

# Successful Teachers

## A Cubist Narrative of Lives, Practices and the Evaded

**Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a Doctoral Degree in  
Education in the School of Educational Studies, Faculty of Humanities at the  
University of Durban-Westville (UDW), South Africa.**

**Promoter: Dr. Michael Samuel**

**2003**

**Guruvasagie Pillay**

## Declaration

I .....

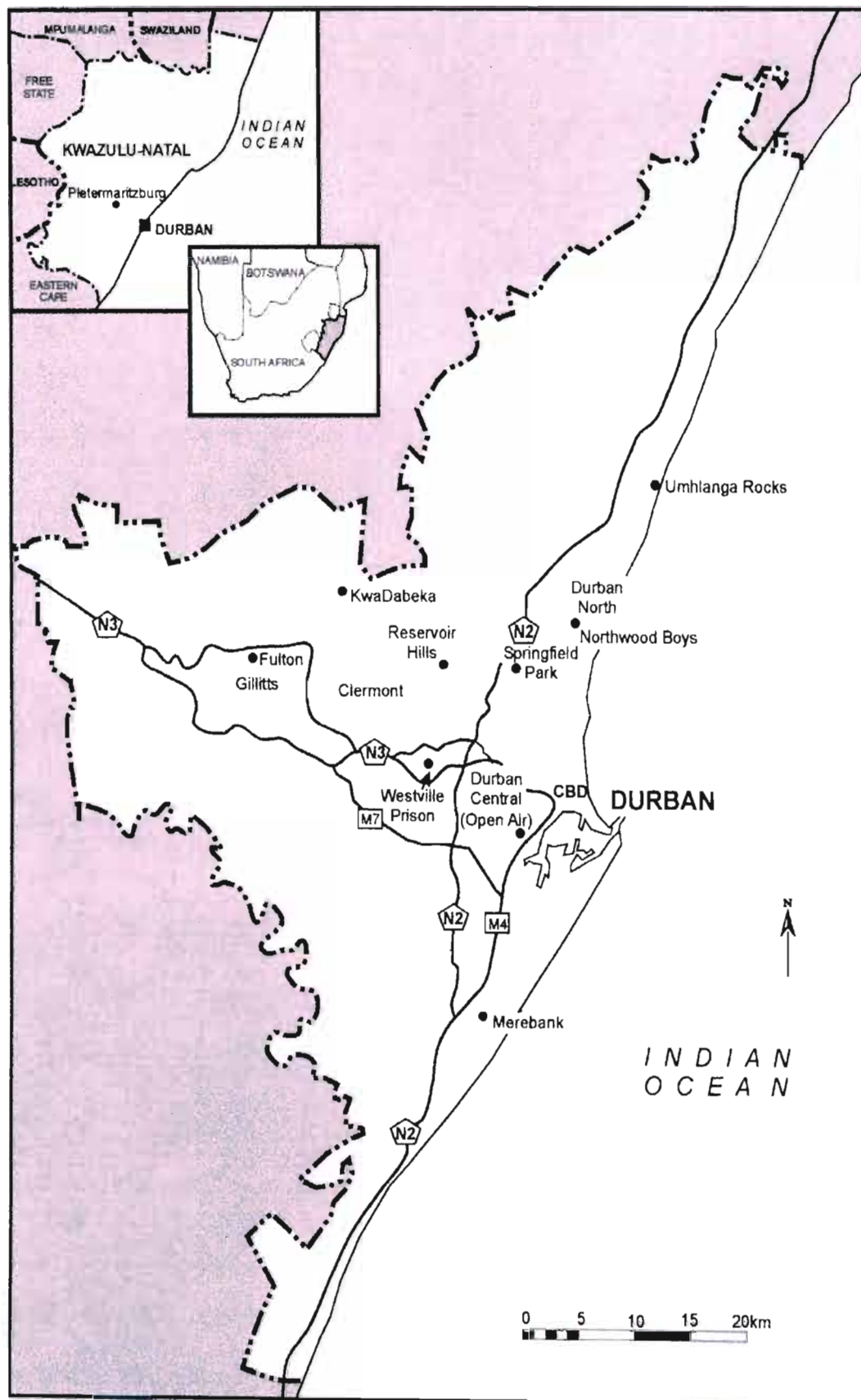
Do solemnly declare that this research work is my original work. This research report has not been previously submitted for a degree at another institution.

This declaration was signed by me on 31st March 2003.

-----  
**G Pillay**  
**Researcher**



-----  
**Dr M.A.Samuel**  
**Promoter**



# Abstract

This research presents an understanding of the world of successful teachers. In documenting their life histories, I composed a research text which explored the presences and absences, identities and differences, changes and continuities, variations and uniqueness, which characterise how teachers perform their success in the present educational context of continued shifts and constantly changing images. Working with Trevor, Anna, Ursula, Daryl, Eddie and Hlo, I co-created stories of lives “told and experienced”, a journey that pressed me to look at the transcending and shifting line between the private/public. Written through a composition of stories, poems, photographs, musical pieces and illustrations, I have engaged in the risky, poststructural practice of redescribing their worlds in order to understand what it means to think, know and act differently, in the struggle with the desire to be “free”. Employing a cubist metaphor as a heuristic device, I was able to entertain the possibility of other “worlds” within the discursive practice of “being teacher”: creating potential explanatory and diverse descriptions other than the one available as the singularly defined identity category of “teacher”.

Employing a poststructural analytical framework, I documented the multi-dimensional nature of identity and meaning, and drew attention to the play between discourse and practice in teachers’ agenda for agency. Teachers’ agenda for agency is described within “Patterns of Desire” within which the evaded or marginalised in teachers’ lives become available as spaces for change and moments of freedom. I present an understanding of teachers’ selves through excavating the “interior” of their lives to provide a more three-dimensional approach that injects the private into the public, rupturing the fine line as a way to maintain an “aura” of desire, love, friendship, hope and familiarity in their daily lived experiences.

Emerging along two axes, “Practices of the Self” and “Practices on the Self”, this composition that I have created, identifies the complexity of teaching discourses and practices enacted out and enacted on teachers’ daily lives that resist and disrupt those hierarchical grids of normalcy and regularity. In particular, I attended to those elusive eruptions of teachers’ selves when teachers articulate their resistance to normalcy and surveillance and make themselves available to refiguration and transformation. Investing in particular historically emergent social practices and relationships that teachers effect, by their own means, there is pleasure in challenging anew the bond between teachers’ private lives and public responsibilities.

Agency of teachers lies in the ability to deconstruct and reconstruct identity within the discursive formations and cultural practices. In troubling the structures that often imprison and violate, teachers are able to slip through and open their thoughts and desires to their differences – the other categories that are evaded in the single identity category teacher, thereby sustaining potential for ongoing continuity and change. Continued metamorphosis of thought and act, simultaneous and consecutive, is what offers teachers moments of deep meaning and awareness that keep the private/public alignment and variation in the ways of experiencing their world, in their ‘desire to be’, ‘desire for’ and ‘desire to please’ as a possible condition for being a successful teacher.

## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to my mother and late father. Although denied the pleasure and fulfilment of the educational experience they warranted and deserved, they always appreciated its value. To you dad for believing in me and reminding me about what matters in the intensity of what could be. After my fathers' death, my mother assuredly supported my own education through and beyond, sometimes at considerable personal sacrifice. To you mother, and all those of her sex, her class, her time, I dedicate this book.

To my late uncle, Mr R. Mayappen, whose life I have incompletely documented at the initial stages of the study but never completed because of his untimely death, your voice I acknowledge and remember through the lives of the dedicated teachers in this study.

# Contents

<i>Map</i>	<i>frontispiece</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	iii
<i>Dedication</i>	iv
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	x

<b>Chapter One: Can we paint the teacher differently?</b>	<b>1</b>
Orientation	1
How can we paint teacher differently?	1
Defining success	1
Research questions	5
Why study the lives of successful teachers?	6
The fragmentation of self	7
Hierarchies and exclusions	8
Understanding teachers	9
The broad national context	12
Politics: Spaces for possibilities	12
Education and the teacher	17
Overview of chapters	22

<b>Chapter Two: Multiple views, alternate frames: Developing tools and techniques for understanding teachers' lives</b>	<b>25</b>
Orientation	25
Introduction	25
Stepping outside	27
Rethinking self/identity development models	27
Understanding socialisation theories	30
Understanding poststructural theories	37

Using poststructural tools to understand different dimensions of teachers' lives and success	45
<b>Chapter Three: Momentarily caught glimpses: Research methodology</b>	51
Section A: Describing the study	52
Research design	52
Whose stories did I choose to tell?	54
The key informants	54
Section B: Troubling the research	63
The research design	63
Narrative inquiry	64
Producing the data	68
Life history interviews with teachers	70
Validity checks	75
Section C: Representing the (re)telling	75
The cubist framework	77
Subject and meaning	77
Principle One: Three-dimensional figures and space	78
Principle Two: Spatial ambiguity	78
Principle Three: The geometrical framework	78
Principle Four: Work in progress	78
Developing the cubist framework	79
Layer One (Chapter Four): The storied narratives	80
Layer Two (Chapter Five): Storied vignettes	81
Layer Three (Chapter Six): Agenda for agency	82
Layer Four (Chapter Seven): Cubist lives	83
Conclusion	84
 <b>Chapter Four: The storied narratives: "Freeze frames, coloured facets"</b>	 85
Orientation	85
Section A: Issues of subjectivity	86
The "crisis" of representation	86

Relationships and issue of voice	87
Experiences of “member checks”	88
Section B: Stories of “desire”	90
Part One: First person narratives	90
Text One: Un-chaining minds	91
Text Two: The dandelion sower	105
Text Three: The jazzman	118
Text Four: The adventurer	130
Part Two: Third person narratives	143
Text Five: The schemer	144
Text Six: The super server	151
Conclusion	158
 <b>Chapter Five: Storied vignettes: Fluid images and potential spaces</b>	160
Vignette One: Collective spaces	162
Vignette Two: Living spaces	168
Vignette Three: Sacred spaces	173
Vignette Four: Private spaces	177
Vignette Five: Challenging spaces	181
Vignette Six: Seductive spaces	186
Conclusion	191
 <b>Chapter Six: Agenda for agency: Patterns of desire for change and continuity</b>	194
Orientation	194
Section A: Practices of the self	196
Desiring knowledge: “If you love your subject, you will love your job”	196
Blurring barriers: “I don’t like this teacher pupil thing”	201
Collective knowing: “From producer to facilitator”	206
Desiring experience: “It’s not about methods, it’s about who I am”	211
Conclusion	217
Section B: Dominant structures	219



Constraining moments	220
Conclusion	227
Section C: Practices on the self	229
The rehabilitators	230
The soul seekers	234
The movers and the seekers	237
Desirable moves	238
Conclusion	240
Synthesis	242
Producing knowledge differently	242
Producing different knowledge	243
 <b>Chapter Seven: Cubist lives: An exhibit of metamorphosis</b>	 246
Section A: Methodological interests	248
Alternate methods as spaces between lives lived and lives written	248
The cubist metaphor	251
Theoretical interests	253
Biographical investments	254
Section B: Overall conclusions of this research study	256
Section C: Implications for teachers	259
Micro level: "Bio-power"	260
Macro level	263
Meso level	266
Just to say . . .	269
 Bibliography	 271
Appendices	

# Acknowledgements

To show and express my gratitude

i recognise

my family backdrop

Puvie for believing in me,

your love, care and endurance in these troubling times is remembered with deep sense of gratitude and humility

Deharen, my son, for the precious moments of sharing, laughing and crying

Kerosha, my niece, for your love and the precious moments we shared bonding

Preolen, my nephew, for your wit and reminders that I should take a break

the teachers

Hlo for your passion

Anna for your spirit

Ursula for your care

Trevor for your sacrifice

Eddie for your spontaneity

Daryl for your humour

Babitha for your individuality

the children of Hillview Primary School

Kapil, Johnathan, Samantha for your time, your thoughts

My cousin Andrew, for your continued assistance and wisdom. Lucille for your assistance transcribing many, many hours of audio-taping

my extended family

my brother Krish and sister-in-law Saras, Uncle George and Aunty Doll for your words of encouragement

i am grateful to my friends

Deevia for reading my work, debating and just enjoying living on the edge

Rubby, for your precious time, brainstorming, discussing, sharing

Juliet, the many telephone conversations when I was down and out, were most welcome

Renuka, Harsha, Farida, Mershen, Alan, Labby, Gavin, Shakila, Victor and Daryl – for your ideas and collegiality during the doctoral seminars

Cliff Malcolm, for caring and sharing your beautiful music

my colleagues in the school of educational studies, thank you

visiting academics

Noel Gough for your excellent seminars and literature

Patty Lather for making it happen, your enthusiastic response to my study was a propelling moment for me

Kristine Keitel for your keen interest in my study

Michael Cross, your deep respect for my ideas were most inspiring

to my supervisor, Dr Michael Samuel

your intellectual support, commitment and generosity are beyond measure

editors

Connie Israel, for your editing. Sally Hines for injecting your personal touch and care in the meticulous editing and layout of my work, your input is highly valued.

## Preface

*Know that many personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues – and in terms of the problems of history making. Know that the human meaning of public issues must be revealed by relating them to personal troubles . . . Know that problems of social science, when adequately formulated must include troubles and issues, both biography and history, and the range of their intricate relations.*

(C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, 1959)

The composition that I want to create in this study on researching teachers' lives, involves asking myself, "How do I want to explore and understand teachers in these fluid and ever-changing contexts". There are multiple ways of representing my experiences of being teacher, knowing teachers, working with teachers. I felt that to locate myself within this doctoral research study, I needed to ask, "What version of teacher do I want to represent?" Choosing to create a composition of teachers' lives, is like a work of art, the choice of what to paint, how to paint it, where to place the figures or shapes, and the focal points, are a reflection of "who I am".

As a learner I grew up believing that "teachers teach and learners listen". As a teacher I found that uncovering my thoughts and interests in and through my practices was only accomplished through agonising effort, earned through a range of alternative discourses. I was witness to the traditional and embedded practices of "teacher as expert and how schools should function". In my teaching I heard that teaching and learning the subject Art matters little in the academic life of learner and institution. I continue to see how alternative experiences and practices are marginalised within institutional sites, hurting my mind and body. I have inherited parts of this being even as I continue to learn and live in and with contradictions as a teacher educator. I am tied to my biography. Harnessing my own personal, practical knowledge and the embodied knowing with the Visual Arts that I have invested in means I "teach for openings", for moments when visual knowing offers me and my learners the space for different ways of thinking and acting. It is this resource that I drew on as I embarked on this study. This research is a frame through which I make sense of myself as a teacher educator and continue to question and challenge my practice of making sense of teachers, teaching, my world and theirs.

## CHAPTER ONE

# Can we paint the teacher differently?

### ORIENTATION

In this chapter I will firstly present how I came to ask the critical questions of this study, which focuses on the lives of teachers. Secondly, I shift to the micro-power politics of teachers and the institutions within which they work, to ask the main questions I set out to explore in this research study. Thirdly, I set out the macro political context as a possible space to explore and make sense of the “slipperiness” of being teacher in these times. With the understanding that teachers fall into a social categorisation which has historically been the target of oppressive norms and practices (institutional and material), I want to explore the potentialities articulated within politics that suggest powerful means through which teachers can “denaturalise” themselves and embrace change.

### HOW CAN WE PAINT TEACHERS DIFFERENTLY?

I begin this chapter, about teachers’ lives, introducing poems and letters written by the learners of Hillview Primary School to their student teacher Babitha. These letters were written two years ago (2000), during the eight-week teaching practice internship when I served as student teacher supervisor. I use these poems to problematise the lives of teachers *who currently work as resident teachers*. The learners in this student teacher’s class comment that the student teacher, in her vibrancy and dynamism is unlike their *real* teachers. It is crucial in that we see in these examples how the terms interrelate, how the student teacher who brings pleasure into the classroom is constructed in opposition to *real* teachers. Scrutinising the oppositions in all of the three excerpts produced by the learners enables me to find out what has been erased, silenced, and muted in the lives of *real* teachers, and what it means to be desirable.

### Defining success

She taught us how to make a fruit salad and maths.  
And dancing and poems and how to do the rap,  
She’s a nice teacher.

*I wish she were my REAL teacher.*

She has a van. It is green and shiny.

(Kapil Gopaul, 2000, Grade Three Pupil, Hillview Primary School)

What does it mean for teachers to give voice to one's thoughts, desires and needs as possibilities for different ways of thinking and acting as teacher? What does it mean for teachers to call on their own identities, to draw on particular resources and shake off habitual practices that limit and constrain how they think and act as teachers? Student teachers, being positively regarded by learners for their novel ways of thinking and working, are illustrative of the routinised or habitual practices that imprison resident teachers in sterile self-repetition. Getting images of vibrant, entrancing and passionate student teachers that children form in the course of their everyday lives was not a problem. But, what does it mean for *real* teachers to teach learners about fruit salad and maths? Are there *real* teachers who are desirable or loved by children, who desire to be and do teacher in unique ways? Having a desire for new and fresh ways is a reward for and perhaps a condition of being a successful teacher.

Thank you for teaching us things like fruit salad,  
poems, raps, divide, times, sums, maths, dance, measurement.

And thank you for all the *fun*.

I wish you were my ma'am.

You are a good student teacher.

You like writing too.

(Johnathan Peter Veeran, 2000, Grade Three Pupil, Hillview Primary School)

What does it mean to be a '*real*' teacher and have fun? These learners' concerns are illustrative of the highly problematic nature of teachers' lives in South African classrooms. It seems from these learners that they experience teachers in their classrooms, as boring, their practices are routine and dreary, and they are passionless. Their practices are oppressive and threaten to close up the spaces for learners and learning. What does it mean to transgress existing limits and traditional barriers to teaching and learning for moments when teacher, learner and subject discipline can connect in *fun* ways? Engaging in practices that conceptualise positions and power relations that are advantageous to learners in productive ways, gives the maximum possible brilliance to their (teachers') lives (St Pierre 1999). Having a desire to please, to cultivate a desire for practices in which teachers can assert themselves in creative and fun ways is perhaps a condition of being a successful teacher.

Mrs B. Balraj was the *second best* teacher.

I have been *inspired* a lot by *her work*.

She was the *best student teacher* of all.

I will sure miss her.

(Samantha Zondi, 2002, Grade Three Pupil, Hillview Primary School)

Who are those teachers who are able to leave behind an exalted reputation for creating a range of unique ways which make possible new forms of knowledge? What does it mean to (re)engage and inspire learners to create their own space for their own voice and unique ways of sense making? Affirmed as unique and embodied beings with desire to open spaces, teacher becomes cathected by the pupil as part of the learning process (Epstein and Johnson 1998). As suggestive of Samantha's poem, desirable teachers, who desire to think and work in unique ways, can fuel learner's choices of subjects, topics and disciplinary identities. This relation and connectedness between teacher, subject discipline and learner can be understood as a metaphorical seduction by both learners and teachers (Epstein and Johnson 1998, 127).

What can I learn from these poems learners wrote? How, as researcher, do I share silenced stories of *real* teachers who experience their lives in times of continued shifts with some sense of pleasure and fulfilment? The learners and I have begun a conversation. So what is the problem that learners face with *real* teachers? As a researcher I am intentional in sustaining a space to linger, to slow down time to think about what is experienced, seen and heard of/about teachers. I watch teachers and I have listened to how and what they do. I have watched teachers being given the "right stuff", and provided with the "right structures" to change them, to be and do teacher differently (Gitlin 1990). What I am also being alerted to through the children's poems/letters is that schools do not provide *real* teachers with the space to continue to resist and challenge the stereotypical images of teacher. Seen through the eyes of these young learners, the figure of a desirable teacher is easily recognisable: one who takes up a range of discourses and practices which are alternate to the historically naturalised constructions of (stereotypical/traditional) teacher. I take my cue from the learners and the wishes they express, to ask, "What does it mean to be a 'successful' teacher, to create the spaces to have fun in the classroom, to create a range of possibilities for teaching and learning and to be a desirable teacher who leaves behind an exalted knowledge-based reputation?"

I knew I was looking for a phenomenon that is more than just the opposite of burnout, something that is more than just work satisfaction or personal growth; it was more about sustaining one's desire to be and do teacher differently, something that is pleasurable and fulfilling (Oplatka 2001). I align myself with the following definitions of a "successful" teacher:

- The Oxford dictionary explains successful as, “thing or person that turns out well”.
- “Being desirable or loved is a reward for, and a condition of, being a successful teacher. Desire may, of course, be ‘desire for’ and/or ‘desire to please’ and/or ‘desire to be’” (Epstein and Johnson 1998, 127).
- “The pleasure of teaching is an act of resistance countering the overwhelming boredom, uninterest and apathy . . . to open our minds and hearts so that we can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, a movement against and beyond boundaries. To find again the place of eros within ourselves (teachers) and together allow the mind and body to feel and know desire.” (Hooks 1994b, 12; 199).
- “. . . desire is at the heart of being a good teacher . . . The basis of creativity, change, commitment and engagement is to be found in desire . . . In desire is to be found the creativity and spontaneity that connects teachers emotionally and sensually to their children, their colleagues and their work” (Hargreaves 1994a, 12).

In my exploration of successful teachers I move in and out of all these modes of being desirable, and drawing from these various sources and my own experiences of being in the field, I look out for their practices that enable them to sustain being and doing teacher differently. In our shifting conditions teachers’ privilege certain practices and relationships which makes their power productive and pleasurable. This makes thinking of one’s life as a teacher an aesthetic one. But the question I want to ask is “couldn’t every teacher’s life become a work of art?”

To discover what matters in my life as teacher educator now, and the lives of these successful teachers means speaking about the often unspeakable, the politics of the body and mind; the pleasure and pain experienced as embodied beings resisting and challenging the hegemonic forces, for moments of freedom. Freedom is not some shining, elusive ideal that manifests itself in teachers’ lives, but is in fact an ongoing resistance within a set of everyday concrete practices that has become commonplace or “natural” and that defines and limits how teachers are being constituted and how teachers constitute themselves as subjects (Rajachman 1985, 6). Therefore, we need to consider the possibility that there are teachers who have the capacity to transgress these limits and oppositions. We need to ask, “how do some teachers move from a discourse where only certain statements can be made, to another where different ways of being and acting as teacher are made possible?” There is a play within discourse and practice and as Butler (1990) maintains, teachers can choose not to repeat a practice. We need to ask then, “what happens in these moments of freedom, and what are the practices in and through which teachers escape from self-closure, transgress



existing constraints imposed by prevailing ideologically patterned sets of activities and events within a prescribed conformity of a social order, to perform their success?"

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This thesis explores research questions that relate closely to the constructions of teachers' conscious positions and their less clearly articulated meanings, desires, thoughts and contradictions implicit in the children's poems with which I started this chapter. The questions that I developed came with the theoretical issues I consider and provide a purpose to this research. They are,

- Who are "successful" teachers?
  - How are the identities of successful teachers constructed through discourse?
  - What are the broader social practices and discourses that successful teachers inhabit and in/through which they produce and perform their success?

The way I chose to make sense of the lives of "successful teachers" is through the stories they constructed. Then, by listening to their life histories, I have come to understand and know their differences in all their forms and manifestations. These are my insights, my composition of reuniting teacher with his mind and attending to the teacher in body, and the lived daily experience of the teacher. I have had to learn to see the teachers through multiple eyes, to observe and listen for the moments of pleasure and pain, for that is what gives teachers' lives meaning and moral questions their terrible weight. These teachers are teachers who "gave more grace and inventiveness to living" (McDonald 1992). It is the reason that everything they feel, know and do matters. It is the reason why being teacher matters (Bach et. al 1997, 16).

The six teachers, whose stories are narrated in this thesis, reflect the race, class and gender dimensions of the teacher population in the Durban Metropolitan region in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and was chosen through a process of theoretical sampling (Chapter Three, Section A, pp. 59–63). I have woven Trevor, Anna, Hlo, Daryl, Ursula and Eddie's life stories throughout this thesis, like a cubist composition of a range of "clues" teachers produced to construct "a life" told and experienced, in pain and pleasure, change and continuity, as spaces of possibility to move from what is, to what could be.

Like Maxine Green (1995, 312), I too believe:

It is when spaces open among them, when their diverse perspectives are granted integrity that something they can hold in common may begin to emerge. It requires



imagination, the identification of deficiencies in the world around . . . and a shared effort in some manner to repair. It is when this occurs that values are created, that persons with diverse backgrounds can come together.

Teachers' stories, as constructions of self, capture their lives in all their complexities, ambiguities and contradictions. In developing their identities as "successful" teachers, I was most interested in making sense of the spaces they were able to create for themselves, in their resistance to asymmetrical relations of power. Excavating the nature and source of social practices and social formations from the selectivities and silences teachers' stories entail, and being aware of the power relations that have shaped the telling, I hope to provide different ways to understand teachers as subjects with power and knowledge to transform and rethink their lives and how they make sense of the world. In this way I hope as well not to silence the very teachers whose voices we want to listen to.

