratic societies in which citizens are not prepared for civic participation, but rather for simple obedience to a central authority. Such authoritarian systems rest on the philosophy that most individuals in society are not capable of critical thinking and self-discipline, and must be closely controlled by those in power through physical punishment. The systematic use of corporal punishment is directly tied to the maintenance of unequal power relations, whereby the majority of people are taught to fear the consequences of disobedience rather than think for themselves.

While a sensitivity to the negative, excluding effects of labelling and discrimination is an important foundational understanding of the vision of inclusion and inclusive education, reflecting and

critically reviewing the effects of corporal punishment is perhaps one of the most basic issues which must be included in such an understanding.

Some teachers' narrative excerpts showed a reflection of the use of corporal punishment in classrooms as contradicting the inclusive principles necessary for building democratic communities and nations, and highlighted the diminishing role of corporal punishment in their experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners, as is evident in the following quotations and photograph (Image 4.25).

Before inclusive I was using a stick to discipline the learners. Most of the time they were crying because of the stick. The teachers who taught me they were using the stick. It seems as if we inherited this from them. It was just like that in my head - the learner can learn if the teacher is having a stick in her hand.

Image 4.25.   Teacher photograph – the traditional use of corporal punishment among teachers (a staged photograph)

I'm no more using a stick as a teaching aid now. Now I've learned that this is not right. I try other ways to discipline the learners without using the stick. I'm now happy with the

learners, talking with them. As we see them they are now laughing. Inclusion make me change because I learnt that the stick won't educate a child. What can educate a child is the teacher.

In the following teacher's drawing (Image 4.26), the participant depicts herself as a *harmless lady because of the inclusive education,* due to the fact that she is *no more using a stick as a teaching aid* and does not label learners as she did before. She sees inclusive education as responsible for having *developed that love of children* in her, so that now she *treats learners the same as inclusive education says.*
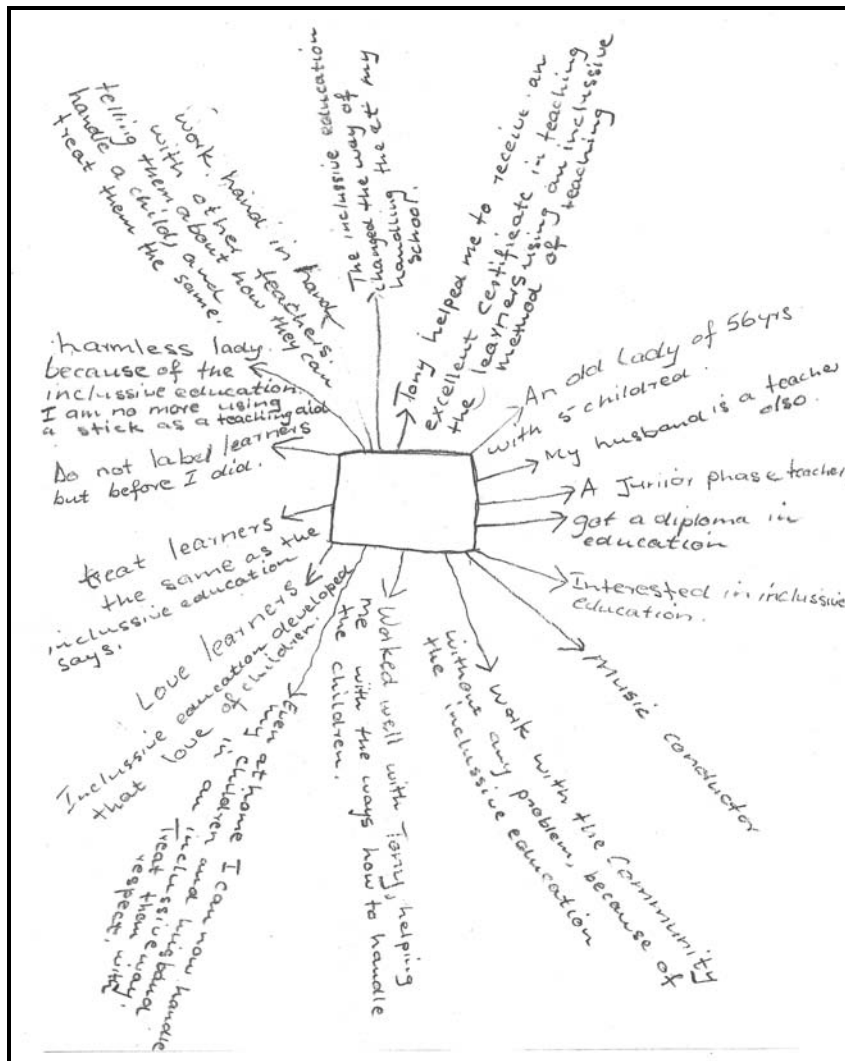
Image 4.26.   Teacher drawing – *harmless lady because of the inclusive education*

Despite the fact that the South African Schools Act of 1996 abolished corporal punishment in schools, rendering teachers who use corporal punishment liable for criminal prosecution, corporal punishment is still practised in schools and a large number of South African teachers still see corporal punishment as a necessary tool for correction of misbehaviour. A few participants were honest in their defence of the continued use of corporal punishment in their classrooms, as is illustrated by the following quotation.

> *Because of the home backgrounds our learners come from, many teachers feel that we cannot do without corporal punishment. It worked for us when we were at school, and it works for our learners now. The parents also request that we use corporal punishment. We know it is not allowed but we will continue to use it. It is part of who we are.*

An understanding of the moral vision of inclusion would necessarily entail the reconsideration of the traditional use of corporal punishment, as it is clearly tied to the maintenance of unequal power relations in the classroom, which inevitably results in the exclusion of some learners from the opportunity to participate in a full and meaningful way in their own learning, and in classroom activities in general. The moral vision of inclusion encourages building a culture of sharing and collaboration within the classroom between learners and teachers, and extends this principle to the whole school culture, where shared power and decision-making practices and collaboration are encouraged between teachers, school management and leadership.

- *Building a culture of sharing and collaboration*

Participants' reflections on further experiences of becoming inclusive highlighted their efforts to implement inclusion beyond the classroom, such as collaboration between staff, and equal sharing of responsibilities and duties between male and female staff. This is illustrated in the following quotations and photographs (Images 4.27, 4.28 and 4.29).

> *Before inclusion, we didn't use to work hand in hand with other teachers. We were not used in coming together to discuss things. Previously we used to take a decision on your own, but now with inclusive we are encouraged to come together, to discuss a certain problem and the barriers of the learners, and then take a joint decision about this child. But*

previously you just take a decision on your own. You just inform the principal and that's it. This is a better way of doing things now, because you get different points of view from different people. Maybe you will realise that the decision you would have taken as an individual is not the right one.

Now that we are inclusive, everybody is involved in taking care of the child. They are repairing wheelchairs here, not that it is their duty to repair wheelchairs, but they are taking part in it because they see the need that this child needs the wheelchair and it is important that they are in a good condition.

Image 4.27.   Teacher photograph – everybody is involved in repairing the wheelchairs

If there's a need, you drive the tractor. You can't wait for the labourer men to come and help. If there's a shortage of maintenance staff, the teachers, no matter what gender, just do the job the needs to be done. Everyone who sees the need now just does what needs to be done.

Image 4.28.   Teacher photograph – a female teacher driving the tractor

*Everybody now cooks and helps out in the hostel, even if it is just stirring the pot. This
includes the teachers. It has not always been like this. The cooks cooked and they were
always women. Now everybody can cook, men and women, teachers and hostel staff. We
share these duties.*

Image 4.29.   Teacher photograph – a male teacher cooking food in the hostel

Participants also reflected on examples and situations of continued exclusion, such as segregation between the professional and non-professional staff in schools: as is illustrated in the following quotation.

> *Now after inclusion, we are quite aware of this issue of power. Here at our school, those who are the professional staff (the teachers, the admin people and the medical staff) they meet everyday and pray in the staffroom, but the other ones (the cleaners, the class-aids, the maintenance staff) they don't pray in the mornings. They are not even invited to join because they have to work while we pray. This is saying, in a way, that we are better, we need to pray to God every day and they don't need God because they are not doing a great work. Because we know about inclusion, its easy for us to see that this is not inclusive. It is exclusive. It is just part of the system at the school. So, even though we know and we are aware of inclusion, we are still doing some exclusive things.*

Transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners involves redefining traditional understandings of teaching and the role of the teacher. These include attitude changes to open the doors of classrooms and schools to those learners who were previously excluded due to traditional and exclusive responses to difference, and revising the power relations and discriminatory practices that exist within traditional classrooms. Traditional school and classroom practices are often contrary to those which are aligned with an inclusive vision of education. Transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners therefore necessitates a break from the old traditional exclusive principles, understandings and ways of being in relation to classroom and school cultures, and power relations.

4.2.4. Developing an alternative sense of self

It has already been discussed in previous chapters of this thesis that the profound and meaningful pedagogical transformation involved in producing inclusive practitioners, involves not only redefining teaching, but also seriously challenges the prevailing system of social relations. Not only do such fundamental changes require teachers to adjust and change their attitudes towards difference among learners and their classroom practices to accommodate this diversity, but also

require teachers to deal with how such fundamental changes challenge their own personal values and beliefs, and those of their communities. Embracing inclusion and inclusive education necessarily pivots on the issue of identity or teachers' sense of self, and involves understanding how individuals' identities were defined for them historically, and how they might be redefined and renegotiated in the light of inclusion (Engelbrecht, et al. 1999).

The ability of teachers to change their historical position, make changes in the social arena and develop an alternative sense of self, largely depends on individuals' capacity for reflexivity and transformative capacity (Giddens, 1984) to challenge the social structures which shape attitude, behaviour and identity. Central to the findings of this research are the various sites of contradiction, tension and constraint which comprise the force field of competing and converging influences in participants' everyday life experiences.

This section reflects narrative moments of teachers' personal sense of self and how they are experiencing redefinition and transformation in this area amidst the tensions which abound.

The following drawing (Image 4.30) reflects the various aspects of this participant's life which make up her overall sense of self and identity. It clearly depicts the multiplicity of any one teacher's everyday reality of life and self, and the interrelationships between each individual aspect. This drawing reinforces the realisation that individual teachers cannot be viewed and understood realistically without taking into consideration the whole person, within the multiplicity of specific contextual realities and experiences.
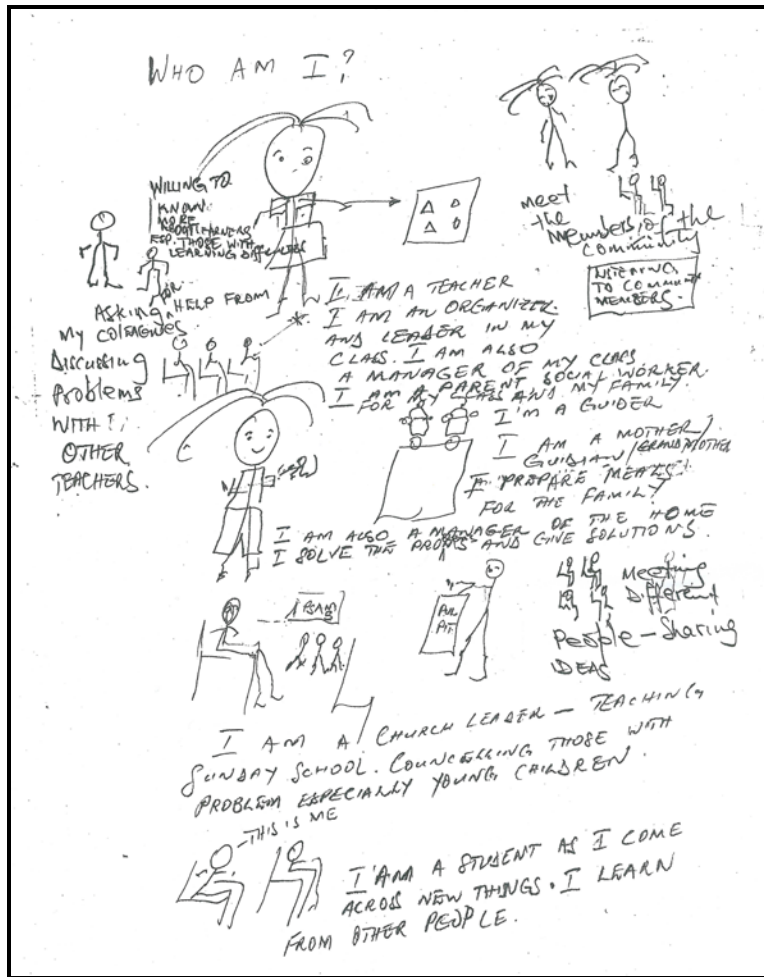
Image 4.30.   Teacher drawing – the multiplicity of identity

- *Transforming our curriculum - transforming ourselves*

The above drawing highlights the complexity and multiplicity of teachers' individual realities and experiences. One aspect of an individual's sense of self cannot be viewed and understood in isolation from the bigger picture, as all aspects are interrelated. The specific link between the challenge of transforming the curriculum and transforming teachers as individuals, is a large focus of this research. This section foregrounds the findings from this research which highlight the extent to which teachers' professional and personal sense of self are linked and have an impact on one another. The following quotations reflect the ways in which curriculum transformation, in particular transformation towards inclusion and inclusive education, has impacted on teachers as people, and portray the importance of teachers' professional identity in relation to their overall sense of self:

Teaching is the most important part of who we are. This is why we think about this first.

The following quotation highlights the extent to which teachers have developed more awareness and tolerance of differences among their learners, but also reveals that such awareness and tolerance has impacted on their personal sense of self.

> *I didn't used to be caring for those who were not coping. I didn't think about these things before. Now I have learned to care about these learners who have barriers to learning. I've learned to treat every learner, and all people, equally and to give support where it is needed. .I feel different as a person now.*

It is clear from the following quotation that this broadened awareness and tolerance of difference, which inclusion has introduced and encouraged in teachers, is having an effect on the way teachers identify, reconcile and come to terms with differences between themselves and others. Embracing inclusion is serving to support this participant towards accepting the ways in which she is different from others and encouraging a healthy self-acceptance on a personal level.

> *Everyone is disabled. I've discovered that I'm disabled. I'm a slow learner. I need to do something over and over. I'm slow in everything, I think. I am told that I inherited that from my grandmother. Inclusive education has helped me to see that there are these differences in us. This is something that we can do nothing about. It's just the way I am, for us to accept. Inclusive education helped me to discover this about myself.*

This teacher reflected on her new-found resilience and belief in her own ability to survive changes and transitions.

> *Inclusion is very challenging as far as teaching and learning is concerned. We need to be dedicated. I see myself now as someone that if I am confronted with a challenge, I say to myself "I can do it." Before, I used to think "I can't go on. I just can't do it."*

The following quotations highlight teachers' reflections on the process of growth, development and transition, specifically with regard to practising a level of self-reflection and reflexivity.

> *I'm always striving to become better at what I do. Then you get to this level and, it's not better any more – you want to do something else, something better than what you have done, and when you get there, better again. You find yourself reading, thinking, debating things, discussing, listening, analysing situations. It's like you never rest.*

> *For me it has become a never-ending journey. There are challenges all the time. The more you see, the more you solve and address things, the new things come up all the time and you wonder if we'll ever achieve this dream of an inclusive society. There are challenges but I think they are good challenges, because they make us think. And you are always monitoring your thoughts, monitoring your actions, having to think before you do. When you find you have done something that is against your social justice principles, you feel very bad about it, but then you tell yourself that next time you are not going to do it this way. You're wanting to contribute to this dream of a just and peaceful society.*

The following drawing (Image 4.31) depicts the participant in his various roles as principal, son, husband, father, student and community member. Surrounding these depictions of his multiple roles, and engulfing, underpinning and criss-crossing all these various aspects of his life, are his reflections about himself, inclusion and the world in which he lives and works. This drawing clearly portrays a deep level of self reflection and reflexivity on the part of the participant, about the interconnectedness between transforming the curriculum towards inclusion and transforming himself towards becoming an inclusive practitioner.

Always striving to become better at what I do. Reading, thinking, debating, discussing, listening, analysing situations, etc.

Never ending journey. Challenges all the time. Will we ever achieve this dream of an inclusive society.

More people coming to you for help; less and less time for self. However, makes my work easier because people are close and are participating

Wanting to change the school into community service centre. Dream people do not understand what this means

Monitoring my thoughts and actions more, always wanting to contribute to a just and peaceful society.

STUDENT

STUDENT

TEACHER/TUTOR

community member

Dad

4 daughters

Mom

Principal

17 Teachers (female)

believe children

Worried about

should include

MOSTLY EDUCATION CONVENTION

my single parent mom

top student

SCHOOL EVALUATION

Sometimes people tell me that I listen too much that I can't filter everything that people say.

My teachers get to it first

Feel restricted by conditions at our school. There are parts of justice or redress we can't bring about because of SES and funds availability.

Image 4.31.   Teacher drawing – self reflections and reflexivity

The following two quotations reveal the internalizing and incorporating of inclusive attitudes into teachers' sense of self, and reveal evidence of teachers becoming change agents in their communities.

I see inclusion as in here [pointing to her heart] *not anymore out there.*

Those who are still looking at things in the old way I try to change their mind and tell them that there are a lot of things that we can do with these learners, and they can also be active in the upliftment of the country – not to look down upon them so much as they did in the past.

It (inclusion) also developed me to work with different people, inside the school and outside the school, I can work with anybody. Because I need to understand how this person is, and then I can adjust myself. But before, it was not easy to work with different people.

The following quotations highlight the issue of gender differences and traditional power inequalities between men and women. They reveal an understanding that inclusion is challenging patriarchal social relations and they reflect the ways in which teachers are attempting to change these in their schools, homes and in the community.

What we did before, a lady could not be a leader. She could not lead. If it happened that a lady was a leader, then it is easy for me just to resist, but not now. The term inclusion means we cannot discriminate. It means we must work together. This term made me to change. It is both a heart and a head decision to change. I've got no prejudice if now I have to work with a lady. I see them as equal to males now.

It happens like this at home: I cannot make a decision which relates to the family on my own. Every time, we sit down and discuss and then we come to a decision. If it happens that I was supposed to make an urgent decision on my own, I have to come back and sit

with my wife and explain that because of this and that I was in the position of having to make a decision without consulting her. When we are working and discussing together, she comes up with good ideas and then, if that is good for us (not for me, but for us) then I take her decision. How I feel is that the family is important, not just the one person that is me. She was lucky because I met her after the IE. She only knows me like this.

I understood that as a boy, there were some jobs that I could not do at home, because those jobs were for the girls and my mother. Like the girls were supposed to cook – not me. But now, I can cook for my family. My wife is working and I'm also working. Sometimes I arrive earlier at home than her, so I cannot sit down and wait for her to prepare and cook for me. I used to prepare the food for myself and start eating, and not wait for her. A woman cannot now do all the things that was taught that she should do, because now the woman is also working.

While narrative excerpts reflect evidence that participants are acquiring a changed attitude towards inclusion, that involves a readiness to engage and a willingness to be flexible in the face of obstacles and barriers, and challenge traditionally exclusive social relations in their schools, homes and community, there is evidence that there were often constraints and tensions which accompanied this new-found transformative capacity. The following quotation highlights the stress and, at times, the sense of alienation that this participant experienced as a consequence of his personal and professional transformation, and alludes to other risks and consequences teachers may face as a direct result of their transformation.

Before it was as if you couldn't see all these problems, but now your eyes are opened and you can see all these problems that other people don't see. And you sometimes think that you are alone. You need to be able to see the big picture, you need to be able to go against the flow sometimes. People don't advise it – going against the flow, because they see what happens to people and to themselves. So you find that it's a situation where you need to prove that what you say works. Also you think that people are going to think you are mad because for them, the situation is normal, and if you try and change it, it becomes abnormal. If you say that something is not just, people say "but this is normal, this is how

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we do things here". So you find yourself denormalising the normalized, and it becomes a problem. It's not always easy to work against the flow. You need to be very strong. Some times the flow could take you away, sometimes it could crush you. But if you win, and you are able to change the flow, however small it is, you feel that you're contributing. But you overstretch yourself too. If people see that I'm inclusive, approachable, willing to help, you find that more and more people are coming to you for help. And there are very few people who allow people to get into their lives like that. And then you find that you have less and less time for yourself. Then you tell yourself "that maybe that's what I am for". Sometimes you feel that people forget that you are just a human being. If you need help it's just like "yes, this person needs help but he's always the person who is always helping us, so sometimes people don't think that there are situations where you need help as well. But also on the positive side, it makes your work easier because people are close to you and you listen to them and you know what they are thinking, and they participate in what you are doing. So you feel at least they understand what you are about here.

Apart from a redefinition of teaching practices, transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners involves deeper levels of transformation – ones that extend to redefining traditional social relations and teachers' personal sense of self. Transforming the curriculum hence extends to transforming teachers on a personal level. Such levels of transformation necessarily uncover various tensions, contradictions and discrepancies between traditional ways of being and understanding the world, and new inclusive ways of being and a revised sense of self in relation to the world.

- *Tensions and contradictions which emerge in the process of teachers becoming inclusive practitioners*

An investigation into participants exercising their transformative capacity (Giddens, 1984) and developing an alternative sense of self, necessarily reveals and sheds light on the daily struggles and the conflicting relations of force which participants experience. Participants' narratives highlight further experiences which comprise the force field of competing and converging influences in participants' everyday life experiences, as they experienced renegotiating their identities in the light of inclusion (Engelbrecht, et al. 1999) towards developing an alternative sense of sense. From the following narrative excerpts, further tensions and multi-dimensions of transition are highlighted,

along with reflections on how participants were responding to this space of disassociation and attempting to navigate a way through the tensions. Transition inherently implies the process of changing from one state or stage to another, and, as mentioned in earlier sections of this thesis, this process is never simple, linear or one-dimensional.

