THE GENDERED ASSUMPTIONS OF NATIONAL

AND PROVINCIAL

POLICY DOCUMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA:

TEACHERS, SEXUALITY AND

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS.

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of **Master of Education** in the Department of Gender Studies, Faculty of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

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August 2005

DEDICATION

TO MY PARENTS, MAURICE & EILEEN

AND MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

CAITLIN

DECLARATION

I, N. F. CATELLE, declare that the research involved in my dissertation, submitted in partial fulfillment of the M. Ed in Gender Studies entitled "The gendered assumptions of national and provincial policy documents in South Africa: teachers, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education in schools", is my own and original work.

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ABSTRACT

In the recent past, teachers in South African secondary schools have begun to give lessons on life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS. The lessons are located within the curriculum in the learning areas of Life Orientation and Life Skills. These lessons are guided by policy documents which regulate what, when and how much information the learners must have access to. Issues explicitly concerning gender are addressed in these lessons as well. Although policy documents provide clear guidelines as to how policy should be implemented, teachers are still experiencing difficulties delivering life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS lessons. Consequently lessons pertaining to these issues are usually minimised in favour of less sensitive topics. Many reasons have been suggested for the poor implementation of these lessons, some of which include inadequate teacher training, a lack of support structures and services, and teacher attitudes and beliefs. Although the way policy is implemented is cause for concern, this dissertation focuses on the assumptions about gender that are concealed by policy documents, which in turn, impacts on the way these documents are interpreted and implemented by teachers.

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyse national and provincial South African education policy documents for the gendered assumptions they make about teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education. Although policy documents are "based on principles of gender equity" (Tallis, 2000: 58), this research tries to establish whether any gender assumptions exist about teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education, that limit how effectual these policy documents are at the stage of implementation. The gendered neutrality of these documents conforms to the requirements of the South

African Constitution, in that they are non-discriminatory. Given the inequalities of the apartheid era, it is possible to regard the use of genderless language in policy documents as progress towards the goals of gender equity. However, not differentiating between males and females is also problematic. Unequal gender power relations that exist between males and females ensure that their experiences are not the same. There are unintended consequences that flow from the use of gender-neutral terminology in policy documents and these include that the gendered realities of teachers are not taken into account and this may well be a reason for the reluctance or inability of teachers successfully to teach lessons on sexuality and HIV/AIDS.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In presenting this thesis, I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following individuals for their invaluable assistance:

1. **Professor Robert Morrell,** my supervisor, for his excellent guidance, constant encouragement and assistance, from the inception of this research study to the final preparation of this thesis.

2. **The University of KwaZulu-Natal** for all the research material.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the gendered assumptions of national and provincial policy documents about teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education. My investigation is prompted by, among other things, my own experiences and observations as a maths secondary school teacher in a Durban school.

Although there is no space formally dedicated in school timetables to teach HIV/AIDS education, policy assumptions about gender in the context of AIDS are likely to find their way into schools in a number of ways. In the first place, the learning area of Life Orientation is a formal part of the syllabus and each school is supposed to dedicate at least two lessons per week to the subject. Within this learning area, certain 'life skills' are supposed to be taught. It is here that teachers tend to deal explicitly with gender in lessons devoted to AIDS and to sexuality.

I have noted that the few sexuality and HIV/AIDS education initiatives at my school have been ineffectual. The uneven implementation of school initiatives and their lack of impact are evidenced in the poor implementation of Life Orientation in the school curriculum (Moroney, 2002) and in the continuing rise of HIV infection rates among young people (Barnett and Whiteside, 2002). There have been attempts to explain the weakness of school-based or youth-oriented programmes by evaluating how policy has been implemented (James, 2002; Campbell, 2003). In this study I propose to approach questions concerning the efficacy of AIDS education from a different angle, by examining the assumptions that policy documents

make about gender. A great many policies have been passed in the last ten years and these have fundamentally changed the terrain upon which school and youth interventions have taken place. In this study I am concerned to discover what assumptions about gender these policy documents make as this may, in some way, shed light on the partial impact of current school-based HIV and sexuality education interventions.

Whilst there are many factors that contribute to the difficulty that teachers experience with teaching AIDS education, analysing the assumptions policy documents make about gender, does not appear to have been considered as a possible factor before. If teachers have difficulty in translating policy intent into classroom reality, perhaps it is because policy documents offer diverse understandings of gender and sexuality and make assumptions about the capacity of teachers to deliver policy. By assuming that teachers are equipped to successfully deliver sexuality and HIV/AIDS education lessons, simply by virtue of the fact that they are teachers, ignores the dynamics involved in teaching sexuality education, and hence the difficulties that teachers experience. These difficulties include the limitations of teacher training, the sexualised and gendered nature of classroom interactions and the personal experiences of teachers, which may prevent them from implementing curricula that require high levels of gender sensitivity, personal self-knowledge and empathy. In addition, policy documents are not clear in assisting teachers and guiding them with regard to implementation. For example, the gendered content of these documents is neutral and takes no account of power differentials or the dangerous nature of sex in the context of compulsory heterosexuahty. These issues will be addressed in more detail in chapter four.

Personal Experience

I have been a teacher for the past 16 years, and specifically, have been a teacher in the transition years since 1994 when the new curriculum, which introduced Life Orientation into schools, was introduced. I am thus in a good position to comment on the changes that have taken place within the education system, even if my comments are limited in terms of my location (in one school for 14 years) and my own subjective interpretations. As a specialist mathematics teacher, it is not often that I receive non-examination subjects to teach. Nevertheless, approximately four years ago, I requested to teach Life Skills to grade 11 learners because I was concerned about the high incidence of teenage pregnancies at the school. It was my opinion that the Life Skills teachers were not adequately addressing issues of sexuality and HIV/AIDS education if the number of pregnant schoolgirls was increasing every year. I had recently completed as part of my post-graduate studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, a few modules that dealt with inclusive education and developmental problems and used this knowledge to prepare lessons on issues I felt needed addressing. In the two years that I taught life skills, there were no pregnancies among the learners in my classes and I took this as some indication that my approach was successful. However, due to the shortage of mathematics educators, I was unable to continue teaching life skills and sexuality education to the senior phase learners.

From my observation of teaching practices at the school where I teach, I noticed the lack of interest displayed by some of the Life Skills teachers. At present, Life Skills is a non-examinable subject at senior secondary school level, compared to Life Orientation, which is an examinable subject at junior secondary school level. Until the Further Education and Training

(FET) phase is implemented in 2006, only then will Life Orientation be phased in as an examinable subject from grades ten to twelve. As there is no Life Skills syllabus, Life Skills teachers tend to utilise that teaching time as they choose for a number of reasons. Firstly, in the present climate of overcrowded classrooms, overburdened teachers consider the Life Skills lesson as a non-teaching period and use it to complete other work, a common practice that James (2002) noted in her study. Secondly, the lack of adequate teacher training in life skills and sexuality/HIV education, particularly for in-service teachers, is cause for concern. Thirdly, from my experience, teachers avoid teaching sexuality/HIV/AIDS education in favour of other life skills topics, such as, vocational guidance and conflict resolution because they are not comfortable with the subject matter. These were, and still are, some of the reasons why sexuality and HIV/AIDS education has not been taught at my school.

Approximately three years ago, I was one of two Life Skills teachers at my school, who were selected to attend a week long, government-led Life Skills/HIV/AIDS workshop for educators. The workshop was held at the Durban Light Infantry Hall in Durban and included three facilitators and about twelve teachers from different schools. The workshop focussed to a large extent on the HIV virus; how it developed, how it was discovered, its mode of transmission and its effect on the body. Very little time was devoted to the teaching of life skills, whilst gender relations were not mentioned at all. Nevertheless, we were required to share our newly acquired understandings and skills by workshopping with other teachers upon our return to school. However, when we did return to school, teachers who did not teach Life Skills were not interested in this information nor was teaching time allocated for this purpose. As a result,

the information gleaned from the workshop, although largely factual, was not passed on to the present or future teachers of Life Skills.