What do we mean when we refer to "identity"? And how do we represent it in the stories we tell about our lives? Do we choose and maintain identity like a job, or do we constantly change and rework it, like when composing a collage? Is identity a sustained inner/private core, or does it change as circumstances and relationships change? In this study I explore these questions through the analyses of life-history interviews with six teachers, who reflect on their lives and their efforts to sustain their integrity and commitment in a time when the educational climate is fraught with complexities and uncertainties.

### **WHY STUDY THE LIVES OF SUCCESSFUL TEACHERS?**

These present times have been witness to a major shift in how we think and work as teachers, a shift that can be summed up in terms of opening up of the category "teacher". This idea does not mean the "death" of the traditional image of the teacher, but the possibility of differences we have evaded, erased and not been able to imagine. In a sense, what "teacher" signifies has been taken for granted for too long and its meanings have become fixed, normalised and slotted into positions of subordination. Locked into a humanism's inscription of the world (St Pierre 2000), and subsumed under the essence of a single identity category, teachers are more easily slotted into a hierarchy or grid and then manipulated and oppressed in order to produce order and regularity.

Demanding that teachers be considered differently not only changes what is studied and what becomes relevant to investigate, but also challenges the existing academic disciplines politically (Bach 1998). There is significant literature around teachers' identities, their training and socialisation that suggest that being and doing teacher has been defined in

particularistic and idiosyncratic ways (Hoadley 2002), a construction which is to a large extent pre-given or foundationalist (Butler 1992, 9). These definitive practices relate to conceptualisations of positions and personal/power relations through which being teacher has been naturalised in fixed ways, and that are disadvantageous to teachers and also to learners in subtle and unequal ways.

### **The fragmentation of self**

Given the binarism and unified subjectivity which underlies such humanist, liberatory educational approaches and theories, teachers' lives are seen as being separated from their personal history or the existence of positionalities in actual historical social relations. While teachers bring into the school their unique ways and personal modes of knowing and being, their thinking and acting is constrained by ideologically patterned sets of activities and events within a prescribed conformity of a social order that is produced and reproduced (Bach 1998, 7). The categories used to categorise teachers (e.g. junior primary and novice teachers) and the social practices in and through which teachers have learnt the meaning of what it is to belong to this shared community of thinking and working (e.g. training, books read) supports the singular and naturalised definition of the term "teacher". According to Flax (1993, 96), "categories created by discourse and social practice function to create and justify social organisation and exclusion". In this sense, what is right and/or normal is socially constituted and produced in the discourse of being teacher.

This view that teachers cannot decide how "to be and do" teacher in unique and different ways is supportive of the seemingly homogeneous, stable notion of self and identity based on exclusions and fear of unfamiliarity (MacNaughton 2000a; Davies 1989). These paternalistic tendencies continue to produce and reproduce teachers, who stand above their students with "recipe knowledge" (Esland 1977): practical, uncritical, unreflective and concerned with means rather than the ends (Sachs and Smith 1988). Constructed as passive recipients of social structure and of the ideological schemata that sustains a regime of power, teachers continue to accept the traditional image about themselves.

The dualistic oppositions (e.g. mind/body, structure/agency, subject/object) which teachers contend with daily ignore the complexity and interrelatedness of the private-public bond. Whilst they determine how teachers think and work as teachers, essentialising both terms and constructed as opposites, they show how they have been used to justify and naturalise power relations. These dualisms that determine teachers' ways of thinking and working are inadequate for understanding teachers' multiple identities which interact in complex and non-linear ways to make meaning of teacher differently. How have teachers' public lives

become separate from their private lives? How have their meanings of “who I am” become viewed as separate from “how I make meaning of my life and the world”? For teachers in this study, it is a crucial concern for the way they know, live and perform their success. The struggle over identity within the teacher is viewed as inseparable from the struggle over the meanings of identities and their subject positions within culture at large (Orner 1992).

As the study unfolds, the issues of private-public alignment are identified and elaborated through interrogations of the complex and contradictory discourses and practices teachers locate themselves in at different times in their lives. During the life history interviews, and through the narratives we have co-authored, I kept asking myself how it came to be that the teacher took up one position and not another in a different discourse. What investments do they have in occupying a particular subject position, and how are their own biographical experiences and personal modes of knowing and being implicated in this? I search for social practices and relationships that have emerged historically which position teachers in particular ways. Through exploring the contradictory discourses and practices teachers take up, this study attempts to find out and make visible what has been erased, silenced and muted in being teacher. The meanings of the term “teacher” continue to undergo transformation.

### **Hierarchies and exclusions**

Opening up the totalising and descriptive identity category of teacher involves skepticism concerning the singular definition and meanings given to the social category of “teacher”, and what it means to think and work as teachers. More broadly, it involves skepticism concerning the existence of structuralist theories which take for granted the singular definitions of teacher and teaching, which assume that they are universal, fixed, ahistorical categories (Falzon 1998, 1), but cannot explain the complexity of everyday lived experience and its incapacity to handle why teachers make the choices that they do. I want to trouble these essentialist structures (academic and social) that describe how “to be and do teacher”; they are dangerous and they create binaries that operate in invisible ways. I want to understand and show how all identity categories (race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender) and not just ‘teacher’ are taken into account in how we think about teachers’ lives.

Studying teachers is not just about teachers, but about the culture and ideological schemata that sustain a regime of power in the world, namely those of class, race and gender. In this study, I want to challenge authoritative cultural scripts in the making of teacher culture. In doing so, I want to argue against the idea of being teacher as static and historical, postulating that power is central to the social relations of teacher. I want to ask how some teachers, regulated and inscribed by discourse and cultural practice, resist those normalising

inscriptions and their material effects, to perform their success. These questions are posed not to straightjacket the studies of teachers, but to open up and go in search. To recognise teachers' lives as a site of historically varying contradictions that actively construct teacher identities, to acknowledge human agency, human resistance and an individual's ability to re-make dominant practices, meanings and understandings (Connell 1987) is what this study attempts to show. I reveal how the specificities of race, class and gender are inextricably bound to the patterns of desire that are constitutive of the private/public bond and in doing so, I want to challenge dominant cultural scripts in the making of teacher. In my study, being a successful teacher can only be understood in terms of exploring and understanding teachers' lives, how they construct who they are (social practices and relationships) and how they relate to their social categorisation in an affirmative way.

### **Understanding teachers**

Presently, all those who call for teacher voice, stakeholders inside and outside the school, do so based on the claim that teachers do not have power, and they want to empower teachers based on convictions that material forces set limits on how teachers think and work. While I do provide a macro analysis, I want to align myself to the micro-power politics of teachers teaching in schooling sites. I want to, as Lighthall (1989) reiterates:

. . . put aside materialist notions of school problems as being either real and worth working on, or imagined and distracting. All school problems are imagined . . . in the sense that they represent a mobilisation of minding, a collective framing of otherwise unframed and uncertain stuff of actually lived school life . . . the habit of defining a problem in one's own isolated terms, of lacking the capacity to see it otherwise. This is a state of blocked collectivity . . . Anyway the crisis is better than none at all in the sense that it awakens people to their differences.

Exploring the micro-power politics enabled me to capture the lived and unique experiences of teachers and the structural inequalities that are important. The learners' poems/letters at the beginning of this chapter alerts us to the fact that putting pleasure back into teachers' lives cannot be reduced to the broad political context only. And, while I do align myself with the micro-politics of teachers and their lives, I realise it fails to acknowledge wider patterns of power and change. In the production of this study, I have heightened my awareness of these materialist notions and political intent of my work, and its contribution to possibilities for change, and for discourses and practices that constitute particular definitions/notions of being a successful teacher. In doing this, I do acknowledge the social location.



In searching for the micro-constitution of teacher identity, I want to know of teachers who work in schools in Durban, and to generate stories of their lives, to learn from their lives what it means to think and work within perpetual contradictions in a pleasurable and fulfilling way. In documenting what happens in these spaces, the slippages and gaps in the contradictions, this study shows how identities and discourses are produced, appropriated and contested within teachers' lives as daily lived experiences within specific historical contexts. My work thus focuses on notions of shifting mobile power relations between the individual and social context and between the individual and teachers' subjective self, in making sense of teachers who experience the fluid context with some sense of pleasure and fulfilment.

Presently in South Africa, the focus on all levels of educational change is an attempt to break decisively away from any absolute, singular and categorical framework of how to understand and practice being a teacher. Understanding the complexity and dynamism of power is key. It is in this manner that the idea of the patriarchal teacher image has engendered intense debate and discussion, resulting in a range of policy initiatives. As a teacher educator engaging in discourses in professional development, I think about knowledge claims made about/on/through/against/with teachers. Who makes knowledge claims about teachers and how they should change: media reporters, developmental psychologists, sociologists, teachers, policy makers and department officials? "Everyone – politicians, the media and the public alike – wants to do something about education" (Hargreaves 1994, 5). While there have been changes initiated by these various stakeholders, some of significance, these reform efforts fail to alter the most glaring failure, the teacher.

These emerging discourses, ideas and practices concerning the changing positions and identities of teachers have often become mired in fear and suspicion, domination and self-closure. Ironically, teachers continue to use the classroom to enact rituals of control that were about domination and unjust exercise of power. Hargreaves (1994, 12) confirms that the more reformers systematically try to bring the devices of change in line with teachers' own desires to change, the more they may stifle the basic desire to teach itself. I am also mindful of the potentiality for teachers to leave the teaching profession. The drive to leave is real (Ramrathan 2002, 127). While there are stories of high attrition rates in the early twenty age group (Crouch 2001), I also hear stories that suggest how health issues like HIV/AIDS affect work conditions, leading to resignations. According to Ramrathan (2002), 750 teachers have resigned from teaching in KwaZulu-Natal in the year 2000 alone, and their reasons centered around structural issues (class size, work loads, rationalisation and redeployment), personal

issues (better financial opportunities) and psychological issues (stress, morale). Singh (2001, IV) adds:

The plethora of policy initiatives seeking educational transformation in South Africa is to a large degree not congruent with existing teachers' beliefs. Teachers have to redefine and renegotiate their roles and identities, which is problematic to a large degree because they come embedded with experiences gleaned during the apartheid era. A significant number of teachers are therefore dissatisfied with teaching as a career.

But it gets harder. What I hear are stories of oppressive practices by those in power inside schools. Singh (2001) elaborates on these issues:

- Conflict with management, as management are perceived to be inefficient and lack leadership skills.
- A demand for excessive administrative or clerical tasks which is seen to be unnecessary, as it takes away from quality preparation time.
- An absence of praise and recognition for the contribution educators make to the holistic development of the school.
- Teachers feel powerless in terms of the decision-making processes in the school situation.
- The use of developmental appraisal to threaten teachers rather than to be used as a developmental tool.

I am troubled with what I see. The reproduction of oppressive practice presses discomfort on my being, framing my knowing and making me question what is seen. This study troubles teachers' lives differently. It attempts to examine teachers' lives who commit themselves to continue to teach and who experience teacher position as a potential space for moments of freedom (pleasure and fulfilment). Demanding that teachers be considered differently challenges the fixed and dominant ways of defining teacher. This study attempts to understand the lives of teachers, males and females of different race and class groupings who teach in a diverse range of schooling sites. One of its key arguments is that ongoing resistance for change as potential spaces for the constitution of teacher as successful is best understood through teachers' rich and textured lives and stories.

I believe that there are better ways of troubling teachers' lives. I hope to explore and understand these better ways. This study asks questions about what it means for teachers to

be and do teacher differently. I trouble the everyday moments and practices in which teachers engage, and the extent to which it brings pain and pleasure to their lives.

### **THE BROAD NATIONAL CONTEXT**

#### **Politics: Spaces for possibilities**

Democracy, freedom and personal and social transformation have found expression and continue to find their way into legislation for regulating continued growth of teachers.

South Africa's democratic constitution (1996) has heightened expectations that political change would facilitate democracy and teachers' personal and social transformation. While the evangelists offer their vision of policy in transformation, policy critics and skeptics explore through publications whether in fact policy can be implemented. Francine de Clercq (1997, 128) makes useful distinctions between the different purposes of policies: there are substantive policies that reflect what the government should do, and procedural policies that spell out who is going to take action and through which mechanisms. Material policies provide real sources to some interest groups, whereas symbolic policies remain more rhetorical about the necessary changes. Regulative policies limit the behaviour and actions of groups and individuals, whereas redistributive policies shift the allocation of resources or rights among social groups through policy initiatives.

As researcher, the position that I take in this study is that policy is a discursive space. Like Barasa and Mattson (1998, 67), I too want to focus in particular on the way in which a selected range of educational policies embody a concept of power as energy, capacity, and potential rather than as domination. The new policies mark a shift from Christian National Education and apartheid education to a new democratic system that embraces multiplicity and partiality of all knowledge and the ongoing processes of identity formation and renegotiation (Orner 1992; Chisholm 1999). In this joint leap of faith from what was to what could be, I want to shift from being cynical about what is on paper (policy) to exploring what are political possibilities for teachers who continually undergo personal and social transformation. Between what could be (policy ideals) and what is mediated by everyday realities, what is possible? My research tries to show this. The next part of this section expands on the national educational context, as it is relevant to this study.

Education, like all features of South African life, is undergoing large-scale changes as a consequence of the wider transition to democracy. Overall, educational policies are envisaged to transform the educational legacy of the past into a democratic education system, which will contribute to the development of productive human beings in a country free from

oppression, exclusion and prejudice. Redressing inequities is thus a major political force of all policies in education. In South African schools, for example, the teacher's work and teachers' identities have been identified as a key focus to the transformation of the education system (Barasa and Mattson 1998).

In the past the philosophy of fundamental pedagogics and Christian National Education subjected all teachers, irrespective of race to the centrally driven legislations for education, which effectively treated them as agents of state ideology. Popkewitz (1994) also supports the view that the "imaginary teacher" is constructed, sanctioned and naturalised, and through authorised professional knowledge teachers' sense of self is embedded in certain understandings. Serving the ideologies of a separatist cultural philosophy, an apartheid government dictated teachers' roles and identities, and within this normative organisation the state was able to maintain a state of closure and domination in how teachers judge and act as teachers. Significant literature on the relationship between the state and teachers revolves around how the state's invocation and definition of teacher professionalism is a form of ideological control, sanctioning certain sensitivities, dispositions and awareness that project specific teacher identities (Hoadley 2002, 43).

The advent of democracy has meant that we introduce new ways of thinking about the meaning of teacher. Democracy has brought the heightened expectation that ongoing personal and social transformation in education and specifically for the teacher will be a powerful means through which teachers can denaturalise themselves from a singular definition and embrace change. One of the most obvious trends in the policy documents appropriate to education is the concern to cultivate desire for practices which serves to unsettle habitual thinking and prevailing categories for being and doing teacher, and to open spaces for their transformation.

The Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, enshrines the rights of all people and affirms human dignity, equality and freedom. The need to take measures to ensure commitment to the ideals of democracy and human rights has thus been recognised in the Bill of Rights, which states:

... all learners and partners at a school have the democratic right to due process and to participate in decision-making about matters affecting them in school. They also have the right to have their views heard about these matters.



In line with the Constitution, educator roles and competences are defined in the Department of Education (DoE) *Norms and Standards for Educators* policy document (2000a). There is consistent emphasis on democracy and values in all aspects of educational practice. As early as 1993, the Committee of Teacher Education Policy (COTEP) was established to make recommendations to the national minister on teacher education policies for South Africa. By 1997, these recommendations were revised to form the *Norms and Standards for Educators* (NSE). Serving regulatory, symbolic and procedural functions, the DoE *Norms and Standards for Educators* affirms the roles of the teacher as crucial to the process of transformation. As a policy document it has major strengths for educational practice, and it offers “a holistic view of the educator as someone with a range of competences and responsibilities”. While apartheid-style Christian National Education provided fertile ground for the teacher as transmitter and authoritative producer of knowledge, DoE *Norms and Standards for Educators* offers the space for multiple roles and dynamic social practices and relationships. This affirmation of the teacher in a position of continuing personal and social transformation and the slipperiness of such an identity is captured in the following extract taken from the regulative policy, *Norms and Standards for Educators* (2000, 29):

The roles, their associated applied competences and the qualifications framework provide the basis for the ongoing professional development of educators, which will be steered by the Department of Education. The creation of multiple career and learning paths will encourage the development of educators who are competent to teach in different contexts and in different ways, playing different roles and using different applied competences.

By recognising and embracing the teacher as a subject with practical, foundational and reflexive competences, this initiative provides a holistic view for teacher change. More importantly, while recognising the normative principles articulated within this framework, it attempts to blur the dualistic oppositions that previously determined how teachers think and work from a single ordered view to one characterised by multiplicity and partiality. Binary oppositions such as teacher/learner, voice/silence, mind/body which have been historically constructed as opposites, and used to justify and naturalise power relations are recognised as inadequate and dangerous (Orner 1992). In this document teachers’ positions are constituted through a range of discourses, including learning mediator; interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials; leader, administrator and manager; scholar, researcher and lifelong learner; assessor and learning area subject specialist. These multiple “realities” are constructed as potential spaces in and through which teachers are encouraged to adopt multiple positions in which they have to forego the security of being the source/producers of

knowledge, skills and values/attitudes and to promote the emergence of new forms of thought and action.

This policy document parades an intention to denaturalise fixed ways of thinking about teachers. These multiple roles interact in complex ways, disrupting linear, dualistic ways of thinking. Being accountable yet autonomous reflects the perpetual paradox of teachers' lives in these changing and uncertain contexts. Changing meanings of the term teacher is not easy and it involves many issues. Emerging out of colonialism and apartheid it involves social issues and the hierarchies (racial, gendered and classed) that were created and exist and the bizarre formulation of race and class patterns. It involves the history of patriarchal privilege in South Africa, teachers' identities regulated and positioned in relation to their work (training and socialisation), institutional constraints and culture/s which made possible certain definitions of "doing" teaching, and "being" teacher.

Within the existing educational context, the objective of personal and social transformation competes with ideological/bureaucratic imperatives. While the normative framework, articulated in the *Norms and Standards for Educators*, creates the spaces for discursive practices, it is also seen as being bound up with an element of non-discursive practices of power. Undeniably, it does create the spaces for contextual sensitivity, negotiation and flexibility of definitions and meanings of teachers' roles and identities, but its separation from all external influences is also problematic in that it can contribute to the establishment of new forms of closed thinking and domination within one's specific context. Without teachers recognising that all positions are finite and partial and none can prevail absolutely, it could lead to self-closure and habitual practices. As embodied beings with reflexive competences, teachers have to question over and over again to unsettle habits and ways of thinking to dissipate accepted familiarities domination and self-closure.

On the basis of this problematisation of existing forms and ways of thinking, the South African Council of Educators' *Code of Conduct* puts pressure on teachers to avoid being imprisoned by their own organising forms. While the concepts of roles and competences created a range of possibilities for unique experiences appropriate to teachers' own contexts, the SACE *Code of Conduct* provides fertile ground for promoting the ongoing dialogue between teachers' desire for autonomy and the normative frameworks encapsulated in the DoE *Norms and Standards* policy document. Defining teachers' thinking and working as a process of ongoing reflexion, is at the heart of Foucault's conception of the "ethics of the intellectual" (1984a, 38). The role of the intellectual is not to "tell others what to do. Rather one should make oneself permanently capable of detaching oneself from oneself". Through

its emphasis on ongoing professional development, teachers will be empowered as subjects to locate themselves within ever-present alternate discourses (multiple positions/realities) as an expression of ongoing resistance to self-closure and habitual practices. The objectives of SACE (2002, 2) are to:

- provide for the registration of educators;
- promote the professional development of educators; and
- set, maintain and protect ethical and professional standards.

Through multiple, competing ways of interpreting and organising how they think and work, teachers' power is reconfigured and displaced in productive ways. In this way, teachers involved with the day to day struggles of teaching will be assisted in bringing about political and social transformation.

In the bigger picture of professional development, the SACE takes primary responsibility for defining and promoting the ethics and values of professionalism (Barasa and Mattson 1998, 53). While it represents a challenge to closed thinking and an opening to the possibility of new forms of thought and action, it is only through exposing oneself to appropriate forms of professional development that will enable teachers to adopt an attitude of openness and promote basic human rights. In defining certain forms of life as being properly human (SACE 2000), sensitive to unequal power relations between teacher and learner, and making visible that which has been hidden, repressed and silenced, there is danger and risk in taking up and absolutising features and establishing forms of domination. However, its promotion of ongoing learning and knowledge and continued shifts in positions (*Norms and Standards for Educators*) should assist resistance to domination by the prevailing norms and forms.

If effectively explored, the DoE *Norms and Standards for Educators* and the SACE *Code of Conduct*, are potential spaces for affirmation of teacher as active, embodied beings. Empowered with the capacity for multiple subject positions and for stimulating and sustaining renewal through ongoing dialogue, teachers are able to challenge and disrupt totalising forms of thinking and acting which would otherwise suppress and silence the learners. These initiatives articulate the potential spaces for framing the fluidity of teachers' identity as a powerful means through which teachers can denaturalise themselves and embrace change.

**Education and the teacher**

When I went out to produce data for this study, Curriculum 2005 and outcomes-based education (OBE) were inescapable aspects of school life. Eddie, one of the research participants, had just returned from a week-long OBE workshop as a representative of his school, and where he was familiarised with “new ways of teaching”, writing up phase organisers and assessment strategies. While Ursula, another research participant, complained bitterly about the lack of space and time, she enjoyed the flexibility that the new curriculum design of Curriculum 2005 offered her. Trevor, a third participant in the research study, expressed his pleasure at having to engage with learners within a spirit of transparency and democracy as advocated by the new curriculum policies.

The African National Congress educational policy framework lists curriculum as central to educational policy and a major initiative in addressing the biased educational context in favour of a democratic structure. This means an overhaul of apartheid-style Christian National Education (CNE). CNE was constructed for all children, Black and White, and was based on the patriarchal authority of the adult (MacLeod, 1995; Suransky-Decker, 1998). The present educational experience provides the terrain for teachers to challenge and question dominant forms of reason and traditional barriers to teaching and learning. OBE-Curriculum 2005 reflects a significant shift for teachers and their changing role as educational practitioners. The role shifts from one of confident educator and authoritative producer of knowledge, generating power over the child who was constructed as deficient, to one of facilitator engaging in practices and discourses that open up spaces for teachers’ unique experiences as candidates for shaping the experiences of learners.

As part of the departments’ commitment to create a national learning framework, the aim is to accelerate the redressing of past unfair discrimination in education, shifting the values and practices of apartheid education into a democratic and rights-based approach to social development (Christie 1998, 208). Curriculum 2005 attempts to rid the education system of dogmatism and outmoded teaching practices and to put in place values and attitudes for democratic nation building (Bhana 2002). It advocates the devolution of control between national outcomes and schooling sites. While the outcomes are set centrally, responsibility for input and the nature of the experiences are left to individual schools and teachers. Curriculum 2005 thus calls for radically new approaches to programme design, teaching methods, power relationships and assessment. It redefines the roles of teachers, learners and school managers and of textbooks and assessment. Within this framework, teachers are able to create a range of practices relevant and useful to their subject position within the specific institutional contexts.

As articulated in the document entitled 'Education in South Africa: Achievements since 1994' (1994, 16):

If teachers are to have central roles in curriculum design, they must also take major responsibilities for assessment of learners' achievements . . . for purposes of reporting and accountability. Teachers' responsibilities for assessment arise in part from the diversity that school-based curriculum development permits, and in part from the emphasis that learner-centred education gives to "deep learning". To support the curriculum functions of schools as centres of professional activity, schools and provincial departments must be reshaped. School managers have to provide professional leadership in curriculum, not only administrative efficiency. Schools have to have management structures and systems that harness creativity and skills within the schools, promoting experimentation and continuous improvement.

Thus, underlying the new curriculum initiative is the idea of a "paradigm shift" for defining teacher. According to the Department of Education (1997, 6) this meant:

A move from one paradigm to another; from one way of looking at something to new way;

A move to a new mindset, a new attitude, a new way of thinking;

A change to a new game with a new set of rules, when the rules change then part of our world changes.

Policy initiatives adopted by the post-apartheid government can be seen as possible spaces for teacher redefinition within this transforming education and training system. Recognition given to the teacher as one with the capacity to occupy a range of contradictory discourses in making sense of their lives, as well make possible different pathways for learners in different contexts and assessment methods (Christie 1998), are symbolic of these progressive ways. Within this new way, teachers can think and work differently to create a range of possibilities for learners' unique ways of making sense of the world. However, the extent to which the new curriculum can foster deeper understanding to disrupt the stereotypical image of teacher, is questionable. As Unterhalter (1999, 26) claims:

The curriculum as a policy text cannot itself explain how it will be put in use in the classroom, and the curriculum in use cannot easily be disentangled from other educational processes like, for example, the pedagogies utilised, the learning materials and the ways they are read, and the assessment system in operation. But all these

processes are gendered and intersect with socially constructed views of race, ethnicity and sexuality.