> ➢ *Professional moments*

The following narrative moment of one of the principals in the sample highlights some of the tensions and contradictions within the force field of competing and converging influences, specific to this individual participant. The excerpt also highlights how this participant was responding to these professional influences and attempting to navigate a way through them, towards negotiating and redefining an alternative sense of self.

> *You find that people are always poaching you. When you meet people they will always tell to apply for another position and leave the school. There were a bunch of positions being advertised and I met one of the officials who asked me "Did you apply? You don't belong to the school." For me I have this belief that to be able to bring about this just and peaceful society, I need to be at the school. Because that is for me, where I can make the greatest imprint. I think this has come from the fact that I once moved away from the school and I know what it means, telling people to do things and you turn your back and they don't do it. Whereas if you are at the school you can see it happen immediately. But if you are not at the school everyday, you will find that after three weeks when you come back, people have not even started to implement things. So you get frustrated. So for me, being involved in inclusion has made me think that being at the school is where I want to be. No matter how people think or try to get me to apply for posts because they want me there.*

> ➢ *Gendered moments*

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, the issue of gender emerges as an important force field of competing and converging influences for all participants faced with the challenge of becoming inclusive practitioners. The following quotations reveal individual female participants' experiences of these influences, and highlight the particular ways in which they attempted to renegotiate and redefine their sense of self in the light of these.

As a female, I've learned how to empower myself and I also understand how vulnerable we are. I understand the way we were socialized as females. As a daughter, you are always encouraged to be a good wife. If you wish to challenge it in our communities, it will take decades because that's just the way it is. As a wife, I understand the different roles as wife, for example, how to dress yourself, and how to be always inferior to the husband. My husband – he's a man, so its more my own way of understanding things and thinking about things. There is no use in not being subordinate at home because that's the way it is. If you want to live peacefully, then you have to be subordinate. At home I can't do anything. I've got to be like that. But I've made peace with this because I understand why and how it has come to be like that. So I'm not frustrated by it because I know where it comes from. As a mother, I now allow children to make mistakes and learn from them. I treat every child as an individual with unique abilities and needs.

As an individual female you don't have that power to challenge something that is wrong. It has got everything to do with gender. If you were a man, you would have this power, but now that you are a female, you do not have this power. Sometimes this is very frustrating – you might have something important to say but because you are a woman, you are disregarded. But with a man, everyone will just respect him immediately. I feel powerless in the sense that I'm an individual female against years of tradition. Even though you are free inside, you can't do anything with this. We as women cannot stand up to the system alone.

My children are still very young, but I'm teaching them equality – that if you are a boy that doesn't mean that your sister does all the work in the house – that if you have got to wash the dishes, you both have to wash the dishes / you've got to clean, both of you. So at my home I'm teaching them differently and I'm trying my best to break with the old traditions, but with my community I can't do otherwise.

The following quotations reveal individual male participants' experiences of these influences, and highlight the specific ways in which they attempted to renegotiate and redefine their sense of self in light of these.

> *Things which have been considered manly, like making the decisions and having a voice in community issues, have been challenges to change. As a community leader, I've now placed a woman to be a full participant in the society as opposed to her having to be submissive. It's quite a challenge, especially to the elder generation, bringing in changes to the traditional patriarchal beliefs and practices. It's still difficult to accept although now there are some forces that has made them aware that the woman is more a part in the community, especially women who have to raise children – they are the ones with this responsibility, because the fathers are not here – they are at work. So they've got no choice now that these women must have their word. So now they've come to accept slowly. Gates are now open, but for the older people it is not that easy because of the way they were brought up believing in traditional beliefs. But they have accepted the changes I have brought in and they still respect me because I'm a man. They are obliged to respect me on these grounds. Being a man, you don't have a problem to struggle – it is a privilege.*

> *The way that you relate to your family changes. Remember that your family is structured along patriarchal lines – the culture, it's very skewed. Then once you become interested in inclusion, you forget that you are going to a family that does not know anything about that. You can't say I'm going to be inclusive at school and then go back to being exclusive at home. You can't do that. When you teach people to be inclusive at work you still need to go back to your family and teach them what it means to be inclusive. They have to understand why you are doing things the way you are doing them, otherwise you will have a problem.*

The following drawing (Image 4.32) depicts this participant's sense of self and his reflections on how inclusion and inclusive education has impacted on his various roles and responsibilities. In realising his responsibilities as an inclusive parent, he reflects that he has had to undergo a shift from the prejudices and stereotypes in relation to gender roles and expectations which he was

brought up with and socialized to accept, towards acknowledging the equal rights of all his children and their individual choices, and supporting them towards equal opportunities. Having a strong voice in the community as a community leader, he reflects that becoming an inclusive practitioner challenges him to challenge the status quo. As a community chairperson who is responsible for the development of the community as a whole and individuals within the community, he reflects that he is responsible for empowering people, regardless of their beliefs, disability, race and gender, and makes a special point of how he has revised the way he sees the place of women in society, specifically towards promoting and facilitating their full participation, and opposing the traditional submission of women.
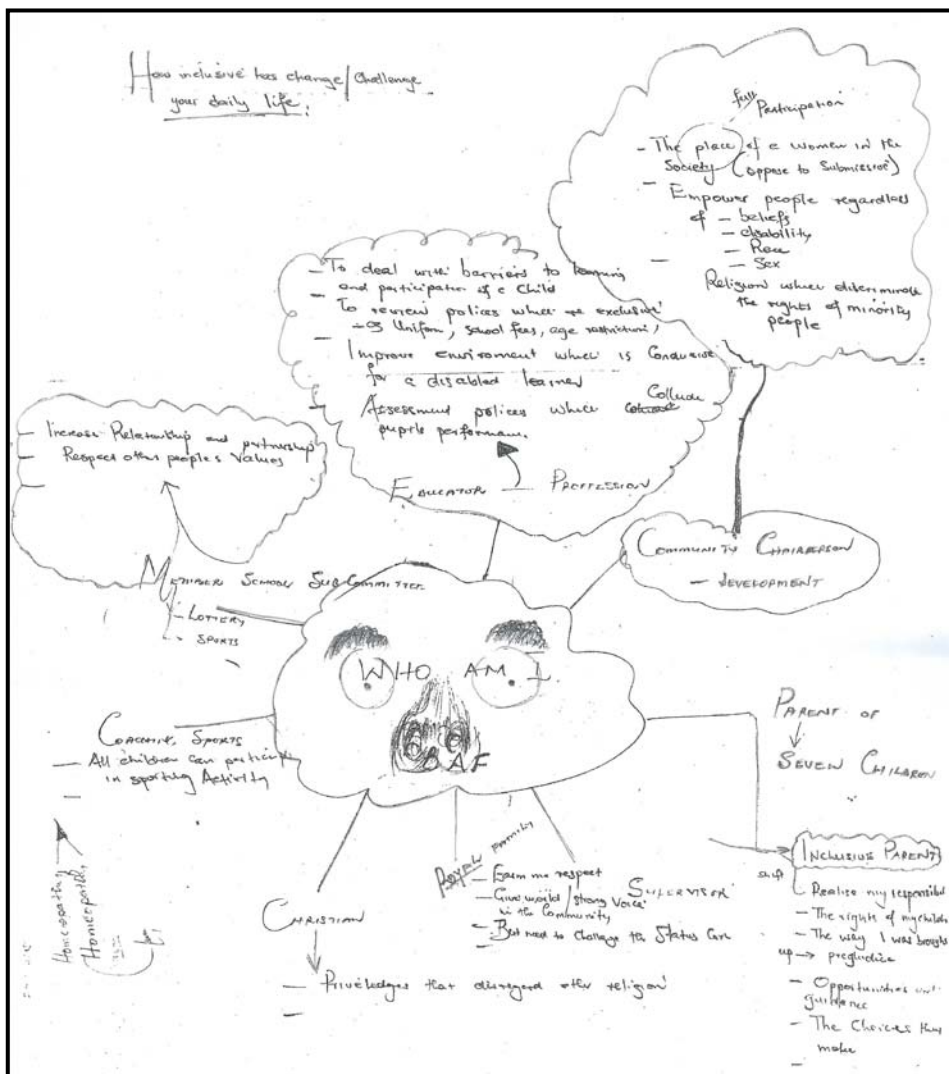
Image 4.32.   Teacher drawing – the place of a woman in the society

> ➢ *Religious moments*

The following quotations highlight competing and converging influences which participants experience within the religious area of their lives, and how individuals are attempting to renegotiate and redefine themselves within these situations.

> *Inclusion helped me to understand and to respect other religions and beliefs. In our small Lutheran community, the people who have all the rights are the land-owners. Other people have no rights whatsoever, so this issue is what we are dealing with at the moment. It came up that the Lutherans bought this land. Whoever occupies this land needs to be Lutheran. If a person is not Lutheran, they won't be involved in the community activities. In the olden days, those people were even taken out of the land. But these days, we accommodate them because we know now that even though they are of different religions they must have a say. These are some of the discrimination issues we are facing in our community here.*

> *In the church, we talk to other members that if we are going to have a child that is having those problems, that they must come out and seek help for that child. Because some of them are not so bad that they can be included in the system, and some of our church members are so shy to talk about these children or family members that they have in their homes. These attitudes of mine sometimes clash with other people in our community or church. Not everybody believes the same thing. They clash, because as I've said, they are so shy to talk or to come out. They are not so open.*

This section has investigated teachers' experiences of being faced with the challenge of developing an alternative sense of identity or sense of self in the context of their transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners. It has highlighted many of the tensions, contradictions and discrepancies which emerge in the process of embracing a vision of inclusion in teachers' professional and personal sense of self.

4.2.5. Teachers experiences of the institutional culture

The vision of inclusion for teachers extends beyond just classroom relations and practices, to incorporate how teachers negotiate and redefine their sense of self within their homes, in their churches and in their community. Just as teachers and principals do not operate in isolation from their families and their community, so they do not operate in isolation from the larger institutional culture of the school and the Department of Education. The vision of inclusion extends beyond classroom relations and practices, and encompasses relations of power between school management and teachers, and between school principals, teachers and the Department of Education itself. This section presents findings from the research which highlights participants' experiences of relations within the institutional culture of each school and within the broader institutional culture of the Department of Education.

- *Teachers experiences of the institutional culture at the level of school leadership - the exercise and mimicry of inclusive leadership*

Investigation and interpretation of participants' narratives highlights the way teachers experience new education policy in general, including inclusive education policy. From the reflections and experiences of teachers in this regard, it emerges that many experience inclusive education policy as marginalising and alienating. Since marginality designates the intermediate space between the old and the new, school principals (who have been and still are teachers), too, must experience new expectations of policy implementation as marginalising. The challenge for teachers becoming inclusive practitioners, is predominantly changing their classroom attitudes and practices. The challenge for principals establishing and managing inclusive schools, is changing their leadership styles to accommodate more inclusive styles of management. Transformation for principals serves to throw former traditional and familiar structuring principles of leadership and management roles and identity into a state of flux, bringing with it a 'crisis of representation'. School leadership and management also, then, become a space of paradoxes and a source of alienation for the teachers who adopt these roles. An understanding of the extent to which principals experience exercising their own autonomy, and/or adopt a form of mimicry of autonomy, which is in fact alien to their personal and professional sense of self, emerges through the reflections of principal-participants in the narrative excerpts which follow.

The following quotations relate to the exercise of autonomy from the perspectives of principals of schools in the sample, and how they experience this phenomenon. The following quotation seems to reflect a genuine desire to reinvent traditional views and perceptions of what a principal is and should be.

> *I do not want to be known as a principal. I would prefer to be known as myself. Because I think it's taking away some of the things that I can do if I remain myself. Like, if I'm the principal then people tend to respond to me in ways that I don't want them to respond to me. I'd like them to respond to me as a human being – approachable. I can't do that with this title because traditionally principals are not seen as approachable. What the principal says, goes. I don't want to be like that. We used to say that once you become a principal then you change. So I try not to change. Instead of being served I want to be serving. I want people to see principalship as serving people rather than being worshipped.*

The following quotation and drawing (Image 4.33) seems to reflect the perception that this participant has learned to adopt a more participatory and therefore inclusive leadership style.

> *Inclusive education has helped me change my management style from a top-down style of management to an inclusive style of management. I include the deputy principal and my two HODs a lot. Here we are discussing the ways in which we are going to improve … for the HODs to come with specific plans… But I'm not happy as you can see here, because there seems to be no team work among my management team. As you can see the deputy principal is here in a different place to the HODs. They don't give the deputy due respect. They undermine her. She gives them instructions and they simply ignore these. Now I'm encouraging team spirit. That's why my hand is in between them – I want to discourage this gap that is between them.*

Image 4.33.　　　　Teacher drawing – principal encouraging team work and collaboration between the deputy principal and the heads of departments

While reflecting the perception of the participant's having developed better inter-personal skills in managing the school staff, a more critical interpretation of the narrative excerpt and the drawing reflects the strong presence of traditional hierarchical relations of power between the leadership and management personnel of the school. With the use of size and positioning, the drawing clearly portrays relations of power among these staff members, with the principal as the largest figure, the one with the most power and authority in the school. From the part of the quotation emerges the clear expectation that the heads of departments are expected to comply with instructions given by the deputy Principal. The question arises as to what extent true participation, team work and collaboration, in the inclusive sense of the word, is understood or implemented by this participant.

- *Teachers experiences of the institutional culture at the level of the Department of Education - the 'forked tongue' of the Department*

School and principals do not operate in isolation from the larger institutional culture of the Department of Education. The vision of inclusion extends beyond power relations and management practices within individual schools, and encompasses relations of power between school principals and teachers and the Department of Education itself. This section presents findings from the research which highlight participants' experiences of the institutional culture at the level of the Department of Education.

The following quotation from a principal-participant illustrates the strong presence of traditional autocratic implementation of policy on the part of the Department of Education.

> *We've got policies – policies on doing something, it must be done like this, at what time, the do's and don'ts of it. Now, if you don't do what is supposed to be done, all I have to do is to refer you to the policy – what does the policy say, and not to be angry at you, as if I am at loggerheads with you. I am at loggerheads with what was not done which you were supposed to do. This is why I say I manage policy and not personnel.*

For transformative education policies to become a reality at the level of classroom and school implementation, the Department of Education itself needs to undergo the radical transformation necessary to be able to manage, monitor and support principals and teachers towards becoming inclusive schools and practitioners. The ambivalence with which the Department of Education is experienced by participants, is reminiscent of the forked tongue notion in Bhabha's (in Rice and Waugh, 1984) thinking – while introducing and expecting teachers and principals to embrace inclusive policy, the Department of Education is operating according to traditionally autocratic principles, which are in direct opposition to inclusive ideology, principles and practices.

From participants' narratives it is clear that teachers and principals experience a great deal of frustration when dealing with the Department of Education. The following quotations candidly reflect the limited efficiency and effectiveness of the Department of Education system which the

participants experience in relation to the implementation of inclusive education policies and the necessary support schools need.

> *Sometimes restrictions from being able to move forward in creating an effective, functioning and inclusive system of education exist because of the way that the Department is structured. I'm thinking of how we make orders. Sometimes we have to send papers to say this is what we need and we send these papers in July last year, and we find that some of these things have not arrived. But these people are working in those offices everyday and when they send things to you to complete and process, they will give you three days and then they want it after three days. But when it's about orders that will help learners, it can take you 12 months. Sometimes these things we don't receive and we forfeit the funds. So you can't do what you want to do.*

> *There was a workshop in May for teachers but the policy document is out. We should have started implementing this thing. You find that we always do things today that we were supposed to do yesterday. And it bothers me. It all stems from trying to be inclusive, from trying to stand on my principles, but then it becomes not easy.*

> *These are the things which hinder my positive attitude, also the lack of resources and high number of learners per class. With a big class, like in our case, we've got more than 50 children, it's so difficult. We find that maybe only 20% is fine and coping well, so you need to attend to more than 30 learners, giving them extra time and support. It is asking more from teachers and it demands a lot more energy. Sometimes we are faced with problems and we need help but we don't have the resources. It is a lot of work on the shoulders of the teachers.*

> *Maybe sometimes if we identify the barriers that some learners have, we don't always know what to do for them to help them, to do everything that is needed, so we need to refer these children to someone. We do need specialists. There is only so much teachers can do at the school. They do need the next level of support and it is often not there. We feel that there is not enough assistance for us. We are not often visited by the department*

people (the PGSES person comes once every now and then) – so we feel neglected. This is understood and interpreted by teachers as a lack of motivation on the part of the DoE wrt inclusion.)

What emerges from participants' narratives is their growing frustration, disillusionment and lack of faith in the institutional culture of the Department of Education to effectively support teachers and schools towards becoming inclusive. The persistence and perpetuation of traditional autocratic power relations between the Department of Education and schools and teachers, does not model inclusive principles and practices of shared power and responsibility, and true collaboration between all stake holders and role players. The Department of Education, itself, is guilty of the very dry rhetoric of inclusive policy that has become such a concern for teachers in classrooms. For this reason, the Department of Education has been interpreted as speaking with a forked tongue – while introducing and disseminating inclusive policy initiatives, the institution itself is continuing business as usual in the sense that nothing is changing in the way they are dealing with and treating individual schools and teachers. Although teachers seem to be willing to embrace inclusion, and to varied extents are renegotiating and redefining their professional and personal sense of self in the light of inclusion, there is little evidence that the Department of Education is willing to embrace inclusive principles and practices and begin the process of renegotiating and redefining its identity.

The following quotation illustrates the lack of confidence teachers have in the operations and policies of the Department of Education, and raises the concern that, despite their commitment to inclusive attitudes and principles, the lack of support teachers experience from the Department of Education, and its poor modelling of inclusive principles and practices, may very well lead teachers to abandon hope that inclusion and inclusive education can actually become a reality.

On our side, it was the Department who introduced this system of education to us, only to find when in the practical, it is too difficult to implement.

4.3. CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented authentic narrative moments of participants' experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners and managers, according to the overarching themes which emerged from the data. Participants' reflections highlight a number of changes and challenges that are part of this intermediate and ambivalent space of transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners and managers. The experiences of teachers in this state of transition can be linked to general characteristics of postmodernism, where grand narratives of yesterday are rejected, traditional and familiar dominant positions and privileged points of view are annulled, and previously established hierarchies of interpretation and meaning are dismantled. Participant narratives reflect, both the changing nature of teaching and school management and broader social formations, and the general fragmentation and splintering of all familiar sensibilities and meanings that were previously taken for granted. This new social epoch of transition and post-modernity heralds a time of ambivalence – a paradoxical site of conflicting discourses in which teachers live out a complex and contradictory relation to the future. Investigation and interpretation of participants' narratives hopefully enables the development of a better understanding of their partial views and halting voices (Haraway, in McLaren, 1995) from this space of transition and this crisis of meaning and feeling.

The following chapter presents more detailed discussion and interpretation of this data in terms of how the data from the various seasons of data generation relate to and overlap with each other, according to the overarching themes which emerge.

CHAPTER FIVE
HOW TEACHERS NEGOTIATE TENSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS AND CONSTRUCT THEIR SENSE OF SELF IN THE LIGHT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
- AN INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

5.1.   INTRODUCTION

Most literature on inclusive education finds a fundamental contradiction between stated policy and actual practice (Booth, 1999; Cochran-Smith, 2001; Eleweke and Rodda, 2002; Fullan, 1991; Saranson, 1991; Vayrynen, 2003; Ware, 1995), and most classroom-based research concludes that education policy in South Africa is distressingly out of touch with school and classroom realities (Engelbrecht, et al. 1999; Fullan, 1993; Goodson, 1992; Hargreaves, 1992; Harley, et al. 1998; Jansen, 2001; Kalabula, 2002; Kavale, 2002; Mattson and Harley, 2001; Sayed, 2003; Soudien, 2002; Wearmouth, Edwards and Richmond, 2000; Zajda, 2002). This research is an attempt to meet the call for research initiatives which investigate policy implementation in the 'real' world rather than in an 'ideal' one, and an attempt to understand the identity dilemma faced by teachers, as they find themselves caught between the demands of policy images of what the ideal teacher, as inclusive practitioner, should look like on the one hand, and their personal identities on the other (Jansen, 2001). It is also an attempt to highlight a way forward through the quagmires that threaten to swallow the ideals of transformative inclusive education policy, and reduce them to the dreaded status of dry rhetoric.

My purpose in undertaking this research was to investigate how teachers construct their personal and professional sense of self in the light of inclusive education, and how they negotiate possible tensions and contradictions which emerge in the process of becoming inclusive practitioners. With authentic personal narratives as the main strategy of inquiry, data was generated through participatory methodologies, which reflected teachers' unique, context-specific experiences of inclusive education policy and the challenges inherent in their transition into inclusive practitioners. These findings were presented in the previous chapter under five overarching themes which

emerged from participants' drawings, photographs and narratives. These were presented in a predominantly descriptive manner.

Following the five themes which structured the previous chapter, and informed by existing literature and the conceptual framework used in this research, this chapter presents a deeper and more abstracted level of interpretation and discussion with regard to: what shapes teachers' sense of self; what defines them; what restricts them; and what empowers them. This is undertaken in an attempt to gain a better understanding of how teachers construct their personal and professional sense of self in the light of inclusive education, and how they negotiate possible tensions and contradictions which emerge in the process of becoming inclusive practitioners.