This method of'cascading' information is noted for its shortcomings (James, 2002; Morrell, Unterhalter, Moletsane and Epstein, 2001a; 2001b; Vally, 2000). Vally (2000) and Morrell *et al* (2001a; 2001b) concur that not only do the reasons stated above contribute to the weakness of this workshop approach to teacher-training, but this situation is further aggravated by the lack of support from principals and teaching staff. Mary Crewe (cited in Vally, 2000) suggests the need for on-going, in-service, teacher training, because of the rate at which the school staff changes due to factors such as deaths, resignations and new teachers joining the staff, and because of the need to change teachers' negative attitudes and perceptions of sexuality and HIV/AIDS education. This view is supported by SADTU (cited in Vally, 2000: 719), who agree that "training programmes should first build on the teachers' understanding of and attitudes towards the disease before addressing the pedagogical issues".

I believe that many teachers are uncomfortable teaching sexuality/HIV/AIDS education to children because of the nature of the content, their personal beliefs or customs, or the fear that they may be creating sexual awareness in children. Cornia (2002: 27) notes that many parents and teachers believe that "any kind of sexual education leads to increased sexual activity", despite research to the contrary. This issue is dealt with in more detail in chapter four. He explains further that sex education curricula which address youth awareness should occur within secure learning environments and promote respect for females, particularly in the South African context where acts of physical and sexual violence against females is a serious

problem (Human Rights Watch (HRW), 2001). This point is noted by Coombe (2002: 17), who maintains that the failure of the HIV/AIDS prevention programmes can be ascribed to focussing on "the biology of human reproduction and barrier methods of prevention" rather than on "understanding relationships, showing respect for others, and protecting the rights of all".

On the other hand, Moroney (2002:6) draws our attention to the Department of Education's National Policy on HIV/AIDS (DoE, 1999: 10), which states that

> Life-skills and HIV/AIDS education should not be presented as isolated learning content, but should be integrated in the whole curriculum.

However, from my personal observations, when HIV/AIDS and sexuality education is taught across the curriculum, in subjects like Biology, Geography and Life Orientation, due to the volume of work prescribed by the syllabus, usually not more than one or two periods per year are allocated to this issue. I am concerned that the failure to integrate sexuality and HIV/AIDS education into the curriculum will continue to perpetuate ignorance of gender issues, as well as, negate the impact that education can have on creating awareness about sexuality and HIV/AIDS.

The policy-making process

Since 1994 there has been a sweeping policy initiative in education (and elsewhere) to rectify the effects of apartheid. During the apartheid years, huge disparities existed in the provision of education to black and white learners, particularly with regard to resources, funding and support services (DoE, 1997). Racially segregated schools managed by different education departments and governed by different laws and policies, disadvantaged the majority of

learners, particularly, the black learners (DoE, 1997). "Bantu education" reinforced patriarchy and served to prepare black people for unskilled labour (Truscott, 1994: 42). The quality of teacher education and training also varied according to the different segregated institutions (Harley, Bertram and Mattson, 1999), whilst learners with special education needs were marginalized, firstly by race and secondly, from the mainstream (DoE, 1997).

After a democratically elected government gained power in 1994, attempts to rectify the inequalities of the previous education systems resulted in the implementation of a number of new laws. These included the Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), which stated that everyone had the right to a basic education, as well as the South African Schools Act (SASA) (Number 84 of 1996), which aimed to provide equal educational opportunities for all learners, to prevent discrimination and to accommodate their diverse needs (DoE, 1996a). Although the objective of these policies was to provide a free and basic education to everybody up to the age of sixteen years, problems such as the almost 1.6 million black children of school-going age who were not attending school, the high illiteracy rate amongst adults, as well as, poorly resourced schools, unqualified teachers, inadequate funding and inaccurate curricula, were challenges that needed to be addressed (Chisholm, 2004; UNICEF, 1996; Wolpe, Quinlan & Martinez, 1997). Transforming the education system therefore required continuous revision of strategies. New policies and programmes had to take into consideration factors such as different learning conditions, learning abilities, teaching and learning styles, subject knowledge of the teachers and the availability of resources (DoE, 2003). In addition to this, the impact of AIDS in terms of deaths, illness and learner and teacher absenteeism, created another problem for policymakers.

An outcomes-based education (OBE) approach to teaching and learning which utilises a variety of learning strategies and assessment criteria, therefore, replaced the previous traditional 'aims-and-objectives' approach (DoE, 2002; 1997). The learner-centred nature of OBE caters for the needs of all learners and was incorporated into Curriculum 2005 (C2005) by the Department of Education in 1997 (DoE, 1997). The further development of a national curriculum, based on the expectations of the Constitution and C2005, has culminated in the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) that includes eight learning areas, namely, Languages, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Technology, Social Sciences, Arts and Culture, Life Orientation and Economic and Management Sciences (DoE, 2002). Although the RNCS "aims at the development of a high level of knowledge and skills for all", it "adopts an inclusive approach by specifying minimum requirements for all learners" and leaves "considerable room for creativity and innovation on the part of teachers in interpreting what and how to teach" (DoE, 2002: 9).

Bearing in mind that since 1994, the democratically elected government has passed laws and implemented policies that have introduced a fundamentally new framework for schooling, it is not clear to what extent this framework has been translated into changed school and classroom realities. Nevertheless, it is important to note these policy changes not least because provincial and district officials are formally charged with ensuring their implementation. While their impact on the classroom is likely to be uneven and unpredictable, there can be little question that they collectively exercise some influence on the impact of school and youth interventions that address issues of HIV/AIDS and gender.

Attempts to implement policy have in many instances involved providing teachers with information and training, often in the form of workshops, which, as stated previously, has been largely unsuccessful. Yet teachers have many demands made upon them and it remains unclear to what extent they have been able to implement policy at the level of the classroom. Policy documents are designed to guide teachers in the process of implementing policy and they serve as basic handbooks for action. However, embedded in them are diverse understandings of gender and sexuality. Policy documents also make assumptions about the capacity of teachers to deliver policy. By assuming that teachers are equipped to successfully teach sexuality and HIV/AIDS education lessons, simply because they have been trained as teachers, ignores the dynamics involved in teaching sexuality education, and hence the difficulties that teachers experience.

Gender Equity

Since the 1990s, gender equity has been an accepted part of government transformation plans. While these goals have gained international support and local affirmation, resources to pursue these goals have not always been made available. Furthermore, quite what 'gender equity' has meant to policymakers has seldom been clear. For some it has meant that girls must have the same as boys, or at least the same opportunities as boys. For others, a more sophisticated understanding has emerged which centres on the fluidity of gender relations and identities.

In 1997, the Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) was appointed by the new government to serve in an advisory capacity with regard to gender imbalances in all levels of the education system, such as learner enrolment, subject choices and career options, and the need for single-sex

schools (Chisholm and Unterhalter, 1999; Wolpe *et al*, 1997). Mc Lennan (1993/94: 55), on the one hand, notes how attempts to equalise education have focussed on the "equal allocation of resources and access". Sadie and Loots (1998: 47), on the other hand, point out that to identify females as target beneficiaries does not constitute gender sensitivity. In fact, Unterhalter and Dutt (2001: 58), based on their research, maintain that "the inclusion of girls and women in formal education programmes has not necessarily led to an end of gender discrimination in education or any other social sphere".

Rather, according to the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Department of Education and Training's (DET) Gender Equity Curriculum Support Paper (1997: 6)

> Gender equity involves women and girls finding new and positive ways to construct femininity, and men and boys finding new and positive ways to construct masculinity.