While the focus on learner involvement requires that schools and teachers take major roles in curriculum design, the teacher is inescapably the subject with the power to make choices regarding what is to be included and excluded, how teaching and learning happens, the shift from book learning to experience as a resource for learning, and the multimodal assessment strategies for learners' diverse experiences and sense making. What is of greater significance is that practices and discourses teachers occupy are deeply infiltrated by teachers' race, gender and class issues (Epstein and Johnson 1998). The process of identity construction as "successful" teacher is therefore one upon which the contradictions and dispositions of the surrounding socio-cultural context have a powerful impact. What is further highlighted and what Unterhalter (1999, 26) illuminates, is that OBE provides the context through which teachers' potential for success is performed in practice. It is against this backdrop that construction of successful teacher identities is being produced and maintained.

While OBE-Curriculum 2005 has created for teachers the potential spaces for social dialogue, for many teachers this shift in position and the idea of abandoning certainty is deeply problematic. As Singh (2001) explains: "Educators are now working in an educational climate that does not necessarily gel with their own formal schooling and teacher education training." And Samuel (1998, 93) adds: "Teachers who were educated in the apartheid era were framed within a 'victims ideology' which preferred them to conceptualise their roles as implementers of the already constructed syllabi of the former apartheid state." The bizarre construction of apartheid and the power it exercised over the education system in South Africa, in the shape of CNE, succeeded in arresting dialogue between teacher and learner. Constructed over time as tools of the state, these new forms and norms of thinking and being make visible the tensions and uncertainties of being a teacher. As Boomer et al (1992, 7) argue: "It is therefore very difficult for teachers to share their power with students, because society and schools are not based on such a philosophy."

While there were shortcomings in the policy documents, compounded by diverse interpretations amongst trainers, education departments, officers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and writers of learning materials, the glaring mismatch was most evident in teachers' daily lives and practices (Department of Education 2001).

In recognition of this, the National Department of Education, and the Education Labour Relations Council developed the ELRC Manual for Developmental Appraisal. The major

strength of the Manual may be seen as its recognition of the teachers' democratic and professional rights in developing accountability among educators and in promoting a partnership approach to school practices and development (Barasa and Mattson 1998).

Using anecdotal evidence and international research as a yardstick, many areas requiring effort to bring about personal and professional transformation in teacher were identified at policy level, at district and school level, including the need for in-service programmes. These initiatives were presumed to contribute to teachers' ongoing personal and professional development and understanding of successful practices within the framework of teacher transformation. Its main intention is "to facilitate the personal and professional development of educators in order to improve the quality of teaching practice and education management . . . based on the fundamental principle of lifelong learning and development" (ELRC 1998). One of the key objectives of the Council, as laid down in the Act is "to conduct research, analyse and survey education nationally and internationally, and promote training and build capacity in education".

For schools, according to the ELRC task team, this system was driven by the need to:

- Create a nationally unified system of appraisal.
- Recognise those educators who were successfully committing themselves to the fluid context, engaging in a range of practices that enhance the quality of teacher and learners' experiences.
- Encourage ongoing professional development to ensure continuing commitment of quality service delivery.
- Lay the foundation for performance management (Barasa and Mattson 1998).

While the ELRC Manual is an impressive document, its translation into school reality is being marred by much suspicion and frustration. My intention in this study is not to argue its symbolic, procedural and regulative functions, but to explore the spaces for possible change in how teachers think and work. Designed specifically to enhance educators' professional development, I see the Developmental and Appraisal System (DAS) as a creative space for all teachers and their cultivation of desire for ongoing involvement in new discourses and practices. In this way, DAS opens up the educators' position as a possible space for the promotion of a culture of basic human rights. While this Manual fails to explicitly evaluate this very significant commitment of teachers' professionalism and professional development, I want to argue that the construction of teachers' multiple identities are not drawn only from teachers' "knowledge base" as a resource, but also teachers' capacity to continue to reflect



on the nature and source for the multiple positions and identities that they occupy in their ongoing dialogue with learners. The role of DAS in this construction should be to create the possibility of differences and the affirmation of teachers' unique modes of meaning making in their ongoing professional progress within contextually specific sites. This is just as significant and should be a pre-occupation of all educators. For example, the experience of inhabiting the identity of "African male teacher" is likely to be very different from "African female teacher" and different from "White male teacher". The nature of the positions teachers choose to occupy in their classrooms, to construct themselves as particular kinds of teachers, are deeply infiltrated by race, class and gender dynamics. Ignoring these resources, and applying core principles and criteria for all school sites is what puts pressure on teachers to engage in "strategic mimicry", i.e. developing myself according to how you expect me to, and not how I would like to (Mattson 1999).

While many would argue that the visions articulated in policies remain purely rhetorical (Barasa and Mattson 1998), I want to again take up the stance of exploring these policies, as spaces that symbolically reject any absolute overarching, unifying standpoint of traditional educational practice. Regarding these reforms as initiatives that "only heighten the contradictions of control, and worsen the cycle of defensive teaching and teacher apathy" (McNeil 1988), I want to show, as the study unfolds, that powerful moments happen in these contradictions, moments that disrupt the cycle, the habits and dominant forms of reason for teachers' freedom and pleasure. In this regard being teacher is not conceptualised as a mere possession of knowledge and skills for transmitting that knowledge, but as a dynamic social process, which is largely value driven (Barasa and Mattson 1998, 50).

The major focus in this study is teachers' lives, explored from a poststructural position, a position that assumes that the teacher has no permanent essential or fixed identity, but the power to assume different identities, identities in a state of fluidity, a fleeting multiplicity of opportunity (Hatch and Wisniewski 1995). The focus on teachers' lived lives in this study thus tries to explore and understand these fleeting, episodic moments of opportunities which makes the "task" of being teacher not just a functional one, but an aesthetic one as well. Politically, the need for being and doing teacher differently is a demand in the South African education context. Teachers' lives cannot be evaded in this process.

Can teaching in South African schools become the possible means through which teachers can "denaturalise" themselves from being known in any definitive and singular way, to embrace change? What are the conjunctural and differential choices that teachers make? What is the power of being teacher? What does it mean for teachers to struggle against



oppressive forces inside schools that imprison those who question and challenge these harmful practices and ideas? In my research study these are questions I try to answer. My assumption is that teachers' identities must be thought of as unfixed, as a process perpetually in construction, perpetually contradictory and perpetually open to change (Belsey 1980, 132). Thus far, there are glaring omissions and shortcomings in the literature on teachers' successful commitment to the fluid South African educational terrain. My assumption is that this study can provide the means through which we can ask questions and work for perpetual teacher change, and teachers' pleasurable experiences, for teachers who embrace change and continuity.

### OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

**Chapter One: Can we paint the teacher differently?** defines the focus of this study and the purpose and justification for this study. How can we see teachers differently elaborates briefly on the research and policy context in South Africa and sets out the two main critical questions it attempts to explore about teachers' lives against these present shifts.

**Chapter Two: Multiple views, alternate frames,** presents the theoretical assumptions that became the original framework for producing and interpreting the data about teachers' lives in these fluid times. This survey highlights alternatives to the structural and linear categorisation models of understanding teachers' lives and their success.

**Chapter Three: Momentarily caught glimpses,** examines the methodology employed in this study to produce teachers' life histories. Like a cubist composition, this chapter produces data as "multiple clues" which teachers use to construct "a life" told and experienced. These multiple data sources were employed to document teachers' conscious positions and their less clearly articulated thoughts, wishes and anxieties. I saw this as an opportunity to move beyond the purely structural approaches to narrative and to explore different ways of representing the other and myself as researcher-author in life histories. The cubist framework was employed to interpret and represent the conscious positions taken up by teachers and their less clearly articulated meanings and positions.

**Chapter Four: Freeze frames and coloured facets,** presents the teachers' narratives in a simple, linear way, describing the dispersal of teachers' lives through discourse. This layer of interpretation I am able to "freeze frame" for in-depth analysis. Written in two different narrative forms, this interpretation presents a romanticised, overwhelmingly positive life

story. Its focus reflects a commitment to maximise, not hold aside, the emotionality and complexity of life histories.

**Chapter Five: Fluid images and potential spaces**, are vignettes that I have created in which I explore the fluid relationship between the individual and the social context, or teacher's self constituted through discourse. It refers to the complexities of race, class and gender in the formation of teachers' subjectivities and multiple subject positions as crucial spaces to perform their success. The construction of apartheid and its intensely dehumanising effects on society has meant a highly unequal society in which teachers' meanings of success are being made. To understand more comprehensively how being a successful teacher is constructed, we need to look at the different social situations in which people are placed in society. The teachers' life histories are reflective of this connectedness. I show how culturally specific processes involve recourse to the dominant discourses that regulate and produce teacher identity. In shifting my stance from a single fixed point of view, this layer of meaning offers me another view of teachers' lives, which make visible teachers' multiple subject positions and subjectivities. The storied vignettes offer me the space to make visible those subtle silences and muted experiences embedded in teachers' life histories, that have shaped, shape and continue to shape their lives.

**Chapter Six: Patterns of desire: A new kind of integrity and continuity**, is another layer of interpretation that is presented in two dimensions, offering me a way of finding commonality in the experience of the different lives. Dimension one presents those potential spaces for teachers' freedom in which teachers as agents create a range of practices in which power is displaced and reconfigured in productive ways. This chapter identifies four crucial spaces for teachers' freedom. This section also highlights the constraints within which these moments of freedom are created.

Dimension two explores the subjective world of teachers and those biographically invested practices and relationships teachers have made in their meanings, for being successful and desirable. Within these practices and relationships are powerful moments in which teachers produce their meanings of being and doing teacher in a pleasurable way in the interstices between freedom and constraints. Drawing on these biographical investments, this chapter explores how teachers' identities as successful teachers are challenging and disrupting the stereotypical images of teacher.

**Chapter Seven: Cubist lives: An exhibit of metamorphosis** is a reflexive story, exploring a cubist composition of teachers' lives, as work that exhibits all the concepts of metamorphosis, of simultaneity and consecutive vision. Placing the data under erasure produced four different stories. In this chapter I bring a sense of closure, weaving together the theoretical, research and practical threads to answer the questions I pose in Chapter One.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Multiple views, alternate frames**

#### **Developing tools and techniques for understanding teachers' lives**

##### **ORIENTATION**

The previous chapter, serving as a sketch to the main study, dealt with an exploratory depiction of particular discourses and meanings that I offer to position myself in this research study. This chapter pays attention to the different dimensions of understanding teachers' private life and public responsibility, and also offers a possible dimension and the tools employed for exploration of "success" and teachers' lives. The following dimensions make up the different sections in this chapter:

- Rethinking self/identity models
- Understanding socialisation theories
- Understanding poststructural theories
- Using poststructural tools to understand different dimensions of teachers' lives as complex and contradictory spaces in which power is produced and performed in successful ways.

The literature presented in these sections offered me the space to construct the theoretical tools that I used to design the data production framework. Employing poststructuralism as a theoretical perspective was useful in that it offered me the space and the tools for multiple methods and strategies for constructing and deconstructing the life histories of the teachers in the study. Most importantly, this theoretical perspective enabled me to create an analytical framework that assumes knowledge as partial, power as dispersed and identity as always in flux.

##### **INTRODUCTION**

This study is about learning to explore and understand the lives of teachers who are able to successfully commit themselves to the teacher position in these times of continued uncertainties, contradictions and changes. Issues concerning the power and knowledge of teachers are crucial for this commitment to education against a variety of oppressive and constraining forces that prevail. While most theoretical approaches suggest that there are several ways of construing the professional life cycle of teachers (Huberman 1993) and offer humanist notions of the self as a neat, coherent package, poststructural theories view

subjectivities as complex and non-unitary. These humanist and realist interpretations chart in a fixed and linear fashion teachers' identities and the potential spaces available to teachers for stages of satisfaction and commitment to their teacher position. The poststructural position seems to be that the teacher has no fixed identity but assumes different identities at different times so that identities are constantly in a state of flux, a fleeting multiplicity of opportunities (Hatch and Wisniewski 1995, 123). Exploring teacher identity within the poststructural framework enabled me to explore those fleeting moments when teachers resist the totalising forms of reason that constrain them, and transgress the imposed limitations to create new forms of being and acting. Energised and transformed, these active and embodied beings enact practices in the teacher position, which open up spaces for dialogue and unique experiences which give their lives certain values. These are moments that make the teachers' practice pleasurable and their lives desirable.

I want to argue in this thesis for an approach that positions teachers not as objects to be changed but as complex subjects with power and knowledge to change. Life history work has much to offer, given its focus on the construction and reconstruction of teachers' identities and the self, transformed continuously in relation to the discourses they occupy to make sense of their lives and the world.

There are many ways to consider the career of teaching, the reasons for becoming teachers and the factors associated with becoming a successful teacher. In this study I attempt to address the question of being a "successful" teacher by recognising the struggle over identity (who am I?), as inseparable from the struggle over the meanings of identities and subject positions that may be occupied by teachers in teaching discourses and practices (how do I make meaning of who I am?). It is these complex identities I seek to understand, and the multiple and conflicting meanings they create in their daily lives. Employing the life history approach enables me to understand teachers' lives as complex, and identities as fluid and multiple.

I draw on poststructuralist theorising to understand teachers' identities and the meanings they constitute through the discourses and practices they adopt as a condition for and outcome of the changes, uncertainties and contradictions in the different teaching and learning contexts. Drawing on a multidimensional understanding of teachers' identities, challenges me to face explicitly that ambiguity, multiplicity and contradictions are inseparable to the form and substance of our identities.

This chapter serves to explore key approaches on identity theory research and teacher socialisation, as well as studies on teacher thinking and teacher identity, and the methodological findings and implications of such studies. The intention is to identify the gaps in terms of theoretical understanding, focus, methodology, and the kinds of studies that may still be explored to expand on an era of research that is very close to the hearts of researchers, who want to counter what was seen as a colonisation of teachers' experience by research practices that characterise the teacher as one variable in the classroom.

### **STEPPING OUTSIDE**

In this section I want to present a brief overview of the literature surveyed for this study as a way of offering the reader a sense of how and why I came to use poststructural theorising of identity theory to analyse the questions I set out to explore.

### **Rethinking self/identity development models**

In considering some of the discursive issues around "self" and "identity", with particular reference to teachers' lives and their career as teacher, I begin with general discussions of self, identity and identity formations. In effect this involves looking at the language of identity constructions as much as its consequences. While I focus on a mere segment of a wide ranging field, my discussion and analysis is sensitive to the complex educational shifts in South Africa and to the discursive developments internationally in identity constructions and the struggle for meaning that constitute "Who Am I". I deepen the critical discussion by a consideration of specific aspects of self in relation to teacher's identity, particularly the personal self and the social self within this category, drawing from a range of theoretical positions, especially from developmental and structural perspectives to more progressive and poststructural thinking on identity.

This section remains a small window through which discursive issues around identity are problematised, developed and deepened to provide an analytical framework to understand the lives of South African teachers with all its' contradictions and ambiguities. Speaking of identity categories at this particular historical moment is difficult. The history of identity formation is therefore relevant as I try to understand how identities and differences are transformed and reconstituted in the present shifts in our educational terrain. I find it necessary to understand the construction of "self" and "identity" in various contexts, to read the way identities are explained, understood and represented, and the reasons and principles for different understandings and representations. While I rely on a multidimensional view of



power and identity, i.e. a social construction that takes place in a context defined by power relationships, there is a range of literature which could also explain the data in my study but which I felt was unhelpful in connecting with the dynamic and divergent lives and experiences of the teachers in this study. The latter were based on psychologically and sociologically assumed identities and draws from the work advanced by Mead (1934) and his theoretical model that characterised the “I” and “me” as two distinct interacting aspects of the self. Teachers socialisation studies were produced and tended to stress external social structures and societal barriers as a repressive and a one dimensional relationship. These developmental based theories, including Super’s Life-Span, Life Space- Approach (1996) and Levinson’s Life Structure Theory (1978) explain an individuals’ development over time through psycho-social maturation and cultural adaptation. While these views are prompted by the dominant institutions or normative categorisations of society and provide definitions of “Who am I,” Holland’s Theory of Congruence (1992) and Dawis and Lofquist’s Theory of Work and Adjustment (TWA), explains how contextual factors impact on individuals’ personality and the alignment or mis-match they experience in any given situation, without taking into account the dominant institutions in society. Problems of semantic drift between the historical contexts or the loss of familiarity with the details of the context were easy to identify. These essentialist, fixed notions of understanding individuals and how they make sense of their lives and their careers draw heavily from the two most commonly known origins of identity building.

Identity Theory, originating in sociology (Burke and Reitzes 1981; Stryker 1980; McCall and Simmons 1978), and Social Identity Theory, originating in the discipline of psychology (Hogg and Abrams 1988; Turner et al 1987), are two perspectives that address the social nature of self as constituted by society and eschew perspectives that treat the self as independent of and prior to society. Both regard the self as differentiated into multiple identities that reside in circumscribed practices (Hogg et al 1995). Accordingly, Identity Theory is strongly associated with the symbolic interactionist view that society affects social behavior through its influence on the self (Mead 1934). This theory conclusively views the self not as an autonomous psychological entity but as a multifaceted social construct that emerges from the different roles people occupy within specific contexts. As such, Stryker (1987) proposes that we have distinct components of self, called role identities, for each of the role positions in society that individuals occupy. Role identities (e.g. mother, teacher, wife, person of colour, working class, etc.), according to Identity Theory, are thus self definitions individuals apply to themselves as a consequence of the structural role positions they occupy, and through a process of labelling or self-definition as a member of a particular social category. While Identity Theory focuses on self-defining roles that people occupy in

society within immediate interactive contexts, they do not acknowledge directly how structurally based attributes like gender, race and ethnicity impact on the self.

Social Identity Theory is informed by the basic idea that a special category (e.g. nationality, political affiliation, sports team) into which one falls and to which one feels one belongs provides a definition of “who am I” in terms of the defining characteristics of the category, a self-definition that is a part of the self concept (Hogg et al 1995). Social identity theory therefore, is about norms, stereotypes and prototypes and speaks of social identification (race, class, gender) as a process of self-categorisation. It also recognises the primacy of society over the individual.

Therefore, while Identity Theory discusses the process of labelling or naming oneself (*role identities*) as a member of a social category, or of commitment, Social Identity Theory explains in greater detail how *social identities* are internalised, how contextual factors make different identities salient and how identities produce identity-consistent behavior.

For this study, Identity Theory implies a relationship between the role of teacher in society and the identity that such a role confers, linking self-attitude (identity) to behavior via the notion of roles, without specifying what has informed how this happened (Hogg et al 1995). This perspective views the identity of teacher as a relatively static property of the structural role position he or she occupies in a school and also distinguishes him or her from relevant complementary or counter-roles within these sites (e.g. teacher and learner, teacher and principal). The dynamics of interpersonal social interactive contexts influence the construction and reconstruction of roles.

Social Identity Theory, on the other hand, implies that a relationship exists between self-attitude (identity) and normative behavior. This implies strongly that teachers’ identities are a shared understanding of what it is to belong to the teaching community, as well as to other social groupings within specific school sites. While the theory views teachers’ identities as a dynamic construct that changes in these long-term intergroup relations, behaviour is influenced by the categorical structure of society (stereotyping, conformity) via the social identity.

These theoretical approaches highlight for me three concerns about teacher identity and the meanings such an identity holds within schooling sites and the culture at large. These concerns are:



- Firstly, the link between teachers' self and social structure is a repressive and dominant relationship because it is pre-given and totalising. It is dominating and repressive because it positions teachers as completely subject to it, particularistic definitions constrain and limit teachers as agentic beings empowered with capacity to live and know differently.
- Secondly, lack of agency/power on the part of the teacher.

The discourse of a state-controlled education system and the school site is central to the production of subjectivity. The former highlights the position of teachers in a formal educational environment such as the school. In this discourse teachers are in the position of implementers of a system of a body of knowledge and learners are the receivers of a system of knowledge which is both dominating and totalising. These individuals have to weave themselves into this system: a one-dimensional power relation. Thus, the role teachers enact that confers on them this teacher identity is a controlled and static one. Furthermore, the norms and forms which urge teachers to think and act in terms of a community or collective grouping, further constrains the teacher as subject with the power and knowledge to change. These norms and forms are experienced as totalising and absolute.

- Thirdly, the meaning of teacher identity focusing on individual's behaviour in teacher role, or his or her actions within intergroup relations are ineffective because these forms of social analysis become totalising and ineffective and lack the emotional investment of a desire for change. Alienating or disconnecting what teachers do from how they feel about what they choose to do, their desires and thoughts is what has become known as the mind/body dualism. As hooks (1994b, 16) says, "the objectification of the teacher within bourgeois educational structures seemed to denigrate notions of wholeness and uphold the idea of the mind/body split, one that promotes and supports compartmentalisation."

This perspective once again highlights the dominant and totalising forces inherent in the social structures that seek to control what teachers do, and limits the possibilities for resistance to the existing social reality. Marginalising teachers' meanings, thoughts, and desires from what teachers do, emphasises how the term "teacher" (identity) represents a social group, which has historically been the target of oppression and as a tool of the state.

### **Understanding socialisation theories**

While it is understandable that the teaching profession would want to distance itself from the many stereotypes and images of teachers and teaching with which it is saturated, it is necessary to uncover and face the constraining images that might be curtailing our ability to truly integrate new ideas and values of teaching into teachers' personal philosophies and practices. Similarly, insisting on reaching a single and definitive interpretation of

empowering, emancipatory discourses oversimplifies teachers' lived experiences, leading to a poor or very partial reading of the cumulative cultural texts of teacher and teaching (Weber and Mitchell 1995, 32).

The sociologically and psychologically determined theoretical approaches discussed above put forward singular and fixed notions of self and behavior/attitude (identity). To understand its implications for teachers' lives I will focus briefly on Huberman (1993) and his research on the careers of teachers. This study is an appropriate example to understand how these fixed and categorised notions are employed and what it means to be termed "teacher" and the socialisation process thereof.

This study involves a mixture of psychological and psycho-sociological frameworks that offer ultimate grounds to understand teachers' lives. Applying the classic studies of the individual life cycle to secondary school teachers, Huberman (1993, 2) asks, what is the professional life cycle of the teacher, and what do we know of the stages of life in the classroom?

In response to these questions he identifies enduring trends or phases in the professional life of teachers. He describes the first phase of the cycle as the Career Entry Phase, which is essentially a period of survival and discovery, followed by the Stabilisation Phase, in which the teacher affirms a single subjective choice, i.e. the decision to commit oneself to the job. This phase is characterised by consolidation and pedagogical mastery. The Experimentation Phase and the Diversification Phase, characterised by the search for new ideas, new challenges and new commitments, sees the teacher attempting to increase her impact in the classroom by embarking on a series of personal experiments in the use of instructional materials, methods of evaluation, etc. In the Phase of Reassessment, the teacher may endure experiences ranging from a routine case of self-doubt to an existential mid-career crisis. Huberman suggests that the crisis of the assessment phase gives way to a phase of Serenity and Relational Distance, in which there is a reconciliation, in neo-Freudian terms, between the ideal self and the real self. There is less to prove to oneself or to others, and there is greater tolerance and spontaneity in the classroom. In the Conservatism and Complaints Phase, one sees some parallels between the general studies of the life cycle and work on teachers, but with the same qualifiers. One passes from the phase of Serenity to Conservatism, although this may be a less linear progression. According to this Swiss study (Huberman 1993, 11), the most conservative teachers happened to be young teachers, who reflect the larger social and political climate that produced them. The tendency of teachers during this phase is towards increased rigidity, resistance to innovations, and a more

pronounced nostalgia for the past. In the last Disengagement Phase, there is a gradual withdrawal and “interiorisation”. One detaches progressively without regrets, taking more time for oneself and activities.

Although Huberman’s theory of life cycles provides an interesting design of “total teachers” (Fullan 1993), depicting the nature of teaching and its enduring effects on teachers’ satisfaction and frustrations, especially in periods of educational reform, this exploration still remains a predictability or a notion of sequential progression that fails to acknowledge the contradictions and spontaneity inherent in social reality, and in teachers’ lived experiences. The idea that we can capture the totality of being in a single global account, that there is a set of categories in terms of which all thought and action can be comprehended and organised, describes once again the totalising thinking in greater detail. Such totalising forms of reason suppress difference. According to Dhunpath (1998, 38), this “rigid canvas cannot depict the richness of human experience and human enterprise, for it fails to capture the multifarious shades, the nuances and the irregularities that typify human experience”. It does not take into account the dynamic nature of the individual, in other words the self-will or resource of the individual, which might be employed to change the situation. It also does not take into consideration unexpected events in teaching, especially in an education crisis that is characterised by redeployment, major changes in educational policy, new employment procedures, and new curriculum initiatives (to name but a few), that confront the teacher in an unanticipated, unrehearsed and uncontrolled way. These moments are very critical and highly charged moments in the teacher’s career, which has enormous consequences for personal change and development.