5.2. RECONTEXTUALISING THE FINDINGS

5.2.1. Teachers on the front lines of creating a good society

With the intended transformation of the social landscape in South Africa, teachers are increasingly required to take on new responsibilities. Not only does inclusive education policy require teachers to define and adopt new teaching practices, it also requires them to redefine their sense of self, on a personal as well as a professional level. The new role of teachers creates a comprehensive set of expectations associated with this social reconstructionist orientation – an educational endeavour that involves meaningful work which extends beyond the classroom to providing an impetus for social change (Whang and Waters, 2001), where teachers are seen, not only as key players in the transformation of education, but also in the transformation of society (Giroux, 1988; Giroux, 1998; McLaren, 1991; Goodman, 1988). Teachers are, therefore, seen as on the front lines (Mitchell, et al. 2005) of making a meaningful contribution to creating a good society (Sacks, 2000), based on the principles of democracy, inclusion, and social justice.

The findings of this research revealed positive evidence that some teachers are taking their place on these front lines of transformation towards inclusive education. Some participants are realising a larger destiny, a calling to be an inclusive practitioner at the school level and at the broader level of the community, on a professional as well as a personal level. Regardless of the difficulties, they remain committed to forge ahead with inclusion and being more inclusive in their attitudes and

practices. Participants have developed an awareness that they, as inclusive people and practitioners, are the most important resources in their classrooms, schools and communities and it is clear that they have developed a sense of embeddedness in their school and community.

Although participants expressed their initial frustration of feeling overwhelmed by the expectations placed on them by the education changes in the system, they expressed the realisation that they had been ignorant to many of the principles of inclusion and social justice before, and reported being pleased to be part of a process that extends the right of meaningful education and the opportunity of full and equal participation to previously excluded or marginalised learners. Participants' narratives provided some evidence that teachers are becoming aware of the barriers faced by previously excluded learners and the changes in the curriculum that inclusion demands. While participants reported having become more accepting of diversity and the need to include the previously excluded, and extend the curriculum and the physical environment to accommodate learners' different needs, it is questionable whether this raised awareness of the need for inclusion has impacted on their teaching and management practices.

Despite expressing a general acceptance of the 'rightness' of inclusion, which seems to indicate that participants have taken hold of the idea of inclusion as a pedagogy of hope, deeper investigation of participants' narratives reveals that efforts to become inclusive practitioners often result in nominal reforms with regard to classroom teaching and school management. Despite the adjustment of the physical school environment for learners with disabilities, participants' adoption of the new language of inclusion, and the belief that they now can be classified as inclusive practitioners and schools, teaching and management practices remain largely unchanged.

Such a fundamental dislocation with the past understandably results in levels of confusion among teachers, a lack of confidence in their abilities to become inclusive practitioners; a sense of powerlessness over their situation, and a lack of commitment, motivation and enthusiasm to meet these expectations. Participants' narratives mirror other research findings that correlate with teachers' perceptions of their lack of preparedness, their lack of confidence and sense of teaching efficacy with the implementation of inclusion and inclusive education policy (Darling-Hammond, et al. 2002; Engelbrecht, et al. 2001). However, while participants' lack of confidence in their own

ability to implement inclusion may explain their initial negativity and hesitance towards inclusive education policy, participants' narratives indicate that the majority of teachers have discarded this initial negativity in favour of seeing the potential good in inclusive attitudes and practices.

In some participants' narratives, it is clear that inclusion is challenging old discourses of difference, attitudes, value systems, teaching and learning practices, expanding awareness and encouraging participants to continually examine their assumptions, beliefs and practices, which in turn facilitates new ways of knowing, seeing, understanding, making sense of the world, and defining participants' sense of self, on a personal and professional level. It is clear, in the case of many participants, that their personal and professional identities are simultaneously influenced by inclusion. Not only are they realising the need to manifest inclusive attitudes, principles and practices in their classroom management and teaching, but they are also realising that these attitudes, principles and practices spill over into their personal lives and sense of self, facilitating a change in their heart attitude to difference in others and themselves, and their personal growth and development.

A closer investigation of those participants who reported being impressed with inclusive education from the outset, reveals that these individual teachers have generally had some personal contact with children with disabilities, either directly having a disabled child of their own, or having a disabled child in their family. Having personal experience of including those previously excluded seems to play an important part in their immediate positive attitude and commitment to inclusion. This is a reminder of how individual participants' reactions to inclusion and becoming inclusive practitioners is firmly set in their particular contexts and life experiences, and the close correlation between how inclusion impacts on teachers on a personal and a professional level. How individual teachers respond to this challenge of inclusion depends, then, to a large extent on influential factors embedded in their everyday life experiences.

While the majority of teachers in the sample manifest the influence of inclusion on both a professional and a personal level, evidence also exists that, while some participants show some understanding of the policy principles of inclusion, they have not yet made the shift personally. With these participants, while some stated that attitudes and classroom practices seem to be more inclusive, the ideology of inclusion in its fullness and complexity has not yet had an impact on them

on a personal level. While adopting nominal inclusive practices and paying tribute to the rhetoric of inclusive attitudes and principles, traditional exclusive attitudes and practices are still prevalent in their everyday professional lives. These participants' narratives did not reflect any evidence that inclusion has influenced them or had much impact on their personal growth and development.

In attempting to understand teachers' responses to inclusion and inclusive education, when faced with evidence that exclusionary practices are still being maintained by some teachers (even after the training and support afforded them in the pilot project towards inclusion), it may be easy to fall into the trap of judging these teachers negatively for not taking hold of inclusive attitudes and practices on any deep personal level, and condemning them for their seeming lack of transformative capacity. However, it is important to realise that certain crucial aspects of individual teachers' discourses and understanding of inclusive education are constructed differently by different individuals. This is why it is of utmost importance to consider the context in which each teacher is embedded, the particular constraints and contradictions which arise in each teacher's life, and their individual means of negotiating these and making sense of them. Such is the understanding which underpins the politics of the personal – all teachers will respond in their own way to new policy, based on their differing contexts, histories and geographies.

5.2.2. Teachers caught between policy and history

The introduction of the notions of inclusion and inclusive education to the South African system of education tap into South African teachers' traditional roots of exclusion and the historic belief in the educational segregation of disabled children and those with special needs. Although there is the belief that teachers are important agents of change in building a good society which offers its members equal access to hope, this belief is in direct contrast to a deep culture of inequality and social exclusion - deep-rooted assumptions and beliefs about intelligence, ability and difference, which clearly influence teachers' initial attitudes and responses to the notion of inclusion, and result in a knee-jerk response of resistance on the part of the majority of teachers to the introduction of inclusion.

The introduction of the notion of valuing diversity and the reconceptualisation of pathologised difference presents "a departure from the categorical thinking that has resulted in the separation

and hierarchisation of particular groups" (Benjamin, 2002, p.309). This shift represents a fundamental break from the traditional principles and ways of being. It is natural and hardly surprising that many teachers reflect on experiencing difficulties reconciling the ideological contradictions and tensions which emerge between the old and familiar, and the new and unfamiliar. It is for this reason that much classroom-based research concludes that education policy in South Africa is out of touch with school and classroom realities (Engelbrecht, et al. 1999; Fullan, 1993; Goodson, 1992; Hargreaves, 1992; Harley, et al. 1998; Jansen, 2001; Kalabula, 2002; Kavale, 2002; Matheson and Harley, 2001; Sayed, 2003; Soudien, 2002; Wearmouth, et al. 2000; Zajda, 2002).

The two paradigms of inclusion and exclusion are so different that it is difficult to comprehend that they can coexist; or that inclusion can be achieved by simply modifying exclusionary ideas and organisational strategies (Clark, et al. 1995). Such a conversion from an exclusive paradigm to an inclusive paradigm is reminiscent of Freire's (1993) theorising about the emancipation of people from oppression and subordination. He believes that such "conversion… requires a profound rebirth. Those who undergo it must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were" (Freire, 1993, p.47). To expect a total 'Damascus Road'[4] transformation, a complete and clear 180 degree turnabout of individual and institutional identities is an unrealistic expectation. What is clear from participants' narratives is that the path of transition in real life contexts is a murky terrain (Harley and Parker, 1999) fraught with contradictions and disassociations inherent in being faced with the transition between two different paradigms, two different ways of being, and the inevitable tensions of finding themselves caught between two opposing social forces.

South African teachers are necessarily products of a society steeped in historic forms of organisation and a system of social relations wherein exclusion and segregation abound. Historic definitions that isolated, excluded and marginalised certain individuals and social groups have made up the very fabric of these teachers' sense of self, and others. Fundamental principles

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[4] A 'Damascus Road' transformation refers to the spiritual conversion of Saul in about AD34. Saul was an important figure in the early years of the Christian church, initially involved in the persecution and execution of the Jews who were followers of the Christian Way, and traveling the road from Jerusalem to Damascus with the purpose of seeking out and imprisoning men and women who were following the Christian Way, when the God of the Christians appeared to him and spoke to him. Saul's conversion is described in Acts 9 as a mystical encounter with God which happened suddenly and without warning. After this encounter, Saul was completely converted to the Christian Way, undergoing a 180 degree turnaround from passionately persecuting Christians to fearlessly preaching in the synagogues that Jesus Christ was the Son of God (The New International Version Study Bible, 1985).

underpinning inclusive policy (such as tolerance, respect, acceptance and accommodating differences between people and social groups), are in stark contrast to traditional values held by South African society in general and the communities participants hail from. In addition to these societal and community values, participants' personal values (which are to a large extent the results of individuals' socialisation according to the rules and norms of dominant society), are therefore often at odds with the ideology behind inclusion. If community values and teachers' personal values contradict those inherent in inclusive policy, becoming inclusive practitioners does not simply represent a new approach to pedagogy – it also represents a profound challenge to their values and beliefs, and those of their communities. Transition towards inclusion therefore requires teachers to undergo fundamental changes that threaten the foundations on which their cohesion and effectiveness is built, thus signifying "a fundamental dislocation with the past" (Parker and Harley, 1999, p.190).

Expecting teachers to undergo a total, immediate 'Damascus Road' conversion is unrealistic, and places great pressure on teachers, which could in itself translate as constraining to teachers attempting to embrace with inclusion. *One* expectation for *all* teachers denies the necessity of teachers undergoing a process of transition in their own way and in their own time, negotiating and constructing their personal sense of self - the individual journeys that teachers embark on and necessarily travel in becoming inclusive practitioners. Teachers do not *all* follow a homogeneous path of transition, but instead represent micro-territories of voices and a plurality of meanings. Transformation and transition to inclusion will therefore necessarily manifest a multitude of paths and means of travelling these, specific to each individual teacher's context, history, geography and personal life experiences.

5.2.3. Redefining teaching – a fundamental dislocation with the past

Transformative inclusive education policy is intended to pave the way for significant curriculum reform in South African education. It is designed to embody a democratic, inclusive and socially just vision of society and the type of citizen that the education system intends creating. Through this policy a new pedagogy is being advocated – one grounded in a politics of ethics, difference and democracy, which suggests the recognition of, and respecting and catering for diversity in all classrooms. The move towards inclusive education rests on the recognition that *all* learners are

entitled to an education that meets their needs, regardless of their differences, and that the education system should be able to accommodate and deal effectively with a diversity of learners' needs. The single greatest challenge facing the new education dispensation, has been seen as the need to train and empower teachers to think and work in a new frame of reference (Prinsloo, 2001). The challenge which inclusive education poses goes beyond simply a professional transformation of teachers, but extends to a personal transformation of teachers' thinking of themselves and others. The demands of inclusive education policy necessarily require teachers to reconstruct traditional notions of difference and challenge old and familiar traditional attitudes, principles and practices of teaching, learning and management.

Such a transformation cannot be expected to be an immediate or instantaneous conversion, but necessarily involves a process of transition and transformation. The findings of this research highlight this period and state of transition towards inclusion and becoming inclusive practitioners, as one where teachers are caught between the old and familiar, and the new and unfamiliar, the 'real' and the 'ideal', what *is* and what *should be.* This transitional state is what begs closer investigation, interpretation and deeper excavation.

- *Looking inclusive: clouding what 'is' with what 'should be'*

Existing research into the education policy/practice gap in South Africa provides helpful insights into strategies South African teachers adopt in their attempts to engage with a policy system that is not aligned with their personal and professional identities, and suggests that some teachers adopt teaching and management strategies which involve simply the rhetoric of inclusion and the implementation of nominal reforms – the primary strategy of mimicry in the attempt to look inclusive (Mattson and Harley, 2001). Without sensitivity and a cognisance of the stark contrast between policy images of what teachers should be, and teachers' personal values and the traditional values held by most South African teachers, and especially African teachers in rural communities, attempts to reform teachers' identities into the ideal image of inclusive practitioners may very well serve to reinforce teachers' strategies of mimicry (Mattson and Harley, 2001). According to Mattson and Harley's critique, policy falls into the trap of social meliorism where commitment to a vision of *what should be* clouds the ability to seriously consider *what is*, so that

the good intentions of social reconstructionism have more influence on the policy agenda than social and school realities (Mattson and Harley, 2001).

New inclusive education policy in South Africa, and the expectations it places on teachers, contains definitions of correct practice, thus representing a clear constraint to which teachers feel they must respond through the construction and maintenance of appropriate displays of inclusive educational imagery (Hargreaves, 1994; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992). From the findings of this research, it emerges that teachers are not all equally open to the idea of inclusion, and they certainly are not all equipped to deal with learner diversity as inclusion demands. Participants' narratives often highlighted the awareness of teachers' limitations in being able to cater effectively for the individual and varied needs of a range of learners, and their need for further training and support to be able to do this. If all teachers in the sample realised their limitations, only some were honest about their perceived limitations. Mostly, participants seemed more committed to being seen as inclusive, but were not able to outline any clear examples of changed teaching practices, reflective of a deep and sophisticated understanding of inclusive principles and practices.

While all participants reported being aware that all learners, regardless of their differences, should be able to access mainstream classrooms and schools, and were prepared to drop their past discriminatory attitudes towards such learners and welcome them into their classrooms, not many participants were clear on how they could in fact accommodate them effectively. Common accommodations include treating all learners the same, changing learners' seating positions in the classroom, allowing learners to learn at their own pace, and showing them tolerance and patience. Very few participants actually included sophisticated understanding of differentiation to accommodate diverse needs in their narratives. Superficial accommodations amount to token inclusion rather than inclusion in the true spirit of the word, where all learners are able to access equitable educational opportunities that support them in developing to their full potential. Schools and classrooms may rest on the rhetoric of extending access to all learners, and consider themselves as implementing the principle of equal opportunity, while in reality continuing with 'business as usual'. Exactly what teachers perceive as equal opportunity school and classroom practices, remains an issue of considerable debate. A prime example from participants' narratives is the excerpt pertaining to the learner who had a cholostomy 'bag', who was sent home when his

bag was full because his teacher could not accommodate his needs in this area. This learner therefore not only missed out on vital teaching and learning, but was clearly singled out as different from the rest of his peers.

To a large degree, then, interpretation of participants' narratives concurs with existing research findings that a broad pattern of mimicry is more often that not adopted by teachers and principals in their attempts to make themselves and their schools look inclusive (Chrisholm and Fuller, 1996; Mattson and Harley, 2001; Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999).

While existing research concludes that teachers' attitudes are the most important factor in the success of effective implementation of new policy (Fullan, 1993; Kalabula, 2002), an interpretation of participants' narratives shows that most teachers eventually give inclusive education policy their support, and that a closer look into discourses on teaching reveals a space filled with tensions and contradictions. A deeper investigation into and interpretation of these tensions and contradictions sheds some light on existing disjunctions between teachers' support of inclusion and inclusive education in theory, and their actual practice of it.

- *Fragmentary moments of inclusion*

Findings from existing research and this research present evidence that radical educational reform in the form of the introduction of inclusive education, necessarily throws traditional structuring principles of education in South Africa into a state of flux, bringing with it an erosion of confidence in prevailing conceptualisations of teachers' sense of self, on a personal and a professional level. Such evidence is in line with a postmodern view of the problematisation and dismantling of historical claims to truth (the rejecting of historical grand narratives). Basic assumptions about structure, social organisation and power relations that have been taken for granted are now being brought into question, and previously privileged points of view and subjectivities are being annulled, thus throwing individuals into varying degrees of confusion. This changing nature of social formations and educational structures and the shifting of previously accepted boundaries, inclusions and exclusions results in what McLaren (1995, p.58) terms a "crisis of representation" for individuals. Such a situation is characteristic of the age of postmodernism, where multiple identities are released on the archaeological landscape (Jansen, 1999), where "the world is constituted

through multiple refracted perspectives" (Plummer, 2001, p.xi), and where micro-territories of voices and a plurality of meanings exist.

Just as Plummer (2001) theorises that "it is indeed a 'plural world', one that is constantly changing and never fixed, and one where meanings are always being negotiated. In such a world, meanings and truth never arrive simply" (Plummer, 2001, p.xi), participants' narratives in this research reflect that there is seldom simple and clear understanding and implementation of inclusion in its pure and ideal sense, but rather fragmented, distorted and contaminated inclusive practices, which are never fixed. Moments of inclusion exist side by side with moments of exclusion in a multiplicity of ever-changing combinations. While being careful not to lose sight of the ideals of inclusion - what *should be*, this research is an attempt to look squarely at what is, as suggested by Harley, et al. (1998), and clearly highlights the uneven, dynamic and complex character of South African teachers in transition from exclusion to inclusion. The argument that the two paradigms of inclusion and exclusion are so different that they cannot coexist, and that inclusion cannot be achieved by simply modifying exclusionary ideas and practices, but by displacing them completely (Clans, et al. 1995), places inclusion and exclusion at opposite ends of the spectrum of democracy, inclusion and social justice. While theoretically and ideologically these paradigms do indeed exist in opposition to each other, findings from this research, and adopting a postmodern lens suggest that in practice and in reality [taut], it may not be possible to judge ideas and practices as either inclusive or exclusive, accomplishing and implementing inclusion or failing to do so. Rather, findings from this research and a postmodern lens suggest that teachers' attitudes and practices fall at various places in between and within the paradigms of exclusion and inclusion in varying degrees and combinations.

Regardless of the postmodern era, there still exists the persistent tendency towards the abstract and the linear in everyday and academic thought, which clearly needs to be resisted in favour of an engagement with conscious recognition of the concrete and multidimensional. Experience and life itself is constantly fluctual and always in flow. Similarly, the path of transition towards inclusion does not appear as a linear and one-dimensional movement from exclusion towards inclusion, but instead manifests as messy, criss-crossed and multi-dimensional. In reality, moments of inclusion exist side by side with moments of exclusion, inclusive ideals and attitudes live in a juxtaposed harmony with exclusive beliefs and frames of reference. While teachers may very well adopt some

inclusive practices, exclusion still exists and remains, as uncompromising as ever. Incongruities such as these are the reality of teachers in transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners. Teachers' personal and professional sense of self reflects both a commitment to and a manifestation of exclusion and inclusion. Teachers operate within and between these two contradictory paradigms and opposing social forces.

Participants' narratives provide evidence of teachers in complex situations, wherein contradiction, ambiguity, disconnection, fragmentation and incoherence are everyday bed-fellows. Such findings link to Borenstein's description of the social terrain as "criss-crossed with pathways" (Borenstein, 1978, p.30). He goes on to state that "it is not given to the social scientist to say which path is to be followed. Nor is it given to anyone to say what another shall make of the journey" (Borenstein, 1978, p.30). The investigation and interpretation of participants' narratives in this research, does not intend making any judgements about what path teachers should be taking in their transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners, nor does it intend to make any claims about presenting prescriptive formulae of how teachers should be undertaking their journeys of transition. Instead, this research is committed to not losing sight of the specific, particular, situated complexity and multiplicity of each individual's context and their individual realities, experiences and perspectives. This is in keeping with the need to engage with multiple forms of knowledge (including local, popular, indigenous, regional); the realisation of teachers' intangible heritage - the network of relationships, traditions and other cultural patterns; and the commitment and intention to stay true to the principle of individualisation in every aspect of the research process.

A commitment to fighting exclusion does not require simplistic or patronising approaches which deny the complexity of the real world in which teachers live and work (Gilroy, cited in McLaren, 1995). In investigating South African teachers' experiences of becoming inclusive, this research does not intend falling into the essentialist trap of neatly labeling teachers as either inclusive or exclusive practitioners, as either successful or unsuccessful in their implementation of inclusive education, or as either committed or not committed to inclusion and inclusive education, but is instead committed to seeing teachers in all their complexity, diversity, heterogeneity and multiplicity. The interpretation of the findings highlights the provisional, contingent, particular, specific, variable, tentative, shifting and changing nature of teacher identity and practices, within

and between both paradigms of exclusion and inclusion. Differences between teachers' experiences of becoming inclusive practitioners and negotiating a new sense of self, are not interpreted as fixed and permanent, but instead, as precarious discursive constructions. This is in keeping with Gillborn's (1995) call for a more sophisticated approach, which recognises the multiple sources and politics of identity, which challenges essentialist and deficit analyses, and engages with the reality of multiple exclusions and inclusions.

- *One-expectation-fits-all*

The critique of a 'one size fits all' approach in relation to what is offered to learners at schools can be extended to the approach adopted with regard to expectations and development of teachers. Teachers do not all arise from similar positions of social, economic, educational and political equality. Therefore imposing a 'one-size-fits-all' expectation of roles and implementations of policy on *all* teachers does not fit within an inclusive paradigm. Neither is the expectation that *all* teachers, regardless of their differences, histories and contexts, should undergo the same route of transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners. Certain schools and groups of teachers have traditionally lacked access or entitlement to certain services or privileges, and as a consequence have suffered the effects and results of exclusion, marginalisation and disempowerment. A normalising, 'one-size-fits-all' approach often ignores the existing, complex social relations (social, economic, and epistemological) between individual teachers and groups of teachers and results in the perpetuation of existing, unequal political conditions. Such thinking reflects the theorising of Soudien and Sayed (2003), in the following excerpt:

> "In normalising individuals and groups the concepts hide differences between and within groups, communities and individuals in that it ignores 'who' is being included or excluded. Thus, what is ignored are, inter alia, the different (and unequal) racial, gender, and ethnic positioning of groups, communities and individuals. The tendency here is also to assume a pathology of individual and group failure. Thus, one of the striking difficulties with the concept of social inclusion is its shortcoming in understanding inequity and the different sources of inequity in society … and their interrelationships… how they articulate with each other.." (Soudien and Sayed, 2003, pp.231-248).