The manner in which boys and girls construct their gender is important for understanding the achievement of gender equity. Dominant or hegemonic forms of masculinity which embody characteristics such as physical strength, lack of emotion and assertiveness, place certain males in positions of power and are essentially the ideal to which many males aspire (Connell, 1995; Kenway and Fitzclarence, 1997). The hegemonic masculinity, according to Morrell (1998), stifles other forms of masculinities and oppresses females. On the other hand, certain forms of femininities, namely, compliance and subservience, also support the hegemonic masculinity and further place certain females (and some males) in a subordinate position to other males (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997). In this regard, Alloway (cited in ACT DET, 1997) argues that particular masculine behaviours are viewed as stereotypically male behaviours, for example, competitiveness, domination and rivalry, and therefore are

accepted as 'normal' boys behaviour (Kenway & Willis, 1998; Wolpe *et al,* 1997). It is these behaviours that associate weakness with femininity and when exaggerated, may lead to violent behaviour (Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997). Thus, in South Africa, where the incidence of violence is high, particularly against women and girls, the achievement of gender equity focuses on females as the most disadvantaged group, but also relies on 'the support and commitment of boys and men' in order to be successful (HRW, 2001; Wolpe *et al,* 1997:2).

Initiatives by the new government to address gender discrimination include establishing (i) the Office on the Status of Women and Gender Equality and (ii) the Commission on Gender Equality. It is the purpose of these bodies to ensure that 'constitutional and political commitments to gender equality become real and meaningful parts of government programmes' (http://\v\v\v.caiK'uatcq\Yav.uov./a^nu/vour tzov/). These organisations liaise with other organisations concerned with gender equity, at an international, national and provincial level, for example, the Commission on the Status of Women, the national Office on the Status of Women and the Commission on Gender Equality (http://www.soiithalVica.in lo/pls-'iiRK's^acpajzc).

The gender machinery established by government has not been terribly effective (Meintjes, 2004). It has been better at contributing to media campaigns and public campaigns than to contribute to processes that have begun to shift lived gender relations and contribute practically to gender equity. It has not provided definitional clarity or leadership in gender work and thus

has not been of much assistance to teachers struggling with sexuality and HIV/AIDS lessons in schools.

Nevertheless, concerns about gender equity have influenced the formulation of education policy documents. Therefore, this study is concerned with examining a number of selected education policy documents to establish the assumptions made about gender, with regard to teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education.

The Research Sample

The research sample consists of four education policy documents, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3 (the Methodology chapter). Chapter 3 explains how these documents were selected and the approach used to analyse them for the purpose of establishing the assumptions they make about gender with reference to teachers, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education.

Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002) and Harley *et al* (1999), are cognisant of the large number of education policy documents that have emerged since South Africa's transition to democracy. These documents were (and are) concerned with reconstructing education for the future, by combining the different education departments into a "single, national non-racial system" (Government Gazette, 1995), by redressing the needs of previously disadvantaged departments and by rectifying the differences between the previously advantaged and disadvantaged departments (Donald *et al,* 2002; Harley *et al,* 1999).

The policy documents that were selected for analysis are firstly, two education laws: (i) the National Education Policy Act Number 27 of 1996 (DoE, 1996b) and (ii) the South African Schools Act Number 84 of 1996 (DoE, 1996a), and secondly, two education policy guidelines: (i) the National Policy on HIV/AIDS, for learners and educators in public schools, and students and educators in further education and training institutions (DoE, 1999), and (ii) Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE, 2000). The criteria for selecting these policy documents are that they were introduced after 1994, and they refer to either teachers or sexuality and HIV/AIDS education.

These laws and policy documents will be analysed with the intention of exploring the gendered assumptions made about teachers, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education. It is necessary to analyse both the education laws, which refer specifically to the laws that have been or are to be implemented, and the policy documents which serve as guidelines for implementing these laws. The following questions will serve as a guide with regard to determining the gendered assumptions made about teachers of sexuality and HIV/AIDS education.

What are the gender implications of the policy documents?

- Are there explicit statements about gender in the policy documents?

  Truscott (1994) noted that, in the past, race and class issues received more attention than gender issues. I will argue that the present policy documents are still not explicit or clear in the ways that they address gender issues. In chapter 4,1 will show that there are no explicit gender statements in the policy documents.

- If so, how is gender conceptualised?

  As there are no explicit statements about gender in the policy documents, I will provide evidence in chapter 4 of how gender is conceptualised into "sex-blind categories" such as 'teachers/educators' and 'learners' (Truscott, 1994: 11).

- If not, what assumptions are made about gender?

  It is usually assumed that the term 'gender' refers to females or that 'everyone knows what gender is', which obscures the complexity of gender issues and makes sexuality and HIV education difficult to deliver. It is my opinion that the obvious use of non-gendered terminology is a strategy employed by policymakers to indicate that gender issues are being acknowledged. In this regard, the 'hidden' message inherent in the use of non-gendered terminology, as I will show later in chapter 4, is that males and females have similar experiences and are treated in a similar manner, thereby obviating the need for gender specific terminology (Truscott, 1994). What the use of non-gender specific terminology fails to take into account, are the male-female power relations that exist, that these relations play out in complex ways and that good teaching requires engagement with this complexity, rather than denying that this complexity exists.

- Are there any explicit statements about teachers who teach Life Orientation, particularly sexuality and HIV/AIDS education?

  In my analysis of the policy documents in chapter 4,1 observed that the HIV/AIDS policy document only distinguishes between who the sexuality and HIV/AIDS educator

at primary and secondary school levels should be, namely, the class teacher and the guidance counsellor respectively (DoE, 1999).

- If there are, what do these statements say about the criteria that teachers should meet in order to teach Life Orientation?

  Upon further analysis of the policy documents, I noted the suggestion of the HIV/AIDS policy document that teachers should receive training and support to handle the sensitive content of this subject even though they are comfortable with the subject content and that they are therefore suitable role-models for learners (DoE, 1999). How this translates into practice is not mentioned. Furthermore, life skills education and in-service teacher training programmes (INSET) have been funded to a large extent by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or community-based organizations (CGOs) (Morrell *et al*, 2001a; 2001b). The 'cascade' model of life skills training, for example, was funded by the European Union (James, 2002). According to Coombe (2002), the South African government has not revised INSET and pre-service teacher training programmes (PRESET) to accommodate the teaching of life skills and sexuality education, which reflects their reliance on outside funding and initiatives. This question will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

- Do these policy statements acknowledge any difficulties that teachers might have in delivering Life Orientation?

  From my research findings in chapter 4, it is clear that they do not.

- Do these assumptions change over time and vary from policy document to policy document?

  Analysis of the policy documents used in this study, provides little evidence of any change in assumptions over time. Chapter 4 examines the assumptions in detail.

It is the purpose of this study to examine the assumptions about gender that a number of selected national and provincial policy documents make and how these impact on teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education. In the next chapter I will review the international and national literature regarding gender and policy-making.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study examines the assumptions about gender that a number of selected national and provincial policy documents make and how these impact on teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education. In order to theoretically locate my study and to draw on existing comparative studies this chapter reviews the international and national literature regarding gender and policy-making. Since a concern with gender equity ostensibly guides South African educational policy documents I will pay particular attention to those works that focus on approaches used to achieve gender equity. From my research I have noted that a shortcoming of gender sensitive policy documents is that they tend to reduce "complex social and gender relations to simple issues", which may contribute to the difficulties teachers experience in implementing policy (Chisholm and Unterhalter, 1999: 3). Parpart (cited in Chisholm and Unterhalter, 1999: 3) agrees that

> developmental policies and programs are largely predicated on the assumption that developmental problems can be reduced to technical, ie, solvable problems...

It is my contention that gendered assumptions can distort or undermine policy intentions and that this can have unintended effects on those involved in policy implementation, which in this case, are the teachers. In this chapter, I will show that the literature confirms this view. I will begin by discussing firstly, the international approaches to gender equity and then secondly, the South African approaches. In my review of the South African literature I will consider the gender sensitive initiatives undertaken during the apartheid government, whilst the country was in transition, as well as, under the democratic government.