While Huberman’s stage development theory has much potential for those of us who share a great passion for teaching and especially the career trajectories of teachers, its emphasis on stages and ages is inadequate for the context in which my study is located. With stage development theory (Huberman 1993), teachers’ identities develop in stages, following a linear progression from “feeling one’s way to ‘disengagement’”. The study goes so far as to predict the stages during which satisfaction in teachers’ careers happen. This fixed categorical framework is open to questioning.

The notion of the “life cycle” reiterates the closed system of thought and meaning of what it means to be a teacher within the school culture. Conferring on teachers’ set ways of making sense of their lives seems to be all embracing and autonomous because it is moving in a circle, and the control and security is acquired at the cost of sterile repetition or affirmation of its stages and categories. Burke and Reitzes (1981, 91) add: “Identity is like a compass,

helping us steer a course of interaction in a sea of social meaning.” They explain that teachers behave in ways that conform to the meanings of their identities. We are again reminded of how the principles teachers live by become absolute and fixed, directing teachers to what they can and cannot do.

This belief that the self is foundational and fixed and its meanings are constituted by other social structures also foregrounds how thoughts and ideas fall into a pattern, imprisoned and constrained by its ruling categories. And the subject is construed as an absolute origin, with a self-contained unity outside of or above the movement of history (Falzon 1998, 24). What this highlights is how these ruling categories (identities) are internalised, produce identity-consistent behavior and completely exclude its historical emergence, its partiality, finitude and how its categories came to be.

For the purposes of this study, it is imperative that I question the claim of a categorical framework of understanding teachers’ lives to be all embracing and complete in itself. As Dhunpath (1998, 38) writes: “Discourse around life cycles often lapsed into absolute formations, categorical products of consciousness.” However, Giddens (1987) claims: “To be a human agent is to know because human agents are concept bearing agents, whose concepts constitute their actions in some degree.”

Underlying this is the assumption that as individuals we could act differently in crucial moments or during critical incidents, however oppressive the circumstances and their likely outcomes (Dhunpath 1998). What this implies, therefore, is that while this closed circular system of thought (of who I am) provides a sense of stability, security and a defence against that which is other, new, unexpected and beyond our control, encountering that which is different and other outside of the circle creates the space for rupturing or interrupting this circle of life. While encountering that which is different means risk-taking and uncertainty, it is also stimulating and revitalising (Falzon 1998, 34).

Reproductionist theories on teacher identity has tended to stress external social structures and the accompanying one-dimensional view of power as constraining and limiting. Responding to the externally regulated constructions of what it means to be a teacher (identity), according to the literature sources, leaves teachers experiencing personal detachment and mis-alignment. In Ball’s (1997) argument, the external regulation of teacher identity recasts them as “state technicians” and attributes the loss of control to new forms of external regulation, the over-determination of teachers’ work and new curriculum initiatives, all of which foster an emphasis on performativity. This perspective focuses on what the dominant



group does to the subordinated group or what the state and other forms of bureaucracy do to teachers.

However, according to Lortie (1975), teachers' self-socialisation is also a powerful influence on teachers' work identities. Literature sources point out that teachers' work identities are constituted largely around their own experience of schooling and in relation to the structure of schooling (Sarason 1982; Sharp and Green 1975; Lortie 1975). But if learning to be a professional and a proper teacher means having to internalise those very informal, though very important rules of the profession and the particular school site, then, according to Lacey's socialisation model, when the demands of the situation are totally out of sync with the beliefs and behaviour of the teacher, the teacher will forge a new belief/behavior system – a contrived identity. Lacey (1977) describes this as internalised adjustment, a process in which the teacher becomes a slave to the situation. In this case on the one hand, the resource of the individual seems completely left out. Strategic compliance, on the other hand, is when the teacher adopts a superficial conformity and personal detachment to the social context as an alternative to reduce commitment (Reddy 2000; Lacey 1977). Mattson (1999) concurs with this explanation in her study on teacher identity and socialisation. She explains that while policies parading democracy and freedom try to change teachers' identities, the strategy of mimicry is a way of side-stepping it, meaning that teachers respond by mimicking a changed identity without really committing to change. She refers to this position as Strategic Mimicry. This highlights how public constructions of teacher identity are contested and recontextualised in the schools and classrooms (Jacklin 2000; Mattson and Harley 1999), because of the forged separation between teacher subjectivities and the teacher position.

Hargreaves (1994) also agrees that when the focus on professional development is placed on innovations in terms of methods, models and techniques, then the connection between teacher, learner and subject becomes a contrived and controlled one, and the spontaneity, sensuality and creativity that teachers possess are removed. Palmer (1998, 12) adds: "The pain is felt throughout education today as we glorify the *method du jour*, leaving people who teach differently feeling devalued, forcing them to measure up to norms not of their own." Burns (1983 cited in Sikes et al 1985) describes this as resistance to situational pressures. Riseborough (1981) reported in his study that teachers who were unable to internally adjust, failed to survive, and could only exist in the school as kinds of living "ghosts" haunting the headmaster, whom they saw as their oppressor.

While this kind of analysis is based on the notion that power represses, blocks and divides, and from which the individual agent needs to escape, in this study I want to move beyond

these simple interpretations of power as fixed or static and one-dimensional. Identity theories that follow the kind of thinking in which ideology and repression are used to account for the kinds of practices that teachers enact, are limiting. Such approaches, while relevant, assume that definitions of teacher and teaching remain constant and fixed, concerning themselves only with the impact that social forces have over teachers. Teachers are constructed as victims, as individuals without agency whose identity has been a “seamless development” from school (as learner), to training (student teacher), to school (as teacher), where the processes of domination (hierarchy) and differentiation (along academic lines) facilitate a largely undifferentiated progression (Mardle and Walker 1980).

While this argument stresses the impact of personal and experiential dispositions and the isolated and private nature of teachers’ work, there is a counter argument that educational practices exhibit overwhelming uniformity across schools and school settings. Contrary to arguments that stress the individualism of teachers’ approaches to their work, notably through the descriptions of the “egg-crate structure” of the school (Lortie 1975; Darling-Hammond 1989), this view emphasises that educational practices exhibit particular preconditions of teaching and justify the way individuals teach, and produce commonality (cited in Hoadley 2002). These dominant positions through which these teachers seek to impose order and stability in their sense making offer teachers a sense of security from change. According to Samuel (1998, 623), “teachers seem to hold back from fully revealing their personalities, their biographies, their individual creativity and their heritages”. He adds: “The teachers adopt a pseudo-personality in the classroom; it is as if they do not really want students to get to know them on a personal level, they are not comfortable to assert their own individual identity in public.” Wedekind (2000) confirms the impact of these dominant forces prevalent within particular school sites. In his study he shows how teacher groupings in a particular school are formed around broad ideological convergences based on a common set of values, norms and perspectives. Within this approach that relies on what Davies (1988, 10) called “osmosis” socialisation, the formation of teachers’ identities are accounted for. Such accounts assume particularistic definitions and dispositions of being and doing teacher. Osmosis socialisation theory assumes that teachers absorb messages of what it means to “be” and “do” teacher uncritically.

In a closed system such as this, in which most teachers’ identities are drawn through engagement in the same sort of work and holding similar dispositions, these spaces offer some sense of stability, avoiding the risk-taking and uncertainties of that which is new and unexpected (Wedekind 2000). Similarly, it also introduces forms of oppression and closure to teacher change and new ways of experiencing the world. More importantly, I believe that

strategies to create new ways of being and doing teacher based on osmosis socialisation accounts are grounded in a flawed theory of how teachers think and work as teachers.

There are many flaws in the idea that roles are simply reproduced. The ideas of resistance and change in social relationships cannot be accounted for by theories positing power as fixed. There is also increasingly a mounting critique against these explanations of teachers' behaviour (Hoadley 2002; Connell 1995; Hargreaves 1994). New approaches to power have meant that teachers are not passive recipients of socialisation or psychologically determined. Teachers choose to act in particular ways. While conformity and stereotypical ways of being and acting offer certainty and comfort, there are teachers who threaten these dominant teaching positions in their desire for fresh ways of being and acting. However, there are also teachers who choose to break out of this circle of conformity, and to open spaces within the dominant positions where their diverse perspectives are granted integrity. More specifically, the search is for the teacher who does not preclude these normative frameworks but eludes the categories and phases within the educational experience, and engages in dialogue with the social context in unique and multiple ways.

As Falzon (1998, 89–94) reiterates: “In seeking to order the world, we inevitably come upon that which is other, that which eludes, resists our categories, and is able to affect and shape us in turn.” On a dialogical view it needs to be recognised that no perspective is absolute and all-embracing. In other words, when we engage in a dialogue, we also encounter other perspectives. This continuous and genuine encounter for openness with other, to exert power over it and at the same time to be influenced by it, means we have to forsake security and stability and expose ourselves to risk and uncertainty. This openness is a task which requires courage and maturity and can be clearly differentiated from a pseudo-openness, where while appearing to make space for the other, we continue to dominate the other, to subsume the other to our categories (Falzon 1998).

Teachers actively construct and impact upon the world, shaping their lives, their learners and others. As the evidence of Sikes et al (1985, 242) suggests, “success of ones’ life as a teacher is a much broader issue of developing competences, academic, moral and vocational”. It is also about negotiating a way through hazards and around obstructions, of making or seizing opportunities to realise or further one’s interests, desires and needs (Hargreaves 1994). Thus, contrary to the humanist view that remains hostile to individual desires and interests, this view acknowledges these desires and interests as that which differentiates us from one another, and which gives teachers specific character (Hargreaves 1994; Falzon 1998).



To understand teacher identity from a humanist perspective is to misrecognise the relations between teachers, the social context and significant others as being in a state of flux, changing and open to change. Social relations are thus always power relations: teacher and learner are relational concepts that have meaning in relation to each other (Connell 1995). Therefore, theories based on sociological and psychologically assumed identities are inadequate to explain the data in my study, as it limits my understanding of the complex, multiple and ongoing processes of identity formation and renegotiation. I want to argue here against the singular, essential, authentic and stable notions of identity these theories presume.

### **Understanding poststructural theories**

In this section I will explain in some depth the central tenets of poststructuralism, its major constructs of power, subjectivity, discourse, resistance and meaning and its resonance with life history research. Traditionally, power has been thought of as that which oppresses, silences and refuses (Orner 1992). The work of Michel Foucault challenges the notion of power as a negative force that acts in a repressive way on us and stops us from doing things that we would otherwise do. Power is a relation. People are passively positioned in certain discourses but can simultaneously be positioned as active in other discourses. Foucault (1980, 98) points out that power is a complex strategy:

Power must be analysed as something which circulates or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands . . . they [individuals] are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power . . . individuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application.

We may be powerless in an instance while positioning ourselves or being positioned as powerful in another discourse. Foucault saw the threads of power everywhere, as woven in social networks. His articulation of power contrasts with the liberal humanist notion that power can be acquired. Foucault posited that we as subjects internalise systems of power to a point of policing our own behaviour – the regulation of the self through the internalisation of the regulation by others. This is why many teachers are seen as pedantic. I am in agreement with Foucault's (1980, 142) position that:

. . . one should not assume a massive and primal condition of domination, a binary structure with "dominators" on one side and "dominated" on the other, but rather a multiform production of relations of domination.

This means that identities are produced as people interact, and identity is actively constructed. They do so not in linear ways but engage with social circumstances to produce and reproduce identities. Active construction means that certain positions are taken up and others are not. These ideas incorporate the notions of agency and contradiction. Power is active and productive. Foucault (1980, 98) writes:

When I speak of relations of power, I mean that in human relationships . . . power is always present: I mean a relationship in which one person tries to control the conduct of the other . . . these power relations are mobile, they can be modified, they are not fixed once and for all . . . they are mobile, reversible and unstable. It should be noted that power relations are possible only in so far as the subjects are free . . . Of course states of domination do exist. In great many cases, power relations are fixed in such a way that they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom.

Foucault argues that power is not a possession nor is it reducible to physiological capacities or labour. Power does not come from above nor is it a violence (Bhana 2002). For Foucault (1980, 98), power is not the property of an individual, nor can it be seized or acquired. The individual is thus both an “object of power” and an “instrument through which power is exercised”. Power is dynamic and unstable. A state of domination exists, for example, when a teacher is subject to the unnecessary authority of the school manager. The ideas that power is not possessed but exercised in ways that produce and reproduce inequalities in the interplay of shifting and mobile relations really appealed to me in that it points to fresh possibilities through which teachers can denaturalise themselves and embrace change in their lives and practices. It is in these moments, disruptions and gaps in the shifting relations within the teaching discourses, that the greatest insights and possibilities for change are offered. Power is a strategic game. Foucault (1987, 129) posited: “To exercise power over another, in a sort of open strategic game, where things can be reversed, that is not evil.”

What is important then, is to analyse these relations of power through the range of discourses and practices teachers embody, constraining and enabling in order to learn what is being produced in these gaps. The idea that power is not possessed but exercised in ways that open up spaces for resistance and agency in the interplay of shifting and mobile relations, will best help to explain how teachers in this study perform their success. “Power is never stable, but in flux: power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere, power makes visible teachers’ identities as multiple and fluid” (Foucault 1978: 93). Poststructuralist discourse embraces this multiplicity and the ongoing processes of identity formation and renegotiation.

The poststructuralist notion that identity cannot be fixed implies that the meaning of teacher cannot be fixed but instead teachers are positioned in teaching as a discourse. This challenges the presumptions of a unified subjectivity. There is no essential or proper way of being a teacher; instead, the dominant forces position individuals who teach and provide them with the narratives about their practices as teachers. The argument that “teachers never really left school” and that their notions of what it means to be a teacher are a seamless development from a learner to a school teacher, confirms this singular definition and the process of domination facilitated through this undifferentiated progression (Hoadley 2002). We are reminded in this social analysis of the limitations of conscious articulation and that the process of identity-construction is one upon which the contradictions, and dispositions of the surrounding socio-cultural environment have a powerful impact.

Contrary to the idea of power as unproductive, we are reminded that the power to know oneself means to realise “what is” (one’s desires, thoughts and needs), and in moments of reflexion to open up the possibility for “what could be”. The meanings teachers give to their teacher position through the discourses and practices they engage with continually undergo personal and social transformation. Teachers’ subjectivities, desires and needs, shape and are shaped by the power relations that lie within the discourses.

However, our choices about who we become, how we give meaning to our lives and others, are shaped by the political strength of discourses (Bhana 2002, 14). Discourse refers to the historically and culturally specific categories through which we give meaning to our lives, practise our lives and invest in particular positions in our lives (MacNaughton 1998). How we live our everyday lives, our social-cultural relations within our world, depends on a range of discourses, the extent to which we have access to them and their political strength (Weedon 1987). According to Ball (in Usher and Edwards 1994, 90):

Discourses are . . . about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority. Discourses embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations . . . Thus discourses construct certain possibilities for thought.

Foucault (1977, 49) explains that the subject is continually reconstituted in discourse. Subjects are positioned and position others in discourse. People make meaning of their lives through discourse. Discourse interlocks with meanings, power and identity. Discourse enables particular groups of people to exercise power, authorising them to speak while correspondingly silencing others or making their voices less authoritative (Usher and

Edwards 1994). Since discourse can be exclusionary, poststructuralists call into question the need to be reflexively conscious of the conditions for possibilities by asking, “how does discourse function, where is it to be found and what are its social effects?” (Lawson in Usher and Edwards 1994, 90). Once a discourse becomes “normal” it is difficult to think and work outside it. Within the rules of a discourse, it makes sense to say only certain things limiting what can be said and done. Discourses point out to teachers what it is that is right and normal for them to do. The role of the teacher as the source producer of knowledge, the hierarchical differentiation or status between teacher and learner, are modes of power that teachers internalise to the point that they have become their own overseer (Orner 1992).

Being constructed as an “over-friendly” teacher is seldom seen as desirable and as not the right way for teachers to act. Teaching learners on the school grounds is also not considered appropriate for learning to happen. Rarely do we align teachers as professional soccer players’, professional jazz musicians or activists for gender equity. What is right and normal is socially constituted and produced in discourse. For example, teacher groupings or collective cultures in particular school sites form around a broad ideological convergence of a common set of values, norms and perspectives and their identities as teachers are drawn from these preconditions. “Discourses are the viewpoints and positions from which people speak and the power relations that these allow and presuppose” (Best and Kellner 1991, 26). The dominant discourses attach power to patterned sets of activities and events in the school. These categories categorise and delineate people on the basis of their responsibility. In the stories teachers tell, the subject is dispersed in discourses and poststructuralism becomes a useful theoretical perspective to analyse constructs like power, identity and knowledge as they are constructed.

Being a teacher involves contradictions. In other words, power can be exercised for moments of pleasure or pain (Yelland 1998). There are always a range of contradictory discourses about who to become, but because some discourses have more political strength than others, they dominate and put pressure on us to adopt the dominant version. These dominant norms and forms of what it means to be a teacher are limiting and inadequate for understanding a world of multiple causes and effects which interact in complex and nonlinear ways. They are oppressive because they reproduce binary oppositions such as private/public, mind/body, voice/silence, teacher/learner. Essentialised and prioritised to read or reify ideas that one’s private life and public responsibility as teacher are separate categories, and historically constructed as opposites, they are used to justify and naturalise power relations as one dimensional. Dualisms ignore the complexity and interrelatedness of “being teacher” and these binary oppositions need to be denaturalised and deconstructed in attempts to find out

what has been silenced and excluded. This study will make clearer these silences, absences and contradictions.

Against the idea that the private and public are static constructs, is the belief that this bond is continually challenged: one of change, fluidity and instability (Usher and Edwards 1994, 199). While the dualism between private/public can be reproduced, it can also change and continue to change. Categorising ourselves in particular ways within the normative organisation can reproduce identity or resist and disrupt the dominant forces to produce identity. Poststructural analyses support the notion that borders are fragile and fluid, opening and closing to change. Jardine (1985, 242) explains:

Dualistic oppositions determine our ways of thinking . . . [Ways] which are inadequate for understanding a world of multiple causes and effects which interact in complex and non-linear ways, and which are rooted in a limitless array of historical and cultural specificities.

This reconceptualised notion of power opens up possibilities for different readings of the term “teacher”, different understandings of power relations and multiple identities as potential spaces for change and opportunity. Furthermore, the focus is on the broader social context within specific sites at specific historical moments, which create the conditions for power. Through agency, teachers as subjects with power can mobilise the existing discourses in new ways, inverting and breaking old patterns (Rheddings-Jones 1995).

Discourse refers to the social practices that arise from categories we and others use to understand what it means to be teacher. Being a teacher provides many categories through which we give meaning to our lives and these categories produce expectations about how teachers should act towards their learners, significant others and how we should be ourselves. Furthermore, the categories of gender, class, race and ethnicity give rise to a number of social practices such as thinking, acting and feeling that will be shaped by such specificities. The process of identity construction is one upon which the contradictions and dispositions of the surrounding sociocultural environment have a powerful impact (Epstein and Johnson 1998).

In this thesis, I find the life histories of the teachers to be particularly rich sources because attentively interpreted they present the teacher as an active subject, and reveal the broader material conditions in/through which the conditions for power are created. Life history explicitly acknowledges the existence of teachers’ multiple, and conflicting, personal

realities and perspectives as they narrate their world to give it form and meaning. At the same time it also enables me to understand how history acts on them, by providing them with the narrative codes and syntax with which to live and make sense of their lives (McLaren 1993; Sikes 1985).

Discourse also refers to the investments we make in our social practices. Teachers in school operate from positions of subordination in relation to the social categories through which they give meaning to their lives as teachers. These categories of what it means to be a teacher, are determined by bureaucratic imperatives and the institutional structure, and are used by teachers to understand themselves and others. While these dominant forms of reason produce commonality, the construction of what it means to be a teacher may not align comfortably with teachers' lived experiences and daily practices. Contrary to the stereotypical images of teachers as dreary, boring, pedantic and passionless, there are contradictions or moments of possible disruption. Enacting particular practices in the teacher position constitute and give form to teachers' meaning-making of their lives, for better ways as a reward for or as a condition for performing success. Power relations can be productive in positive ways. Being teacher is not fixed.

Hence within poststructuralism, discourse has been recast to include the investments teachers have in taking up particular positions and social practices through which meaning is constituted in their lives. It also attempts to encapsulate the complex interconnections between the individual, meaning and the social. It is these complex interconnections that this study attempts to understand, and to explore the teaching discourses and practices that give teachers' lives a sense of pleasure as a condition for being a successful teacher.

The making of identity (teacher) is a dynamic process. For poststructuralists the principles we live by and our ways of acting are more than just our individual essential nature. They have emerged historically and are specific to a given time or moment. These existing forms of being and acting have become constitutive of people and their actions. Frosh et al (2002) explain that this happens when discourses (such as race and class) are articulated and circulated via the major institutions in our society. However, whilst we have some choice about "who I am", and "how I want to make sense of the world", our desires (our ways of being and acting) are not absolute but shaped by the way in which powerful discourses circulate in and via social structures and institutions. This makes possible some ways of being and not others.



Teachers, however, may find it difficult to describe the sources and nature of their various identities and subject positions. In attempting to understand why individuals invest in one position rather than another in a different discourse, some researchers have drawn on psychoanalytic categories for possible constructs and methods to analyse the positions taken up by people. They alert to the psychic and emotional investments these people have in the kinds of subjective positions available to them in various contexts (Hollway 1984 cited in Frosh et al 2002). While I do not want to enter the debate about what constitutes psychoanalytic theory, I also have, in line with such discursive psychologists, sought to involve myself in this study, to constantly question the fixed categories and the norms attached to the category “teacher”.

Employing an eclectic analytical approach within a poststructural framework, I pay attention to the gaps in the discourse, the contradictions, silences and other absences, as an important strategy for conceptualising the limits of conscious articulation (Frosh et al 2002). An important aspect of poststructuralist work has denaturalised and deconstructed concepts like “meaning”, “the subject” and power to find out what has been erased, silenced and rejected. An eclectic approach enables me to think differently about power: to open up what seems natural to other possibilities but also to understand that material conditions set limits to and provide the context of the everyday world of teachers. Being a teacher can never be formulated as a totalising discourse and the humanist notion of a neat, coherent self shifts to view the teachers’ self as decentred and nonlinear.

Exploring alternate ways for understanding teachers’ lives means not just understanding what are the dominant ways (norms and forms) of being and doing teacher, they also offer the individual teacher different modes of subjectivity. In poststructural theories the subject is the generic term for what, in lay terms, would be the person or human being, and what in psychology is referred to as the individual. The term subject refers to something quite different from the more familiar term “individual”. According to Weedon (1987, 32), the “subject is always both conscious and unconscious”, and MacNaughton (1998) adds:

“Subjectivity” describes who we are and how we understand ourselves, consciously and unconsciously. These understandings are formed as we participate in, articulate and circulate discourse. As discourses form subjectivity, they constitute the very foundations upon which teachers’ choices are made about what to do, what not to do, how to do, and who to do it with.



According to Weedon (1987, 32) humanist discourses presuppose:

. . . an essence at the heart of the individual which is unique, fixed and coherent and which makes the teacher what she is . . . Poststructuralism proposes a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in the process constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we speak.

There are alternate choices to understanding the dominant, totalising discourse for what it means to be a teacher. The self and subjectivity can no longer be thought of as unified and coherent. These alternate choices offer a less fixed positioning of subjectivity.

So, to understand decisions and choices that teachers take up in their daily enacted practices, calls us to identify discourses that constitute how they think and work as teachers, their consciously articulated positions and less clearly articulated thoughts, interests and wishes. Employing the poststructural position that the individual's construction of "self" is situational and constantly in flux, and assumes different identities at different times, this study tries to show these fleeting multiplicities of opportunities (Sparkes 1994) through the telling of the story. In this study, the life history approach offers a greater sense of process to a life, gives a more ambiguous, complex and chaotic view of reality and a deeper understanding of the complex relations between ideology and culture, self and society (Munro 1993). This focus avoids the romanticisation of the individual and thus reproduction of a hero narrative which reifies humanist notions of the individual as autonomous and unitary. By using narratives, I also become storyteller and co-creator of teachers' lives, a position in which I feel compelled to deal with issues of truth and authenticity, authorial responsibility and power, ethical responsibility and meaning.

While I do understand that as researcher it is "bad faith" to try and live the lives of the teachers in this study (Geertz 1986), I try to move beyond discourse conventions which in many ways limit how we construct versions of a life, "life as experienced", how we express and organise ourselves through story, "life as told", and how such a life can be understood and represented in text (Emihovich 1995; McLaren 1993). Evoking remembrances of "a life lived" through alternate discourse conventions linked through narratives, is discussed in relation to issues of textual organisation, voice, and the politics of metaphor. This is elaborated on in the next chapter.

Understanding the complex ways the past and its remembrance invade and pervade the present produces different discourses, layers of meaning, understandings and reconstructions of identity.