Findings from this research leads to strengthening the argument against the expectation that teachers undergo a 'Damascus Road' conviction (an overnight transformation) from exclusion to inclusion and being inclusive practitioners, in favour of viewing teachers in a process of transition, embarking on their own individual journeys of transformation. The unrealistic expectation that teachers can make such an overnight transformation to being inclusive practitioners, inevitably sets teachers up for failure. For teachers in transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners and making inclusion a reality, a simple essentialist and reductionist analysis and critique on inclusive practices might forfeit gains that have already been won, and paralyse future developments by undermining teachers' belief in their ability to do anything without falling foul of one theoretical position or another. The language of critique sometimes comes to dominate in a way that loses sight of the steps that have been taken towards inclusion in schools and classrooms, and may be damning in its attack on teachers' understanding and implementation of and commitment to inclusive education. It is for this reason that Gillborn (1995) warns that although criticism is a vital spur to the development of both theory and practice, it must be used constructively. While important lessons can and must be learned, critiques should not spell the end of inclusion, but rather, offer the possibility of a more critical and effective inclusion. Honest and critical investigation into *what is* instead of focusing on what *should be* should be a priority, while never losing sight of the hope and the possibility of what *could be*.

The post-apartheid South African society has been subject to a restructuring process to meet reformed social and political expectations, induced by the specific needs experienced by South African society, in particular, as well as a worldwide shift from a modern to a postmodern era. Following the need for the education system to reflect and accommodate political and social changes in society as well as postmodern influences (nationally and internationally), it is clear that all aspects of teaching and learning necessarily involve a reassessment of the traditional modernist approach. The traditional modernist approach to assessing, monitoring and researching teachers by and large has involved the use of objective measures to investigate teachers' success and strategies in the classroom. Foundational principles of the broader shift towards inclusion need to be extended to the ways teachers are thought about and dealt with. A shift in the approach to assessing, monitoring and researching teachers in the traditional sense is inevitable. Based on the ethics and ideology inherent in inclusion, teachers should be supported and facilitated towards

becoming inclusive practitioners, and diversity and individual differences among teachers should be identified, acknowledged, respected and accommodated. Based on a postmodern work ethic of self-development and meaning-making, a more subjective personal approach to how teachers understand and negotiate changes in teaching and learning which they are faced with, should be adopted. This research is grounded in the commitment to the principle of individualisation, which is a fundamental discourse inherent in both inclusion and postmodernism.

The use of only objective, measurable approaches and strategies of thinking about, working with, researching and investigating teachers, cannot be rationalised within an inclusive or a postmodernist discourse. Teachers cannot all be coloured with the same brush, and blanket statements and unilateral assumptions or judgements about how inclusive or exclusive teachers are, cannot be made. Multiple and contingent forms of differences and barriers to learning require multiple and contingent forms of addressing them. There is no single homogenous strategy of implementing inclusion - an effective strategy in one context may be ineffective in another context or at another time. Similarly, there are multiple and contingent manifestations of inclusion and exclusion amongst teachers, requiring multiple and contingent forms of understanding, approaching and addressing them. There can be no one single blueprint of implementing inclusion for all teachers at all times, across all circumstances and contexts which can be prescribed or imposed. No teacher can be judged as purely exclusive or inclusive, because any individual teacher manifests moments of inclusion and moments of exclusion in their own particular and unique combination (even these do not necessarily form a predictable pattern of responding and behaving and could vary from day to day or from moment to moment). Inclusion and exclusion are not exclusive and never homogenous.

A more constructive critique stresses the need for a constant awareness of the realities of life in schools and classrooms and the differences which emerge between teachers' understandings and implementation of inclusive practices. Just as inclusion warns against assuming groups to be internally homogeneous, fixed and absolute, this warning needs to be extended to understandings of and attitudes towards teachers. Simple essentialist and reductionist analyses and understandings need to be resisted, and instead, the diversity which exists within and between teachers needs to be recognised. Just as inclusion suggests the recognition and acknowledgement

of diversity, a respect for differences, and the right to participate in all aspects of society without having to give up or deny an individual's unique identity or context, so teachers' individual and unique relationship with inclusion and inclusive education, needs to be acknowledged, respected and accommodated. Researchers, policy implementers and teacher developers need to embrace an understanding that differences among individual teachers and the ways they have chosen to, or not to, adopt inclusive practices in their schools or classrooms, does not have to mean deficiency. Just as the principles of ethics, difference and democracy which undergird inclusive education offer a politics of hope to those individuals and groups previously marginalised, stigmatised and excluded, these selfsame principles need to be extended to how teachers and their practices are viewed. Wherever individual teachers are in their personal and professional journeys of transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners, they should be afforded the same show of respect, tolerance and support that is inherent in the ideology and implementation of inclusion.

5.2.4. Developing an alternative sense of self

Fundamental changes are involved in redefining teaching and challenging the prevailing system of social relations in South Africa, on both professional and personal levels for teachers. The process of becoming agents of change, transformative agents (Giroux, 1988), cultural workers (Freire, 1993), inclusive practitioners and teachers for social change and social justice (Cochran-Smith, 2001), requires that teachers develop an alternative sense of themselves, not only as teachers but as individuals. The realisation that inclusive education policy demands extend beyond simply redefining teaching practices, to redefining teachers' personal and professional sense of self, is reiterated by existing research into the field of teacher change towards becoming inclusive practitioners (Carrim, 2002; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Goodson, 1992; Barasa, et al. 1998; Jansen 2001; Kalabula, 2002; Mattson and Harley, 2001; Soudien, 2002; Wearmouth, Edwards and Richmond, 2000). It is precisely this realisation that prompted this investigation into how teachers construct their personal and professional selves in the light of inclusive education. Findings from this research therefore shed light on this process of transformation.

- *Transformation: a state of 'becoming'*

Perhaps the way to try and understand teachers in transition is to follow Paulo Freire's thinking (1993) that one of the best ways to work with human beings is based on the premise that individuals are never complete, fixed and static, but rather, constantly in a state of 'becoming'. If this is so, then it is not fair or realistic to judge or categorise them as either one thing or another, inclusive or exclusive, but rather to see them on their own personal and unique journeys of 'becoming'. The intention of this research, as already stated, is not to measure teacher practices in terms of how inclusive they are, but to investigate and recognise them as "human beings … in the process of creating, negotiating and performing meaning … making their way through a world that poses obstacles, interruptions, contingencies, crises and turning points, epiphanies and moral choices", and provide insights into how they "change over time as they struggle to make sense of their experience" (Ellis and Bochner, cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p.748). Such an engagement with teachers, and the issue of them becoming inclusive practitioners – "a view which takes the human being as an embodied, emotional, interactive self, striving for meaning in wider historically specific social worlds" (Plummer, 2001, p.255), may be more liberating and appropriate to the current age of postmodernism, than more static essentialist conceptualisations of these issues. It is a reminder of the belief that teachers' sense of self is forged in a force field of competing and converging influences (Samuel, cited in Matheson and Harley, 2001); the understanding that teacher strategies arise within sites of contradiction and constraint (Hargreaves, 2001); the unevenness of change, the insecurity of transition, the reality of the process – where different frames of understanding exist side by side.

- *Tensions teachers experience in this state of 'becoming'*

What is helpful in endeavours to better understand teachers' experiences and realities and in developing a respect for and tolerance of diversity and multiplicity within and between teachers, is investigating and theorising the ways in which such diversity and multiplicity is shaped by unequal power relations in teachers' histories and contexts. The following sections comprise a discussion of various tensions which participants experienced in their state of becoming, highlighting the strategies which they employ within these sites of contradiction and constraint with which they make sense of who they are in the world in which they live and work, and the underlying assumptions or relations of power which inform teachers' experiences of becoming inclusive

practitioners. Living and teaching purposefully in a mayhem of competing knowledges presents huge challenges to teachers. Attempting to understand teachers' subjective and context-specific experiences, as this research has done, leads to a more insightful investigation and interpretation of teachers in transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners and may also aid future attempts to develop and support teachers towards further implementation of inclusive education policy.

➢ *It has everything to do with gender*

As the findings from this research highlight, notions of inclusion, democracy and social justice inevitably include considerations related to the issue of gender. Transformation towards equal opportunities for all necessarily includes transition from traditional patriarchal notions of social relations, where men have been dominant and women have been relegated to subordinate status, to notions which emphasise equality, inclusion and equal opportunities for women.

Evidence from the research findings strongly suggests a raising of critical consciousness regarding gender inequalities and the development of personal agency among the majority of female participants. These female participants consciously realised the unequal distribution of social power between the sexes, and were able to reflect on the different socialisation processes that males and females are subjected to. Some female participants reflected that an understanding of how systemic gender differences and inequalities are perpetuated and maintained in society, has helped them realise and confront their own positions of internalised subordination, in turn helping them to challenge the negative and disempowering messages of inferiority and subordination which are allotted to women in their community. In this sense, they reported feeling empowered to challenge traditional patriarchal notions of social relations which they encounter in their everyday lives, and to begin to redefine and renegotiate their identities in the light of the new knowledge and understanding they have acquired with regard to gender power relations.

However, what also emerges from the findings are the tensions, contradictions, incongruities and discrepancies which female participants experience when they try to extend their new-found sense of equality and empowerment in the home and the community. In situations where traditional patriarchal power relations still exist, such as areas of leadership and decision-making, women are traditionally devalued and disregarded. They therefore experienced the inevitable frustrations of

being overlooked and subordinated, and reflected that resisting this system seemed futile and senseless, bringing more trouble than it is worth.

Findings reveal that female participants find themselves experiencing the situated complexity of being female - on the one hand, encouraged by the ideology of inclusion to live a life of empowerment and equality, while on the other hand, still having to live and work within a traditional culture structured along patriarchal lines, where they are still powerless and subordinate to males. While some showed their commitment to gender inclusion by reporting teaching their children gender equality, this break with tradition did not often extend to their own role of wife in the home. They reported feeling trapped in traditional patriarchal structures, powerless to challenge them in any real way, and they therefore submitted to their subordinate status as a woman and a wife. This choice to collude with the old ways and roles, inadvertently serves to maintain and strengthen traditional gender roles and perpetuate existing inequalities between men and women. Female participants have hope that in time this status quo will change, but do not see themselves as the agents of bringing this transformation about.

Hope for transformation in this area seems to lie squarely in the hands of men, as it is seen as easier for male participants to challenge traditional gender power relations in schools and in the community. There is evidence from the findings that some male participants are putting their commitment to gender equality and inclusion into practice, by using their social privilege as men to encourage equal and full participation of women in traditionally male-dominated areas. Some male participants even realised the need to extend this commitment into their home and family life. To the extent, therefore, that male participants are making a stand as change agents for equal gender rights and privileges, the dominant discourse on gender is being challenged.

On the issue of gender, it seems that participants in general are redefining their sense of self as a result of their new-found belief in and recognition of gender equality, and negotiating their own transformative capacity (Giddens, 1984). The investigation and interpretation of participants' narratives in this research highlights the extent to which their commitment to gender inclusion actually impacts on their families, schools and communities and is skewed according to traditional gender inequalities, with male participants reporting more power to make changes in the area of

gender inclusion than female participants. Males seem to be able to bring about more transformation towards gender inclusion than females, due to the existing social power relations – the social power and privilege given to males rather than females, who seem stuck in their roles of subordination. Making sense of who they are, personally and professionally, places female participants squarely in the murky terrain of transition, in a space where ambiguities, disconnections, fragmentation and incoherences abound. It is within this site of contradiction and constraint, this force field of competing and converging influences that any new sense of self must develop. At best, it is a tentative, precarious, provisional, contingent, discursive construction. Participants, in particular the female participants, in a state of becoming inclusive, find themselves in the difficult situation of being caught between two different ways of being and two opposing social forces. They therefore learn to wear different hats as they play out the different roles which define who they are, as women, in their personal and professional arenas; as they make sense of and interact with the various facets of their lives and their world; as they juggle the tensions, contradictions and constraints of being female, simultaneously empowered yet powerless, liberated yet trapped, committed to inclusion yet colluding with and perpetuating their subordination, as they learn to embrace an epistemology that is conscious of its own insecurity.

➢ *What the principal says, goes*

Transformation towards inclusive schooling also necessarily impacts on management and leadership styles within schools. Traditionally, principals have operated along the lines of an autocratic leadership and management style, where power, authority lies clearly in the hands of the principal. The introduction of inclusion and inclusive education directly challenges these traditional top-down styles of leadership and management, and puts forward notions of shared power relations amongst all members of a school, and democratic decision making processes. In developing an alternative sense of self, principals must necessarily re-think traditional styles of authority and autocracy, and re-create themselves as democratic and inclusive principals.

There is some evidence from the findings of this research that some schools are adopting a transformed management structure, and that collaboration, co-operation, supportive structures, team-work, participation and co-responsibility in decision-making, management and support issues are becoming a reality. At other schools evidence from the findings suggests that transformed

management structures are implemented on some, but not all, levels of school organisation and management, and that very often, the exercise of inclusive leadership manifests as superficial mimicry to a large extent, without evidence of a deep sense of inclusive principles or understanding of the true nature of inclusion as it relates to school leadership and management. In those schools where the management style remains traditionally autocratic or predominantly so, where teachers have not been given a voice or the opportunity to share in the decision-making process, schools have not been able to develop structures and mechanisms to support the process of becoming inclusive institutions or the process of individuals becoming inclusive practitioners.

While the principals who participated in this research manifested knowledge of inclusive leadership and management styles and the desire to adopt and implement a more inclusive leadership and management style, the roads these principals are traveling and the dynamics and challenges they experience along the way of transition, are very different from each other. One principal's narrative reflected a clear and critical realisation of the autocratic status a principal of a school is automatically given; a clear disagreement with such power relations; and a genuine desire to reinvent such traditional views and perceptions of what a school principal should be. While another principal expressed her commitment to encouraging participation and shared management between members of the management structure, it remained clear that the Heads of Departments are expected to obey the deputy principal and the rest of the staff are expected to obey the instructions of the Heads of Departments. Evidence exists that this principal seemed still to believe in autocratic hierarchical leadership at certain levels of school management – the Heads of Departments were 'reprimanded' for ignoring instructions and undermining the deputy principal.

This evidence supports the notion that change does not take place evenly between individuals and their particular situations, histories and contexts, but is in fact uneven, erratic and incomplete. The first principal, who showed a clear and critical understanding of the traditional and expected power relations involved in being principal of a school, and the genuine desire to transform these power relations, understood his transition as a never-ending journey of self-reflection and critical thinking and clearly understood that he is in a constant state of becoming inclusive. His astute and critical reflexive understanding of being inclusive allowed him to recognise that becoming inclusive necessarily involves making errors along the way. Transition is clearly not about a complete

turnaround and change from being exclusive to inclusive, but rather about journeying through an unclear and uneven terrain.

The second principal did not seem to be as astute or critical in her understanding and implementation of inclusion in her leadership and management role. While her narrative clearly intended to convey the impression that she had developed good inter-personal skills in managing her staff and had changed her management style from a top-down approach, it revealed the persistence of a strong hierarchical implementation of department policy, however thinly disguised under a veneer of participative and inclusive management. Herein lies the ambiguity, incoherence, multiplicity and disconnection indicative of a transitional space. On the one hand, this participant believed she had made some effort to transform her previously top-down management style to a more inclusive style, while on the other hand, she perceived teamwork among her management team to comprise a process of issuing and obeying instructions according to the traditional hierarchy of power relations in schools - the Heads of Departments following the instructions of the deputy principal, and the staff implementing the do's and don't's of policies, as prescribed by the Department of Education.

It seems that nothing of much significance has changed in the way that this school, principal and individual teachers respond to departmental policy or in the way the school management and leadership operates. This narrative provides evidence that policy – the voice and instructions of the department – should be obeyed without questioning or adaptation or discursive and participatory input on the part of teachers and the school management team (the principal, deputy principal and Heads of Department). The institutional culture and ethos of this school does not seem to challenge traditional dominant discourses of top-down autocratic management, but instead seems to play its part in maintaining and perpetuating the existing status quo with regards to schools' relationships with policy and the Department of Education, and teachers' relationships with school management. Policy is seen in this instance as a meta-narrative, a given, where individual teachers and Heads of Departments are merely required to passively accept and carry out the instructions from above without questioning or engaging with them in any critical or reflexive manner.

These participants' narratives highlight differences in the extent to which the dominant discourses of the past are being challenged by principals and are dissolving and transforming, or are being maintained and strengthened. These narratives provide a clear example of the situated complexities of principals' experiences of becoming inclusive managers, and highlight the multiple knowledges which exist side by side, not only between different participants but within each individual.

On a more personal level, principals' narratives revealed the risks and the dilemmas that are involved in becoming inclusive school managers and leaders. One principal identified that the main risk of becoming an inclusive manager and introducing a style of leadership and management which includes more participatory decision-making approaches and shared power relations between staff members, lay in challenging traditionally exclusive and autocratic ways of working, going against the flow, and de-normalising the normalised.

Another principal felt clearly uncomfortable with the risk of being in a social position where she was perceived to be in confrontation with others over an issue, and rather chose to avoid conflict. Further interpretation of her narrative revealed that she felt isolated from others in her community and insecure about her own empowerment and status level in the community, revealing a strong indication of her insecurity in herself, in the strength of her character and the person that she is, in her ability to lead a school, and in her ability to fit in and experience a sense of equality and belonging in her community. A closer interpretation of her narrative therefore leads me to question to what extent she wanted to create a relaxed and workable atmosphere among her staff for the sake of being seen as following the vision of inclusion, and to what extent her misgivings reflected her own personal insecurities and fears of finding herself in a leadership and school management position.

As highlighted by the findings from this research, the natural and social need to belong and be accepted and included by others, may present as a contradiction to teachers and principals challenging the old ways of leadership and management and implementing more inclusive practices. The choice to go with the flow, rather than against it; to collude with traditional and established relations of power, rather than challenge them, presents as taking the road less

travelled, of least resistance, the road less risky, safer and more comfortable. The benefits of this choice should not be underestimated, but do beg careful and serious consideration when investigating the experiences of teachers and principals faced with transition towards becoming more inclusive practitioners and managers.

What emerges clearly from these findings is that despite broader changes sweeping the policy landscape, teachers and principals as agents of change cannot be viewed as homogenous in their envisioned task of carrying the torch of inclusion with equal fire, passion and commitment. Despite their general realisation of their new roles and their intention to create the impression that their outlooks, attitudes and practices have changed, contradictions exist between and within individuals. The findings reveal that in many cases, while individual participants highlighted their personal liberation, change and transformation, their practices may actually be serving to strengthen, affirm and perpetuate traditional ways of seeing and being, in the home environment, in the life of the school and in the life of the community. Findings illuminate the reality that participants still bear the birthmarks of dominant and subordinate power relations and have to walk a path through existing stereotypes, discriminatory attitudes and behaviours - traditions, symbols and patterns of behaviour which remain distinctively persistent and powerful. Such contradictions, tensions and discrepancies impact on teachers' and principals' choices regarding their transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners and managers. As each individual responds in his or her own particular way, so each individual must be analysed within his or her own specific situated complexities.

Evidence from the findings suggests that it is largely management's realisation of the need to change and its commitment to inclusive principles, that filters through structures in the whole school, and results in the eventual sharing of management and decision-making. If inclusion is to be implemented at all levels within the education system, specific attention needs to be given to the process of transition towards inclusion with reference to the management components of schools (the principals, the deputy principals and the Heads of Department), where the need for democratic leadership and management is emphasised, where strategies to bring about this transformation in power relations within schools are outlined, and where effective and relevant support are guaranteed.

Unequal power relations in schools are reflected and modelled by those within the Department of Education itself, and between the Department and schools. Investigating power relations between principals and teachers within the school culture cannot be undertaken without viewing them within the broader context of the institutional culture of the whole system of education. Evidence from the findings suggests that just as it is largely school principals' and school management's commitment to and modelling of inclusive values that facilitates, enables and supports the development of an inclusive school, so it is largely the commitment to and modelling of inclusive principles on the part of the Department of Education, that facilitates, enables and supports school principals and management teams towards becoming inclusive.

5.2.5. The institutional culture

True and ideal transformation is not content to simply work at transforming teachers at the grass roots level of the system. The process of transformation needs to work at higher levels within the Department of Education itself as well. This section discusses findings related to the role that the structure of power relations within the Department of Education plays in the broader issue of inclusion.

- *Because of the way that the department is structured, you can't do what you want to do*

From participants' narratives it is clear that teachers are frustrated by constraints placed on them by the structure and bureaucracy of the Department of Education, which hinders their ability to move forward in creating an effective, functioning and inclusive system of education. Despite participants' commitment to realising inclusion, they do not find it easy to implement the principles of inclusion, and this frustrating situation inevitably erodes their positive attitude and willingness to persevere in becoming inclusive practitioners. Constraints which emerged from the narratives include a lack of resources, the high number of learners per class, an ineffective and bureaucratic ordering system, an inefficient system of communication, a lack of effective and efficient staff and skills development with regard to supporting new policy implementation and teachers becoming inclusive practitioners.