International Policy Approaches to Gender Equity

The international literature suggests that when gender has been approached from within a "'development' discourse" it has either adopted a Women and Development (WID) approach or a Gender and Development (GAD) approach (Kabeer, cited in Chisholm & Unterhalter, 1999: 3; Young, 1997). Although both approaches are concerned with promoting gender equity, the WID approach focuses on the provision of equal opportunities for women, and strives for the removal of "discriminatory barriers to women's employment" (Kabeer, cited in Chisholm & Unterhalter, 1999: 3). With regard to education, this approach would entail improving girls' access to education, in terms of making structural and visible changes (Unterhalter and Dutt, 2001). On the other hand, the GAD approach emphasises transforming the "basic rules, hierarchies and practices of public institutions" in order to attain gender equity (Kabeer, cited in Chisholm & Unterhalter, 1999: 3). In this approach, strategies do not focus on women only, but instead, take into consideration the unequal power relations that exist between men and women, and the ways in which they affect the unequal outcomes for women in all situations (Chisholm & Unterhalter, 1999; Young, 1997). The difference between these two approaches is that the WID approach equates gender with women whereas the GAD approach allows for a consideration of other factors and actors (including men and masculinity). Historically, the GAD approach usually follows the WID approach, but in the South African context, due to the country's history of apartheid and the liberation struggle, both of these approaches have been applied at any given time to address gender issues (Chisholm & Unterhalter, 1999).

South African Approaches to Gender Equity

(a) Under Apartheid

Under British colonial rule, a racial classification emerged which distinguished South Africa's people into various groups including white settlers, indigenous (black and brown) people and indentured (Indian) labourers. This schema emphasized the importance of racial difference and provided an ideological foundation for white superiority (Unterhalter, 1995). Although white people enjoyed political power and its associated privileges, both black and white races were further divided according to class, language, religion, location and political affiliation (Unterhalter, 1995). From 1948 when the National Party (NP) came into power, laws were passed to enforce racial classification, residential and educational segregation, as well as, other restrictions (Unterhalter, 1995). During this time, women occupied traditional roles in a male-dominated society. In fact, the notion of'"woman"' implied "domesticity, subordination to male authority, childbearing and child care" (Unterhalter, 1995: 228). Both black and white women were discriminated against because of their gender; but black women were further marginalized due to their race and class, whilst white women enjoyed some benefits because of their race (Unterhalter, 1998b; Walker, 1990).

Nevertheless, from the beginning of the twentieth century, women's resistance to the apartheid system of government was evident in, for example, their mobilisation against the imposition of passes, their involvement in trade unions and their membership of organizations such as the ANC and the ANC Women's League (Unterhalter, 1998b; 1995; Walker, 1991; 1982). At this level women were in conflict with men, even though they may have been of the same race and class (Unterhalter, 1998b). Women specified the areas of their oppression, identified their

needs, such as the need for maternity leave, equal pay and birth control clinics, and set them out in the Women's Charter of 1954. They subsequently took action in these areas (Unterhalter, 1998b). To a very limited extent and in a racially discriminatory way, policies began to take account of women's rights and women's issues. In the 1980s, in the period of political upheaval immediately prior to the establishment of a government of national unity, women's interests were already securing recognition amongst progressive forces, for example in the deliberations of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) in 1986 (Morrell, 1992; Unterhalter, 1998b).

(b) In the Transition Period

From 1990, but particularly after 1994, policies were developed by the new government with the goal of transforming the education system. Racial inequalities within the schooling system, as well as, class and gender disparities were addressed (Chisholm and Unterhalter, 1999; Deacon and Parker, 1998; Harber, 1997; Truscott, 1994). Policies were an important means of achieving social justice and consequently were designed to promote basic human rights and non-discrimination, which was in line with the conditions of the new Constitution (DoE, 1997; Unterhalter, 1999). As a result, the "visionary, symbolic policies" which have emerged since the early 1990's have displayed the commitment of the African National Congress (ANC) to "development, equity, and redress" (De Clercq, 1997: 150).

Reconstructing the education system also required making structural changes, such as combining the different education departments into one education department with one education policy (Deacon and Parker, 1998; Donald *et al*, 2002). However, the transformation

process necessitated more than simply exchanging the structures of the previous system of education for the structures of the new education system (Donald *et al*, 2002). The policy-making process had to reflect these changes as well, taking not only the needs of the people (particularly those that had been disadvantaged by the previous system of government) into consideration, but also the needs of the country. Unterhalter (1999: 101) notes that under the apartheid system of government, the lives of many South Africans

> had been marked by violence, inhumanity, lack of rights and profound division across barriers of race, gender and ethnicity.

Hence, in South Africa, the proposal by the ANC for a "people's education", which rejected racism in education, was considered in conjunction with the country's "manpower needs" (Badat, 1991: 18,24; Harber, 1997: 142; Unterhalter, 1991: 74; Wolpe, 1991: 5).

The Education and Training White Paper of 1995 provided a framework for the transformation process (DoE, 1997; Unterhalter, 1998a). This policy document locates education and training within a human rights discourse, thereby focusing on alleviating poverty, providing basic services and distributing resources more equitably (DoE, 1997; Unterhalter, 1998a). Education and training are considered important for developing the human resources of the country, as well as, the necessary skills for successful economic development (DoE, 1997). Hence, the aim of the education and training policy was to ensure that everyone received a good education, that no one was deprived of educational opportunities and that the past inequalities in the previous education system were addressed (DoE, 1997). The Education and Training White Paper identified the areas where transformation was needed, but neglected issues pertaining to gender (Unterhalter, 1998a).

(c)Under a Democratic Government

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) initiated by the South African government in 1994 was an important element in the new education system, the purpose of which was to

> .. .nurture as well as reflect democracy and development, and build a new nation by laying the basis both for popular participation in local government and public service provision, and for the expansion in skills and infrastructure necessary for economic development (Deacon and Parker, 1998: 132).

Although the aims of the new education system are firstly, development and secondly, the achievement of national unity, trying to achieve democracy and accommodate diversity has been neglected in favour of development (Deacon and Parker, 1998; Wolpe, 1991). The literature shows how addressing inequalities, particularly amongst the people previously disadvantaged by the apartheid system, for example, out-of-school youth, street children, the disabled, women, the unemployed and rural communities, is made reliant on development, and how this relationship underpins the formulation of policies within the education system (Deacon and Parker, 1998; Unterhalter, 1998a).

Whilst redress is supposed to embrace all those affected by apartheid, identifying particular groups of people only marginalizes them further, for example, when homelessness or femininity is seen as a disability (Unterhalter, 1998a). Even so, from their observations, Truscott (1994) and Unterhalter (1998a) noted that addressing gender inequalities was minimised in the policy-making process. Despite education as a constitutional right implying equal access for women and girls, Unterhalter (1998a: 363) points out the failure of the Education and Training White Paper of 1995 to address the "ways in which women's subordination is co-constructed by race and class" and how "the notion of human rights might

conceal the ways in which women's oppression has been perpetuated and the difficulties they might have in accessing their rights". Chisholm & Unterhalter (1999) agree that gender issues were reduced to a race or class issue at first. Race was an important criterion because, for certain women in South Africa, a high level of education was not a guarantee of better employment prospects as racial classification usually determined the rate of pay (Unterhalter, 1991). Therefore, the objective of gender policies in education was the removal of discrimination on the grounds of race and class, thus ensuring that more females would gain access to education and possibly greater access to the labour market (Chisholm & Unterhalter, 1999; Unterhalter, 1991).

Nonetheless, since 1994 there *has* been an increase in awareness of gender discrimination, because of the new South African government's "policy of redress", which prioritised identifying and addressing gender imbalances (Chisholm and Unterhalter, 1999: 1). This is evident in the establishment of the Gender Equity Task Team (GETT), the Commission on Gender Equality, as well as other women's groups and non-government organisations (NGO's) (Chisholm and Unterhalter, 1999). Added to this, the feminist movement and social problems such as the high incidence of sexual violence, as well as other forms of violent acts perpetrated against females in particular, have highlighted the unequal power relations between males and females and has drawn attention to the need for action. The government has responded by passing laws that have provided a policy environment, which enables action to be taken to end violence and promote gender equity. All forms of violence at schools, such as sexual harassment and corporal punishment, have been banned in order to create "girl-friendly school environments" (Chisholm and Unterhalter, 1999: 15; Harber, 1997).