### **Using poststructural tools to understand different dimensions of teachers' lives and success**

Poststructuralism as a loose framework provides a basis upon which to build this study and offers fresh ways of thinking about teachers' lives and their moments of success. These poststructural ideas which broaden the existing frameworks that guide thinking about teachers' lives and their success in and through their practices thereby act as a restorative to the oversimplifications of teacher socialisation, teacher identity and developmental accounts of teachers' lives and power. They are useful and relevant as they point to fresh possibilities and the creation of teacher discourses that form subjectivity, acknowledge identities as fluid and shifting, and constitute the conscious and unconscious pleasures, processes and desires of teachers. These ideas offer me a deeper understanding of power relations, the multidimensional view of power in the analysis of identity at multiple levels of social life (the personal, the institutional, the governmental, the commercial), in and through which the conditions of power are created (Orner 1992). People cannot interact with others independently of the social world in which they live.

Poststructural thinking is concerned loosely with discourse, power, meanings (knowledge) and identity. How meanings circulate and which meanings are considered "normal" is struggled over and impacts on teachers' identities (Kenway and Willis 1998). Meaning is influenced by power and power influences meaning. Teachers' identities are viewed as unfixed, and perpetually in construction through new discourses and modes of activity within the socio-cultural environment. Teachers' identities are thus always formed in and through complex interaction with race, class and gender. The performance of success by teachers in this study takes place within these continuing materially structured, asymmetrical relations of power. This is what the study attempts to explore and understand.

Meanings, power and identity are always changing in social-cultural circumstances. Power is always shaped and limited by systems of meanings. Some meanings that circulate are more powerful than others, for example the dominant view teachers as the source producers of knowledge. While this is harmful, power is attached to it and therefore it becomes a common, powerful argument. In the same way teachers were told how to teach the learners and where the content should come from. This was the role teachers' "played" in the teaching and learning site. How teachers should group (English team), which teachers should

group (all grade one teachers), how teachers teach, what teachers will assess, were some of the forms of surveillance and control exercised over teachers and became dominant in the circulation of meaning about teachers. The meanings about what is normal in the constitution of the category “teacher” places “pressure” on individuals to position and be positioned by constructs invested with power. In this sense poststructuralism becomes a useful theoretical perspective to analyse constructs like power and meanings and identity as they are constructed in and through discourse and personal narratives (Munro 1993).

Power relations are always maintained and disrupted in discourse. However, poststructuralists view these unequal power relations as a central focus of analysis taking into account when these power relations are resisted and disrupted. This study will show that teachers’ lives cannot be explained in singular, simplistic and deterministic ways. Such explanations are misguided understandings of power, which make invisible dynamic relations in teachers’ lives (Bhana 2002). Steinberg et al (1997) explain that power can be turned and sometimes turned upside down. The sometimes upside down everyday experiences of the teachers in the study can best be understood by a theoretical approach which recognises the complexity of living. In this study, I employ an eclectic approach in/through which power is manifest, but also pay attention to the material realities/conditions which create the conditions for power and through which we can understand the differential access to power, its practices and effects. What is useful in this study is the notion that power can be turned against itself to produce alternate, multiple conditions for power. The idea of power as not unidirectional, but everywhere, is important for continued questioning and challenging the fixed categories and boundaries of being and doing teacher (Steinberg et al 1997, 9). This view takes into account social and cultural processes. It is important to recognise the social locations and material realities as they impact on identity and create the conditions for power relations. Within specific circumstances, race, class and gender impact in different ways on identity.

Teacher identity is produced in and through everyday practices specific to institutional contexts. Firstly, this thesis builds on the idea of being a successful teacher as a performance, in relation to significant others and constructed through everyday discourses. In the act of constructing one’s life through stories, the focus is on central moments, critical incidents and practices that revolve around the confusions and contradictions individuals face at different times in their lives, as a production of coherence among the situated, contextual and the particular elements of the data. Using the idea that being successful is a performance, I use the story’s explanatory power to listen and look out for the disruptions or resistance to the

norms in their daily practices (Connelly & Clandinin 1990). These practices enacted at different times in their lives assist me to understand the nature of their days.

Secondly, it attempts to assert the differences or uniqueness of teachers' identities in all its forms and manifestations created by, for example, class, race, gender. In foregrounding particular positions teachers adopted, I try to understand teachers' self constituted through discourse and how issues of race, class and gender manifest in the construction of teachers' identities. In the description of the formation of teachers' subjectivities, I try to critically account for the relationship between the individual and the social context.

Thirdly, I elaborate on the story's pragmatic dimension on shared discourses and practices across the life histories of the six teachers. My hope is that this dimension will provide the reader with insight and understanding of the teachers' self constituted through practice and how they perform their success in their teacher position. In this layer of meaning I want to explore how teachers understand freedom, their enacted practices and the effects of this.

Few studies in this area have taken this theoretical perspective on identity and fewer still have included a mix of race, gender and class in order to get a broad understanding of teacher identities. In this thesis, I aimed to enhance understanding of the ways in which individuals have been shaped and continue to be shaped by the dominant discourse of apartheid and how the specificities of race, gender and class impact on their performances of success. It is such specificities that shape them as unique beings and create potential spaces for threatening moments and change in their work. Through the stories the teachers tell, the study is able to address these individuals as subjects whose lives are continually reinvented as they construct and reconstruct self and identity. They are active participants in the research process, in that the focus is trying to understand what they say about themselves and their lived experiences as teachers.

However, in focusing on teachers' lives, the study does not imply an uncritical acceptance of their versions of themselves; rather, it builds on the idea of their success as achieved – a set of practices (Wetherell and Edley 1999), "performative acts" (Butler 1990, 33), or ways of "doing" success (Bohan 1997 cited in Frosh et al 2002, 4), related to the social contexts in which they live and work. In this study, I offer alternative "fictions"; moving from realist interpretations in chapter four, critical interpretations in chapter five and deconstructive interpretations in chapter six, each version selected to foreground different interpretations of teachers' practices and performative acts. Teachers' stories through life history approaches

offer graphic descriptions of their lived experiences, giving me access to this successful performance through interpretation.

Like Simon (1992) in his book *Teaching Against the Grain*, I want to attempt to understand the successful teacher by addressing questions such as:

- What is my view of this 'person'?
- What are their daily practices that give meaning to their lives and for their learners?
- Do they have access to alternative discourses in the teacher position?
- What are these discourses and how do they add value to the teachers' daily lives?
- What type of desires and interests influence the particular investments teachers have in taking up particular positions in and through discourses and practices she embodies and enacts in the teaching position?
- How do these investments define her responsibilities as a teacher?
- Who could benefit from these alternate teacher discourses?
- How do these discourses challenge the students in her class?
- For what should learners be held accountable, to what should the teacher be held responsible?
- How do issues of race, class, gender and individualism manifest in the construction of teachers' identity and their performance of success?

How do we begin to understand the connection between teachers and success? The approach that is taken in this study is important in the understanding of power relations within the teacher position. While Babitha (the student teacher) was able to resist the limitations imposed by singularity, and was empowered with capacities to create a range of possibilities for change (see Chapter One), the image of *real teachers*, it seems, remains fixed and immovable, and the reason for the oppressive power over learners. Power seems to be one-sided. Pratt (1984) reiterates that stability of hegemonic life comes at the cost of suppression of teachers' voices, their subjectivities and knowledge. Such a denial leads teachers to a total separation from their own voice, their desires and interests and results in essentialising and naturalising who they think they are. This is what discourses do.

In postructural theories, the subject is considered a construction, and identity is presumed to be created in the ongoing effects of relations and in response to society's codes (St Pierre 2000, 503). Teachers can *experience* the educational as a terrain to denaturalise themselves and embrace change in pleasurable and fulfilling ways. Teachers may occupy a range of contradictory discourses for making sense of their lives and their world. On the one hand,



this enables me to understand the local contextual specificity of teachers' identity formations. On the other hand, the development of teacher identities and discourses takes place within continuing materially structured relations of power, and these too are important to understand (Bhana 2002). Given this poststructuralist view and the inability to fix teachers' identities, all categories are open to transformation.

Non-stereotypical images of teacher are powerful and this should be encouraged through dialogue between groups. Participation in the human-world relation would offer spaces for teachers' own subject positions, versions of history and personal experiences (Marton and Booth 1997). According to this view, this will not simply mean the appearance of new voices but that these voices will effect rules, and will enable the teacher to interconnect appropriate experiences in desirable ways (Falzon 1998). These are moments when the agency of the subject in its poststructural multiplicity is up for grabs, and as Halperin (1995, 17) explains, "something always does escape from the relations of power to a place outside power". We need to open up these moments to find out what these places are and what happens in them. We need to know how they are created in schools and what happens in "successful" teachers' lives during these moments.

It is this approach of power from below that I use to ask questions about teachers and their successful commitment to their teacher position. In doing this I hope to show by example what teachers should and could do to perform success in their teacher lives in a way that offers them a sense of pleasure and fulfilment. In approaching power relations in this way, I will attempt to understand the individual's participation in the human-world relation, why teachers adopt particular discourses and practices in their teacher position and not others.

While a host of literature sources has focused on external factors and strategies for teachers to redefine their identities and renew their commitment to change, this thesis argues that the process of identity construction is more than adopting new roles and behaviour. Poststructuralist theorising offers me relevant tools that support the idea that power is productive and important in moving beyond role model and social interactionist theories which often assume a singular and fixed meaning of teacher.

The complexities of understanding identities as fluid, multiple and nonlinear has been done through poststructural frameworks with teachers teaching in different teaching and learning sites in the Durban area. Listening to the teachers narrate their life stories enables me to get a sense of their daily practices, understand the critical moments and incidents in their lives. Specifically, it assists in exploring how particular practices and discourses inspire teachers'

thoughts and actions to continue to participate in the formation of their political will. My study is thus generated by notions of shifting, fluid power relations in which powerful moments open up spaces for teachers' freedom within the normative structures that work for change and continuity in successful ways.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Momentarily caught glimpses**

#### **Research methodology**

This chapter gives expression to my understanding of teachers' identities as fluid, continually in a state of flux, multiple and non-linear. Being inspired to move from charting a life in a simple, linear fashion from a fixed position as researcher, my explorations of these teachers' lives included complex, somewhat eclectic data production approaches and interpretative representations. Understanding teachers' lives, told and experienced as dialectic between their unique experiences and the constraints of the broad, social, political and economic structures, alerted me to a range of possibilities that I needed to contribute to the construction of the stories. My study therefore employs the research design as a discursive space of momentarily caught glimpses, produced and constructed by the teachers and researcher to create a meaningful representation of a person's life within a text. These multiple and momentarily caught glimpses, in words, images, desires, thoughts, sentiments and meanings gave me access to teachers' lives, told and experienced, the articulated and the evaded, the private and public. The cubist metaphor, drawn from the field of visual art, provided me the space to create a framework for the layers of meaning that I have come to in my interpretative struggles as I attempt to explore and understand these complex and contradictory lives. This analytical framework provided the spaces for representing the different dimensions of teachers' lives, each layer/principle offering a different dimension and meaning of the presences and absences in the stories teachers constructed of "a successful life". It also provided a framework to explore my own role in the authorship of the narratives, and therefore to reflect differently on what constitutes "data" in the research process. I am implicated in the construction of these teachers' stories as I bring to the research process as much who I am, as who the research participants are. That framework that I found in cubism enabled me to explore my own authorship in an imaginative way. Since the storied narrative is the researcher's construction, the purpose of the cubist framework is its power to enhance the trustworthiness of the text, for plausibility and consensus.

Producing the data for this research study on the one hand assisted me in my attempt to know more about those investments teachers have in taking up particular subject positions and in the description of the formation of teachers' subjectivities. The analytical framework on the other hand assisted me in moving toward the unthought, providing the space to make visible those evaded and silenced investments and teachers' identities.

This chapter analyses the methodology employed to explore the lives of six teachers who continue to resist the stereotypical images of working and thinking to ensure moments of success. The focus of this study is to understand the meanings these teachers give to themselves as particular kinds of teachers, which inspire them to continue to commit themselves to the teacher position with some sense of fulfilment and pleasure.

In this study I have employed life history approaches to interpret teachers' lived experiences, to understand how these experiences constituted what makes them successful in their teacher position. In this chapter I present an argument for the use of life history research as the most appropriate method to explore teachers' transient and ambiguous experiences, as well as the inclusion of those cultural forms that have been marginalised, or regarded as non-academic means of representation. In doing so I am able to go beyond having access to "a life" as told, to the exploration of "a life" as experienced. This shift was crucial for my exploration of teachers' discourses and practices as well as the evaded and silenced in these discourses, to understand that the structures of successful identity and the positions that teachers take up in and through it are complex and contradictory.

## **SECTION A: DESCRIBING THE STUDY**

### **Research design**

The research design that I devised for this study is shaped by my own specific background which includes my training and teaching experience as an art teacher, and my knowledge of teacher identity and professional development. This knowledge has equipped me with a particular perspective and theoretical view, and has definitely influenced and shaped the approaches that I employed to focus on particular issues of understanding "a life" as told and as experienced.

Seven years after the first democratic elections, and many teachers in South African classrooms continue to entertain and express thoughts of resigning from their teaching professions. Post-apartheid South Africa has seen a number of transformations in education. As part of its social commitment to change, several Bills and Acts attempted to regulate the roles and responsibilities of teachers as a consolidated effort to transform racist education. *The*

*Norms and Standards for Educators* (2000), Outcomes Based Education, the South African Council of Educators (SACE) *Code of Conduct* (1997) and the Development Appraisal System (1998) were some of the government's initiatives aimed at engaging teachers to change. However, teachers as products of the apartheid system themselves and having inherited particular meanings as teachers, these spaces for change involved uncertainty and risk taking. Without delving too deeply into the multitude of reasons that contribute to teacher dissatisfaction, generally there are many teachers who have responded to the continued changes in a way that resulted in a sense of mis-alignment with their teacher position (see Singh 2002, Chapter One, pp. 8–9). The forces driving the issue of teacher resignation and the sense of disconnectedness that many teachers experience in their teacher position impacted on teacher's level of commitment. Many teachers continue to enact practices in their classrooms in a way that is less threatening, stereotypical and passionless.

However, there are also teachers who, while recognising the normative structures that regulate them, challenge and threaten the dominant forces and stereotypical images of being a teacher for rejuvenating moments that enable them to continue to commit themselves to their teacher position and enact practices that give their lives a sense of fulfilment and pleasure. It is these teachers that I seek out in this study.

My research involved a three-year study of teachers described above within the greater Durban region. I wanted to know about their lives, the construction of identities and the daily practices that constitute and give meaning to the multiple subject positions they occupied in making sense of their lives and the world. My study of teacher identity construction was done employing life history approaches, life history interviews, focus group interviews and a range of alternate methods to gain access into the teachers' lived experiences: told and experienced. I wanted to know about their lived experiences and understand the complex process of the subjective consciousness and identity construction of these teachers so that I would be able to know how this shapes and continues to shape their teacher position and performance of success. I wanted the teachers' lives to reflect the experiences of being a teacher in Durban and in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Thus, I needed to access teachers in terms of their race, class and geographical specificity. In South Africa these factors continued to determine the apartheid constructed educational experience.

The life history interviews and a range of alternate modes I employed during the data production process (e.g. drawings and photographs), gave me access not only to a narrative of a "life lived" but of a life as "experienced" as well: of images, feelings, desires, thoughts and meanings known to the person whose life it was exploring. The ability of life history to focus

on central moments, critical incidents and fateful moments that revolve around contradictions and challenges, offers more “rounded” and believable characters than the “flat”, seemingly linear characters from other forms of qualitative inquiry (Sparkes 1994). I wanted the teachers to be representative of the teacher population in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Thus I needed research participants in terms of race and gender since these factors continued to shape the subject positions and identities of teachers.

### **Whose stories did I choose to tell**

#### ***The key informants***

Sampling procedures occur at different moments in the study regarding decisions about which aspects from the transcriptions to include, what to interpret in greater depth than others (material sampling) and which cases or parts of text are best used to demonstrate the findings (presentational sampling). In this chapter, it is connected to the decision about which persons to interview and from which groups they should come.

I initially started off the research production process by snowballing from one case to another. My colleagues at university proved to be a valuable resource. They were able to introduce me to teachers they knew or worked with on other research projects, and friends who were known to be committed teachers. While I initially confined myself to persons from my own broader environment, I soon realised that the stranger the field, the more easily people (strangers) have something to say which was new and different for me. Using my position as lecturer, academic researcher and student teacher-supervisor, I also made contact with principals and teachers who gave me access to teachers who they believed “fitted” the description I provided. I did have a research agenda, and this enabled me to decide after the first meeting whether I was going to include the subject into the research study. The study was largely dependent on lengthy interviews (8 to 10 hours long) with the teachers, and this determined partly the small number of teachers that I was able to include in this study. At the same time I had to choose a sample wide enough for a diversity of types to be explored to include a range of perspectives. The issue of sampling emerges at different points in the research process. In this study I had to make decisions in which I needed to explore the following:

- How did I come to define the criteria by which teachers were selected for this study?
- Who from the thousands of teachers did I select for this study?
- How did I arrive at a final sample?



**Table One: The final sample of teachers and variables that were included in arriving at the selected teachers, employing the maximum variety sampling process**

Sample	Institution	Teaching experience-phase (number of years)	Gender	Race	Context of Present teaching	Location of Educational site
1. Hlo Gabela	Westville Prison-Youth Centre	Senior Secondary (6 years) Non-formal	Female	African	Westville Prison	Westville Durban
2. Anna Bressan	Cato Manor Technical College	FET Senior Secondary (5 years) Non-Formal	Female	White	Ex-HOD Technical College	Springfield Durban (working class, Indian suburb)
3. Trevor Gumede	Sithokozile Secondary School	Senior Secondary (21 years) Formal	Male	African	Ex-DET	Claremont Durban (working class, African Township)
4. Ursula Collings	Bechet Secondary	Senior Secondary (12 years) Formal	Female	Coloured	Ex-HOR	Sydenham Durban (working and middle class Coloured suburb)
5. Edwin Elisha	Hillview Primary	Senior Primary (21 years) Formal	Male	Indian	Ex-HOD	Reservoir Hills Durban (middle class Indian suburb)
6. Daryl Franks	Super Tutor College	FET(Junior and Senior Secondary) (4 years) Private	Male	White	Ex-HOA/ Private	Umhlanga Durban North (middle class, White suburb)

The six teachers are drawn from the Durban Metropolitan Region in KwaZulu-Natal (see map). Verbal consent from the teachers to have their real names included in the description of the sample was procured. The social locations of schools create the conditions for the relations of power and open up possibilities for teachers to perform their success. This study shows how teacher identities and discourses are produced, appropriated and challenged within the teacher position as daily practices within specific historical sites. It is necessary at this point to provide a more detailed description of the teachers and the specific locations in which they work. The racial labels I use in my description of the teachers in this study refer to the historical apartheid racial classifications. The use of the labels (African, Indian, White and Coloured) in this study is used to provide the racial and class fragmentation of the educational experiences under this bizarre system.

Hlo Gunene is an African woman. She is a thirty-one-year-old mother of one working at the Westville Prison School for juvenile criminals. At the prison school she teaches Life Orientation and Zulu. Her career as a teacher began in 1992, in a rural high school in Edendale. Under the previous apartheid government, schools for Black learners were controlled by the Department of Education and Training, one of the four education departments created to serve the needs of the four major racialised groupings in South Africa. Three years later Hlo applied

to teach at the prison school as well as serve as a member of the management team. She has been in this school for the past seven years. During the period of the research process, Hlo was also studying for her Masters in Education degree specialising in Social Justice and Peace Education. I was introduced to her as a potential research participant by one of my university colleagues.

Anna Bressan is a White woman, a British immigrant who has been granted South African citizenship. Anna came to South Africa with her mum, dad and twin sister twenty-nine years ago. She was just nine years old. She has travelled and experienced very different teaching and learning environments, from teaching the deaf, the physically challenged, and at rural African schools/technikons. She currently teaches at the Cato Manor Technical College, which comes with its own apartheid baggage. Initially a service provider for the Indian community, it has since changed. Staffed by predominantly Indian teachers and a White male principal, it offers a wide range of technical courses to a predominantly African and Indian learner population. Anna has successfully managed to include fifty deaf learners in this school population.

Trevor Gumede is forty-four years old, African father of four. He teaches Physical Science and Mathematics in Sithokosizle High School. This is a peri-urban school located in a Black township about 16 kilometres from the city of Durban. The apartheid government created the township of KwaDabeka in 1974. This school was built to cater for African learners who reside in this economically deprived area. Trevor lived in an area adjoining KwaDabeka called Clermont and travelled to school by public transport. There are only African learners in this school. Trevor has worked here since 1981 and his fellow teachers are all African too.

Ursula is a Coloured woman teaching Biology at Bechet High. This was originally a training college for Coloured teachers, which Ursula also attended. It is located in Sydenham, a residential area originally demarcated for the Coloured population. While the homes surrounding the school reflect a working class population, its poor infra-structure and lack of adequate public facilities make the school a hotspot for a range of social ills like drug trafficking and truancy. Ursula has taught in Bechet High ever since she qualified as a teacher. The staff is predominantly Coloured with an Indian principal. Both African and Coloured learners are admitted to this school.

Edwin Elisha (Eddie) is an Indian male, currently teaching at Hillview Primary School. He is forty-three years old and the father of two children. As a qualified music specialist and a professional jazz saxophonist, Eddie's experience as a teacher has been far and wide. Initially he started his teaching career at Rhylands Primary in Cape Town, in a province far from his

hometown Durban. Eddie interprets this posting as a punitive measure taken by the Department of Education, which regarded him as a student teacher who was “blacklisted”. What this meant 20 years ago was that Eddie was a political activist and a trouble-maker. He spent many of his years as an itinerant music specialist. He returned to KwaZulu-Natal in 1984. He has since taught in five other schools, including his present school. Hillview Primary School was been historically established under the House of Delegates, a department created to service the needs of the Indian population in South Africa. Eddie does not teach music in this school, but his guitar and saxophone are daily companions. Within the new OBE-Curriculum 2001, Eddie finds himself teaching across the five different learning areas. This school has an all Indian staff and is presently populated by Indian learners who reside in the historically Indian residential middle-class suburb of Reservoir Hills, as well as a large African learner population from the growing informal settlement that borders Reservoir Hills.

Daryl is a forty-three-year-old White male managing a private school in Umhlanga, an élite suburb north of Durban. This area is populated by predominantly Whites and is a construction of the apartheid government. Daryl has taught since 1983. Qualified as a Mathematics and Physical Science teacher, he started his teaching in an ex-House of Assembly high school in the Gauteng Province. After three years as a “novice” teacher he moved to KwaZulu-Natal where he taught in another ex- House of Assembly high school for White learners. He resigned from teaching in the public system and established his own private school in 1993. Super Tutor offers a “service” to learners who live in the surrounding residential areas in Durban North. Given its status as a private school, it is accessible only to a select group of learners who are predominantly White. The staff is all White, including the two administrative assistants.

Arriving at this final sample of teachers from a range of schooling sites prevalent in the province of KwaZulu-Natal was not a very easy task. I think the one important distinction I had to make in deciding on the nature of the sampling process, was to ask myself, in the context of this study, whether I was interested in substantive or theoretical conclusions. I was not really interested in observing the stance/s the teacher adopted in his relationship with the learners or the dynamics of his classroom behaviour and the intended academic success (Glaser and Strauss 1967, 80). My interest rested in understanding and interpreting the social processes that informed the teachers’ “lived” experiences therefore the choice to employ theoretical sampling was most appropriate. In this case the teachers are selected according to their level of new insights for the developing theory. Theoretical sampling has been discussed in greater detail in the sections to follow.



The feasibility of excavating the biographical narratives of teachers was determined by the nature of the potential subject. Is the person articulate? What are the means available to me to gain access into the individual's "life"? Does the person have a good memory? How would I be able to know the kinds of experiences and types of organisations and events the individual has participated in, for me to explore agency? Does she/he have the time to offer in a study of such nature? As the research production process progressed I realised that it was crucial to carefully select subjects who were willing to share their time and their "lived experiences". A letter written by Hlo during the process of the life history interviews illustrates the nature of the data production process, the relationship that I have come to share with the participants over the three-year period (Appendix 4).

I only arrived at a tentative description of research subjects after meeting with a pre-service student teacher (Babitha, the student teacher I refer to in the introduction to Chapter One). She struck me as a very passionate, committed and creative teacher who thoroughly enjoyed her term of practice teaching in a very challenging situation. My initial engagement with her may be regarded as my pilot study for the research. Having observed Babitha, I came to realise the appropriateness of prolonged engagement through the long interview, as a method which would enable me to excavate the biographical narratives of a student teacher who in uncertain and unstable times resisted the stereotypical image of teachers she faced in the school for new practices which gave her some sense of joy and fulfilment. The narrative approach enabled me to explore the individual's life story as teacher as well the social context within which such "a life" is lived.

I then set up a focus group interview with the five other student teachers who had been working collaboratively with Babitha on the design and planning of a curriculum package as part of their preservice curriculum tasks. I intentionally chose to interview the other students who were not engaged with the teacher position Babitha had, to clarify for myself who did not fit the evolving descriptive definition of a "successful" teacher.