Although diversity, heterogeneity and multiplicity exist among individual teachers with regard to the depth of their knowledge and understanding of inclusive principles and practices, what emerged from participants' narratives is a strong sense that even if teachers have a deep knowledge and understanding of inclusion, they are not able to engage with it in a meaningful way in their everyday working contexts. Inefficient bureaucratic and communication systems within the Department are seen by teachers and principals alike as the cause of much constraint and frustration. Schools do not operate autonomously, as everything that is planned and implemented in schools has to go through the appropriate bureaucratic channels in the Department. Inefficiencies, delays and bureaucratic backlogs necessarily hinder schools' implementation plans. The expectation of policy implementation without effective and efficient support and development towards this end, is a concern and a source of immense frustration for teachers and principals. While they may be at the stage of being able to identify barriers to learning which learners experience, they are not all at the stage of knowing how to help learners with regard to minimising and overcoming these barriers. They believe they are not supported, assisted or developed sufficiently towards becoming inclusive practitioners in the full sense.

Such reports of bureaucracy and lack of support result in teachers and principals feeling neglected and unimportant and experiencing an element of isolation, marginalisation and powerlessness in their transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners and schools. Such experiences impact negatively on teachers' and principals' sense of self, both professionally and personally. The barriers which exist within the Department of Education do little to develop teachers' and principals' skill, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Nor do they build a positive relationship of trust and respect between teachers and principals and the Department of Education, but instead fuel the perception that the Department is disinterested and inauthentic in its commitment to realising the vision of inclusion.

Traditionally, South African teacher training and development has pivoted around conveying accurate subject matter and content, resulting in the view that teachers merely transfer knowledge. With the need for classroom practices to be aligned with the overall agenda of social transformation towards inclusion and social justice, teachers need to play an essential role in

organising, managing and facilitating appropriate and effective learning environments, which offer quality education to all learners by adapting the curriculum to cater for diverse learner needs, and so develop the full potential of all learners. These new roles and responsibilities of teachers require development and support which go beyond simply exposing teachers to new policy ideas. Policy not presented as a process of communal discourse, where teachers are encouraged to think and collaborate creatively towards minimising barriers to learning, development and participation of a diversity of learners, presents as policy being taught as a non-negotiable given, and teachers feeling devalued and silenced, and experiencing a loss of autonomy. What emerges from the findings is that much policy implementation is experienced by teachers and principals as elitist and automatic, prescribed and imposed on them from the Department of Education, and although teachers and principals are placed at the forefront of policy development and implementation, the individual teachers and principals themselves are not being taken into account, accommodated or given any voice or autonomy. There seems to exist a very real tension and contradiction between dominant institutionalised definitions of teachers and principals inherent in the structure of the education system, and policy definitions of teachers as autonomous, problem-solvers and independent, creative and critical thinkers. Interpretation of participants' narratives highlights the fact that teachers and principals ultimately feel powerless in the face of the inclusive call to challenge and deconstruct the master narratives of the past, challenge and transform traditional bureaucratic structures and systems which operate along unequal power relations within the Department of Education.

The following section presents a more detailed critique of way the Department of Education operates regarding policy implementation, and brings into question whether inclusion, despite its emancipatory and participatory ideology, is not in fact being presented as oppressive.

- *Inclusion: a politics of oppression*

While teachers admitted to a major cause of their initial attitudes and responses of negativity to inclusive education policy having its roots in a lack of knowledge and understanding of new policy, insecurity and a general fear of change, teachers' narratives also foregrounded their feelings of being overloaded with and confused by the new changes in education, and expressed frustration with always having to adapt themselves to new policies. This links to the conclusion of much

classroom-based research that education policy in South Africa is out of touch with classroom and school realities (Engelbrecht, et al. 1999; Fullan, 1993; Goodson, 1992; Hargreaves, 1992; Harley, et al. 1998; Jansen, 2001; Kalabula, 2002; Kavale, 2002; Matheson and Harley, 2001; Sayed, 2003; Soudien, 2002; Wearmouth, et al. 2000).

It has already been established that teachers' personal and professional identities are intertwined and feed off each other, and given that most participants reflected that teaching is the most important part of who they are and their personal and professional identity, whatever impact new educational policies have on teachers' professional identities, this can be directly translated to the impact they have on the teachers' whole sense of self. This links to Ntombela's (2007) findings that teachers perceive new education policy initiatives as a dominant form of discourse, based on a conception of rationality which denies the centrality of teachers' experiences. The construction, prescription and imposing of the policy image of teachers removes the control of the meaning of their lives from individual teachers, defining for them who they should be and prescribing how they should be as teachers, thus reinforcing structural inequality caused by differential access to knowledge. Ntombela (2007) warns that inclusive education could then be viewed as an exclusionary form of discourse which perpetuates the dominance of the system by forcing teachers to conform to a prescribed set of rules and suppressing their personal empowerment and liberation. Dominant education rationality can therefore be linked to power and control, and associated with oppression, marginalisation and exclusion. This is perhaps where the major contradiction and ambiguity lies - inclusion and all recent education policy initiatives profess to challenge and transform traditional inequalities and exclusions, while in fact they operate in ways that maintain and perpetuate these very forms of oppression. Radical inclusive theory views these conflicts and contradictions [taut] as a way of denying teachers access to their true potential selves – free from oppression and marginalisation, included, valued and empowered, as living and working according to a prescribed image and identity alienates teachers from their potential to embrace their role as agents of change which is the foundation stone of becoming inclusive practitioners (Ntombela, 2007).

Transformative education policy sets out to reform teachers through prescribed roles and specified competencies, which Popkewitz (1987) refers to as "an invasive form of governing the soul".

Bhabha's (cited in Fanon, 1986) thinking about colonialism and the colonial subject can be applied to teachers expected to become inclusive practitioners, and the ambivalence with which the Department of Education is experienced by participants is reminiscent of the notion of the forked tongue in Bhabha's (cited in Fanon, 1986) thinking. Progressive education policy may promise transformation, democracy, emancipation, social justice, equality and inclusion for all, but the fact that it specifies knowledges, attitudes, conditions, practices and relations that are often foreign to many teachers, positions teachers in a confusing, frustrating and no-win situation. For those teachers that are unable to embrace democratic transformative policy completely and become inclusive from the inside out, the only alternative is to dutifully, and at worst mechanically, submit to the expectations of policy which results in a reliance on the outer symbols rather than the substance of transformed practice, thus inspiring forms of mimicry (Mattson and Harley, 2001) and inclusive policy being reduced to mere rhetoric. Setting teachers up for failure in this way perpetuates naming them as 'other', and condemns "the subject to mimic alien form of autonomy, but not actually to exercise her own" (Mattson and Harley, 2001, p.313).

The critique of colonialism can be extended to the recent call for inclusion, where the Department of Education is seen as the colonising structure and ultimately responsible for producing marginal human beings (Mudimbe, 1998). The investigation of the contradictions, tensions and discrepancies which impact on teachers' transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners, highlights how inclusive education policy produces alienating factors for the teachers who attempt to embrace it. An interpretation of teachers' narratives leads to the realisation that many teachers experience inclusive education policy as marginalising and alienating, causing them to feel confusion, frustration and a certain amount of despair. This clearly positions teachers in an intermediate or marginal space in which alienation, ambivalence and paradoxes abound. Ideal, and often unrealistic, expectations for the roles teachers need to play in order to be considered inclusive, create a 'paradoxical site' in which teachers live out a difficult, if not impossible, relation to the future (Grossberg, 1996; McLaren, 1995). Teachers' need to renegotiate their identities has thrown them into a state of flux, bringing with it a crisis of representation and a steady erosion of confidence in prevailing conceptualisations of what constitutes knowledge and truth, and their pedagogical means of attainment (McLaren, 1995). With prescribed images and expectations of what *should* be, at odds with teachers' subjective experiences and existing identities, inclusive

education policy implementation may very well become predominantly a terrain populated by simulations rather representation (Hassan, cited in McLaren, 1995). This locating of the subject within the superficial meaning of the image, undermines individuals' exercise of power, and contributes to the demise and depoliticisation of the historical subject – suctioning out its capacity for critical agency (McLaren, 1995).

The criticism against the Department of Education here is that the development of new education policies presuppose "an already given set of procedures, institutions and terms of public discourse into which those who are excluded or marginalised are incorporated without change" (Young, 2000, p.11). Teachers are therefore expected to conform to hegemonic norms which have been developed by groups or elites that have all the power and influence over policy and implementation decisions, thus excluding or marginalising most teachers from any significant influence over this process or its outcomes. Applying Bhabha's thinking leads to the criticism that the same universalising impulse of colonial relations of power underlies the current call for inclusive education by naturalising, universalising and de-politicising the identity of the individual teacher (Popkewitz, 2001). While Ntombela (2007) claims that it is not helpful to dismiss all policy as elitist attempts to prescribe to teachers their identity and roles within that identity, there is some value in distrusting policy implementation strategies which assume a cultural homogenisation and which fail to respect and recognise the specificity of individuals.

Given the radical disjuncture between the ideals and practices of inclusive education and the traditional contexts and existing social relations of African rural teachers, it is important that policy definitions and prescriptions are made accessible, thereby transforming the traditional material conditions of knowledge production and teachers' access to this knowledge. Given that teachers' subjectivities are informed by their cultural and social contexts, and that teachers' everyday practices are inscribed within a politics of signification, effective knowledge acquisition and transformation should not be considered in isolation from teachers' everyday practices. What this implies is a sensitivity to the agency of the subjects. Teachers should not be treated as passive resources to be mapped and manipulated from a subject position of moral certainty that exercises an authoritative closure on what and how teachers should be, as this results in the re-othering of teachers, who are marginalised and disempowered by yet another dominant discourse (Porter,

cited in McLaren, 1995). Freire (1993, p.45) refers to such action and structured behaviour as the "oppressor consciousness" - the tendency of the oppressor to "in-animate" and control their subjects. The more teachers are controlled, and structured as inanimate subjects, the more the message is strengthened that they have no purpose except that which their oppressors prescribe for them, and the more they are constructed without freedom, autonomy, agency and authenticity. It is this reasoning that leads to equating teachers caught between the demands of policy and the realities of their lives, as archetypal postcolonial subjects, inhabiting an interstitial space, structured by ambivalence (Bhabha, cited in Fanon, 1986).

To ensure teachers' commitment to becoming inclusive practitioners, on a deep level and not simply as superficial mimicry, Ntombela (2007) encourages the consideration of transforming both the social relations of knowledge production and the type of knowledge produced, and that to do so requires challenging the fundamental questions of how and where policy/knowledge is produced and by whom, and, the structures and systems which determine how this knowledge/policy is disseminated or not. The conflicts and contradictions between experience and policy, access to and participation in the exclusionary process of defining teachers and their roles, and the authoritarian structure of the education system in implementing and monitoring these definitions and roles are of central relevance to a politics of inclusion. There is a need to remember that a politics of inclusion is directed at changing historic unequal power relations between previously privileged and dominant social groups and those who have been silenced, marginalised, excluded and constructed as subordinate, and that the true values of inclusive education include a system based on values such as equity, participation and justice; and, developing the full potential of each and every practitioner; participatory and collaborative decision-making – which "includes equally in the process that leads to decisions, all those who will be affected by them" (Young, 2000, p.11). The crisis of representation has been a concern of mine since the outset of this research, and hence my inspiration for adopting personal narratives as the main strategy of inquiry – the choice not to silence subjects but to include the 'other', by privileging participants' voices, previously underrepresented or not represented at all.

Freire (1993) believes that it is a contradiction in terms to have a pedagogy of liberation developed by the same people, departments and institutions that once were the oppressors, insisting that an

authentic pedagogy of liberation does not lie in the replacement of the former oppressive structure with a new one, which continues to subjugate teachers to prescribed practices and curricula. It is not possible then to speak of liberation in any real and true sense while the same rigid, repressive and bureaucratic structures still exist and still exercise their dominance. The culture of domination and prescription which has characterised the Department of Education needs to be confronted and every level within the Department of Education needs to undergo the radical transformation necessary to be able to adopt a model of deliberate inclusion and participation in order to include, manage and support teachers and principals towards becoming inclusive practitioners and schools.

Simply giving teachers a voice and expecting their participation may also not result in a radically inclusive form of participation. An inclusive process needs to be implemented, one which takes into account what Freire (1993, pp.27-56) terms "the tragic dilemma of the oppressed". Coming from a history where teachers have been passive recipients of prescriptions, "silent, castrated in their power to create and re-create, in their power to transform the world" (Freire, 1993, p.33), "in a state of submersion, impotent in the face of oppressive reality" (Freire, 1993 pp.37-38); and suddenly required to take active responsibility for creating transformed classrooms, may result in teachers manifesting a fear of freedom, as this would require them to reject prescriptions and replace these with autonomy and responsibility, and so, prefer the security of conformity (Freire, 1993). Teachers naturally experience the tension inherent in having been prescribed to and suddenly having choices. Given the circumstances which have produced their dilemma, it is only natural that teachers may distrust and lack confidence in themselves and their own ability to know, and may be prone to react in a passive and alienated manner when confronted with the necessity to struggle for their freedom and self-affirmation (Freire, 1993) and embrace and engage with their own transformative capacity. Fatalistic attitudes towards their situation presents as a clear indicator of teachers' levels of internalised subordination and disempowerment to act as agents of change towards creating inclusive classrooms and schools. Continued dependence and passivity of teachers, as the fruit of the concrete situation of domination and subordination which shaped them and their attitudes to teaching and learning, lends itself to a superficial conversion to the cause of liberation and transformation and the adoption of patterns of mimicry in order that teachers and schools look inclusive. One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation and true

inclusion is that an institution's dominant, prescriptive, and therefore oppressive, reality absorbs employees within it and thereby acts to submerge individuals' consciousness.

Any education reform initiatives therefore need to take serious cognisance of these realities when conceptualising and planning teacher development and support towards this end. If the stated intentions behind policy reform initiatives, in particular those around inclusive education, are to be realised, and a radically inclusive, democratic, participatory, and socially just system of education encouraged, the Department of Education needs to seriously consider the following issues: To what extent is the institutional culture transforming from its historically prescriptive characteristics and nature? Are the dominant discourses of the past changing and dissolving? To what extent is the management structure and organisational culture changing from a rigid hierarchical management system to a more inclusive and participative system? To what extent are teachers experiencing continued alienation, isolation, marginalisation and powerlessness?

5.3.   CONCLUSION

What emerges from this interpretation and discussion of the findings of how teachers construct their personal and professional sense of self in the light of inclusive education, and how they negotiate the tensions and contradictions which emerge in the process of becoming inclusive practitioners, is the realisation of the diversity which exists within individual teachers and between different teachers - that not all teachers are equally open to the idea of inclusion; that individual teachers' understandings of inclusive education are constructed differently; and that while teachers may understand many of the principles of inclusive policy, many have not yet made the shift personally. It is clear that teachers cannot be viewed as homogeneous in their envisioned role as agents of change, carrying the torch of inclusion with equal fire, passion, commitment and effectiveness. What emerges strongly is the realisation that there are seldom simple and clear understandings and implementations of inclusion in its pure and ideal sense, but rather fragmented and distorted practices – moments of inclusion existing side by side with exclusion.

It is wise to heed Gillborn's (1995) warning that while criticism is vital, it should be used constructively. A language of critique may prove to be too damning in its attack on and negative

assessment of teachers' understanding and implementation of, and commitment to, inclusion and inclusive education and their transformative capacity. A more constructive critique instead stresses the need for constant awareness of the differences which emerge between teachers' understandings and implementations of inclusion and their transformative capacity towards becoming inclusive practitioners. Critiques should not spell the end of inclusion, but rather offer the possibility of a more critical and effective inclusion.

What is of great concern is the broad pattern of mimicry and inclusive rhetoric, as teachers and principals respond to the pressure to conform to policy expectations of what inclusive practitioners and schools should look like. Of equal concern is the perpetuation of historic constraints which the Department of Education continues to impose on teachers and principals, resulting in their experiences of inclusive education policy initiatives simply as another dominant form of discourse which denies the centrality of teachers' experience, and the complexity of the real world in which they live and work.

CHAPTER SIX
A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE: IS THERE ANY HOPE?

6.1.   INTRODUCTION

The advent of the new democratic South Africa heralded the end of the politics of the past and the beginning of a politics which aimed to repair the damage to the country's social ecology. Policies were aligned with a politics of ethics, difference and democracy, thus reflecting the country's overall commitment to transform the social landscape to one that would redeem individuals from isolation, exclusion, alienation and marginalisation created by the indoctrinations and exclusions of the past, thus offering a politics of hope to the majority of individuals and social groups.

Inclusive education and education practising exclusion and segregation are two approaches to education that have their roots in different paradigms, in turn constructing different kinds of human relationships. Dividing practices of exclusion was central to the historic organisational processes in South African society and its system of education, and the use of these forms of organisation and the creation of separate and different curricula and pedagogies, formed particular identities and subjectivities which were learned and maintained. Transition towards inclusion therefore requires teachers to undergo fundamental changes in challenging previous identities and negotiating new identities, thus signifying "a fundamental dislocation with the past" (Parker and Harley, 1999, p.190).

If community values and teachers' personal values are at odds with the values inherent in inclusive policy, becoming inclusive practitioners does not simply represent a new approach to pedagogy – it also represents a profound challenge to their values and beliefs, and those of their communities. Such transition is fraught with contradictions and disassociations inherent in being faced with finding themselves caught in a dilemma of identity between two opposing social forces – the demands of inclusive ideology and policy images of what the ideal inclusive teacher should be, on the one hand, and community values and teachers' personal identities, on the other.

In the light of the inevitable contradictions and tensions between the 'real' and the 'ideal', research consistently finds that teachers' efforts to become inclusive have resulted in many cases in token inclusion - nominal reforms to classroom teaching and school management. To a large extent it has been found that teaching and management practices, while adopting broad patterns of mimicry in their attempts to make themselves and their schools look inclusive, remain largely unchanged, and while individual teachers and school managers pay lip-service to inclusion, many have not made the shift to inclusion on a deep personal level (Hargreaves, 1994; Hargreaves and Fullan, 1992; Mattson and Harley, 2001).

It is the concern that transformation and transformative policy is reduced to the status of rhetoric, that prompted this investigation into how teachers construct their personal and professional selves in the light of inclusive education, and how they negotiate possible contradictions that may emerge in the process of becoming inclusive practitioners. This chapter serves as a concluding chapter to this thesis: it presents the salient points of the key findings of this research, discusses possible implications of these findings, puts forward suggestions for further research, and considers the contribution this research makes to the body of knowledge around teacher transformation towards becoming inclusive practitioners and their implementation of inclusive education policy.

6.2. A CONCISION OF SALIENT POINTS OF KEY FINDINGS

This section presents the salient points of the key findings of this research endeavour. The four sub-sections (roots of exclusion, fruits of inclusion, within and between the old and the new, and perpetuating the colonised mentality) each present a key discovery from the investigation and interpretation of participants' narratives. Utilising archaeology as a frame of reference has allowed me, as the researcher, and the participants, as those being researched, to embark on a journey of discovery, an archaeological dig to excavate participants' life experiences and layers of memory which have comprised the trajectory of their lives as teachers and as people.

The various participatory methodologies utilised in the process of data generation and the interpretation of participants' narratives allowed for the excavation of some of the assumptions and expectations that have shaped participants sense of self over the years, and the unearthing of

some of the social forces and events that have defined them, and perhaps even bound them. This process of excavating participants' identities that history and tradition has moulded, and identifying parts of their present sense of self and teaching and management practices which are still firmly located in the exclusions and segregations of history and tradition, I refer to in the sub-section 'roots of exclusion'.

The sub-section 'fruits of inclusion' comprises a concision of the pieces of participants' deeply personal journeys of transition which supply evidence that they are willing to develop an alternate sense of self, think about their lives and themselves, as individuals and as teachers, in a different way, and begin to engage with and develop their transformative capacity towards becoming inclusive practitioners.

The sub-section 'within and between the old and the new' comprises a concision of the findings which locate the participants simultaneously *within* both the traditional, exclusive (old) paradigm and the inclusive (new) paradigm, and *between* these two opposing paradigms and social forces. This concision draws from the following themes which emerged from the narratives: teachers caught between a policy and a history, redefining teaching: a fundamental dislocation with the past, and developing an alternative sense of self.

The sub-section 'perpetuating the colonised mentality' draws directly from the theme which refers to the institutional culture, and comprises a concision of the realities and forces that still influence participants' professional and personal journeys of transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners. These realities and forces at work in participants' lives through the institutional culture they are subjected to, remain like the clinging soil of the past, threatening to perpetuate traditional and historic identities and social relations within educational institutions.

6.2.1. Roots of exclusion

Findings from this research serve as a reminder that teachers are necessarily products of a society steeped in historic forms of organisation and a system of social relations wherein exclusion and segregation abound, and that historic definitions that excluded and marginalised individuals and social groups have made up the very fabric of their sense of self, how they understand themselves

and others. It is clear from participants' narratives that the introduction of the notions of inclusion and inclusive education are very often in direct contradiction to teachers' traditional roots of exclusion and the historic belief in segregation on the basis of difference; and the expectation that teachers transform into inclusive practitioners inevitably throws them into a difficult space where they are forced to grapple with the dilemma of having to make choices between two very different identities and opposing social forces.