Policy documents may reflect gender sensitivity or are construed as being gender sensitive, but in reality, in the way that policy is implemented; gender equity is seldom achieved and in some cases, scarcely advanced. In these documents, gender works at the level of rhetoric rather than as a plan for systematic action. Policy documents post 1994 differ from apartheid documents in that they address gender issues, but they do so in a very vague way which ultimately stands in the way of full implementation. For example, strategies developed by policymakers to promote gender equality within the schooling system have translated into visible signs, for example in the curriculum, by providing equal opportunities for both boys and girls in subject choices and career options. However, these initiatives fail to take into consideration the manner in which the education system reinforces gender inequalities through the overt and hidden curriculum (Wolpe, cited in Chisholm & Unterhalter, 1999). The result is that while boys and girls may theoretically have less gender biased and more open curriculum choices, they still in reality end up making gender stereotyped subject choices.

At this point I would like to provide an example of how vague policy-making results in ineffectual policy implementation. In 1994, the South African government initiated the RDP projects to address women's needs and develop gender sensitive policies (Sadie and Loots, 1998). Adopting a WID approach, these projects sought to

> increase women's knowledge, build up confidence, make them self-reliant, improve their skills, improve their access to resources and provide opportunities for participation in decision making (ANC, cited in Sadie and Loots, 1998: 33)

Despite policy guidelines on development proposing a gender-based approach, Sadie and Loots (1998) noted in their research of the various RDP Projects, that the way gender sensitivity was interpreted varied according to the different departments. An analysis of the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programme indicates that the specific needs of women were

not directly addressed, but rather referred to in general or non-gendered terms (Sadie and Loots, 1998). Thus by incorporating women's needs into the general goals of policy, the impression is created that the documents reflect gender sensitivity, when in reality, the particular needs of women are minimised and their conventional roles remain unchanged (Sadie and Loots, 1998). This gender-neutral approach to development makes it difficult to ascertain whether women have gained from their participation in gender sensitive programmes because the skills they have acquired may not necessarily contribute to their empowerment (Sadie and Loots, 1998). Therefore, Sadie and Loots (1998) have concluded that the ABET policy fails to address women's needs in relation to their circumstances, and consequently fails to redress gender inequalities in South Africa.

Garcia-Moreno (1997) draws the same conclusion in her analysis of health and health-education policies, that unless the social and economic circumstances, as well as the fact that women's needs differ from men's needs, are taken into consideration by policymakers, the women being addressed will interpret the messages differently depending on the relevance this information has to their particular situations. Sadie and Loots (1998) concede however, that a Gender Unit was established by the RDP office, which prioritised the inclusion of gender into all policies and programmes planned by the government.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the local and international literature on gender and policy-making. As this dissertation is concerned with the gendered assumptions made by education policy documents regarding teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education, I have focused on the approaches used to achieve gender equity. The South African literature

suggests that policy documents, even when they are gender-sensitive, tend to prioritize the reduction of racial inequalities within the education system rather than addressing gender inequalities. Policy documents that do address gender issues tend to be vague, thus influencing implementation.

In this study I will be analyzing the following education policy documents for the gendered assumptions that they make about teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education:

(a) The National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 1996) (DoE, 1996b)

(i) The National Policy on HIV/AIDS for learners and educators in public schools, and students and educators in further education and training institutions (DoE, 1999).

(ii) The Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE, 2000)

(b) The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (DoE, 1996a)

These documents constitute the 'primary data' of this study. In the next chapter I discuss the methodological approach taken.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this dissertation is not conventional in the sense that no fieldwork was involved and no data was collected. Instead, this dissertation uses as its 'raw material' four education policy documents. This chapter explains how these documents were selected and the approach used to analyse them for the purpose of establishing the assumptions they make about gender with reference to teachers, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education.

Since 1994, the new democratic government introduced a number of education laws and policy documents to address the inequalities of the past education system. Policy documents such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of 1995 and the White Paper on Education and Training of 1995, focussed on, for example, improving the quality of education, social justice and economic development (Unterhalter, 1998a). However, it is not possible to analyse all of the policy documents that were introduced after 1994, because firstly there are too many, and secondly, not all of them address the issue that I am investigating. With the inclusion of the Life Skills/Life Orientation learning area into the formal curriculum, teachers are required to teach life skills or to deal with gender issues in lessons about HIV/AIDS and sexuality education. Therefore, the sample of official documents selected for this study consists of those education policy documents that were introduced after 1994 and which refer to teachers, sexuality or HIV/AIDS education. Based on these criteria, the following four policy documents were selected for this study: firstly, two education laws: (i) the National Education Policy Act Number 27 of 1996 (DoE, 1996b) and (ii) the South African Schools Act Number 84 of 1996 (DoE, 1996a), and

secondly, two education policy guidelines: (i) the National Policy on HIV/AIDS, for learners and educators in public schools, and students and educators in further education and training institutions (DoE, 1999), and (ii) Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE, 2000). I experienced no difficulty in obtaining these documents, as they are either official school policy documents or guidelines for implementation. As documents and not people are the object of this research, I will not encounter any ethical problems because no data was collected "at the expense of human beings" (Strydom, 2002: 62).

Because texts, in this case policy documents, are written in particular ways or address particular audiences, the way they are interpreted by individuals differs from person to person dependent on various factors, such as their personal experiences, their world knowledge and the way they have been socialised. As Johnson, Chambers, Raghuram and Tincknell (2004: 188) note, "the specific historical and social contexts in which a text appears, is read and understood becomes itself increasingly visible and important to the meanings we find within it". Friedl, De Vos and Fouche (2002: 437) note in their explanation of the role of 'meaning' in conceptual research, that

> Meaning and understanding remain dependent on the role-players of the process of communication. Structuralists would say that the sender of a message determines its meaning. Post-structuralists realise that the sender is near incapable of pinning down an unequivocal meaning to his message. According to them, it is the receiver of the message that fills it with content and meaning.

McCulloch (2004: 4) is also cognisant of the need for documents to be "interpreted in the light of specific factors involved in their production and context, such as personal, social, political and historical relationships". It is thus critically important to note the context in which South Africa's policy documents have emerged and to read the documents against this backdrop. Whilst the condition of transition that South African society is currently experiencing due to

the removal of apartheid and the inauguration of democracy in 1994 has to be taken into account, the policy documents will be studied as discrete entities, that is, no attempt will be made to examine the processes by which they were produced or the personalities that produced them. Nevertheless, attention given to context should allow me to explore how "particular forms of consciousness" have emerged and how these have informed these documents (Johnson *et al,* 2004: 191).

Given the nature of the research, several research techniques were used. As the policy documents will be analysed to collect information pertaining to the assumptions they make about gender, this study is concerned with documentary analysis and content analysis. My concerns about the partial impact of current school-based HIV and sexuality education initiatives has prompted me to determine the gendered assumptions (if any) made by these documents. Data collected in this manner falls within the paradigm of qualitative research, an objective of which is to "understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life", as well as, quantitative research (Fouch6 & Delport, 2002: 79). As policy documents are quite "formal and structured", more than one technique is necessary for interpretation, thus the method of triangulation, which combines the qualitative and quantitative approaches, will be used (Strydom & Delport, 2002: 324).

Because programme evaluation is used to evaluate existing programmes, this is one of the techniques that will be used to analyse the policy documents in this study. This method assesses educational programmes for various reasons, such as to establish efficacy or to identify problem areas, usually with the intention of improving those policies and programmes (De Vos,

2002). However, whilst De Vos (2002: 375) notes that programme evaluation is used to "judge and improve the ways in which human service policies and programmes are conducted", my concerns are whether or not the policies are being delivered according to the purposes for which they were designed, therefore, programme monitoring, as a form of programme evaluation, should guide my research. Programme evaluation combines both qualitative and quantitative methods.

My research will begin by applying a quantitative data analysis approach to determine whether any gender bias exists within the terminology used to describe teachers in the policy documents. Every instance of the words 'gender' and 'educator' will be identified and examined. A list will be drawn up to indicate how many times the terms are used, the context in which the terms are used and the definitions that are offered for these terms. In order to interpret these terms I will draw on qualitative approaches generally used for the study and analysis of documents (Strydom & Delport, 2002). Friedl and Friedl (2002: 444) define "textual theory" as

> that specific, comprehensive view the researcher ... has on the text... under investigation, as well as on the elements and factors influencing its origins, peculiar features and expressive power.