For this study, enlargening and modifying the theory from my initial notions of "success" gathered through a range of literature sources and the pilot study (with student teacher Babitha), were made possible by the ideas I found within the emergent design framework. This enabled me to select teachers as the research study progressed using the emerging theory as a constant reference and guide.

Initially, before I came to the idea of the emergent design, I had planned in advance on choosing teachers at different points of the teaching experience: a student teacher, a novice

teacher (with 1 to 3 years of teaching experience), an experienced teacher (10–15 years of teaching experience), an expert teacher (20 years and over) and finally, a retired teacher. However, after the pilot study I realised the gaps that existed with such an approach. For example, Babitha the student teacher “represented” the kind of teacher that I was “looking for”, but she would be an inappropriate sample given the focus of this study. While she articulated her desire to teach and reflexively engaged in her teaching, the construct of commitment cannot be gleaned from someone who has only been in the “real” situation for eight weeks, to understand what sustains such a commitment and desire for different ways of being and knowing. The changing emphases of the research process were a response to a decision to allow the research methodology to unfold in the course of doing the research. Samuel (1998) refers to this type of research sampling as different from one that is clearly formulated before entering the field as an “emergent design”. Included in the idea of the emergent design is the issue of “theoretical sampling” which Glaser and Strauss (1967, 45) explain as follows:

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses the data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop this theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory.

The specific features of such sampling procedures I found very useful when arriving at my final sample for this study are listed in the left-hand side of the table below.

**Table Two: Theoretical versus statistical sampling**

<b>Theoretical sampling</b>	<b>Statistical sampling</b>
Extension of the basic population is not known in advance.	Extension of the basic population is known in advance.
Features of the basic population are not known in advance.	Distribution of features in the basic population can be estimated.
Repeated drawing of sampling elements with criteria to be defined again in each step.	One-shot drawing of a sample following a plan is defined in advance.
Sample size is not defined in advance.	Sample size is defined in advance.
Sampling is finished when theoretical saturation has been reached.	Sampling is finished when the whole sample has been studied.

Theoretical sampling assisted and enabled me to choose widely. The individual teachers were selected according to the level of new insights for the developing theory, in relation to the state of

theory elaboration at that point. An example of the unfolding sampling process is illustrated in an extract from my researcher's log:

**Example of theoretical sampling**

A study of the lives of successful teachers initially comprised of cases taken from the formal schooling site. After pilot interviews were conducted with a teacher presently teaching in the formal schooling site and a retired teacher, it became clear to me that I needed to increase the meaningfulness of the study in light of the changing educational context. The sampling then included a further dimension that promised additional insight of successful teachers who have been trained to teach in the formal school site but who presently teach in different teaching and learning sites, formal and non-formal. This dimension for my study reflects the diversity of educational opportunities that have "mushroomed" since the democratisation of the country and the integration of education departments within the broader education and training sector.

A lecturer colleague at my university, who spoke to me about Hlo Kunene, a very passionate and committed teacher who taught in prison school, facilitated my first interview. Hlo was studying for her Masters in Social Justice and Peace Education. Meeting with Hlo was the beginning of a relationship that acted as a spin-off to the other teachers that I thereafter sought to interview. While I never decided on the type of subject I wanted to interview, when I eventually did meet Hlo, a chance meeting in the carpark, she struck me as a good subject and I decided to pursue her as one of the subjects. This encounter with Hlo created a space for me to "give an ear" to a Black woman academic's voice, to thoughts, ideas, feelings that go against the grain. (As a teacher who became very unpopular in a male dominated arena in the schools, instead of enforced silence she chose to question canonical knowledge, critique relations of domination and engage in self-reflection and professional development as a way of maintaining agency.) After realising the challenges and constraints Hlo faced as an African woman, I wished to explore the forces that enabled and constrained other female teachers of other race groups in their desire to remain committed to their profession. Only having female teachers in the study will not reflect the present teaching population, so I also looked out for male teachers. It is not the intention of this study to understand whether successful male teachers' experiences are different from females', but the "fact" that I have more woman teachers' stories than male teachers does reflect the changing patterns where teaching is seen as a more suitable profession for woman (Samuel 2002).

In trying to diversify the sample to reflect on the different teaching and learning situations accessible to teachers I included government schools, technical colleges, private schools including prison schools and schools for physically handicapped learners. The teachers in the sample worked in the different phases of schooling, the General Education and Training (GET) and the Further Education and Training phase (FET). I did not search for different teachers from both the formal and non-formal sector to understand how different one institution was from another, but to understand that cultivating the desire for commitment and joy in one's profession goes beyond structural constraints. Below these differences in teaching environments are similarities that some individuals share in their commitment to their lives as teachers. My scheduling of different types of teachers was directed by a general conceptual scheme which included commitment, "desire for" and/or "desire to please" and/or "desire to be" and a sense of joy and satisfaction in teaching against the grain as well as by a developing conceptual structure including matters not at first envisioned (for example, race, gender, class) (October 2000).

Choosing teachers of the different race, gender and class groupings became a conscious decision for me as the study progressed, in order to understand individuals who actually

inhabit different locations within the social structures, but also as a way of mapping out within these differences a terrain of commonality, a connection and shared concern in their lives and practices as teachers. As I have mentioned earlier, my intention is to explore issues of identity and difference in all its forms but to also find a commonality in the experience of difference. In including these cultural divisions I was able to understand the barriers that may have or may not have been erected by race, gender, class and the pain of one group without denying that of another. Choosing teachers of different racial, class and gender groupings was also to highlight those powerful moments when such barriers are crossed and differences confronted, creating these specificities as spaces to disrupt the seemingly fixed assumptions of oppressive hierarchy for new ways of being and knowing. These criteria that I have defined and provided an explanation for here, are in relation to the theory that developed as I moved from one interview to the next. The categories of race, gender and class and so on derived relevance only in relation to the developing theory.

I found myself constantly questioning my selection of data: "What kind of teacher am I looking for in the next data production? And in what way will she or he extend the emerging theoretical constructs?" As Flick (1998, 65) explains, "the possibilities of multiple comparisons are infinite, and so groups must be chosen according to theoretical criteria." For me, often stepping back to ask, "If I do things this way, what am I missing? What am I gaining? Why this research participant and not that?" The more aware I became about the ramifications of the choices, the better chance I had to choose wisely. Although the strategy of the emergent design is to conduct interviews until you find no more cases that your theory does not fit (theoretical saturation), this task can become too large to accomplish in the time allocated for data production (Glaser and Strauss 1967), especially in this case where the life history interviews took up to 13 hours. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967, 61):

Sampling and integrating further material is finished when the *theoretical saturation* of a category or group of cases has been reached, i.e. nothing new emerges any more.

I limited my study by defining certain categories that were relevant and useful to my study. These included teachers from different learning sites who taught in different phases of schooling and different subject disciplines. These categories, including the different race and gender groupings, enabled a well-founded limitation of the sampling.

I also had the power at the outset to select research participants according to a conceptual framework. The sampling proceeded according to the relevance of the cases to such a scheme instead of their representativeness. This type of sampling, described in Table Two, allowed me



to draw parallels with the concept of data triangulation (Denzin 1989). Data triangulation refers to the use of different data sources, which are distinguished from different data methods for producing data. Denzin suggests that when studying particular phenomena, e.g. “successful” lives, time, space and persons are distinct subtypes to data triangulation. The point that I am attempting to make is that whoever you are (White man/African woman), wherever you teach (prison, private school, technikon), whatever position you occupy (lecturer/tutor/teacher), in whatever geographical space (rural/urban), there is potential for performing success. Patton (1969, 169–81), defines this diverse selection as, “maximum variety sampling”. I was able to engage in a process of deliberately selecting a heterogeneous sample and observing commonalties in their experiences. I found this to be the most appropriate method of sampling when exploring concepts such as desire to teach, hope, commitment and passion/love. Understanding the phenomenon, desire to teach or experiencing the teacher position as pleasurable by selecting a range of people from different teaching sites and subject disciplines, most definitely presented a richer, thicker description of what it means to successfully commit to one’s life as a teacher. The maximum variety sampling technique provided the space to include individuals with varied backgrounds, and teaching experiences for which I was able to:

- Produce high quality case descriptions, useful for documenting uniqueness (Chapters Four and Five).
- Foreground/identify emerging and significant shared patterns of commonalties existing across the participants (Chapter Six), through selective theorising.

For this particular study, combining two types of sampling techniques, the “theoretical sampling” and the “maximum variety sampling”, was most appropriate and seems to be endemic to researchers working within a rapidly changing context (Vithal 1998) as this enabled multiple interpretations and experiences of working within diverse teaching and learning contexts.

Doing biographical research is an active constructionist activity with the first task of biography being the experience of “picking a hero or heroine, be he or she recognised as such or not by the population at large” (Edel 1984 cited in Denzin and Lincoln 1998, 289). I found this selection of particular teachers quite a simple but creative process. As much as the selection of particular individuals foregrounds my own subjectivities (personality, fears, yearnings) which reach out to a particular kind of person as the subject, I also know that the teachers may be consciously and unconsciously trying to please me as researcher, for particular democratic positions. During the initial stages of the research process questions did arise and teachers

would ask why I think her/his life was worth telling. I also needed to ask myself whether a kind of self-deception by the teacher had already begun, and how would I manage this process. However, the fact that they inhabited momentarily this alternate and desirable position which was “my construction”, creates the potentialities and possibilities for teachers inhabiting such a space in the future as well. Despite these limitations, what cannot be denied are the benefits involved in sharing experiences with teachers in this present study.

## SECTION B: TROUBLING THE RESEARCH

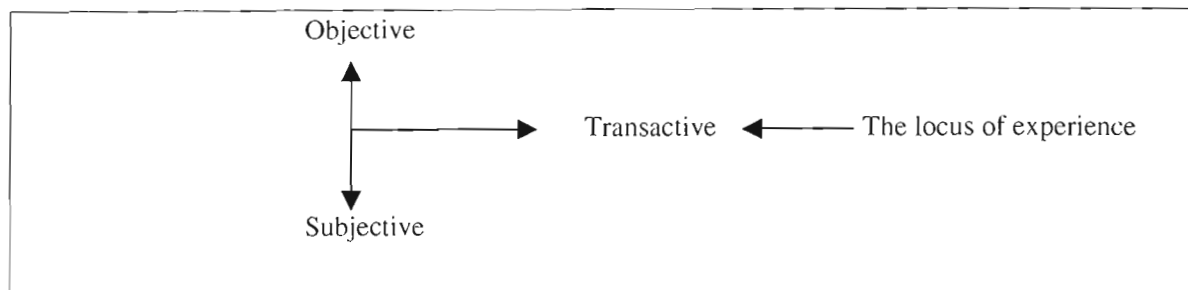
### The research design

*Like an artist, who has to make choices about what to paint, what views to present of the “reality” out there, what techniques to employ to express her experience of that “reality” and finally, what colours will best capture her experience of the “reality”, I am that too . . .*

In this section I present an argument for the data production processes I have engaged with and which finds support in Eisner (1998, 10), who questions the changing educational world, the conventional assumptions about research and the researcher’s role in it. In attempting to explore and understand the lives of teachers who are able to successfully commit themselves to the teacher position with some sense of fulfilment and pleasure, I continue to ask myself: What is an empowering approach to generating such knowledge? How do I move into this process knowing that this study is not only the call for teachers’ voice but my voice as well? When I use the term “empowering”, I want to shy away from believing that my study will call for particular teachers to find and articulate their voices or to offer educational change to yet another set of categories or strategies that will define the term “successful” teacher. How do I heighten my awareness of ways in which the story teachers tell will not be to foreground my interests only? How do I make sense of my power and authorial responsibility without harming the teachers who have invested many hours of their lives with me?

Eisner (1998) proposes an arrangement derived from Dewey’s work (1938) which I have found useful to make sense of my positionality and which takes me forward into the research design. The diagram clearly reveals that the experience of working with/on teachers is a transactive one.



**Figure 1.**

There is no independent reality in this process. When I first met with the teachers, some were total strangers and others not so strange. In this study I have been the researcher and the researched, making public my take on teachers' lives and reflecting my experience of what it means to be an Indian working-class woman doing research with/on teachers in different school sites in Durban. My research journal points to the fact that I am a human, not some disembodied abstraction. I have inserted myself into this research that I have orchestrated, asserting my power in the selection of teachers, the research methods I employ, the questions I choose to ask. All these point to my own subjectivity and my own positionality in this process. I am therefore both the author of the research, as much as the focus of reflection as readers engage with the product of the research process. The research text (this study) draws attention to my own voice in coming into a sense of my own power and my relationship with the context of this study. The "transactional" dimension of the research process is thus noted.

### **Narrative inquiry**

This section picks up on those moments to discuss what is and is not happening between and within the negotiated relations of whose story is being told, with what interpretation, and whose story is being foreshadowed, why and with what consequence. In this way I hope to engage with:

- Methodological criteria that will enlarge and deepen my understanding of "a life", on the premise that there are multiple ways in which that world can be known. I discuss how I came to consider narrative inquiry as the appropriate methodology for this study and the methods I have chosen for understanding teachers' lives, told and experienced. The work of producing the data for this study was done through narrative inquiry, specifically life history approaches and biographies. In choosing narrative inquiry and life history approaches, I was able to create the spaces to rupture traditional *single perspective* and *objective truth* for *transgressive possibilities* and *multiple truths*.

I can never separate myself from this research. Within the life history approach this relationship is important. The relationship I shared with the teachers who work in different teaching and learning sites in KwaZulu-Natal reflecting different race, class and gender experiences had effects on the

research process and on my own subjectivity. Locating myself in the study makes power a central concern. I am indebted to the changing patterns of research which make space for emotional data, troubles the subjectivity of the researcher and assists with the messy conundrum of the researcher in the research (Lather 1991; St. Pierre 1997). An example taken from my research journal to illustrate this appears in the box below:

My first interview with Hlo was challenging for me as well as for her. At the end of the second interview, Hlo wanted to opt out of the study because she experienced the retelling of certain critical moments of her life as a traumatic experience which brought back memories that *"I have shut out for a very long time"*. As much as I realised that I should not "pressure" Hlo to remain in the study, I experienced great difficulty trying to remain emotionally detached to her feelings. I acknowledged her sense of sadness as well as anger when she spoke about her father and his abusive nature. Hlo's story was very critical to my study, and I really did not want her to drop out at this point. I do believe that my power as lecturer and as researcher did insert itself in this relationship. Although the second interview did not go as planned, Hlo promised to call me and set up a third interview at her institution, which she subsequently did. After some time had lapsed, she confided, *"I know how important this study is for you, and as much as I am upset by certain critical moments in my life, I feel lighter talking about it"*. (Log entry: November 2000)

In the domain of educational practice, this has meant becoming more attentive to the original voices of the research subjects in order to produce a broader view of their social reality (Schatz 1993, 1).

The life history is about life experience and it has the potential to focus on the individual as the storyteller whose personal account reflects subjective positionalities that constitute and give form to her/his different subjective selves.

In this study I use life history methodology to excavate teachers' biographical narratives (Polkinghorne 1995). Biographical narratives make power central. The story of "a life" is created in a social interaction in search of meaning. As Polkinghorne (1988) notes, "We are in the middle of our stories and cannot be sure how it will end; we are constantly having to revise the plot as new events are added to our lives." Each story is a construction of life. I agree with Freeman (1993, 95), that "the telling of a story is in a real sense the construction of a life, and as a life told, it may be different at different times, with a different audience, or different purpose."

Narratives are social acts (Mishler 1999, xvi ). In speaking we perform our identity, selecting and organising the resources of language to tell our stories in particular ways that fit the occasion and that are appropriate for our particular audiences and contexts. We express, display, make claims for who we are and who we would like to be in the stories we tell and how we tell them. Using Butler's idea (1990, 33) that being teacher is a performance, and the notion of power which can be turned against itself to produce alternate modalities of power, is useful in this study. The performance approach to narrative asserts that every performance is unique and therefore every narrative identity multiple, fragmentary and unfinished. Identity is a performative struggle, always destabilised (Butler 1990;

Langellier 1989). The specificity of my own research makes it a construction of a life in/through which identities are dynamic, partial, fragmented and context driven. I am an extricable part of it.

Excavating the biographical narratives of teachers enables me to penetrate the surface and to seek what Geertz (1973b) calls a “thick description”. The presence of voice in the text, the flavour of a particular individual produced through the narratives, is what legitimately may be called the “aesthetic features of the case” (Eisner 1998, 38). Therefore I cannot claim that macro-theories of successful teachers’ lives can be read off my life history research study of six teachers. What I do show is how different relations interrelate and rejuvenate teachers to enact practices to perform their success.

The stories I narrate of particular teachers’ lives are a subjective declaration, and open to a range of other possible interpretations. This goes against the stoic and logical patterns of traditional categories of “fieldwork, textwork and headwork” that are set out in advance following coherence and linearity (Van Maanen 1995, 4). Postructuralists are among those who struggle against normative constructions and are part of changing research patterns. Poststructural theorising has impacted on life history research by encouraging me to move away from:

... the humanist concepts of the neat, coherent package to a more complex idea of the self as fragmented and non-unitary. This complicates life history research . . . If we have non-unitary subjectivity, we can no longer chart life in a simple linear fashion in which one logical step leads to the next . . . When representations are complex, we, as interpreters, find that the lives are more open to multiple interpretations, and therefore our interpretations become less authoritative (Bloom and Munro 1995, 99).

Far from seeking to chart teachers’ lives in a well-ordered linear process, my own research in identity construction has been one of multiplicity and non-linearity. Narrative and life history work is a valuable tool for sorting out the complexity and facetedness of poststructural notions of self and identity. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000, 49) aptly state:

Narrative inquiry uses as its analytic framework the metaphor of a three dimensional space, the personal and social (interaction); past, present and future (continuity), combined with the notion of place (situation) are the terms that create the three dimensional narrative inquiry space . . . each of the terms occupying different dimensions. It allows our inquiries to travel inward, outward, situated within a place. In other words to research teachers’ experience within this framework, allows one to understand the interaction (personal and social) as continuity (past, present and future).

The main argument in this study is that the teacher position is an important arena of power where private lives and public responsibilities are acted through the dynamic processes of dialogue, resistance and appropriation. Advancing the argument that teachers identities are actively constructed through investments they have in taking up particular subjective positions, makes life history research more powerful for understanding notions of private/public through a poststructural lens in my work with teachers. Frank (2000, 225) comments:

Life history researchers examine the cultural scripts and narrative devices speakers use to make sense of their life experiences. In relating these experiences, individuals help define the ideology that drives their lives and the image they have of both their own lives and others.

The intent of the life story for me is in part to understand my role as researcher in interpreting these stories in ways that I am able to take responsibility for my authorial power in this transaction between the researcher and researched. I forced myself to theorise my own identity as I theorised the teachers in my study. I necessarily examined the construction of my own subjectivity in dangerous and fresh ways. I share the view that life history interview process oozes with power. As I listened to the teachers and reflected in my research journal and later as office work (Van Maanen 1988b, 4), I was determined to find out more about the unthought and unnamed that hovered near all the words I wrote. My research journal became an important record for my reflections, a tool for knowing an event differently by becoming a "stranger in my own language"(St Pierre 1997a). My posture as researcher and academic is jolted, deflated and displaced by thoughts and connections that were erased from awareness until they were worded. In constituting my own subjectivity there was no inside and outside, no divisions, no boundaries. The text that is constructed between the autobiographer and myself is where I search for meaning and negotiate my relationship with the teacher. (St Pierre 2000).

I am highly alert to my presence and the nature of power relations between the teachers and myself in and through which meaning is constructed. Constantly negotiating and renegotiating the relationship between myself and the teachers through more collaborative and mutually beneficial data production strategies, spaces are created in which the issues of power, knowledge and privacy were worked through with respect, trust and commitment. I agree with Clifford (1992, 7) who claims that the "making and remaking of identities occurs in contact zones". In this study, the social relations with teachers had contextual specificity. The relations with teachers and the meanings through which race, class and gender worked, produced these narratives.

My engagement with teachers in different institutional sites reflecting the race and class experiences in Durban had effects on the research process and on my own subjectivity. Therefore I cannot claim



that my research is representative of anything but involves power relations in and through which I engaged the study and through which others engaged me. I do show through the life histories of the six teachers how different relations interrelate and inform specific teaching practices and discourses of successful teachers. In selecting what has constituted the research data in this study I have echoed the poststructural notion of writing about lives which contends that there is no one truth, no reality, no one “true” way to connect the object world and the spoken or written wor(l)d (Rhedding-Jones, 1994, 84). As researcher, I had orchestrated this research, I set the agenda and I have ultimate power in its interpretation (Epstein and Johnson 1998). This transaction between the participants and myself is shifting, bound up in power relations. Many stories can be written from the same material.

### *Producing the data*

The study of teachers’ stories of “a life” told and experienced is increasingly being seen as central to the study of teachers’ thinking and working. Samuel (1998) Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue that it is crucial to understand these aspects of teachers’ lives if current efforts at educational improvements and reforms are to be effective. While continued change hopes to inspire teachers to view the educational experience as a terrain to shift from their existing ways of knowing and being for different ways of thinking and working, many teachers express the desire to leave the profession.

This methodology attempts to research the lives of those teachers who continue to commit themselves to the teacher position with some sense of pleasure and fulfilment. These teachers’ lives I have come to describe as “successful”. A life lived is what actually happens. I agree with Geertz (1986, 373) when he brilliantly says:

We cannot live other peoples’ lives, and it is a piece of bad faith if we try. We can but listen to what, in words, in images, in actions, they say about their lives . . . it is all a matter of scratching surfaces. I believe there is so much to learn from the stories and lives of others. Even if it is limited to scratching the surface.

I believe I wanted more than just to “scratch” the surface. I found the task of getting insight into the life of the individual, “the figure under the carpet”, most challenging (Edel 1979 cited in Denzin and Lincoln 1998a). During the *initial engagement* with the teacher through life history interviews it was more the exploration of what Edel (1979) refers to as the “*mask of life*” – the appearance, the overt behaviour . . . , and other documents, and the underlying “life myth” – the major inferences into the character and personality of the person being written about. For the artist in me, the life history interview was a way of trying to *infer* from what seemed like a *two dimensional art-form*, or images in relief, the solid mass of background from which it is created. While life histories are stories of people’s lives, it is the connection of one’s life events to social events that distinguishes life history

from life story and other forms of narrative (Goodson 1992, 6). Core questions pertaining to one's life, life as being lived in a time, place and under particular social circumstances rather than a simple collection of events, enabled me to gain greater insight into the "figure under the carpet" and present more rounded *three-dimensional*, believable characters.

However, bound by particular discourse structures in life history research that gave me access to "life as told", was limiting. I align myself with Rorty (1986, 48) who posits that "we only know the world and ourselves under a description . . . and perhaps we just happened to be on that description." If we entertain the possibility that all might not be what we have been led to believe – then there might be strategies for producing the knowledge of "a successful life" differently. In this study I want to attempt to explore and understand these worlds, worlds outside of the categorisation and description of "the teacher". I want to pay attention to the gaps in discourse, the silences and other absences that impact on the nature of teachers' various identities. In this section I will attempt to excavate these silences through different strategies or forms. Poststructural theorising offers me the opportunities to investigate those worlds by opening up language, to move beyond just the description, from words to other signs and forms that offer teachers the spaces to feel, to experience and to see (St Pierre 1997). Understanding these desires and feelings will help me to analyse the range of subject positions these particular teachers occupy to perform their success.

Being a teacher places constraints on what we want to say, and what we can say. Excavating the silence is a complex task and depends very much on the *memory* of critical moments, incidents, people, places and *gaining access* to these memories or "lived experience". In this case, trying to understand how the private lives and public responsibility dialogue and interact, means accessing deeper issues around the teachers' sets of relations to different cultural signs and the way in which these sets of relations have been historically and culturally constructed (Stein 1998). While life history interviews give access only to a life told, increasing heterogeneous visions through the inclusion of photographs, poems (personal), diagrammatic illustrations, and music as data sources expand the story of the human connection and continuity and create spaces for a life as experienced. How I came to select these particular cultural forms will be discussed in greater detail in the next section. Their inclusion (as non-academic strategies) disrupts the discourse conventions bound by language, and extends my versions of "a life" told and experienced.

Engaging with the life history research in this way, I am also highly alert to my presence and the nature of the power relations through the insertion of these multiple data sources. As researcher, I take with me my own subjectivity, understandings and experiences into the construction of the individual's life. In the following section I will show how the life story accounts for this study were created through a combination of biographical excavations through life history interviews and a range



of alternate data sources that happened during the life history interviews (written, oral and visual). All these were employed to offer a “thick”, more rounded version of a life told and experienced.

### *Life history interviews with teachers*

I describe here the interview process and the multiple data sources that were employed to extend what is generally accessible to life history accounts of an individual life. While the biographies I excavate through life history interviews illustrate one of the ways in which the story of a life can be told, the different constructions of narrative also illustrate the type of control I have over these narratives and their final interpretation and representation.