Teachers' engagement with new education policies which are out of alignment with their existing personal and professional identities highlights teaching and management strategies which are often based on rhetoric, mimicry, and essentially nominal reforms. Teachers are responding to the pressure of the expectation to be inclusive, by attempting to look inclusive. It is almost as if inclusion is a cloak that is donned. Evidence suggests that while teachers may understand many of the policy principles of inclusive education and use the rhetoric of inclusion to describe themselves and their teaching and management practices, a significant number of teachers have not yet made the personal shift to integrating the true ideology of inclusion into understanding and defining their sense of self.

What this research illuminates is the realisation that 'true' inclusion involves embracing a journey of personal transformation which begins from the inside, from a deep sense of self and identity within each individual teacher, and specific to each individual teacher. Becoming inclusive does not simply entail teachers being trained and developed in new and redefined teaching and management practices, but instead, entails the necessary redefinition of teachers' personal and professional sense of self, the development of a new sense of self, sense of others and sense of community. What it also illuminates is that an expectation of a total 'Damascus Road'[5] transformation is unrealistic, and that the path of transition in real life contexts is a murky terrain (Harley and Parker, 1999) rather than a clear-cut decision between the two paradigms. Inclusion and inclusive education is therefore inevitably engaged with from a multiplicity of interpretations, according to individual teachers' cultures, histories and geographies.

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[5] See previous footnote on 'Damascus Road' from chapter five.

6.2.2. Fruits of inclusion

Although there is much to despair of, findings from this research suggest that there are also reasons to invest hope in the advancement of inclusion and inclusive education. Some teachers are realising a glimpse of a larger destiny, a calling to be inclusive practitioners at the school level and at the broader level of the community. Although adopting the rhetoric of inclusion leads many teachers to accept the 'rightness' of the ideology of inclusion, there is evidence that some teachers are genuine in their commitment to the process of inclusive education, which extends the right of meaningful education and the opportunity of full and equal participation in life to all (especially those learners who are at risk of exclusion and marginalisation), and their view of inclusive education as a pedagogy of hope. Furthermore, although some teachers experience many challenges, barriers, frustrations and difficulties, they remain committed and passionate to continue their individual journeys of transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners. Any assumption, then, that all teachers remain passive in the face of forces of transformation, is inappropriate and misleading. Commitment and struggle towards inclusion is taking place at many sites. Such evidence keeps the flame of hope alive – hope that teachers will reclaim history, inhabit a space where they can "speak their own stories, listen loudly to the stories of others, and dream their own dreams" (McLaren, 1995, p.28).

It is clear from participants' narratives that teachers' professional identities play a major part in defining them as people and their personal sense of self, and the ideology behind becoming inclusive practitioners is clearly tied to most teachers' initial rationale for wanting to become teachers at the outset of their working lives. There is definite evidence of a parallel process of personal and professional growth and development in some teachers. In these teachers, the introduction of inclusion has: challenged old discourses of difference, attitudes and value systems; expanded awareness; and changed some teaching and learning practices. Evidence also exists that inclusion has encouraged some teachers to realise the need to continuously examine their assumptions, beliefs and practices, and has developed in these teachers new ways of knowing, understanding and making sense of the world and their individual personal and professional sense of self. In the case of some teachers there is a sense of something new developing, and new

sense being made of the way life and education can be, showing a sense of a willingness to move beyond the familiar.

There is definite evidence of the transformative capacity (Giddens, 1984) of some individual teachers - their perceived power and capacity to make changes in their personal and professional positions that challenge their historical positions of subordination and domination, and to make changes in their social arenas. If it is largely individuals' capacity for reflexivity (Giddens, 1984) that constitutes the power of that individual to challenge the social structures which shape attitude and behaviour, then evidence suggests that some teachers' capacity for reflexivity enables them to take on the struggle to become inclusive practitioners on a daily basis and that it is through engagement in such processes that new levels of autonomy and agency are being won.

What has emerged through this research endeavour is the need to recognise teachers as human beings - embodied, emotional, interactive, engaging in the process of creating, negotiating and striving for meaning in a wider, historically specific social world; engaging (whether consciously or unconsciously) in the process of forging a new sense of self within force fields of competing and converging influences, and within sites of contradiction and constraint. However ambivalent and precarious these reconstructions of self are, it is important to note that transition, in all its complexity, partiality and multiplicity, is taking place, however uneven.

6.2.3. Within and between the old and the new

Despite powerful and deep roots of exclusion, findings reveal some fruits of inclusion emerging amongst teachers. While signalling hope for the future of inclusion and the realisation of the dream of inclusive education, the reality is that only a percentage of teachers actually manifest the reflexive capacity necessary for effective and real transformation. Not all individual teachers are equally sensitive to the shifting contexts of contemporary social and educational life. Furthermore, acknowledging that it is the capacity of individuals to recognise at least partially the construction of self that makes liberation and transformation possible, leads to the understanding that not all individuals share the same precondition to assume self-consciously and critically new modes of subjectivity and a praxis of self- and social empowerment where they realise that they can act in ways other than they do (McLaren, 1995).

Regardless of the intentions of the particular methodological techniques designed to encourage and facilitate critical reflexivity in participants, the findings revealed that not all participants responded with equal reflexivity to the methodological techniques employed; that there is in fact an uneven distribution of critical reflexivity within the sample of teachers. To understand this phenomenon, we can fall back on the principle of individualism, which accepts that all participants are individuals and will respond differently to any stimuli or opportunities.

Findings from this research clearly support the fact that in any social situation, there exists a variety of points of view or ways of understanding, telling and engaging with the challenge of change, and a variety of cultures, contexts, geographies, agendas and interests. With the evidence that not all teachers engage equally in the act of cultural struggle in which new forms of identity and subjective formations are sought in the context of a deepening democracy, comes the constant reminder of the reality that there are multiple forces at work on and through individual teachers, increasingly fracturing and dislocating the familiar. The internal differences, rivalries, contradictions and disagreements within my sample of teachers, is a clear indication that any blanket statements, judgements, assessments or generalisations about African rural teachers, or teachers in general, would be misleading and incorrect. Individual teachers are positioned within and between the old and the new social forces, where evidence of moments of exclusion and inclusion exist alongside each other in a multiplicity of combinations.

6.2.4. Perpetuating the colonised mentality

This research raises the concern that the move towards inclusion and inclusive education is manifesting into a series of moral and political claims about progress through a liberal and democratic society, ultimately a progress which champions the development of Enlightenment thought and the western ideal. It serves to critically highlight the ways in which much transformative policy in education in particular, far from being a liberatory and empowering force, may in fact be serving as a blanket ideology to justify the perpetuation of unequal power relations and oppression.

The traditionally narrow focus on the mechanics of implementation results in displacing transformative policy's more sophisticated conceptual and philosophical intentions (Jansen, 1999). Thus, in spite of inclusion being founded on the principles of tolerance of the differences between

individuals or groups of people, evidence suggests that inclusion as implementation of policy is in many senses proving to aspire to become hegemonic in its own right. The reformed teacher is being invented by the normalising power of education policy and the Department of Education. However it is not a progress or a liberation, but simply another form of traditional power relations in which human subjectivities are constituted in and through a spiral of power-knowledge discourses (Gordon, 1980; Plummer, 2001).

Through policy implementation that serves to coerce teachers into a new historical dimension, teachers are forced into a space of disassociation between their authentic identities and contexts, and the imposed prescriptions of new policy images of the ideal, inclusive practitioner. Such a space is fraught with contradictions and disassociations, which in turn give rise to the many effects and outworkings of exclusion, alienation, dismemberment and distortion in terms of teachers' personal and professional sense of self and their attempts to look inclusive through seeming to engage with attitudes, principles and practices of inclusion.

Traditionally the Department of Education has functioned in a way that teachers have experienced as dominant and prescriptive and have often been rendered voiceless and powerless. It is therefore not surprising that anti-policy tendencies abound among teachers and that they interpret and reject all policy as authoritarian, prescriptive and oppressive. Marginalisation and alienation is perpetuated through the maintenance of unequal power relations between the implementers of policy, the Department of Education and teachers.

Clothed in the grand narratives of enlightened progress and development, (Kavale, 1992), theories of colonial expansion and discourse on African primitiveness justified the process of inventing a continent and naming methods for its regeneration. However these proved simply to be ideological explanations for forcing Africans into a new historical dimension. Transformative policy requires that teachers are to be improved, inducted into a new way of doing and being (Mudimbe, 1998), with new identities conferred upon them and a new order of activities and values and new rituals instituted. This research uncovers evidence that teachers are being subjected to and coerced into inhabiting a similar space of colonisation, where the effects of being named and buying into external definitions of self lead to their continued disempowerment and being robbed of a sense of

agency. This research therefore raises the important question: to what extent is new transformative inclusive policy and images of teachers as inclusive practitioners yet again placing teachers at the receiving end of a colonialist discourse, encouraged to transform by the very act of conceptualising, inscribing and interacting with them in terms not of their choosing, thereby making them into subjects once again?

Heeding these warnings against transformative projects that aspire to become hegemonic in their own right, there is a need constantly to challenge the transformative project of inclusion and inclusive education. The findings of this research lend weight to such warnings and the need to further investigate and challenge the effect of inclusive policy implementation in South Africa.

6.3.   IMPLICATIONS: A WAY FORWARD

This section discusses implications which arise from the salient point of the key findings of this research, and presents implications at a grass-roots level of teachers transforming their identities in line with becoming inclusive practitioners, at a broader more institutional and systemic level of inclusive education policy implementation strategies, and at a broader level still – one that explores the theorisation involved in the ideology of inclusion and inclusive education.

6.3.1. Transforming teachers' identities

A politics of inclusion necessarily implies a heterogeneous public and the accommodation of differentiation. Any ensuing education policies in line with the overall ideology of inclusion must therefore take into consideration historical exclusive social structures as part of trying to understand who teachers are; their starting point must necessarily be the understanding of those power relations which have subordinated, marginalised and silenced the interests of some social groups. The very real fact that African rural teachers are products of historical circumstances of domination and subordination, and that the policy image of teachers as inclusive practitioners is very often out of sync with teachers' everyday experiences and their personal, cultural and professional sense of self, cannot be overlooked and ignored. The deep culture of non-participation, inequality, social exclusion and marginalisation which has shaped and informed, and to a large extent still shapes and informs the very fabric of teachers' lives, has effectively curbed

and destroyed individuals' empowerment, full, equal and active participation, and authentic sense of agency over their lives and the future of South Africa's social landscape. Teachers are caught between personal and professional identities that have been shaped by historical expectations of impotence; passive recipients of prescriptions, "silent and castrated in their power to transform, create and re-create" (Freire, 1993, p.33), and the expectations of policy images of teachers as transformative agents, cultural workers, teaching for social responsibility, change and social justice, and making active choices and taking responsibility for creating transformed and inclusive citizens and classroom communities.

Such a dilemma leads to the inevitable questions: What chance does South Africa have of successfully transforming the very identities of individual teachers and educational institutions? How can the previously oppressed, as divided, inauthentic beings, participate in developing and implementing a pedagogy of inclusion and liberation? What needs to happen for teachers to be effectively and appropriately encouraged and supported towards this expectation of shifting paradigms and identities, of fundamentally breaking from the old and familiar traditional principles, understandings and ways of being, of developing a new sense of self, personally and professionally, which moves them out of their historic colonised mentality towards taking on the role of agents of change, cultural workers and teachers teaching for social change, responsibility, inclusion and social justice? How can this transformation and emancipation of teachers, individually and collectively, be facilitated?

6.3.2. Working *with* teachers

Policy implementation in general needs to move away from the tendency to reduce all individuals to simply the static outcomes of social determinants, to dissolve the agency of individuals with the claim that individuals are all produced and finalised as subjects within a discourse – merely products rather than producers of subjectivity. According to Freire (1993, p.55), "the only effective instrument is a humanising pedagogy in which the revolutionary leadership establishes a permanent relationship of dialogue with the oppressed".

Dialogue with teachers should comprise the foundation of any in-service training and development initiatives for teachers. Attempting to develop in teachers a pedagogy of liberation and

transformation by ignoring dialogue, reflection and communication and devaluing teachers' conscious involvement and reflective participation, reflects a basic mistrust of teachers' ability to think and reason, treats them as objects which can be manipulated, and attempts to change their practices through instruments of domestication. Instead of being instruments by which the Department of Education continues to manipulate and oppress teachers, methods of implementing policy and training and developing teachers towards this end should reflect the consciousness of the teachers themselves, and reflect a commitment to working *with* teachers towards transformation. Such a revolutionary form of leadership would mean that the Department of Education and teachers would be equally involved in the task of recreating knowledge towards the development of a pedagogy for liberation and transformation.

Only through committed involvement will teachers be encouraged to become authentic agents of change, cultural workers, inclusive practitioners and teachers for social justice. Just as Sacks (2000) believes it is impossible to create a good society without a vigorous process of public debate and without some consensus about the kind of society we wish to create, so it is impossible to create an inclusive society and an effective system of inclusive education without allowing teachers to become joint architects of something they help build and share with other teachers. Such a politics of involvement is essential. "The power of this vision is that it locates the source of action within ourselves. It restores the dignity of agency and responsibility. It leads us to see our lives not as the blind play of external causes … but as a series of choices in pursuit of the right and good… It allows us to see ourselves as on a journey towards the good society" (Sacks, 2000, pp.258-269), an inclusive society.

Participatory processes, which allow teachers opportunities to find and use their voices, and have their experiences and opinions valued, acknowledged and attended to, make a significant contribution to recreating new knowledge towards the development of a pedagogy for liberation and transformation. Having a voice and being encouraged and enabled to participate in processes which necessarily impact on them, is vital for teachers in transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners. Future policy implementation strategies would do well to follow such an approach.

It is necessary that teachers actively engage and participate with the struggle for liberation, inclusion and social justice. According to Freire (1993, p.31), "freedom… is acquired by conquest, not by gift, and must be pursued constantly and responsibly". It is for this reason, that any pedagogy must be forged *with*, and not *for* teachers.

There is an urgent need to support those teachers who seek to explore the shared values and beliefs of inclusion and social justice. The historical belief that whatever can be done on a larger scale is beyond any individual teacher's direct participation needs to be rectified, as this separates individual teachers from the wider community involved in education, and perpetuates in them a feeling of disconnectedness and powerless. Teachers, schools and departments within the education system have been working in isolation and in disconnected spaces for too long. An alternative framework of coexistence and working together needs to be created and supported at all levels within the system of education. If inclusion is to become a reality in South Africa's system of education, teachers need to feel connected to one another and to the Department of Education in general, joining their individual striving to a larger community of common purpose. This connectedness is part of the larger geography of hope. To establish this connectedness, teachers need to build confidence in a way of speaking which has become systematically undermined (Sacks, 2000).

However, relying on forced assent from individual parties or sectors, rather than genuine conviction, will not bring about effective implementation of genuine and true inclusion. Nor can this be achieved through bureaucratic rationality, wherein people are defined by their function. Some commitments (such as the collective sentiment and shared determination to build a more inclusive and socially just society, community or system of education) lose all their values when they are coerced. Furthermore, forced compliance to implement policies would betray the ideal of a society of autonomous agents – an open society of emancipated individuals.

6.3.3. New wine needs new wineskins

A critique of the implementation of inclusion which exists within the plan of the Department of Education strongly relates to the warning embedded in the biblical parable of new wine in old wineskins (Matthew, 9:17). In ancient times, goatskins were used as wineskins to hold wine. As the

fresh grape juice fermented, the wine would expand and the new wineskin would stretch. But a used skin, already stretched, would break (NIV, 1985). Just as new wine could not be contained effectively in old wineskins, new education policies cannot be effectively implemented within the confines of old forms and structures of organisation and conceptualisation of policy implementation. If transformation of the education and training system within South Africa is to move beyond mere rhetoric of new inclusive education policies, where only nominal reforms are put into practice by the majority of teachers and schools, barriers to development and participation need to be addressed at all levels of the system of education.

It is important that the injustices at the very centre of this traditional discourse characteristic of the Department of Education, be revealed and that a revolutionary form of leadership adopts the commitment to building a critical mode of developing teachers that refuses to: suppress their histories, deny their contexts and realities, dissolve the agency of individuals, deny them their claim to subjecthood; and that opposes: the tendency to reduce them to simply the static outcomes of policy determinants; and any development and pedagogical practice that insists that certain individual or groups of teachers cannot speak.

Freire (1993) warns against the spectres of the past haunting revolutionary transformation – that teachers' contribution to the pedagogy of inclusion and liberation will be impossible if they are not liberated, empowered and inclusive themselves, but are merely being produced as "domesticated Others" through a process of "obligatory acculturation" (Spivak, 1987, pp.560-561). True and meaningful transformation towards inclusion and inclusive education will be impossible if historic forms and structures of organisation and conceptualisation of policy implementation within the Department of Education itself are not drastically revised.

6.3.4. A revolutionary style of leadership and management

At the heart of transformation, is the necessary breakdown of traditional, authoritarian forms of leadership and management, in favour of an institutional culture within the Department of Education less dominated by generalities and master narratives, and styles of leadership and management where an increased sensitivity to diversities exists. In such an ethos and culture, a multiplicity of 'local' rationalities are acknowledged and allowed to find their voices.

Universalism does not entertain consideration of wider differences and positions among the teacher population and is distinctly western. The trend towards postmodernism and the approach of critical theory reject any grand claims or notions that there is one single universal truth or grand narrative that creates order, continuity and restraint from a privileged perspective. Implicit in the postmodern stance is a warning against the dangers in abstract and generalised normative theorising, and a preferred highlighting of the importance of respecting the existence of a plurality of perspectives, and local, contextual studies. The movement away from grand narratives, universalism, and single overarching ontological, epistemological and methodological paradigms, adopts the commitment to study the world or phenomena always from the perspective of the interacting individual, and the belief that a politics of liberation must always begin with the perspectives, desires and dreams of those individuals and groups previously and/or presently marginalised and silenced (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

This requires a system of training, development and support which can encompass differences in subjectivity, instead of institutional attempts to impose and monitor an all-encompassing perspective. It is important to recognise that discourses and understandings of inclusion are necessarily constructed differently by different individual teachers and that "rigorous and reputable ways of enabling the discourses to inform one another" should be enabled (Engelbrecht, et al. 1999, p.9) through the means of collective problem-solving "which depends for its legitimacy and wisdom on the expression and criticism of the diverse opinions of all the members" (Young, 2000, p.6).

The complex diversified conditions and discrepancies across and within the nine provinces in South Africa (such as differences in terms of fiscal allocation, previously inherited disparate service provision, rural disparities and infrastructure, as some of the complex conditions), pose particular challenges to the establishment and sustaining of an inclusive system of education, and lead to Naicker's concluding that an inclusive system of education could take various forms and be characterised very differently across the various education sites in South Africa (Naicker, cited in Engelbrecht, et al. 1999). Similarly, complex diversified contexts and discrepancies between and

within individual teachers and schools, lead to the realisation that inclusion and inclusive education will take on various forms among individual teachers and schools.

Transformation calls for revolutionary leadership and management within the Department of Education, which enables a widening and deepening of our understanding about and engaging with inclusion. If the Department of Education is to adopt a revolutionary style of leadership and management in line with inclusive politics, what is required is a more open system that accommodates differentiation (more relational interpretations of inclusion); a system of multiple, overlapping manifestations of inclusion. Instead of enfolding all teachers and schools within a single discourse of inclusion and inclusive education, an inclusive politics establishes "a heterogeneous public engaged in transforming institutions" (Young, 2000, p.12). The ideals of inclusion and social justice cannot be prescribed as blueprints, but should rather be conceptualised as a matter of degree, at times only present intermittently, partially or potentially, allowing teachers and schools to vary in both the extent, depth and the intensity of their commitment to the inclusive process.

6.3.5. The need for a critical theory of inclusion

The overall theorisation of inclusion has implications for educational practice which we cannot afford to ignore. Inclusion focuses on the specific needs of the individual; the identification and minimising of any barriers or potential barriers to learning, development and participation that the individual may experience; and, adjusting the environment, ethos and curriculum towards these ends, thus better catering for the needs of all individuals and creating enabling environments for each individual to reach his/her full potential. Principles of valuing diversity, personal agency among individuals, a sense of freedom to develop in their own way and at their own pace, encouraging active democratic participation in their own development, adjusting curricula to the specific needs of individuals, creating enabling developmental environments, and offering meaningful, relevant and quality learning, development and participation, therefore resonate with an inclusive culture and ethos.

A critical theory of inclusion questions the definitions of and prescriptions for teachers which recent inclusive education policy seek to impose on teachers, and the absence of teachers from this very process. A critical theory of inclusion therefore questions the way in which the Department of Education has gone about disseminating and implementing new policies. Applying a critical lens to understanding and engaging with inclusion encourages and facilitates the process of recognising and understanding structures which have the power to exclude, and the position of teachers within these. Envisioning transformative possibilities in the system of education, necessarily involves revealing exclusionary practices within the system, at all levels. Adopting a critical lens means continually troubling the mechanisms of power within education departments and institutions and searching for possibilities of change.

Young (2000) encourages seeing public assertion of experiences of people located in structurally or culturally differentiated social groups as an important resource for democratic discussion and decision-making, believing that these differences derive from relationally constituted structural differentiations – socially situated differences, proposals, claims and expressions of experience, and are important forms of participation and expression from a socially situated perspective (Young, 2000). Investigating the meaning of structural, social relations and the implications of the way teachers are positioned in them is a vital part of the process of troubling mechanisms of power. An adequate politics of inclusion – a critical theory of inclusion and inclusive education - must be accountable to the forms of oppression and interests which divide teachers, as well as those which teachers share. The purpose is to hold onto inclusion as a politics which must have tangible results, and to use the theory of inclusion critically, in order to develop strategies for change on behalf of inclusive interests.