Since this method of analysing these documents is quite mechanistic and will only provide a partial understanding of the gender assumptions, each policy document will then also be holistically assessed. This will augment the narrow approach adopted initially and will allow the deeper assumptions concerning teachers, sexuality and HIV/AIDS to emerge as these will not always be obvious when the focus is only placed narrowly on the relevant terms.

As this dissertation is concerned with feminist documentary research, I have analysed the way that language has been used in education policy documents to ascertain the assumptions made about gender. This approach draws on the methods of discourse analysis, because as Codd (cited in McCulloch, 2004: 47) points out,

> The aim of discourse analysis is not to prove which of these readings is *correct* but to consider them *all* as evidence of the text's inherent ideological ambiguities, distortions and absences. In this way, it is possible to penetrate the ideology of official policy documents and expose the real conflicts of interest within the social world which they claim to represent.

Throughout this chapter I have shown that an analysis of the selected policy documents for the gendered assumptions made about teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education, is a complex issue that requires a variety of research methods. This is due to the nature of this type of research, that is, that it is not conventional because no fieldwork was conducted and no data was collected.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH

In this chapter four education policy documents will be analysed for the gendered assumptions they make about teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education. These policy documents consist of, firstly, two education laws: (i) the National Education Policy Act Number 27 of 1996 (DoE, 1996b) and (ii) the South African Schools Act Number 84 of 1996 (DoE, 1996a), and secondly, two education policy guidelines: (i) the National Policy on HIV/AIDS, for learners and educators in public schools, and students and educators in further education and training institutions (DoE, 1999), and (ii) Norms and Standards for Educators (DoE, 2000).

The new democratic South African government is committed to redressing past inequalities such as discrimination on the grounds of race and gender. This research is concerned with identifying the gendered assumptions of these documents in the light of these goals and therefore it is necessary to analyse both the education laws and the policy documents that serve as guidelines for implementing these laws. The approach that I will take in the analysis has been set out in chapter 3, but I.should add that my interpretation will also be influenced by my educational experience as a teacher. I am currently a secondary school teacher working in an urban school with secondary school learners, whose ages range from twelve years old to approximately nineteen years old. It is my opinion that my daily engagement with gender issues will further sensitise my analysis. The policy documents will be analysed individually. As indicated in the previous chapter, a quantitative approach will be used first to identify the number of times key terms were used and then a qualitative approach will be used to analyse

the ways in which the terms are used. An overview of all the documents will be given at the end.

Analysis of Policy Documents

1. The National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996

An objective of this Act is firstly, to provide a national policy for education and secondly, to replace the former separate education system, which had divided education according to race, class and gender differences (Truscott, 1994). As the intention of this document was to redress the inequalities of the past, this Act comprises of a number of policy provisions that address these issues, for example, an Admissions Policy for Ordinary Public Schools, the National Policy on HIV/AIDS for learners and educators in public schools, as well as, students and educators in further education and training institutions, the National Policy on Instructional Time for School Subjects and the Norms and Standards for Educators. For the purposes of this study, only the National Policy on HIV/AIDS and the Norms and Standards for Educators will be analysed later in this chapter.

Within the National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996, the overall definition of an educator is

> ... any person who teaches, educates or trains others at an educational institution or assists in rendering education services or education auxiliary or support services provided by or in an education department, but does not include any officer or employee as defined in section 1 of the Public Service Act, 1994 ... (DoE, 1996b: 1-1).

The term 'educator' is used three times with reference to policies regarding educator-learner ratios, the professional development and accreditation of educators, as well as, the training of educators to enhance the standard of education (DoE, 1996b). No use is

made of the term 'gender' nor is any reference made to the gender of the educators in each instance.

The use of gender-neutral terminology is based on the principles of the Constitution of South Africa (1996) that all persons are entitled to a basic education and to be treated equally. Therefore, in the interests of equity, transparency and non-discrimination, the use of the gender-neutral term 'educator', in this instance, is in my opinion, an attempt on the part of the new government, to avoid referring to race, class and gender. Truscott (1994: 11), on the other hand, acknowledges that race and class issues have dominated the new education system, but considers the use of "sex-blind categories" such as 'teachers' and 'learners' in official documents, without specifically differentiating between males and females, to be an indication that the needs of girls and women might be disregarded in the new education system. According to Truscott (1994), the use of non-gender specific terminology implies that male and female teachers and male and female learners have similar experiences and ignores the male-female power relations that exist. The implication of using the word 'educator' is to assume that female teachers arid their male counterparts subscribe to similar values, conform to societal expectations of heterosexuality, do not display gender bias in the classroom and are equipped to teach in the new democratic South Africa.

The use of gender-neutral terms makes sense in terms of the Constitution because it is important to downplay gender difference particularly when such differences have, in the past, been the basis for discrimination against women. Previously, laws that

distinguished between men and women have mostly been to the detriment of women. However, whilst laws that make use of non-gendered terminology are understandable and non-discriminatory, in reality, the genderless use of terms must be considered in a context where risk, fortune and other factors are influenced by gender and sharply different for men and women. Furthermore, whilst policy documents are consistent in their non-gendered reference to educators, in some cases this may have the unintended consequence of concealing gender power, as well as, concealing the realities of the classroom. Although I am aware that legal documents are not intended to take into account a variety of contexts, it is my opinion that policy documents should because of the implications associated with their implementation.

2. The National Policy on HIV/AIDS, for learners and educators in public schools, and students and educators in further education and training institutions.

Because of the seriousness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the reliance on strategies to reduce the incidence of infections, this document serves as a guide for schools to implement their own HIV/AIDS Policies. The purpose of this document is "to contribute towards promoting effective prevention and care within the context of the public education system" (DoE, 1999: 2). There is no definition given for the term 'educator' in this document. However, this may be due to the fact that this policy is a spin-off of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (No. 27 of 1996), which has provided an overall definition for the term 'educator'. Nevertheless, this policy document acknowledges that the definitions used in other documents, such as the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996) and the Employment of Educators Act (No. 76 of 1998) will be applicable in this policy document if used in the same context (DoE, 1999).

As this is a guideline document, the word 'educator' is sometimes used together with the terms 'learners', 'staff, 'students' and 'parents', in every possible situation associated with HIV/AIDS, which include for example, risky situations, non-discrimination, sexuality education, training and disciplinary measures. The term 'educator' is used sixty eight times throughout this document, in a consistently gender neutral way, whilst the term 'gender' is not used.

Because of my concerns about the implementation of these policy documents, it is important then that this document is understood against the backdrop of the AIDS mortality and morbidity figures, which are highly gendered. Reference is made in the document to the inclusion of infected educators and other members of the school community into the school population (DoE, 1999). There is no doubt that the school community will comprise of more and more infected educators, staff members and learners, thereby supporting the need for a HIV/AIDS strategy to deal with this problem at school. However, it is likely that more female teachers than male teachers will be infected with HIV/AIDS because of the trend in infection rates, that is, that the infection rate for females is higher than that for males (Morrell, 2001a; World Bank, 2002). The use of the non-gendered word 'educator' inadvertently conceals the gendered profile of HIV infection rates amongst South African males and females. The profile shows that whilst the 25-34 age group have the highest prevalence of HIV, those worst affected are "African female educators in the 20-49 age category" and "women in KwaZulu Natal" in particular, which may be due to physiological reasons as well as gender inequalities in the area of sexual intercourse (HSRC, 2005a; 2005b; MTT, 2005: 12-15).

This does not mean that African males are not at risk. Silberschmidt (2004: 42) notes that "Heterosexual men are often seen as the driving force behind the epidemic" because of gender inequalities, which allows them to "dictate the terms of sexual intercourse". Kelly (cited in Coombe, 2002: 12) suggests that the risk of infection increases for teachers because of their

> ...relative affluence, mobility and status in the community, their expectations of sexual 'bonuses' in lieu of better conditions of service, and circumstances that separate them from their families.