In my study, I created the spaces for teachers to tell their story through the life history interviews and offer dense visual, written and oral data in understanding their agency within the narratives of schooling and the teacher position. I have classified these data sources as primary data sources because they related directly to the teachers, and were told, prepared and given to me by the teachers.

The interviews were relatively unstructured and lasted an average of two hours. They were conducted over eight to ten sessions. Audiotaping was the central way of documenting the oral telling of the life histories. The number of sessions depended on the availability of the teachers, and how they were feeling (emotionally/physically). The interviews happened in different places and at the convenience of the teachers. I met with them in their workplace, at their homes, and in coffee shops. At some point in the data production process teachers were also invited to my home either to listen to the songs that they chose to include in their story, or to drop off a document or photograph. It also assisted the social relations that developed between us. I think it was important that teachers knew me not just as a researcher. My home was a perfect place to start. The interviews offered opportunities for the teachers to tell their stories in their own way to someone who I hoped they would view as an attentive “listener”. These teachers were not taught how to tell the stories and according to Mishler (1995), it is part of their cognitive repertoire and an ordinary way in which they make sense of and communicate life episodes. In excavating the teachers’ biographies, there are serious ethical considerations. Many times during the interviews teachers offered me “data” about their lives which they requested not to be included into their written story. The opposite also happened. At times they would disclose “information” that really made me feel uncomfortable to make public. For example, one of the teachers in the study explained how she was raped at the tender age of nine and how this impacted on her relationship later. Initially she agreed to have this included in her story, but withdrew consent after her reading of the final story. I was also aware that the stories elicited in a formal interview with the teachers differs in fundamental ways from stories told spontaneously, in either oral or written form. In this study, I asked questions of the storyteller, thereby both interrupting her/his narrative and perhaps even directing it in ways the narrator might not have otherwise chosen.

Thus it is important to acknowledge that the stories told in such interviews are clearly co-constructed, in the context of the dialogue that necessarily occurs between the teacher and myself. The word is a two-sided act. It is determined equally by whose word it is and for whom it is meant . . . A word is a territory shared by both addresser and addressee, by the speaker and interlocutor (Bakhtin 1986). The particular challenge in my research emanates from the biographical accounts that will serve as the principal data source.

The questions I asked of teachers were to understand how particular dimensions of their life as teacher and the range of subjective positions these individuals occupy, impacted on their performance of success. Understanding these relations between the private lives and personal responsibility brings out the complexity and ambiguities of lived experiences. Initially, I did try to make sense of their “successful” lives by seeking out the source and the knowledge they used to construct their identities. The teachers, instead, responded to the questions by telling me what they did, the practices they enacted that offered them moments of pleasure. I started listening for ideas and practices and they used to replicate or resist the meanings of the term “teacher” in their everyday practices through which their desire for “success” was aroused. I listened to the teachers as they spoke about their everyday ordinary experiences. These ranged from their practices of home and family life to the school site. In telling their stories of a life lived inside and outside of their teacher position, I was able to focus on their private and public performances.

While I did try to shape the interviews to follow some form of chronological ordering, of greater concern were the central moments and critical/fateful incidents they remembered throughout their lives. These critical moments and incidents became the methodological patterning as they constructed their telling. I only intervened at critical points in the telling for elaboration or clarification of these moments and incidents. Challenging the idea that power oppresses and teachers are just the people in the corner issuing instructions (Thorne 1993), my focus attends to the discourses and identities constructed in and through them. Using the data produced I explore how teachers know, live and act as teachers and examine the way in which they negotiated and produced particular relations of power (Foucault 1982).

Each teacher is a maker of her/his own meaning. In trying to capture each teacher’s uniqueness, the past and its remembrance, their desires and wishes, I wanted to explore the complex ways these relationships invade or pervade the present and their performance of success. For this study this meant selecting appropriate cultural signs to arouse the “materiality of life that lies at the root of remembrance” (Stanley 2001), those silences and gaps that impact in a deep and meaningful way teachers’ thoughts and desires. To assist me in making decisions about what alternate strategies and forms I should include in the data production process, I turned to Dewey (1934) cited in Eisner

(1998), who distinguishes between two modes of attention that we give to our lives: the process of categorisation he named “recognition” and the process of visual exploration he called “perception”. Eisner (1998, 17) explains further: “Well before we are able to assign words to qualities we call blue, hot, tall, loud, or prickly, we *experience them in their nameless state*.” What Eisner tries to emphasise in this statement is the capacity of our sensory system to *perceive* and explore these qualities within our purview. Often, however, we tend to experience qualities as labelled objects, for example, “tree” or “teacher”, and limit that perceptual experience. Eisner argues that, “we move instantaneously from the *qualities* we are able to *see* to their *classification and labeling* and while that is useful it also *forecloses* the exploration of the *qualities* that constitute the “that tree”, “this teacher”.” If our *perceptual* experience is aborted for the sake of classification, our experience is attenuated; we do not experience all that we can.

Therefore the argument I want to present here is that asking questions about “a teacher’s life” must also include ways of getting to know discourses teachers adopt through investments they make in taking up particular positions in their daily social practices. I want to understand the source and the nature of these subject positions as well as the social practices consciously described and articulated. These in-betweens can enhance what teachers want to say, how they can say, and it can “thicken” the description of the memory and the remembrance of how they know, live and act out particular practices in their teacher position. Arousing the materiality of life that lies at the root of remembrance/memory is possible through particular cultural signs that refuse the divide between the material and immaterial, the past and the present and their private lives and public responsibility.

This explanation I hope offers substantiation for the use of different, carefully selected, and appropriate cultural forms and signs of representation. These cultural forms, photographs, favourite songs, personal poems and diagrammatic illustrations offered teachers the space to experience the remembrance, and the joys as well as the pains of memory. They reminded me as well that lives lived are not as simple and obliging as lives written; they have a recalcitrance that intrigues and provokes (Stanley 2002). These multiple ways of understanding teachers’ “lived lives” acts as a powerful means of thinking about writing lives as well as living them in their complexity and contradictions.

Producing the drawings, photographs, written poems and listening to their favourite songs enabled me to go beyond the spoken word, and offer a different kind of description of their world in which they happened to be. As St Pierre (1997, 176) adds, “there might be worlds other than the one described by liberal humanism, and poststructural theories offer us the opportunities to investigate those worlds by opening up language for redeployment in revitalised social agendas.” I believe that accessing teachers’ lived experiences through these diverse ways really offered teachers an affirmative position in this research process, which heightened my awareness of the shifting power

relations between the teachers and myself and the importance of recognising my ethical responsibility towards them.

A collective discussion of these cultural forms and their usefulness in exploring teachers' lives in this study highlights an innovative and provocative point of entry, an alternate discourse that adds contrast and thickens existing traditional, developmental and educational discourse on teachers' identities and lives. Integrating these cultural signs into the life history interviews demonstrates the power and forces that shape experience, and also provide a rich description of the story being told and the narrator's shaping of his/her world. For example, Eddie's inclusion of the photograph of the cave in the lime quarry in Robben Island is very appropriate in understanding how this visit impacted on his knowledge of apartheid and the formation of his political will in his position as teacher. His classroom, like the cave in the lime quarry where Mandela and his friends met to strategise, is a space for him to resist the constraints imposed on him in his teacher position. Like the cave, he describes his classroom as a sacred place where his agency as teacher occurs in powerful ways. Through conversations around their photographs we are able to co-construct "a research text" (Clandinin and Connelly 1994). Mitchell (1992, 95) also supports that the use of photographs "do not seek to recover . . . the truth captured in the image, but rather liberate the signifier from the constraints imposed upon it by the rationalist ideology of representation". My hope is that by including the teachers' photographs a space will open to go in search for the evaded and silenced. Placing the photographs within the storied narratives is designed to authenticate its substance, that which is depicted, in order to make the image tell its true story (Bach 1998, 95).

The metaphorical images teachers use to describe themselves through the poems they wrote also comes from their thoughts/the evaded. Teachers came up with many metaphors for themselves - being a teacher is like being a gardener, mother - nature, artist or lighthouse. This exercise rooted in an image that arises from somewhere in the unthought and the silenced, offers teachers' moments of reflexion, especially in moments of disconnectedness and sterility, to resist the technical fixes available in the teacher position for better ways. The poems teachers wrote provided yet another source for the particular subject positions they choose to occupy to perform their success.

I see a continued need for multiple forms of representation of data and research. And creating the space for photographs, poems, diagrams is how I came to understand the place multiple forms occupy in different and rich ways of telling a story that are as much controlled by the teachers as they are by myself as researcher. While these data forms "speak" to me in particular ways, they "speak" for themselves as well as a reality created by the teacher alone, for the reader. These different representational forms offered me spaces to "listen to what, in words, in images, in actions, they say about their lives" (Geertz 1986, 373). For those who have been much burdened and even violated by



the language and the practice of humanism, these representational forms could also be understood as affirming descriptions. In privileging my epistemological status of these selected representational forms foregrounds my “self” in relation to the co-construction of “field texts” (Clandinin and Connelly 1994) to represent aspects of the teachers’ life as it unfolds.

The inclusion of multiple realities, by which teachers make meaning of their lives, invites the “reader” to move from point to point, to understand that there is no one reality, but an infinite number of momentarily caught glimpses, formulated and codified in the mind of the spectator. While the photographs, drawings, poetry and songs enabled these teachers to foreground and shape themselves in particular and specific ways during the “telling”, as symbolic forms of making meaning of the world they can resignify “. . . as remnants of that loss, and as resources from which to articulate the future” (Butler 1993, 11). Their inclusion in the study as “non-academic” forms of data production, I argue, provided a more complex and nuanced version of “a life”. Each text, written, photographic, diagrammatic or musical required that I attend to, reflect upon, and speculate on the qualities of an alternative potential of a “lived experience”. It also attempts to acknowledge that understanding teachers’ lives lived is complex. It is about many thoughts, feelings and ideas, conflicting and contradictory, all happening at the same time, that inform what teachers do and say. I hope that the inclusion of cultural symbols (their photographs, poems, diagrams and songs) will be revisited as inspiring and challenging ways to understand teachers’ lives.

My desire is that you, the reader, should also experience the infinitely complex interwoven interrelationships in the stories, of the photographs, the poems and musical pieces. These ways provide you as well the spaces to experience these “lives lived” with your senses without any attempt at categorisation, as a way of understanding what it is to be fully alive. The researcher and the artist within me cultivate a desire to pursue separate visions – multiple ways of seeing (Bach 1998, 97). This research is like a cubist painting, different clues yet harmonised viewpoints. My own valuing of an aesthetic response to the world is acknowledged within this research strategy.

As much as I had my own agenda for asking the research participants for the inclusion of different cultural forms/signs as part of the construction of a particular reality, it also offered teachers the space to insert their own agendas in the research process. For example, the choice of photographs included in the description, the metaphors used in describing themselves in the poems, their subjective positioning in the diagrammatic representation and the musical pieces they listened to, are part of other worlds, other than the world we know under a liberal humanist description (Rorty 1986). I do acknowledge that these different discursive possibilities created affirmative positions for those who have been “burdened and even violated by language and the practice of humanism” (St Pierre 1997, 176). The discourses through which I present teachers’ lived experiences in this study are not

innocent, but are organised within relations of power, my own preferential power of aesthetic ways of knowing and representing. While the inclusion of such representational forms has assisted me in encouraging ambiguity and multiplicity, it also fulfils the purpose of triangulation.

### *Validity checks*

In biography we see a life recreated. Excavating “lived lives” involves working in a tone of intimacy with the teachers. Because the material is intimate, it means that the potential to harm is greater. It is this intimacy that raises some of the sharpest ethical questions in this kind of study. Being acutely aware that the observations that I make and the stories that I write may be potentially damaging to the teachers, I felt obliged to send the completed version to the teachers (research participants) for their comments. I felt an obligation to protect the teachers from being manipulated and alienated from the telling (Measor and Sikes 1992, 211). Conducting these member checks proved to be a very valuable activity, it contributed to the validity of the stories narrated and the study.

It was my ethical responsibility to see that the teller was not diminished or written out of their telling in the narratives. These member checks were done by asking each teacher to read “their” story as a confirmation that the story captured “a life” told and experienced as constructed by the teachers, or to correct, amend or extend it (Lincoln and Guba 1985, 236). A more detailed description of this process will be given in Chapter Four, to illustrate the need for mediating between the story that is theirs and yet not theirs (Grumet 1991, 70). Written consent from the teachers (for the final representation) was procured (refer to Appendix 3,5-7).

### **SECTION C: REPRESENTING THE (RE)TELLING**

The data, which was produced over a three-year period (including the final reading of stories by the teachers), arises out of the six life history interviews and a range of alternate forms and strategies that were produced by the teachers during the long interviews. The wide range of data sources offered me consciously articulated data as well as images and cultural forms that arouse the less clearly articulated remembrances, the evaded and erased thoughts, desires and interests. Researching the everyday world of teachers, understanding how teachers think, live and know how to be teacher meant that I had to be in the middle of things, in their pain and pleasurable moments. I had to deal with the messiness of it all (St Pierre 1997). In the messiness of that condition I found agency through the employment of a device, a metaphor.

The cubist framework underpinned by a metaphor drawn from the visual arts was developed as a response to the interpretative dilemmas that I faced in locating discourses that constitute teachers’ evolving definitions of self and their “shifting” perspectives on life through which their success is performed. The purpose of the cubist framework is not simply to produce a reproduction of



observations, but to provide a dynamic framework in which the range of disconnected data elements, situated, contextual and particular, are made to cohere in an interesting and explanatory way.

In analysing the data through the employment of the cubist framework, I was attempting to work against the usual way of redescribing the teachers' stories. However, given that I must use language to do so, putting the data under erasure through a metaphor assisted me to think differently and to move toward the invisible and the unthought. In thinking differently about the data I was also aware of my own subjective positioning as subverter and inscriber in the production of knowledge. Because the storied narrative is the researchers' construction, the purpose of the cubist framework is its power to enhance the trustworthiness of the text, for plausibility and consensus.

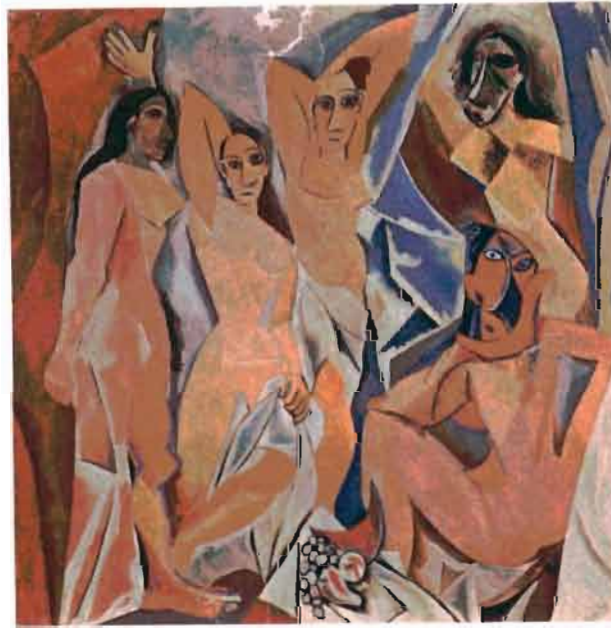
My intention in the analysis of teachers' identities is to employ an eclectic approach to explore the multidimensional view of power that makes visible teachers' fluid identities, and the social structures through which the conditions of power and human agency are created. The use of the metaphor was for me a response to the crisis of redescribing the subject, of developing an eclectic approach to be able write a conventional narrative but then to critique and deconstruct the narrative to show its workings. I find support in Barone (1992, 143), who explains that deconstruction is an analytical reading process of making the invisible visible. For example in my study I wanted to know through the stories, about teachers multiple and potentially fluid identities, how they are constructed in their lives and how meanings about them open up spaces for teachers to perform their success. In this process, the employment of the cubist metaphor enables me to:

- make sense of the storied narratives and the dispersal of self in discourse,
- interpret and represent through the storied vignettes the constitution of multiple and fluid selves in and through discourse, and
- then to the constitution of the self through practice.

In employing the cubist metaphor I continually shift my position or standpoint and offer multiple views or different facets of teachers' lives. In making these shifts I am able to theorise about different kinds of data and knowledge once I placed the data within the cubist framework. While it enables me to assert the distinct realities and forms of each life, it offers the space to find commonality in the experience of differences without compromising how the individual effects success in his/her teacher position.

### The cubist framework

In this section I would like to provide a brief explanation of the cubist framework that I have developed for the analysis of the data in this study. This framework that I found in cubism, is drawn from the visual arts, more specifically from the work of Pablo Picasso. I will firstly present a brief description of one specific painting by Pablo Picasso, called the *Les Femmes d'Alger* (O.J. version O) in 1907 (see below), as a way of demonstrating the principles that I have borrowed to create a framework for this study.



### *Subject and meaning*

The painting shows a figurative composition of five nudes grouped around a still life. The *Demoiselles* is crucial to the history of twentieth-century painting. It was the first to give monumental expression to the concept of *pictorial space* toward which experimental painters had been groping for a hundred years.

In the months leading up to the painting's creation, Picasso struggled with the subject – five women in a brothel. He created more than 100 sketches and preliminary paintings, wrestling with the problem of depicting three-dimensional space in a two-dimensional picture plane. In creating *Les Femmes d'Alger*, Picasso turned his back on middle-class society and the traditional values of the time, opting for line drawing rather than the colour and light-defined forms of the classical painters.

***Principle One: Three-dimensional figures and space reconfigured in a new dimension of time and space (two-dimensional picture plane)***

Picasso restructured and transformed the female forms into a series of harsh angular planes, of coloured facets shaded in a way that gives them a certain three-dimensionality. In this painting Picasso asserted for the first time the principle that even the figure could be subordinated to the total painting. The figures and the background seem to form a relief that forgoes all pursuit of spatial depth and retains close relationship to the pictorial surface.

***Principle Two: Spatial ambiguity and multiple spaces***

Picasso also illustrated in the *Demoiselles* that the vision of the spectator is enlarged to include a number of different views, seen as though he was moving from point to point, now looking up, now looking down. Modern studies of perception have shown that this is indeed the way we see – not by one fixed, all encompassing glance but by an infinite number of momentarily caught glimpses, formulated and codified in the mind of the spectator. The figures are essentially indistinguishable from comparable planes composing the environment in which they existed. We cannot be sure whether they are concave or convex; some look like chunks of solidified space, others like fragments of translucent bodies.

***Principle Three: The geometrical framework imposing a new kind of integrity and continuity***

Each individual figure is united by a general geometrical principle that superimposes its own laws onto the natural proportions. The definite outlining, sometimes with tonal contrast, is both thick and heavy, creating the flat space. Only lines suggest forms, and not by tonal effect.

The motif of five female nudes grouped around a still life, remains indebted to classical convention. The intensity of the fragmented and disintegrated figures contrast strangely with a serene little still life in the foreground (a pear, an apple, a slice of melon, a bunch of grapes).

***Principle Four: Work in progress: Exhibits concepts of metamorphosis, of simultaneity and consecutive vision***

The painting is more a record of a work in progress, of an artist in the process of changing his mind, than a resolved composition: the forms are dislocated, inconsistent in style, in fact, unfinished. It is a disturbing picture overthrowing perspective, single viewpoint, integral form and local colour. The spatial depth and the ideal form of the female nude were destroyed. The figures constitute a unique kind of matter that introduces a new understanding of shifts and multiple views, all taking place simultaneously on the entire canvas.

### Developing the cubist framework

In this section I will explain how I will employ the four cubist principles described, to develop a framework for the analysis of the data. In doing so, I will also explain how each one of the *principles* described creates the space for me to explore different *layers* of meaning and interpretation of teachers' lives told and experienced. Making the shifts within such a framework assists me in making sense of the "heroine"/"hero" in the story, to explore the range of contradictory, ambiguous discourses that are constitutive of the teachers sense-making, and multiple subject positions teachers adopt in their teacher position to perform their success. Each layer presents a different kind of story that I have produced as co-constructor, engaging in a different set of practices and ideas for each. Employing such a framework foregrounds different knowledge produced about teachers' and their lives. At the same time, it assists in finding a commonality in the experience of difference. Placing the data under erasure within this framework offers the spaces for multiple dimensions within any one life history, intricately enmeshed and connected. Each layer of meaning created through the framework is another facet of the cube, another facet of "a life" and each will be represented in different chapters of the research study. The methodology acknowledges, indeed maximises, the multiple and potentially contradictory perspectives and invites me as co-constructor to focus on four layers of meaning.

In producing these different layers of interpretation and meanings to teachers' lives, I explore and negotiate my own authorial power and ethical responsibility to the teachers who offered me their stories. While no one layer is any more plausible than another, creating these different discursive spaces opens up possibilities for the disruption of the linear conventional narrative by encouraging multiple interpretations of teachers' lives.

The orally generated stories were transcribed and transformed into written texts. According to Van Maanen (1988b, 95), the stories have to be "textualised" for only in textualised form do data yield to analysis. Working from the database of life history interviews and a range of alternate forms and strategies that merged into the construction of the narration, I have chosen to craft four different fictions about teachers' lives, each one different, yet discursive. Layer one interprets the teachers' stories in the form of storied narratives, which I have named "Freeze frames, coloured facets". Layer two presents the storied vignettes that I have named "Fluid images and potential spaces". Layer three represents the data in the form of shared patterns called "Patterns of desire for change and continuity" and finally the fourth layer, "Cubist lives: An exhibit of metamorphosis". In doing this I find support in Richardson (1990, 1993), who explains that the different representations enabled through the cubist framework are for different audiences. The cubist framework created using the four cubist principles moved me toward the unthought, to deal with my interpretative struggles, by opening up the space for me to offer layers of meanings of the data produced in this study.



***Layer One (Chapter Four)******The storied narratives: "Freeze frames, coloured facets"***

*Picasso restructured and transformed the female forms into a series of harsh angular planes, of colored facets shaded in a way that gives them a certain three dimensionality.*

(*"Culture Shock: Flashpoints"* 2002)

In this layer of interpretation I present the teachers' stories as storied narratives. As a written representation of "reality" it invites us to consider the individual account within its own panorama. In the process of being told, transcribed and narrated, these storied narratives have been coloured and filtered by my own experiences as researcher. These individual stories are likened to a two-dimensional relief frieze, foregrounding the self, and dispersed through the story, reconfigured in time and space. However, through the active self-construction by the subject, this layer of the interpretation does present a romanticised, overwhelmingly positive life story, a reproduction of a hero narrative that reifies humanist notions of the individual as autonomous and unitary. I am able to "freeze-frame" that level for further analysis, by putting the data as storied narratives under erasure. The coloured facets of the cubist work remind me that with one small shift I will be able to view another side of the individual, and another dimension of "a life".

Further exploration of two different narrative forms (narratives written in the first person, narratives written in the third) enabled the dispersal of my authorial power through the role of "ventriloquist" and "interpreter". While neither positionalities are innocent, this fictionalised layer provided a relevant and appropriate terrain to deconstruct the storied narrative to show its workings-imperative for the believability of the stories.

***Layer Two (Chapter Five)******Storied vignettes: “Fluid images and potential spaces”***

*Picasso illustrated in the Demoiselles how the vision of the spectator is enlarged to include a number of different views, seen as though he was moving from point to point, now looking up, now looking down. The figures are essentially indistinguishable from comparable planes composing the environment in which they existed (Arnason 1969, 130)*

Putting the data under erasure through the cubist principle (two) provides me with the opportunity to create a second layer of analysis of “a life”. In the vignettes that I have created, I am able to explore the teachers’ stories “impregnated by their location within power structures and the social context” (Goodson 1998, 2000). In shifting my point of view from a single, linear perspective, I am able to reveal multiple views, multiple, ambiguous and contradictory discourses constitutive of teachers’ self (conscious and unconscious). In this layer I was able to understand teachers’ and their private lives and public positions.

In reading between the lines, I am able to interpret the data in ways that the teacher may never have thought. As Pamphilon (1999, 394) wrote, “ironing in pleats where they should not go”. The storied vignette offers a space for me to provide a critical perspective to the interpretation, through a process of excavating and making visible those subtle silences and muted experiences embedded in the life story, that have shaped, shape and continue to shape teachers’ lives. Through a conscious selection and organisation of data, I was able to identify those specific discourses reflexively embodied as *potential spaces* for disruption, resistance and change. Within these discourses I have chosen to foreground one of the multiple identities that teachers adopt and negotiate in their daily lives as teachers. While the storied vignettes were thematically organised from the perspective that I have taken to explore teachers’ lives, it is a text open to many different interpretations, purposes and audience. Within the scope of this study, I present multiple views of one teacher, Anna, as an example to illustrate how the cubist principle was used to understand and interpret teachers’ lives. From this standpoint, the vignettes I produce connect the individual stories produced by life history approaches to larger contexts of society.



***Layer Three (Chapter Six)******Agenda for agency: Patterns of desire for change and continuity***

*Each individual figure is united by a general geometrical principle which superimposes its own laws onto the natural proportions.* (‘‘Culture Shock: Flashpoints’’ 2002.)