6.4. WHAT CONTRIBUTION DOES THIS RESEARCH MAKE?

The contribution this research makes is directly related to the overall purpose of investigating how teachers construct their personal and professional selves in the light of inclusive education, and how they negotiate possible tensions and contradictions that may emerge in the process of becoming inclusive practitioners. Not only does this research shed light on how these realities and

experiences impact on how they make sense of who they are, as people and as teachers, it also extends to contributing to a critical look at how such contradictions, tensions and discrepancies inherent in becoming inclusive practitioners may be reconciled and accommodated; and, to what extent traditional, exclusive discourses are being challenged and are dissolving. This research also opens up possibilities for further critical research into teachers and inclusive education policy implementation. Furthermore, this research contributes to debate about the feasibility of inclusion and inclusive education in South Africa by commenting on what hope emerges that inclusion and inclusive education will be effectively implemented in South Africa.

6.4.1. Research enabled participants' telling of the self

The intention of this research is to foreground and investigate teachers' experiences (as a fundamental medium of culture, agency and identity formation), in order to reach a better understanding of the ways and forms through which teachers learn to define themselves, within the context of educational transformation towards inclusive education. Methodologies intended to offer teachers opportunities to examine their own lived experiences, memories and subordinate knowledge forms, to reflect on their own experiences outside of frames of reference related to the pilot project or the Department of Education inclusive education implementation strategies, in the hope that these would reveal local forms of knowledge and beliefs that teachers use to give relevance and meaning to their experiences, and that these would in turn, illuminate the processes by which they are produced, legitimated or disconfirmed.

The telling of the self, or the ability to relate one's narrative, does not naturally exist in all individuals. It is instead "an effect produced by forms of autobiographical practice and does not precede it" (May, 2003, p.355). The telling of the self is a form of cognition (Giddens, 1991) - a way of knowing and understanding the self that reflects a sense of interiority (the movement of the self from the outside to the inside) – and the self gains this form of cognition or interiority through particular techniques. It is a belief supported by many theorists that the act and methods of remembering the self, reflecting back on past experiences, and the actual telling of the self, are significant in the formation of self-knowing and strongly related to the construction of character and personhood. The particular methodological techniques used in this research served as prompts and spaces which facilitated participants' remembering of self, reflecting on the self, and telling the

self. The particular techniques were designed to encourage participants to go beyond mere description of their experiences, towards engaging in critical reflection of the various internal and external forces that shaped these experiences. They were also designed to facilitate and encourage the knowing of self by participants, and thus attempted to seek out the possibilities of transformation in the everyday experiences of self and knowing that inevitably cause subtle shifts in the consciousness and ways of self-knowing. The design and creation of spaces for participants to remember, reflect on and tell their stories, were intended to find innovative, non-threatening ways of participants finding their voice in order to investigate the research issues and questions, but these simultaneously created possibilities for change and empowerment in participants by encouraging and facilitating the development of the kind of vision of mobility in regard to identity that calls for reflexivity entail.

6.4.2. Significance and benefit to a wider audience

The principle of beneficence requires that research is of benefit directly to the research participants and/or more broadly to other researchers and the education society at large. Although the narrative data generated clearly pertains to the individual teachers within the research sample, there exists some level of shared reality or shared underlying structures with a broader audience of teachers. Realities as experienced by individual participants in this sample are often the result of processes of interaction between structures existing beyond the individuals investigated and the individuals themselves. Elements of these individual stories and accounts, and the interpretation and discussion which emerge from these, are able to highlight important issues and learning about how teachers *in general* are dealing with the advent of inclusive education and how they are negotiating their personal and professional identities in the light of inclusive principles and practices. These will be of significance and benefit to other teachers, in South Africa and in other countries, faced with the challenge of transformation towards becoming inclusive practitioners, and to teacher developers and policy implementers. The broader significance of this research lies in its succeeding in its potential to benefit participants, and a wider audience of teachers and readers who engage with this thesis.

Adopting an interpretive approach to this research process was firmly rooted in the premise that human existence cannot be separated from its context, and aimed at allowing teachers'

experiences of and their insights into their journeys of transition towards becoming inclusive practitioners to speak for themselves (Huysamen, 2001). One of the limitations of the interpretive approach, discussed earlier in this chapter, is this relativity of perspective, the inability to generalise data to other instances and the abandoning of the global for the local. If this research is to be of any relevance to a wider audience of teachers and educators involved in the areas of policy formation, evaluation or implementation, it needs to be able to say something about teachers' experiences of embracing and implementing inclusive education policy beyond the specific experiences of the participants in this research sample.

Drawing on the notion that interpretive inquiry can include both dimensions of specific individual realities and broader generalisations, enabled me to reconcile adopting an interpretive approach with the need for a level of generalisation, and meant that I could retain the location of my research within an interpretive stance, without having to compromise my interest in pursuing a broader relevance of the research.

6.4.3. Research aligned to critical educational research

This research went beyond merely documenting participants' experiences and perceptions of engaging with inclusion and inclusive education policy. By encouraging participants to participate actively in their own learning and development processes, this research drew on many of the principles which constitute participatory research and can therefore be considered successful as a tool for developing knowledge. Not only did engaging in narrative inquiry open up a space for participants to tell their stories, thereby functioning to construct meaning, but by engaging participants in deliberate consideration and reflection of their experiences, it also functioned as a means of participants fashioning new perceptions and new meanings. Participation in this research and the critical reflection that it facilitated and required, involved participants in developing a consciousness of critical issues that many had not been given the opportunity to develop before. This research has therefore had the potential to encourage the construction of new ways of understanding participants' realities and themselves, and thus holds great promise for making a positive contribution to the lives of teachers, personally and professionally.

If this research is to be of any relevance to the broader field of policy formation, evaluation or implementation, and intends to lead to action that will change the world, it needs both the richness of interpretation and the ability to move beyond this to make claims about processes and structures. It needs to align with a focus of always investigating more than individual experiences of a phenomenon, always employing a language of analysis which has serious political implications. It needs to embody Giroux (1998) and McLarens' (1995) claim that experience should never be celebrated uncritically, that while the research needs to respect the specificity of difference, it needs simultaneously to articulate these differences critically within a politics of liberation. While acknowledging and respecting the importance of subjective meaning and the specificity of differences among individual participants, adopting a critical approach has taken this research beyond a focus on the micro-level interpersonal interactions and an uncritical celebration of all specific experiences and particular meaning systems of individual participants, to recognising that there are specific relations that shape social relations, thus placing individual participants' experiences and contexts within a larger macro-level context. While adopting an interpretive approach has enabled this research to provide accounts of individuals participants' experiences, mechanisms and systems of interpreting and making sense of the world, adopting a critical approach has enabled this research to investigate the existence of unequal power relations which exist between teachers as individuals with other individuals, and between teachers as a group and the Department of Education – how they came about historically, how they are perpetuated and maintained, how they impact on teachers professionally and personally, and how these could possibly be changed.

Critical research seeks to provide participants with a resource that will help them understand and change their world. In the sense that this research facilitated a process of knowledge production and developing reflexivity on the part of some of the participants, this research is aligned to critical research. Engaging in narrative inquiry has provided a powerful and effective platform - a starting place - for empowering participants to build a better life for themselves and others (Lyons and Kubler LaBoskey, 2002), in that it has actively involved participants in the production of knowledge and, potentially, action which is directly useful to them as teachers, therefore succeeding in empowering them through the process of constructing and, hopefully, using their own knowledge, towards the transformation of their reality. The space created by the research design and

methodology of this research succeeded in affirming rather than muting the participants' voices, and enabled them to reflect on their own subjectivities, and explore the strategies they employ to redeem their power and identity. The methods of data generation succeeded in encouraging the active, creative, imaginative and authentic participation of participants, thereby affording them the space for critical self-reflection on internal and external structures and systems which may have been keeping them trapped in traditional, unequal and harmful power relations.

The potential of this research as a transformative endeavour lies in facilitating the empowerment and liberation of participants to change their conditions and renegotiate their personal and professional identities to allow for the building of a better world, and in doing so, inform aspects of a counter-discourse which may help to organise wider struggles against relations of domination, and encourage other teachers to participate in their own self-transformation. With this potential capacity, this research is in line with some of the objectives of critical educational research.

6.5.   LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

The purpose of critical research is to provide a vision of a possible future (Neuman, 2000) and empower individuals to change the world for themselves. Research can only be considered a tool for development if it enables participants to go beyond critical analysis of their situation, to planned action of a transformative nature, and herein lies the limitation of this research endeavour. There can be no hard proof of this in the scope of this research. I cannot make the claim that this research *has* transformed or *will* transform participants' realities, that it *has* proved or *will* prove directly useful to the communities in which they work and live, or that it *has* mobilised or *will* mobilise all participants in the sample towards action any different from that in which they have always been engaged. Although this was never the sole intention of this research, my positioning within this research can be labelled political in that I had an emancipatory consciousness, which therefore led me to adopt a critical research paradigm. I would have liked to have worked more with the participants towards participatory transformation and emancipation from the domination and perpetuation of the constraints they experience. I would have liked this research to be a truly transformative endeavour, by extending it to include further critique of participants' social and institutional conditions, thus serving as a catalyst towards developing a plan of change (Neuman,

1999) which could lead individual participants towards the broader goal of transforming the social order (Fay, 1975), developing new social relationships and so causing major social change. This could prove to be a worthwhile endeavour for future research.

6.6.   POSSIBLE AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research would do well to take heed of the conclusion reached by much policy analysis and classroom-based research - that South African policy implementation is distressingly out of touch with teachers' personal and professional identities, their context-specific realities and everyday experiences. It was this criticism, that policy implementation considers teachers in too abstract a sense, instead of considering teachers in their individual contexts and realities, that prompted my adopting a research focus which started from the politics of the personal, and aimed to investigate "*these* people, in *this* place, *this* landscape" (Sacks, 2000, p.50). This is a focus which further research into teachers' transformation into becoming inclusive practitioners and their implementation of inclusive education, would benefit by adopting.

The particular methodologies used in this research – the use of narrative inquiry and visual methodologies as creative prompts in the generation of data - could inform further research aiming to investigate teachers' lived experiences and teachers' implementation of education policy, towards the particular understanding of the lived relations that characterise teachers' lives and contexts, both personal and professional, and how these teachers can be effectively and appropriately supported and enabled (particularly teachers from subordinate classes and groups) to transform the dominant school culture in the interests of a more just and inclusive society.

While this research focused on a sample of African rural teachers in KwaZulu-Natal, further research could be conducted with other groups of participants. Further research could focus on teachers and principals from urban schools, Department of Education officials, and teacher trainers from pilot projects, NGO's and higher education institutions, towards investigating how they experience inclusion and inclusive education policy, possible constraints, tensions and contradictions that emerge from their experiences, and how they might be redefining and renegotiating their personal and professional identities in the light of inclusion and inclusive

education. These would generate data which could be compared with data from this research, to investigate similarities, differences and the implications of these, and to give a broader understanding of the impact inclusion is having on more groups of people.

Although this research is in line with some of the objectives of critical educational research, in that it enabled knowledge production and the development of reflexivity in some participants, it was only in the scope of this research endeavour to begin a process of empowering these teachers and principals to participate in their own self-transformation. This research therefore opens up areas of possibility for further critical research to take this process of empowering teachers and principals towards participation in their own emancipation, further. Further research could be considered tools of development by utilising critical and participatory methodologies which enable participants to go beyond critical analysis of their situation; afford participants ongoing opportunities to engage in the process of eroding ignorance and enlarging critical insights; and lead to planned action which improves teachers and principals conditions, contexts and lived experiences. Action research endeavours could engage participants in a cyclical process of planning, action and critical reflection with regard to implementing inclusive education. This would allow researchers and participants to directly investigate classroom and school practices towards making them more inclusive, while simultaneously facilitating constant, critical reflection on a personal as well as a professional level, encouraging in participants the development of their transformative capacity and the redefinition and renegotiation of their identity and sense of self.

6.7. CONCLUSION: 'NEW UNFOLDINGS' TOWARDS A POLITICS OF HOPE

Accepting and respecting the specificity of difference, while simultaneously articulating 'differences' within a politics of liberation, offers all teachers equal access to hope. Acknowledging the diverse voices, experiences, histories, and community traditions which characterise participants' lives, in schools and their community, and their personal and professional sense of self, offers participants a space which does not deny them a voice and the telling of their narratives. Recognising individual teachers as people, and valuing the uniqueness in each of their contexts, lived experiences and geographies, models ways of researching, ways of working, ways of seeing, that speak to individuals' deepest needs as social animals (Sacks, 2000). As this research has intended to do,

spaces need to be created to investigate the ways in which teachers understand and make sense of, and eventually begin to resist, their realities and experiences of oppression, exclusion, social injustice, and lived difference. Creating such spaces will also enable the investigation and facilitation of how such resistance points are being transformed and can still be transformed into strategies of power.

Yudice (in McLaren, 1995) believes that we need to believe that the open-endedness which characterises the postmodern condition can make possible new unfoldings. Similarly, we need to see the potential and the possibilities which can arise from a multiplicity of teachers' realities and experiences in times of transition towards inclusive education. Extending equal recognition, affirmation, voice and opportunities to all teachers is aligned with the ideologies of inclusion and social justice, and provides a strong starting-point for a politics of hope.

The transformation of the social landscape in South Africa must be reflected in a transformed landscape of the individual. All teachers are called to be agents of change in this new dispensation, regardless of their histories and geographies. The ultimate outcome of such a revisionary enterprise may be re-conceptualising and restructuring social relations and society at large, but it involves re-conceptualising and restructuring the way individuals think of and define themselves. In times which call for such radical transformation, we need to remember that of all things, change is hardest to bear.

Although the scope and extent of this research may not have revealed evidence of uniform transformation within the sample of participants or even major personal and professional transformations in a few participants, I take hope in what Sacks (2000) says, that "the relationship between ideas and history is rarely immediate" (Sacks, 2000, p.121) and "social processes are not stories. Stories have endings, history does not. [Social processes] do not have a beginning, a middle, and an end. They are set in motion by forces… which continue to operate long after the conscious goals of architects of change have been achieved" (Sacks, 2000, p.76). With this in mind, who is to say, then, that such a humble intervention as this will not become a force that will put into motion an ongoing process of developing reflexivity and growing commitment to inclusion, and the transformative capacity of the participants, and that these will continue to operate long

after the immediate goals of this research have been achieved? It is my hope that this research has begun a process of critical reflection and excavation within individual participants towards the unearthing and development of their transformative capacity towards becoming inclusive practitioners, and taking on the mantle of agents of change and heralds of a better order. It is my hope that these participants will continue their journey towards inclusion as pioneers and heroes of a new ethos, teachers who will touch the lives of their many learners in positive ways, modelling the attitudes, ideals, principles and practices of inclusion: that all learners are equally respected, accepted, accommodated, valued, acknowledged, affirmed and loved.

Image 6.1.   Researcher's photograph of a mural which high school learners had painted on their classroom wall

> Hope leads… to courage… Hope… is what empowers us to take risks, to offer commitment, to give life… to comfort the afflicted, to lift the fallen, to begin great undertakings, to live our ideals… It is the best way, perhaps the only way, of retaining our sense of the underlying goodness of the world and the miraculous gift of life itself (Sacks, 2000, p.267).

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APPENDIX A
LETTER OF CONFIRMATION OF RESEARCH TO DOE

Faculty Research Committee
Faculty of Education
Edgewood Campus
University of KwaZulu-Natal

Mr Alwar
Department of Education
Pietermaritzburg

To whom it may concern

RE: Research Clearance – Ms Antionette D'Amant – 811810992

This letter serves to confirm that Antionette D'Amant is a bona fide student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and is currently studying towards her Doctoral Studies.

She currently wishes to engage in research and as such requires permission to conduct research in the schools identified in her research proposal.

Should there be any queries please contact Derek on the following telephone number 031 260 3524.

Many thanks

D Buchler
Research Officer
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus

APPENDIX B

School of Education and Development
Faculty of Education
Edgewood Campus
University of KwaZulu-Natal
April 2007

Dear ……………………….(name of teacher),

While working with teachers in the various pilot schools in the Inclusive Education Resource and Educator Development Project, I developed a particular interest in how they were experiencing the challenges of implementing inclusion in their particular contexts. I have registered with the University of KwaZulu-Natal to do my PhD. The focus of my research is to explore teachers′ realities and experiences of implementing inclusive education policy. I have selected a number of teachers that I worked closely with during the course of the project, who showed a good grasp of inclusive education policy and a commitment to implementing inclusion, to participate in my research. I would like to invite you to be one of these participants.

Being a participant would require that I spend some time in conversation with you around the above issues. These conversations would take the form of a series of contact sessions (three at the most) where we would explore in detail your personal experiences and realities with regard to implementing inclusion in your classroom and school. Each session would take approximately one hour and will be scheduled at a time and place convenient for you. These will be recorded in order that I keep an accurate record of your responses. Recorded interviews will be transcribed and interpreted together with all other participant′s interviews, in order to identify themes and patterns in the responses. The final research dissertation may well use exact quotes from any of the participants. These will, however, not make mention of any one teacher′s name.

As a participant, you will not stand to benefit in any way. By agreeing to participate in my research you will simply be doing me a great favour towards the acquisition of my PhD. I would like participants to feel comfortable about being honest and open in the interviews and not to fear that the information disclosed may harm their reputation or jeopardise their employment or career. For this reason, participants′ identities will in all circumstances be treated as confidential. Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Regular opportunities to discuss and renegotiate issues during the course of the research will be scheduled, and, if at any stage a participant wishes to withdraw from this research for any reason, they would be free to do so.

Your experiences and insights into the challenges you are facing as you work towards inclusion in your classroom and school will be extremely valuable to my research. I am hoping that by representing authentic voices, experiences and realities of teachers, this research will offer important lessons and recommendations towards the successful implementation of inclusion.

Please give my invitation your consideration. If you are willing to participate, please be so kind as to sign the following declaration. (While your name appears on this declaration, it is solely for the purpose of acquiring ethical clearance for this research.)

If there is anything you would like to discuss further with me, please feel free to contact me on ……….. My research supervisor is Professor Naydene de Lange and she can be contacted on ………...

Kind regards,
Toni D'amant

I, ………………………………………………………………(full names of participant)
Hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.
I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

……………………………………   ………………

APPENDIX C

PROMPT FOR SEASON ONE OF DATA GENERATION

Please write your responses to the following questions:

- What were your reasons for becoming a teacher?

- **What was your initial response to WP6 and inclusive education?**

- **Why do you think you responded this way?**

APPENDIX D

PROMPT FOR SEASON TWO OF DATA GENERATION

Participants were each given an A4 size plain paper and a pencil and asked to draw or represent in some way their response to the prompt question "Who Am I ?"

It was stressed that there could be no right or wrong drawings, and that depictions were open to individual creativity and expression, so it didn't matter that participants may think they cannot draw. They could respond to the question in any way they chose to.

Participants were given some time to draw and then asked to speak to their drawings to me and the group, through the prompt "Tell the group about your drawing".

Participants were then given an A3 sheet of paper each and asked to glue their A4 drawing in the middle of this new sheet (glue was provided). They were then asked to extend their original drawing, to explore and depict the relationship between aspects of their identities and inclusive education. The specific prompt for this level of data generation was "Who am I in the light of inclusive education?"

Again, participants were encouraged to speak to what they had added onto their original drawing.

APPENDIX E

PROMPT FOR SEASON THREE OF DATA GENERATION

May 2008

Hello again,

We have explored "Who You Are" in the drawings you did.
In this exercise, we'll be looking at the events and/or developments that have made a difference in your journeys of change, personally (as a person) and professionally (as a teacher).

By 'your journey of change', I mean the time in your life that you have been aware of, thinking about, and engaging with inclusive education and the meaning of inclusion in general.
Your reflections can start at the beginning – that is the moment you first heard about inclusion and/or inclusive education … and then continue to the present … and look ahead to the future.

If someone maps or plots their journey from one place to another, one would expect them to draw landmarks along the way – important objects or features that stand out along the way.
In the same way, you will be taking photographs of the significant events and developments that have to some extent shaped you, defined you, enabled you, and hindered you on your journeys towards becoming inclusive teachers.

- ➢ To enable means to provide with the means or the opportunity to do something
- ➢ To hinder means to get in the way of something, or to hold you back from moving ahead and succeeding in achieving or reaching some destination or goal.

In the photographs you take, you can re-create the scenarios of these significant events and/or developments, as if they were landmarks along the road to inclusion.

You can work in small groups in deciding how best to depict these scenarios, and then in setting up the scenario for the photograph.
Some scenarios might be individual people's events or developments.

Some may be shared events and developments by everyone in the group or just a few group members.

Each camera will have a spool of 24 exposures, so you will have ample opportunity to set up some scenarios that depict enabling and hindering events and developments in your journeys towards inclusion.
If you make a mistake or two, it doesn't matter.
I will collect the cameras with the finished spools still in them next week, and then have them developed and printed.
I will then visit you again and spend some more time with you, where you can tell me the stories depicted in the photographs you have taken.

Thank you for your continued participation.
I am so enjoying seeing you all again and spending these times with you.

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT OF A CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEW WHERE TEACHERS 'SPOKE TO' THEIR SELF-DRAWINGS

Researcher: Tell me about your drawing of yourself…

<u>Participant A</u>

This is myself and my different roles.
First, I am a member of the community – the Estcourt community.
I'm a teacher and I also do tutoring.
But I'm also a student at the university.
I'm also a Dad, four daughters. One is 20, 10, 5 and 6 months.
This is their Mum. She is also a teacher at a primary school in Thabamhlope.
And she's also a student.
And my other role – I'm also a Principal of a school.
My school is dominated by females, lots of females.
There are only 2 males – 3 including myself, at the school.
And this is my mother. I'm born of a single parent. She only went as far as Grade 5.
Funny enough, she was the top student, when she had to leave school because at that time, when you are a girl, you did not need education – that's what people thought. She has got lots of worries, particularly, she is worried about the composition of my family: 4 daughters. She thinks that in order for the family to be complete, I must have a son. She has been saying that all the time. But she doesn't know that I'm going to have 4 children – the one that is 6 months is the last one. I'm not going to tell her.
I also serve in the union – the South African Democratic Teachers' Union. I'm an educators' convenor there.