Service delivery by infected teachers will be affected by high absenteeism and poor performance (Badcock-Walters, 2001; World Bank, 2002). Because of the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS, the implication for teachers of life skills, HIV/AIDS and sexuality education is that infected teachers may avoid discussing the issue of HIV/AIDS altogether, for various reasons, such as, ignorance or fear of discrimination and violence. On the other hand, uninfected teachers may not be willing to support infected learners and colleagues in the form of care and counselling (Coombe, 2002). In order to include those infected with HIV/AIDS, the myths and stigma surrounding the disease must be dispelled so that infected members of the school community are able to disclose their status. This can only be done when the policy documents acknowledge that the reality in the classroom influences the manner in which a policy document is interpreted and implemented. The use of gender-neutral terminology in education policy documents erases difference and therefore has the possible, unintended consequence of concealing these realities and hindering discussion of gender inequalities.

The HIV/AIDS policy document states that educators must be sensitive to and be equipped to deal with confidential issues as they arise (DoE, 1999). As I have pointed out above, fear and suspicion may lead to discrimination and intimidation when a person is suspected of being HIV positive. Nevertheless, the assumption inherent in this statement is that educators have

received training and are equipped to deal with all aspects of HIV/AIDS. But this has not been the case, because as James (2002: 175) observes, problems such as "a lack of adequate initial teacher-training and on-going teacher support" have contributed to the poor implementation of life skills, HIV/AIDS and sexuality education at schools. In a survey of teacher training programmes offered by universities and colleges in South Africa in 2001, Coombe (2002) notes that the introduction of the life skills curriculum was very slow. Furthermore, Moroney (2002) notes in her study, that none of the objectives of teaching HIV/AIDS education as part of the Life Orientation learning area focus on changing negative attitudes towards infected people or include teaching skills for dealing with male-female power relations, which aggravates this situation further.

According to Cornia (2002), the teaching of life skills and HIV/AIDS education should be an on-going process and that the content should be age-appropriate, taught across the curriculum and included in the training of pre-service and in-service teachers to facilitate their understanding and handling of HIV/AIDS issues. No mention is made of the gender of the educators, which implies that both male and female teachers, once trained, will be equipped to teach life skills, HIV/AIDS and sexuality education. However, unlike subject specialisations, the suitability of teachers to teach life skills, HIV/AIDS and sexuality education is not considered. Consequently, the problems that male and female teachers may respectively experience with regard to delivering HIV/AIDS and sexuality education may result in teachers avoiding the subject or skirting the issue of sexuality. Because of the low status of life skills education, as a non-examinable subject in the curriculum, priority is also given to examinable subjects.

I have tried to show that the process of moving from the policy document to implementation generates difficulty. While the laws understandably do not distinguish between males and females, an unintended consequence is that people implementing the laws assume that men and women are the same and it is here that the problem becomes serious. As a classroom teacher, my own experience of in-service HIV/AIDS training was based on the 'cascade model' (James, 2002: 175), whereby I attended a weeklong HIV/AIDS workshop and was expected to return to school to train other educators in HIV/AIDS and life skills education. The group was treated as one homogenous unit despite the attendance of both male and female teachers, of which the female teachers were in the majority. The workshop focussed mostly on the origin, composition and effect of the virus, whilst hardly any time was spent on developing strategies to change attitudes or risky sexual practices. No consideration was given to differences in male/female responses. Morrell *et al* (2001a: 90) note the "prescriptive approach to dealing with HIV" in these workshops, and how

> No attention was paid to the gendered nature of the messages or consideration given as to how learners would receive the messages.

The current teacher education curriculum, according to Sayed (2004), is based on the new school curriculum, which is an outcomes-based system of education. Student teachers are taught the skills required for using an outcomes-based approach (Sayed, 2004). The documentation used in this study, does not mention how student teachers are taught to deal with HIV during their initial training to become a teacher. The implications for teachers of life skills, HIV/AIDS and sexuality education is that they are expected to teach this subject with little or no support.

3. Norms and Standards for Educators

After 1994 a number of documents were produced stipulating the roles and the competences required of effective educators. These include, amongst others, the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000), the SACE Code of Conduct (2000) and the Employment of Educators Act (No. 76 of 1998). As it is not possible to analyse all of these documents, this study will analyse the Norms and Standards for Educators policy document for the gendered assumptions made about teachers of life skills, HIV/AIDS and sexuality education.

In the Norms and Standards for Educators policy document, the term educator is used sixty four times and refers to

> all those persons who teach or educate other persons or who provide professional educational services at any public school, further education and training institution or departmental office. The term includes educators in the classroom, heads of departments, deputy-principals, principals, education development officers, district and regional managers and systems managers (DoE, 2000: 9).

This document acknowledges a pending amendment to include all educators as defined by the Employment of Educators Act (Number 76 of 1998), for

> including those persons who teach, educate or train other persons in adult basic education centres or in early childhood development centres and those who provide professional therapy and educational psychological services (DoE, 2000: 9).

The South African Council for Educators has a similar definition, namely

> any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or provides professional therapy at any school, technical college or college of education or assists in rendering professional services or educational auxiliary services provided by or in a department of education (and whose employment is regulated by the Educators Employment Act, 1994) and any other person registered with the council. (SACE *Code of Conduct)* (Harley *et al*, 1999: 9)

Within the Norms and Standards for Educators policy document, the term 'gender' is not mentioned.

In order to understand the significance of the use of the term 'educator', it is necessary to examine the reasons for its introduction into policy documents. The implementation of C2005 in 1998 brought with it many changes. With regard to the curriculum, subjects became known as learning areas and the traditional, teacher-centred, content-based approach to teaching changed to a learner-centred, outcomes-based approach to learning (Carter *et al,* 2003, Harley *et al,* 1999). As a result, the role of the teacher had to change in accordance with the changing curriculum. Teachers now became known as 'educators'. Harley *et al* (1999) explain that in comparison to the term 'teacher', the term 'educator' refers to every person employed under the Educator's Employment Act. In addition, the term 'teacher' is also synonymous with the past system of unequal provision of education, thus the term 'educator' is deliberately genderless, indicating a move away from the past. The conscious choice to develop a new terminology makes sense in the context of a new South Africa trying to rid itself of past gender and race discriminations. However, changing the terminology without guiding teachers in the use of these documents results in teachers overlooking gender inequalities and differences when they refer to these official documents, which may have unfortunate gender consequences.

The purpose of the Norms and Standards for Educators policy document, according to Harley *et al* (1999: 20), was to meet the following criteria, namely,

> the occupational criteria for employment by the DOE; the professional criteria for registration by SACE; and the academic criteria, or standards, for qualifications to be registered on the NQF.

Seven key roles of the educator were identified, namely that of learning mediator; interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials; leader, administrator and manager; scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; community, citizenship and pastoral role; assessor; and learning area/subject/discipline/phase specialist (DoE, 2000). According to the Department of

Health's Guide for Educators (DoH, 2001), although the roles of community facilitator and pastoral care-giver appear to be new tasks for the educator, in the past many educators did fulfil these roles as the need arose.

In attempting to answer my research questions, below I identify a number of instances, which refer to the seven educator roles. I have selected these examples to show how genderless terminology might have unintended gendered outcomes. Although I have tried to keep each role separate, in some places, these roles overlap. In the first instance, as a learning mediator, the educator is expected to show sensitivity to the different needs of learners, by adapting their teaching methods, subject matter and attitudes to accommodate all learners (DoE, 2000). The way in which the educator's personal background and experiences, like their individual beliefs, expectations and customs, influences the way they work, is not taken into account (Coombe, 2002; Donald *et al*, 2002). These differ from person to person and between males and females. As a teacher of life skills, HIV/AIDS and sexuality education, the manner in which teachers construct their own sexuality also impacts on their teaching style (Mitchell & Weber, 1998). This point is noted by Mitchell & Weber (1998: 148), who state that, "issues around sexuality are often problematised differently" for male and female teachers.

Secondly, as an interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials, the educator is required to interpret existing learning programmes, create new programmes and improvise with regard to available resources, in order to achieve the objectives of the different learning areas and to meet the needs of the different learners (DoE, 2000). According to Scott (1988: 104),

> Different teachers will interpret materials in varying ways and the students receive numerous messages from the teacher; they can make many assessments about the nature of a subject by virtue of the sex of the teacher.