Researcher: What was the first thing that came to your mind? Being a Dad?

Yes, I enjoy it a lot. It's just that when I leave school in the afternoon, I know that I'm not going to do anything else, but be with my daughters. So that's the most important thing for me. I think this comes from the fact that I didn't get the chance to be with my Dad. He was all over, involved in crime. He didn't have time for anyone, because he was most of the time, away doing, we don't know what. I thought that, not to repeat what was done to us, let me spend some time with my daughters.

Researcher: Is there any reason why you put your mother right at the bottom of the page?

I think it's because I'm no longer living with her. There is that distance now. I have to think about my immediate surroundings first, then think about her and whatever pressure she's putting in me.

Researcher: And your role of being a Principal? It's in the middle of the page. Does this mean it's secondary to your home life?

Yes, I want it to be secondary because people always tell me that I work too much. So I would like it to be in the background.
Also I do not want to be known as a Principal. I would prefer to be known as myself. Because I think it's taking away some of the things that I can do if I remain myself. Like, if I'm Principal then people tend to respond to me in ways that I don't want them to respond to me. I'd like them to respond to me as a human being – approachable. I can't do that with this title because traditionally Principals are not seen as approachable. What the Principal says, goes. I don't want to be like that. We used to say that once you become a Principal then you change. So I try not to change.

Researcher: So being a Principal is subject to all the other roles in your life which make you the person that you are, a whole person.

Yes.
Instead of being served I want to be serving.
I want people to see Principalship as serving people rather than being worshipped.

Participant B

Researcher: Tell me about your drawing of yourself…

I'm x. I'm a teacher and an organizer in my class.
I'm also a manager in my class.
I do everything in my class. I organize it so that teaching can take place in my class.
I'm a parent, social worker – sometimes our learners have problems. I do listen to them sometimes.
I'm a guider. I've just joined the South African Guiding association.
I'm a mother, a guardian of 3 children. And a grandmother
As a mother, I need to prepare some meals for my family.
I'm also manager of the home – I sort the problems and give solutions. Sometimes children come with lots of problems.
I'm also a Sunday school teacher, a leader in my church. I train children you give service in my church.
I'm a counselor sometimes because these children come with many problems – some come from the families where they don't attend church and then I have to teach how to go about.
I'm also a student because I learn everything. I like to learn new things.

Researcher: I noticed that you spoke firstly about yourself as a teacher, then as a parent, then as a Sunday school teacher and then as a student. Is there any reason why you placed them in this order?

Yes, because this (*teaching)* is what I like most about myself.
It's all important to me, but this (*teaching*) is the first thing that came to my mind.

Discussion after addition made to initial drawing.

Participant B

Now, I'm willing to learn more about my learners, especially those who are having learning difficulties.

I'm trying to work with teachers of other grades in order to help my learners.

And also I try to work with the community members, as some of the learners are coming from families where the parents are not interested in the learners' education.

So other community members help me in that way.

Also with my colleagues – they are sharing ideas and we are coming with our problems, discuss the problems, and now we are trying to identify our learners earlier and now we are trying to get even those who are big, and trying to help them.

I'm also learning about problems especially about HIV/AIDS which are common in our community.

Participant A

For me it has become a never-ending journey. There are challenges all the time.

The more you see, the more you solve and address things, the new things come up all the time and you wonder if we'll ever achieve this dream of an inclusive society.

Before it was as if you couldn't see all these problems, but now your eyes are opened and you can see all these problems that other people don't see.

And you sometimes think that you are alone.

And you're always striving to become better – I'm always striving to become better at what I do.

Then you get to this level and, it's not better any more – you want to do something else, something better than what you have done, and when you get there, better again.

You find yourself reading, thinking, debating things, discussing, listening, analysing situations. It's like you never rest.

And if people see that I'm inclusive, approachable, willing to help, you find that more and more people are coming to you for help. And there are very few people who allow people to get into their lives like that. And then you find that you have less and less time for yourself. Then you tell yourself "that maybe that's what I am for".

But also on the positive side, it makes your work easier because people are close to you and you listen to them and you know what they are thinking, and they participate in what you are doing. So you feel at least they understand what you are about here.

Sometimes you feel that people forget that you are just a human being. If you need help it's just like "yes, this person needs help but he's always the person who is always helping us, so sometimes people don't think that there are situations where you need help as well.

And you are always monitoring your thoughts, monitoring your actions, having to think before you think, having to think before you do. When you find you have done something that is against your social justice principles, you feel very bad about it, but then you tell yourself that next time you are not going to do it this way.

You're almost wanting to contribute to this dream of a just and peaceful society, but this society doesn't get any more peaceful. It's getting not peaceful by the day.

But you see it happening in a small scale, but you wonder when is it going to happen in it's full weight?

Also you think that people are going to think you are mad because for them, the situation is normal, and if you try and change it, it becomes abnormal. If you say that something is not just, people say "but this is normal, this is how we do things here".
So you find yourself denormalising the normalized, and it becomes a problem.
You need to be very strong because you need to be working against the flow.
It's not always easy to work against the flow. Some times the flow could take you away, sometimes it could crush you.
But if you win, and you are able to change the flow, however small it is, you feel that you're contributing.

One of the things that has happened to my life is that I listen a lot now. That is not what I used to do. I know I was good at listening, but not listening as I do now.
I think I listen a lot now.
I think in this world, not listening is normal. If a person wants to tell people what this is al about, you selectively listen, you listen to what you want to listen to, and if a person tells you something that you would not like to listen to, you just shut down. You shut down and shut the person out, then people will know that you don't go to that person with this kind of stuff. So you find that people select what they tell you and thereby you will be able to listen to what you want to listen to.
But then in this world, there is also listening too much. People will tell you that sometimes you listen too much to what people say, and they say that you can't listen to everything that people say. At the same time you are thinking that each person is valuable, that each person should be afforded dignity, should be listened to, should be respected. And you say is it respecting a person not giving a person a very small piece of your time to listen to what that person is saying? It calls also for not judging what people are going to say as nonsense, as stupid. It calls for being able to listen to it and think about it without judging it. And also fitting it into the broader spectrum of this conversation and being able to understand the sense out of the nonsense. And being able to include that person. I think for me, inclusion is about that – listening to all the views and also getting the sense out of the nonsense and being to make that person feel included.
Some might say "Don't listen to this person. He is always like that. If you listen to that person, this is what is going to happen." We are so socialized to thinking that we have walked this road before and this is what is going to happen, without thinking that yes, it happened at that time because it was you who was listening to that person, it was not me who was listening to that person.

As I have said already, you need to be able to see the big picture, you need to be able to go against the flow sometimes. People don't advise it – going against the flow, because they what happens to people and to themselves. So you find that it's a situation where you need to prove that what you say works.

For me, I think my teachers come first and they should get everything first. Like say when I'm studying or looking for information, I find myself also looking for information that would help them to become all inclusive. That is what is good about inclusion, because I get to think about other as well and not only about myself.

Sometimes I feel that I'm being restricted by the conditions in my school.
There are some things that I can't bring about because of the socio-economics at the school.
Like say I would want to have a get-together with all the teachers away from

Our place of work, but I don't have the means. I know that that kind of environment will help us to achieve what we want to achieve.

Sometimes I would want to have the computers at the school because I realize that some of the learners would learn well with computers. But then you find that funds are unavailable. You are only given this amount to use and you find that finishes before you are able to do these things.

Sometimes restrictions from being able to move forward in creating an effective, functioning and inclusive system of education exist because of the way that the Department is structured. I'm thinking of how we make orders. Sometimes we have to send papers to say this is what we need and we send these papers in July last year, and we find that some of these things have not arrived. But these people are working in those offices everyday and when they send things to you to complete and process, they will give you three days and then they want it after three days. But when it's about orders that will help learners, it can take you 12 months. Sometimes these things we don't receive and we forfeit the funds.

So you can't do what you want to do.

There was a workshop in May for educators but the policy document is out. We should have started implementing this thing.

You find that we always do things today that we were supposed to do yesterday.

And it bothers me.

It all stems from trying to be inclusive, from trying to stand on my principles, but then it becomes not easy.

The way that you relate to your family changes. Remember that your family is structured along patriarchal lines – the culture, it's very skewed. Then once you become interested in inclusion, you forget that you are going to a family that does not know anything about that. You can't say I'm going to be inclusive at school and then go back to being exclusive at home. You can't do that. When you teach people to be inclusive at work you still need to go back to your family and teach them what it means to be inclusive. They have to understand why you are doing things the way you are doing them, Otherwise you will have a problem.

But you overstretch yourself too.

There are challenges but I think they are good challenges, because they make us think.

You find that people are always poaching you. When you meet people they will always tell to apply for another position and leave the school. There were a bunch of positions being advertised and I met one of the officials who asked me "Did you apply? You don't belong to the school." For me I have this belief that to be able to bring about this just and peaceful society, I need to be at the school. Because that is for me, where I can the greatest imprint. I think this has come from the fact that I once moved away from the school and I know what it means, telling people to do things and you turn your back and they don't do it. Whereas if you at the school you can see it happen immediately. But if you are not at the school everyday, you will find that after three weeks when you come back, people have not even started to implement things. So you get frustrated.

So for me, being involved in inclusion has made me think that being at the school is where I want to be. No matter how people think or try to get me to apply for posts because they want me there,

APPENDIX G

SAMPLE OF TRANSCRIPT OF A CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEW WHERE TEACHERS 'SPOKE TO' THEIR PHOTOGRAPHS

Researcher: Tell me about these photographs that you took…

Photo 19:
This inclusive education – when it started, we didn't know what was it, we didn't know what was going to happen with it, so most of the staff we had this negative attitude towards it. so all the things that was said about it, it seems to be failed, maybe those things won't happen.
There are so many changes in the department which started with OBE, then it was inclusive, now it is RNCS, so teachers are complaining – they think the old education system was better then this one. Some of them say they do not want to change to accommodate this inclusion because they are used to that OBE. They see inclusive education as something new and different from the OBE education.
In the beginning it was something new, now we are used to it. It was only at the beginning we didn't know much about it.
Sometimes I used to refer back to when I started to teach, in about 1996, when I heard about inclusive and understanding the inclusive, I realized it was this inclusive that I'd done there, but I didn't know that it was inclusive at that time. But when I'm starting to compare the old ways and the old syllabus with this inclusive way, there were also some things that I was doing that was not inclusive.
Like when you are in the classroom, you begin to see that this one is clever and this one is "dom" – we used this kind of words. And you forget about those ones that are struggling and concentrate only on those ones that are sharp.
So now, we realize that maybe that one that was not clever, maybe it was because they were struggling there and there. We didn't take the time or care enough to ask about the background and all that. We didn't know about the background of all our learners in the classroom. We were not interested to ask about the background, but now we are interested to know about the background of the learners so that we can see that he or she has got a problem.

Photo 13:
Previously we used to take a decision on your own, but now with inclusive we are encouraged to come together, the IST, to discuss a certain problem and then take a joint decision about this child. But previously you just take a decision on your own. You just inform the principal and that's it.
This is a better way of doing things now, because you get different points of view from different people. Maybe you will realise that the decision you would have taken as an individual is not the right one.

Photo 18:
Now that we are inclusive, everybody is involved in taking care of the child. They are repairing wheelchairs here, not that it is their duty to repair wheelchairs, but they are taking part in it because they see the need that this child needs the wheelchair and it is important that they are in a good condition. Everyone who sees the need now just does what needs to be done.
It has always been happening like this here, but we were not aware that it is part of inclusion.

Photos 8, 9,10:

This one's about sport. Before maybe we used to discriminate the ones who were disabled, the ones who have got a certain disability, and we would let the able bodied ones participate in sport, and these ones they just sit and are spectators. They would be taken as just spectators, that they couldn't do anything, kind of useless when it comes to sport.

Photos 23, 30:
But now with inclusion, we see that they can take part. After inclusion, the physically disabled are participating in sport. They are now included. Now their self-esteem has been boosted because they see that now they can do it.

Photos 6, 7:
Our games are exclusive because if you are on a wheelchair, how can you get up there? So you need to just sit on your wheelchair and just watch those ones enjoying being up there. You can't even get into the swing. They are not participating. There is no recreation for them.
But now it has changed. Our jungle-gym has been accommodated. You can see that you can just put your wheelchair near the swing and just get in. They can even get onto the jungle-gym structure by kneeling. Everyone can be here and they do, as you can see there are some crutches lying on the ground here and their owners are up there. Those who are able help the others.

There is not a lot of discrimination between the learners with different abilities, but it is there at times. Sometimes those who are mildly challenged they see those that are physically challenged as not as good as them and they tease them sometimes. Also as it is because that are just children, not adults. When we do have such cases, we do talk to those children that are more advantaged, that they mustn't tease or discriminate these children that are less advantaged, but this is maybe because they are just children. Maybe when they grow up they will come to their senses.
Just because they are doing this doesn't mean that they are not told it is wrong. All the learners that are here at this school, are here because they have got problems.
But sometimes it is the physically disabled ones that are discriminating these mentally challenged ones. The ones that are physically challenged, the intellectual ones, think they are better than those that are able-bodied, because they can do the academic stuff and these ones can't.
I think it is just human nature that makes us want to think we are better than someone else. It's jealousy. Even our social upbringing encourages this. For example if someone has bought a car, maybe I can think that she can't be better than me, so I must buy one – maybe a four-by-four, so it is better than her one. It's this competitive thing. We are born into a social world like this.
Now after inclusion, we are quite aware of this issue of power. We can think about things now and see that this is racism now and not just jealousy. Or maybe sexism, or classism - not just pure jealousy. Here at our school, those who are the professional staff (the teachers, the admin people and the medical staff) they meet everyday and pray in the staffroom, but the other ones (the cleaners, the class-aids, the maintenance staff) they don't pray in the mornings. They are not even invited to join because they have to work while we pray. This is saying, in a way, that we are better, we need to pray to god every day and they don't need god because they are not doing a great work. Maybe it's just an honest thing, but because we know much about inclusion, so its easy for us to see that this is not inclusive. It is exclusive. We are not happy with this because sometimes we don't feel like going to the assembly but we have got to be there, because of the politics. We don't have the freedom to express that we don't always want

to be there. It is a compulsory thing. In fact it is a way of checking up to see that we are all on time and not late. It is just part of the system at the school.

Even though we know and we are aware of inclusion, we are still doing some exclusive things.

Photo 24:

We have the rails so that everyone can walk around properly.

Photo 26:

You can just move in and out of the classroom freely.

Photo 1:

Even if you are on the wheelchair, there is a plan made for you so that you can wash your hands as well as the others.

There is always an adult to help.

Photo 3:

Even if the child wants to go to the toilet, there is always an adult looking after the child. They are never left alone. There is always someone at the door, next to the child depending on the needs of the child.

Photo 22:

We take the child as an individual not in the group. We find out the background, the needs of the child, everything we can find out about the child. It's not new this trying to understand the child as an individual. It's not a new practice but we are more aware of it's importance now, as it is a part of inclusion. But now we understand that we can't just talk to the child while the class is listening. There must be some kind of privacy. So inclusion is not completely a new thing. It is not changing everything about how we were doing things before.

Before we would shout at the child at the back of the classroom, in front of the class. We didn't have the idea that we were not respecting the child's feelings. We were ignorant.

But it was also because of frustration. We would just shout at a child if he is doing something wrong. To shout was a way of showing that now you are fed up with what he or she is doing. Now we realise that we need to give that child individual attention, so that maybe we can find out what the particular problem is that he or she is having.

Photo 21, 23:

This teacher is confused. I've been through all these trainings C2005 all these other things. Now it's inclusive education. Why? What is the need? These other things did work.

Royal education – our grandmothers were in this type of education, Bantu education, C2005 which has OBE, then RNCS and now its NCS, and on top of all these things there is IE.

We were in the pilot project so we have more understanding about it now. But when we hear these other teachers talking about it, it's just like it's another policy – this IE.

Photo 20:

This is trying to explain the need for IE.

Maybe it would've been better if there was just one policy that accommodates everything. The common principles that belong to all these policies – the inclusive, the OBE, the RNCS. So that teachers didn't have to think that all these were different things. The NCS and IE – teachers think they are two different things, but they work towards one goal.

Photos 12, 25:

Admissions. It's a committee where they sit down and talk about how to admit learners in our school. It's not exclusive. We admit all learners who apply to the school. But also we cannot take those learners whom we cannot help. We look at the need of each child and we decide if we can or cannot help them at the school, depending on the skills of the staff. We cannot help those learners who are blind or those that cannot talk, because we don't have the staff who can deal with that and help that child properly. It's not because we don't want those children. We are not having a negative attitude towards them. It's because we cannot help them. We will need to be developed in these areas first.

And in the hostel, we cannot take these severe ones who cannot do anything for themselves, because of the shortage of staff. The house mothers are struggling with the ones we have in the hostels right now. We have ones who need to be washed, who need to be dressed, everything must be done for them. If the department can employ more staff in the hostels, we can take more severely handicapped children into the school.

Photos 4, 5:
The learners who cannot do it in the classroom, they are doing the skills. So when the child has been admitted, you see that they cannot make it in the classroom, so then there are some skills. There is brick-making, cooking, baking, weaving, fence-making, gardening. We do what we have according to our resources. We can upgrade if we can have more resources. We do have woodworking machines, but this is not on the school programme anymore because we do not have the staff who are skilled in this area.

But these skills are not only for the intellectually impaired. Even the ones that are academic they do skills, but depending on the teachers' programmes.

Everybody now cooks and helps out in the hostel, even if it is just stirring the pot. This includes the teachers. It has not always been like this. The cooks cooked and they were always women. Now everybody can cook, men and women, teachers and hostel staff. We share these duties. In the olden days the boys would be looking after the cattle and all that stuff, but now most of the people are staying in the urban areas, so there are no cows that need to be chased. So in some houses and homes, boys are being changed to do these things that was known as girls work.

Tractor driver:
This is the same thing as the cooking. If there's a need, you drive the tractor. You can't wait for the labourer men to come and help. We need to cut the grass. It's the same as the wheelchairs. If there's a shortage of maintenance staff, the teachers, no matter what gender, just do the job the needs to be done.

Photos 27, 11:
This is the preschool activity. Everyone is involved which is showing that everyone can learn. Doing different things – cutting newspapers, colouring in with crayons, depending on the ability of the child.

Differentiation according to the physical ability/disability:
It depends on the activity. If you need them to draw and there is someone who can't draw, then you draw for that person or make a copy for those that can't draw. But we don't just say these ones can't draw. They need to try and have that confidence about how it's done. We have those that just use the computers because they can't use their hands, so they do it on the computer. Even in maths and geometry, you need to measure and draw a lot. They have to have an idea how it's done and you can't expect them to be perfect. As long as they have an idea how squares and all these shapes are drawn and how to measure. They use their hands

to show us – even if it's crooked, you can see that this is a square – it's not a round. Then we can see that they've got an idea, then they can do it on the computer. Even if they measure angles, even if it's crooked, you can see that they are wanting to show it's a 90 degree angle. Some of them they can't read but they do understand. They've got the intellect but they can't read. And we've got to be there every time if there is something that needs to be read. We have to also adjust the pace according to the learners' needs in the classroom. There are those that are easy to catch up and those that are slower, so we have to work with both groups. We accommodate them all. We give this one group work while we are going to attend those who are slower learners – to explain to them carefully.
Sometimes they are not good in all learning areas, but good at some.

Researcher: How do you feel about yourselves teaching at a school like this?

We've achieved quite a lot. We've gained a lot. But we need to go out now and show other teachers how its' done. It would be good if we could now go out to mainstream schools and others can come into this school. Because with the experience and the knowledge that we have, now we can help more learners in the mainstream. We even volunteer our services to other schools, but teachers don't even come to us for help, only the few. White Paper 6 says something about this but really, unfortunately, opportunities are not there.
It's nice to teach at a special school. We are gaining a lot. Sometimes it is hard, you become emotionally involved and you are emotionally drained, but anyway, we develop here more than in a mainstream school.
Many teachers out there think that if you teach at a special school, you are crazy, or you are not normal as they are.
They also always ask "How do you do it? How do you cope? How do you manage?"
Even if you try to explain, they don't understand because they think that you are crazy.
They battle to even understand that disabled children can play basketball in their wheelchairs. Most of the rules are the same as for able-bodied basketball – it's only a few that are not the same. So they play like a normal person. It is only that they are in their wheelchairs. They are doing OK. Even now we have got a wheelchair team in the Olympics. But this unbelievable to other teachers.

We even have a teacher here at the school in a wheelchair. (Photograph did not come out) There isn't even anyone who is helping him. He is just teaching on his own. Writing on the board, doing everything on his own.

Researcher: What happens to the learners when they leave your school?

We only go to grade 7. Some of them go to the high school, the academic ones, like Open Air. They also go to mainstream schools and they cope very well. I think it is because of our environment. They gain from having this opportunity to be few in the classroom and they got the attention and everything they need. They are very much intelligent, even better than the ones from the mainstream. We are surprised by this. Even those that are weak they are doing very well in the mainstream. And we tend to wonder how they were struggling to cope here but there they are doing so well. There they say they are the cream, some of the best. Maybe it says something about the standards.
Some of the learners they come here and they can't read and now they are very good readers.