In terms of sexual knowledge, Jackson (1988: 131) notes

> it is usual for distinctions to be made between boys and girls regarding what sexual information is appropriate, when, how and from whom it should be acquired, and in what context it should be applied.

The implications for teachers of life skills, HIV/AIDS and sexuality education is that teaching and learning about sex is a difficult process that cannot be reduced to simply interpreting and designing learning programmes. Issues such as moral attitudes, sexual privacy and the innocence of children influence this process, as does the attitudes, fears and knowledge of the teachers (Jackson, 1988). The assumption inherent in this educator role as interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials is that male and female teachers share similar thoughts and expectations, whilst the influence of external factors is ignored.

Thirdly, in the community, citizenship and pastoral role, the educators' tasks include

- being able to respond to current social and educational problems with particular emphasis on the issues of...child and women abuse, HIV/AIDS and ... degradation
- accessing and working in partnership with professional services to deal with these issues
- counselling and/or tutoring learners who need assistance with social and learning problems
- demonstrating caring, committed and ethical professional behaviour and an understanding of education as dealing with the protection of learners and the development of the whole person. (Government Gazette, 415(4), February 2000 cited in DoH, 2001: 6)

The provision of HIV/AIDS education is an important aspect of this role. One of the problems that teachers of life skills, HIV/AIDS and sexuality education encounter is that "expressions of sexuality" are usually forbidden in schools, which complicates their task (Epstein & Johnson, 1998: 108). Although teachers are expected to deliver life skills, HIV/AIDS and sexuality lessons, teachers themselves should not appear to be sexualised beings (Epstein & Johnson, 1998). Gender plays an important part in the desexualisation of teachers, particularly with regard to the way they dress and how they behave (Epstein & Johnson, 1998). Female teachers

in particular are expected to conform to a moral 'ideal' where they dress appropriately, are heterosexual, married, and usually have children (Epstein & Johnson, 1998).

4. The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996

The aim of the South African Schools Act is to provide a uniform system of education for all schools, in terms of provision of education, governance and funding (DoE, 1996a). This is a lengthy document, comprising of seventy pages, that addresses issues such as school admissions, school attendance, the school language policy, corporal punishment, school fees and school governing bodies, as well as, prescribing regulations for public and independent schools. Compared to the National Education Policy, the South African Schools Act is concerned more with the organisation of the school rather than with education.

Although the term 'educator' is used forty three times, it is usually referred to in relation to the duties required of an educator, with regard to the functioning of the school. The term 'gender' is used twice, in the first instance with regard to the provision of single-sex public schools and in the second instance, in the case where a learner is subjected to a body search, by a person of their own sex, such that that learner's dignity is observed.

The two references to 'gender' indicate that in particular circumstances policy documents do acknowledge the importance of gender. Nevertheless, for the most part, policy documents allow teachers to interpret and understand the policy document as they see fit. As a result, when policy documents are not specific, they make

assumptions about teachers that may be wrong. Therefore, whilst the law and policy-making process in a context like South Africa generates gender-less categories, an unintended consequence is that messages are taken up in gendered ways, which may increase inequality. The logical point from this is that teachers need more gender training rather than re-drafting of the documents, because it is neither appropriate nor possible to explain 'gender' in these documents.

Conclusion

From 1994, the definition of an educator has broadened with the introduction of new policy documents, such that the term 'educator' is now used to refer to any person who works with learners or in an educational institution, or who is employed in terms of the Employment of Educators Act. Because changes had to be made to the curriculum to accommodate diversity, changes also had to be made to the educators' roles. The way that these documents describe these changes is in line with the objectives of the new Constitution, that is, in a non-discriminatory manner, where references to race, gender and class are minimised. This is evident in the use of genderless terminology such as the word 'educator', to refer to teachers.

What is cause for concern is that the laws erroneously assume that a) gender differences between teachers are unimportant, and b) teachers have gender knowledge that will allow them to use the very same laws to address instances of gender inequality. These assumptions flow from the bland nature of policy documents and the national commitment to gender equality (which in these documents is expressed in the use of genderless terms). The effect of these assumptions is to obscure gender difference and inequality and to make possible diverse

interpretations that may well result in undesirable gender outcomes. Educators will make interpretations of the policy document that reflect their gendered histories and understandings, and these may warp and bias the intentions of the various acts and policies.

As I have tried to show throughout this chapter, male and female teachers have different experiences as educators, due to factors such as the gendered differences of their experiences, as well as, the fact that teachers are also a diverse group. Non-gendered terminology that refers to teachers fails to take these factors into consideration and can produce a situation where policymakers and those charged with implementing policy, ignore the problems that teachers are faced with at grassroots level. Epstein, Flynn & Telford (2003: 50) are aware that teachers are expected to work within the "constraints of Government guidance", but that policy guideline documents invariably fail learners because of the gap between policy formulation and implementation.

Therefore, as long as policy documents are not explicit or clear in the ways that they address gender issues, the complexity of gender issues will be obscured, thus making sexuality and HIV education difficult to deliver.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the national and provincial education policy documents for the gendered assumptions they made about teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education. This research was motivated by my observations, as a secondary school teacher, of the manner in which the teaching of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education was, and still is, implemented at my school. Among the observations that concerned me was that the number of pregnant schoolgirls was increasing every year. I felt that this was an indication that they were engaging in sexual risk-taking behaviour, despite the fact that they were being taught life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education. Considering that South Africa has an alarmingly high prevalence of HIV/AIDS (World Bank, 2002), the poor implementation of life orientation and life skills was, in my opinion, cause for concern, because it was contributing to the limited and partial impact of current school-based HIV/AIDS and sexuality interventions. Nevertheless, instead of evaluating how policy documents have been implemented, I chose instead to analyse these documents for the assumptions they made about gender.

It was my opinion that teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education were experiencing difficulties interpreting, and hence, implementing policy. I was aware that teachers were not adequately trained to teach these subjects/learning areas. In addition, I had gathered from interacting with other teachers, that teachers were uncomfortable with the nature of the content, and therefore were neglecting topics related to sexuality. The personal beliefs

and customs of teachers also influenced their capacity to deliver lessons on sexuality and HIV/AIDS education, as well as, on issues concerning gender.

My research focussed on analysing the selected policy documents for the hidden assumptions they made about gender and what this meant for teachers of life skills, sexuality and HIV/AIDS education. What was most noticeable about these documents was the fact that they made use of non-gendered terminology in their reference to teachers and learners. This is evident in the use of the words 'educator' and 'learner', without specifically referring to males or females. In the context of post-apartheid South Africa whereby all forms of discrimination were abolished, it is understandable that differentiating between the sexes has been avoided. Bearing in mind that prior to 1994 and the new Constitution, laws that differentiated between males and females usually discriminated against females, therefore laws that place both males and females in one category, that is, that treat males and females in a similar fashion, are considered non-discriminatory and a step in the right direction.

On the other hand, the use of genderless terminology fails to take into account the unequal male-female power relations that exist particularly with regard to sexual relations. Factors such as poverty, unemployment and gender inequality place certain individuals, mostly females, at a disadvantage that contributes to their vulnerability in terms of risk-taking behaviour, acts of violence and limited options. Within this context, the use of non-gendered terminology conceals and contributes to the power imbalance between males and females. Similarly, the use of genderless terminology fails to take into account the sexualised and gendered nature of the classroom. Therefore, in reality, gender influences many situations and

decisions, which are overlooked by policy documents. I am aware that policy documents are guideline documents and as such are not concerned with the contexts in which they are implemented. Nevertheless, I have argued in this thesis that a consequence of ignoring these contexts is to obscure issues of gender power and different lived realities that exist in schools. Even though policy documents are based on the principle of gender equity and are designed to promote gender equity, an unintended consequence is that, in the area of sexuality and HIV/AIDS education, they may be doing little to empower female teachers. I therefore suggest that the process of policy-making should be more mindful of gendered context.

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