Employing the third cubist principle of geometric patterning which imposed upon the different shapes a common geometric patterning to define and enhance its cubist dimensions, this layer of interpretation offers a way of finding commonality in the experience of different lives.

While layer one and layer two foreground teachers unique experiences and personal modes of thinking in their sense-making, the thematic ensembling of teachers’ lives in this layer of interpretation assisted me in creating a set of patterns that brought commonality in understanding the practices teachers’ enacted in performing their success, irrespective of who they are or where they taught. This layer presents to the audience those shared practices constitutive of the self, as fleeting moments of opportunities in the teacher position. This fictionalised narrative provided the pragmatic dimension to the understanding of teachers’ lives, within an organising framework constructed along *two* axis for comparing the six lives and connecting the common practices, ideas and values:

- Practices *of* the self.
- Practices *on* the self

Likened to the fragmented, continually shifting figures that contrast strangely (dialogue and resistance) with the still life depicted in the dominant classical tradition, the teachers (through practices, *of* and *on*) are in continuous dialogue within the normative structures in which they think and act, resisting the patterned sets of activities, for new ways.

***Layer Four (Chapter Seven)******Cubist lives: An exhibit of metamorphosis***

In this layer of interpretation I bring to some sense of closure the study of successful teachers by offering a new kind of understanding of teachers who continue to commit themselves successfully in their teacher position with some sense of pleasure and fulfilment. In this reflexive story I reflect on meanings generated in the three layers of different stories through the theoretical constructs developed in Chapter Two to produce the fourth layer of interpretation. This layer of abstraction constitutes a unique understanding of the potential ways for teachers to perform their success in the teacher position. The fourth layer is never fixed, like all the other dimensions it is open to multiple interpretations.

While the fictions have been described as separate entities, they are interdependent and complementary to each other. These shifts and moves between and across layers are not discrete entities or binaries and should not be read so, but relations intricately enmeshed and connected, each layer another facet of the same cube, enhancing the stories each facet reflects through a dynamic, complementary and dialogical process. I fully understand that someone else could study the same phenomenon/culture and produce different interpretations, with similarly valid representations. Therefore there is nothing particularly privileged about the multiple interpretations that I have made, each one not necessarily truer than the other. They resulted from the interpretative struggles I was challenged to face and the different fictionalised narrations produced through the cubist framework is a serendipitous resolution (St Pierre 1999, 272).

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter has introduced the research practices, ideas and values that I engaged in this life history research of six teachers teaching in different teaching and learning sites in the greater Durban region. The methodological focus is intended to show how particular teachers perform their success in their teacher position with some sense of pleasure and fulfilment. The methods I employ to represent the challenges that I faced as researcher in theorising the data are reflective of the multiple ways of interpreting the data produced. The eclectic approaches in /through which I “put the data under erasure”(St Pierre 1997, 177), is a conscious attempt at acknowledging how I inscribe myself into the research process as a critical intervention in this transaction. Foregrounding my own subjectivities by employing the cubist metaphor enabled me to make sense of the transaction between the inside and outside of the research process. Within this positionality I was able to creatively challenge my ways of interpreting data and to search for ways that might enable me to produce different knowledge and to produce knowledge differently.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The storied narratives

#### “Freeze frames, Coloured facets”

##### ORIENTATION

**Cubist principle:** Three-dimensional figures and space reconfigured in a new dimension of time and space.

*Picasso restructured and transformed the female forms into a series of harsh angular planes, of Coloured facets shaded in a way that gives them a certain three-dimensionality.*

*(“Culture Shock: Flashpoints” 2002)*

This chapter has two sections depicting the storied lives of the research participants. Section A presents an argument for representing the storied narratives in two different narrative forms. Included is a discussion of my interpretative struggles as co-constructor of the storied narratives, having to deal with issues of representation of the participants’ voices. It briefly focuses on the process of ensuring validity of the research stories created.

Section B is a representation of the stories. Part One includes four storied narratives in first person and Part Two includes life stories of two teachers written in the third person.

**SECTION A: ISSUES OF SUBJECTIVITY****The “crisis” of representation**

I write up four stories in the role of the ventriloquist and assume the role of first person narrator in the storied narratives that I have referred to as Text One, Text Two, Text Three and Text Four. These stories are presented in Part One. In this layer of interpretation, I consider the particular, individual account within its Coloured and faceted form.

In Part Two, I have chosen to write two of the stories in the role of “evangelist” or “interpreter”. This was a consciously chosen decision by me to write the stories in the third person narration, a form in which a “reporting” of the teacher’s “voice” is an interpretation of the words and message of the teacher, by the narrator (the messenger). In retelling the teacher’s life story in a third person narrative, I would like to make overt my presence by moving my standpoint, as in the cubist work. These two stories are likened to the two outer figures (Chapter Three, page 76) with the “accentuated mask-like appearance” (Arnason 1969). The mask symbolically represents the “face” I give to the figures, asserting my perspective of the teacher’s life, in my words, to a large extent.

While I sought to fulfil the ground rules in this biographical narrative, I created the space for further learning about knowledge and meaning. Narrating the story differently was enticing as well as challenging. However, as much as I acted as the vehicle for transmission (as messenger/bearer) of the narration, how I narrated the stories, and what narrative forms the stories take acknowledge my power in this relationship. Essential to the activist stance that I take in the research process, is also my critical awareness and sensitivity to the power relations in these conversations and the teller’s vulnerability when they enter into this relationship with me.

I am able to “freeze frame” this layer of reconfigured time in a kind of traditional research manner for in-depth analysis. All the stories were co-constructed or co-created within a bounded temporal period marking a beginning point, a middle and an end (Polkinghorne 1995, 17). In synthesising the data, in the form of stories within the two different representational styles, I had to provide the specific contexts and enough detail so that they appear as unique individuals within particular situations, and I had to be able to differentiate one teacher’s life story from the next (Polkinghorne 1995). The power of a storied outcome was therefore derived from its presentation of a distinctive individual, in a unique situation, dealing with issues in a unique manner.



However, while I took on this stance of anonymity to tell the teacher's story, what was narrated was a *co-construction* between the teacher and myself. In the storied narratives I have consciously left room for openings, not closures, through the expansion of our ways of knowing.

While the verbal narrative articulates the conscious, I intentionally created sites of vulnerability for the possibility of the evaded in the teachers' lives. Including photographs chosen by the teachers, the favourite songs we listened to, poems they wrote of themselves and diagrammatic illustrations, extended the dialogue about how they experienced their lives, their silences, desires and needs. Including these cultural forms into the storied narratives is useful; as clues or elements of verbal realism they validate my concern about "what is reality?" I found the cultural forms powerful for transforming the less clearly articulated, to unfreeze memories and to trigger off critical moments in the teacher's life. They also serve as faithful "realities" to the actual data produced by the researched acting as real themes in counterpoint to the co-construction of the story.

Through their narratives, the teachers have given me ways of penetrating their thoughts and desires, the unarticulated silences and absences that shaped their practices and the potential ways of performing their success in their teacher position. Although I know that what I perceive is only part of the reality before me, every teacher creates her/his own world and it is through the narratives that I learn to understand "a life" told and experienced through, with, and against other ways of knowing.

### **Relationships and issue of voice**

I was aware as researcher that I had to make certain inclusions and exclusions in generating the story from the data, decisions that were shaped by the research questions that this study sought to explore. Therefore, as much as the relationship between the researcher and researched is a dynamic one, it was very difficult sustaining and maintaining that dynamism. As the researcher I did have the final authority to describe and re-inscribe the stories in the way that I did in terms of the research focus and my responsibility to offer an explanation for the study I set out to research. The narratives were not simply a matter of compiling or aggregating happenings or events: they also had to be drawn together into a systemic whole. Once again, I find drawing parallels with the visual metaphor of a cubist work appropriate at this point. Just as a cubist painting is a visual representation of reality re-configured in a new kind of space so is narrative a verbal representation of reality re-configured in a new dimension of time (Vanhoozer 1991, 37).

As researcher, I faced the complex task of constructing a “story” of peoples lives, “of complex human experiences unfolding through time, as it stands out at any present moment through recollection and imagination” (Heidegger 1962 cited in Polkinghorne 1995). These storied narratives are therefore not objective representations or mirrored reflections of the teachers’ lives as they actually occurred; they are rather a series of constructions. As the cubist work reveals, lives are a complication of different levels of reality (Arnason 1969). These stories are dialogical (re)productions resulting from the interactions between the teachers and myself, a composition of events and happenings Coloured and filtered by my views, - by my views from the time of its collection and my own subject positioning as an Indian woman educator.

### **Experiences of “member checks”**

The choices I make reflect my power as researcher. While these stories were told in particular ways by the different teachers, I made choices about how I described and inscribed these stories, what I included and marginalised. I have actively composed the shape and form as I narrated the stories. As the narrator, I provided another layer of meaning to the story being told. I have a story, one that is embedded in my culture, language, gender, race and beliefs.

This is how I came to the decision to send to the teachers the stories that describe their ways of existence before I wrote out the final version of their narratives. I sent them this section of the study in which I produced a storied narrative that focuses on their ways of existence, that included the following: the significant relations in their life, practising religion, practising politics, practising education, practising affirming, desirable and joyful moments in their lives and learning how to practise successfully in their teacher position. This portion of my study was about clarifying and elaborating certain issues, and as I found, collecting additional information. I had conducted member checks as I interviewed them. After a series of interviews, I would often ask the teachers what they thought about the interpretations I was making about their lives. I also member checked in this fashion with my supervisor, my colleagues and my husband.

Two-and-a-half years later, after I had a “final” version of the interpretation, I visited each one of the teachers and presented them with a copy together with scanned photographs that were going to be included. In the time that lapsed between the interviews and the written interpretation, one of teachers suffered a serious medical setback, losing her “voice” due to the paralysis of the muscles in her throat.

The teachers and I agreed to meet two weeks later. After my initial doubt about their response, I met with each of the teachers, in their homes, eating houses and workplaces. I was anxious about their response, but more than that I wanted to know how it mattered to their lives. I

wanted them to know how I struggled to write these stories, that they had consumed my life in many ways and transformed my practices. I suppose that is what a study of this nature should do. I hear their words in my lectures with the student teachers I teach, and in the lectures I have with the teachers who attend post-graduate studies.

When we did meet my questions to them were simple: What do you think about the story I have finally written? What aspects of the interpretation do you disagree with? What do you like about the story? One of the teachers requested that I remove from the story certain details about her family members. But she also offered me additional information on other aspects of her life, which I found very helpful and which assisted me in the theorising.

On the other hand I was really disappointed when one of the teachers explained to me in my telephone conversation with her that she had not yet opened the envelope. "I will do so soon" she replied. This really "sunk" me. Only later she explained how low she had been feeling and that not reading the story did not in any way show a lack of interest. My real dread happened when one of the teachers who described to me how much she loved what I had written and acknowledged how much work I had put into it, phoned me to let me know about her father who had passed away. However, our conversation did not end there. She expressed her desire to meet with me because his death had affected her and what she told in the story needed to be reconsidered. There was a tone of censure.

The other teachers found this an opportune time to offer me additional information. The captions that I asked each teacher to provide for their personal stories worked very well. I also requested them to include captions and descriptions of the photographs.

I am not really sure even now as I offer the storied narratives in the written form in this chapter, whether the member check really helped me to get an honest critique from the teachers. Generally it was a kind of silence and politeness that was also troubling me about the teachers' responses. One teacher was just glad that someone had listened to her story. At the end of all of this, I am still not sure if I have it "right". I just have to know that the approval and the silence are a reminder to be responsible to these lives. As I continue to write these stories through which I offer my interpretation and critique, I continually think about what responsibility to these teachers' lives actually mean. It is on this note that I go on to write the next section of this chapter.

**Section B**  
**Stories of “desire”**

**PART ONE**

*First person narratives*

**Text One:     Un-chaining minds**

**Text Two:     The dandelion sower**

**Text Three:   The jazzman**

**Text Four:    The adventurer**

## TEXT ONE

## Un-chaining minds

👤 Hloe Kunene 👤



My mother, Mrs. P. Gabela, myself and My Father Peter, Gabela. Two people who have contributed to in my life in very different, ways...

My Mother - always positive, supportive

My Father - yes, irresponsible but in his strange way = supportive in his own right

What is interesting is that he would get so carried away on graduation days = claiming how he has contributed to my success and singing praises about how proud he is of HIS ELDEST DAUGHTER.



Hlo Kunene told the story you are about to read. Hlo, as I call her, is an African woman and a mother of one child. She was 29 years old at the time I conducted these life history interviews. She had been working as a teacher and member of the management team at the Westville Prison School for Juveniles since 1996. Her students are criminals serving long sentences for crimes including murder, hijackings, rape and robbery. Her office is a little room adjacent to the classrooms in which she teaches and is reached after many flights of stairs and gated entrances, which can only be opened by certain members of the prison staff. An armed guard is posted outside her classroom while she teaches.

An extremely high wall outside of her office is a constant reminder of the many occasions when students attempted escape. She is extremely careful not to leave any of the gates open while she works in her office.

---

Sometimes I felt very helpless  
Often I thought of giving up . . .  
Hungry, angry, frustrated!  
Things got really bad at times.  
I would cry, pray, cry . . .  
When things got really abnormal,  
My mother was always there for me.  
She kept me going,  
She kept me strong  
Committed to my vision of who and what I  
Wanted to become.  
'Twas by faith  
It was not easy, but it was worth it!  
(Hlo Kunene 2000)

### **I became a mother in my teens**

Being the eldest of the three children was not easy. Most of the things had to be done by me at home. My mother worked as a nurse and when she went to work at night I had to take care of my brother and sister, like seeing to their meals and their uniforms. Although my father worked as a machine operator for a tool company, he was not a very responsible man. You can understand the home environment when a father drinks a lot; you end up having lots of problems. Father was very violent with us, he would hit everyone and that only stopped when I was in high school. I remember the day, while I was still in high school and I came home to find that there was no food, there was nothing. I sold my school bag to some lady so that I could buy food for my brother and sister.

In a way I became a "mother" in my teens, and my interest in education started way back then when I had to help my brother and sister with their homework and solve their social problems. I developed skills in dealing with people very early in my life and I enjoyed sorting out other peoples' problems such that I thought I was going to become a social worker. Being a social worker was my first choice over and above being a teacher. I loved

both careers because I thought I had skills to do both. But I choose teaching because being a teacher meant that I am still very much a social worker.

I ended up being very close to my mother. Although she went through so much physical and emotional abuse from my father she cared and provided for me. What struck me most was her strength. She made sure that we went to the best schools at that time. She would also make sure that we attended political classes where the SACP cadres taught us about the struggle. Politics where I came from was like daily bread for me.

In fact, as badly as I've created my father, he was somebody that was very intellectual in his own sense. He expected you to be with your books all the time. He made sure that we understood words and every afternoon he would sit down with me and while he had his liquor he taught me to see the time and so much about "life".

He was somebody you won't really understand at times. I was sometimes confused because he was very nice but still very irresponsible. My father treated me differently to the way he treated my younger brother and this was always an issue. That really upset me and it created in me that constant pressure of having to prove that I am female and I can do anything. I never really looked up to father in that sense of being a parent.

#### **Madam V**

Mrs V, my grade five teacher made me feel special. I remember being very interested in education. I would take my books home and go over everything that was done for the day at school. I would also ask my mother to read to me and help out with my homework. Mrs V. cared about me and when she established that I was not the "happy" girl that I looked she wanted to help me and she went to the extent of phoning my mother at work to find out about me. I knew that if I had a problem I could go to her.

She had this confidence in me and that confused me, because I was expected to perform much better than I could. I was always worried and I always carried a book with me everywhere. In the June exams I got a "C" aggregate and I remember Mrs V called me into her office and told me, "this is not your mark and you are not going to accept this". I worked hard and in the December examinations I got a "B" aggregate and I also ended up being the second best student in the circuit.

As much as there was that pressure Mrs V. made you do your utmost. I think that was very important because as students you tend to be lazy and not realise your full potential. It really helped being on my toes all the time. I learnt from her that there must be some environment that should exist for teaching and learning to occur and it's interesting for me when I talk about this because these values stayed in my mind for a long time.

#### **St Francis Boarding School**

##### **To perm or to braid?**

Everyone in the taxi warned me that I should never go to boarding school with my hair permed and looking like that, but I just wanted to see to what extent the nuns would actually go in interfering with someone's hair. At four o'clock that day a big meeting was held and I was called to stand in front, on the podium to be seen by all. The sister then emptied omo-washing powder over my head and forced me to wash my hair. She then pulled

out a pair of scissors and cut off my hair. I cried. I was told to apologise to the entire school for what I did.

I stood up and I told the students how sorry I was, and that next fall I will return in the same hairstyle because it looked very pretty and neat. This made the sisters very angry but I enjoyed the reaction because I expected it.

#### **It was all about Christian values**

Boarding school was all about Christian values. St Francis in Mariannhill is a catholic school, and the culture there was that you won't be allowed to practise anything that was outside those Catholic values. The problem was that there were just sisters and nuns there, so that is the life we had to live. The only two male teachers taught history and Biology while the other subjects were taught by the nuns. They were all White except for the Zulu teacher.

My experiences there are still so fresh in my head, like when we used to go to the dining hall, we were not supposed to talk at all. Even if you made a sign asking for salt or something that became a serious problem. There were no excursions and even the movies that we watched were about David and some story from the Bible. I was the first person to object to this. Why should we come to a place that was just showing something that we know and read in the Bible? If it is entertainment they should get us movies that we could identify with.

The nuns could never accept that we could just know a boy, and we could actually be expelled for just knowing and speaking to one. We girls were treated differently from the boys. Our letters were opened and read while the letters of the males were not. We were abused. We carried sand from one point to another and repeated the process until they asked you to stop. We were asked to scrub floors and sweep the dusty, corrugated roads, as punishment for things they regarded as "wrong". Being politically aware I realised that my rights as a student and as an individual were being violated. I became very unhappy.

I mobilised the students and discussed these wrong doings. I remember being called to the office for inciting the students. They threatened to call my mother to complain about my political activities. But the trap was that I was very intelligent and in Marriannhill they wanted people like me who were doing well for their marketing strategy. As much as they disapproved of my political activities, they did not expel me.

I am not a born again Christian, because I am still very much into African culture and beliefs like my father. After watching the preparations for Shaka's Day celebrations on television we decided that we would like to plan some activities for the day as well and being in the forefront I approached the nuns to explain what we wanted to do and why. There was a series of meetings with the SRC about that issue and eventually they refused. But a group of girls I mobilised decided to go ahead anyway. We mobilised and prepared for this cultural event. We practised dance routines, songs and other cultural items and on that particular day, we marched into the dining hall, sat on the floor as we traditionally did and celebrated...

The next day the organisers were called to the office and we were each given nine of the best lashes. We all returned with our palms bandaged.

**The cream of the crop**

As a result of "bad" behaviour or poor performance, many of my friends were expelled or suspended from school by the time they had reached standard eight. And really, if you returned to complete your standard nine, you became the "cream of the crop" and I was one of those who returned. Parents complained and objected to my return, especially those parents whose children were expelled or who had failed. The nuns called me in to discuss the complaints but for some strange reason they did not expel me.

I decided to concentrate on my schoolwork and forget about the hard life that we were experiencing at boarding school. Things got a little better in standard nine. I became close to my teachers and they also understood me for who I really am. I was made a prefect and was responsible for cleaning the premises, a real honour then to have such a responsibility.

My standard nine English teacher was one who stands out vividly in my mind when I recall my experiences at boarding school. During one English lesson, she gave us an essay to write on our career choice and the reasons for such a choice.

I wrote about wanting to become a teacher. In the essay I poured my heart out about the kind of teacher I want to be. I also wrote about how strange I felt that we teach people about their rights yet as teachers we infringe those rights, and as learners there is very little that they can do about it. Being a teacher, I wrote, would give me a chance to understand the learners as total beings, like Madam V did for me.

I was most surprised when my teacher asked me to read out the essay in the assembly, given how critical I was about my own teachers. And I asked myself, *"Hlo, do you think that someone in this place has finally accepted me for who I truly am?"*

**Leaving Edendale, Leaving Marriannhill****Teaching, my lifeline**

Yes, I would often talk to God directly, I would tell God this is what I want to be. I want to succeed and I don't want my life just to end here in this small location in Edendale.

When I registered to train as a teacher in 1988 at the University of Zululand (Unizul), I really wanted to specialise in Speech and Drama, something I enjoyed watching on television. I also loved dancing and role-playing. But a friend of mine told me, "You know Hlo, as a African person there is no chance of you getting a job with Speech and Drama", and so I changed. I was as fond of Biology as I was about my tennis and athletics. I wanted to do something that was physical. And so I decided to major in Human Movement Studies. I realised that it was where I could be my best, although I didn't even know at that point it was going to be offered in schools. But the main thing is that I wanted something different. Pursuing a qualification in HMS meant I could open a gym in my area, something that I really felt I needed to do. Where I grew up, the people were very poor and they were always saying, *"Hey Hlo, we depend on you. You go out there and do your best."* So there was also this pressure of having to do things not just for me but also for the community because they had this trust in me. They saw me as somebody who had the potential to change their lives. I always feel that sense of connection with my community,



1991 FAREWELL FUNCTION AT UNIZULU,  
These people are still my friends - we come a  
long way - - -



you know. I just don't look at my family, but my family and the people that were so supportive. I have always wanted to change their lives too.

What I realised in the four years at university was that there wasn't a single African female pursuing HMS. I felt very strongly about this, and so that pressure of proving that I'm a female and that I can do anything. Human Movement Studies was exactly what I needed, I hate being an ordinary person. When I really think about it, I identified with HMS and being a teacher precisely because it was going to give me a chance to be with people and I could never see myself alone, sitting in an office.

I struggled. Imagine being expected to do gymnastics at 18 or 19 years. You don't just learn gymnastics at that age, it's a bit late. As much as I did my work and my grades were good, I demanded for more time to be given to us to prepare for our practical. I got into a lot trouble with the White lecturers because they could not identify with African females who were as direct and confident as I was. I mobilised the students and we approached the lecturer about the assessment and those aspects of the course content.

I think that was a good step for us to take and I feel proud to have been part of the committee who were instrumental in bringing about some change in the curriculum and assessment procedures. Although I struggled with Physiology, the relationship between the lecturer and myself, a White gentleman, was very "open" and he offered extra classes. I found it very interesting. I managed two distinctions in my first year at Unizul and I ended up being one of the top students in the Human Movement classes.

Being the "head" of the hostel gave me the opportunity to start a gym and aerobics class for my floor mates. The communication and closeness developed later into the Women's Interest Group where we discussed issues that were close to my heart, like politics and women's issues. I really grew from that. My experiences at home created that pressure in me to prove myself as a woman, and actually engaging in what we wanted and didn't want happening to us especially as African women. Friends that would always come to mind would be Zodwa Msimang, who is the Director of Oname Investments Group, a communications company in Westville. She was also very instrumental in making sure that we'd come together to find that common ground to work from. Hlengiwe is a teacher who kept me in touch with the outside world. Very often she would come to the prison to teach my classes and I would do the same for her.

#### **Working against the odds: "Bongudunga Secondary School"**

I went to this school particularly because it was poor, because it was a joke of a school. I had a choice of applying to the boarding school just down the road but with my personal experiences at boarding school I did not want anything to do with it. I opted to apply to this school, not far from where I spent many years of my childhood.

I knew the people from around, it was where I was born and the people know me. I knew that they were not interested in their children's education, but I could make home visits, interact with parents and encourage them to participate in school committees and meetings.

Many of the learners were squatters who ran away from home or surrounding areas because of the violence. Many of them stayed alone renting rooms in the area. Many of them were much older than me, some as old as twenty-seven.

### Teaching from the heart of hope

I wanted to teach in this school, God wanted me to be there at that time. There was such chaos. You can imagine a school with an enrolment of seven hundred pupils, with no running water and no toilets. The students had to go to the neighboring homes to make use of the toilet. People would come into the school and steal things and I was aware that it wasn't people from very far off, that these were people coming from around the school and perhaps students themselves. Coming from a similar background and from the same community I think I was better positioned to understand first of all why that was happening. People were stealing windows and doors to sell them or to build their own squatters, I understood the thinking behind this. But for me it was important that students understand that this is their school and no one owns this school except them, that the government is not interested if the school is there or not, the government does not have anything to lose even if the school is closed down.

The results of the learners were terrible. Although I would have loved to teach HMS at Bongudunga Secondary School, it was just out of the question. I knew how important it was to create an environment for teaching and learning to take place.

There was this song that I always listened to when I struggled with the crisis that I faced in this school. It is a gospel song that gave me the strength in moments of despair.

I will lift up my eyes to the hills  
From where cometh my help  
The Lord which made Heaven and Earth  
He said he would not suffer  
Thy foot, thy foot to be moved  
The Lord which keepeth thee  
He will not slumber or sleep  
Oh thy Lord is thy keeper  
The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand,  
Upon thy right hand  
Oh the sun shall not smite thee by day  
Nor the moon by night  
He shall pre-serve thy soul  
Even forever more  
My help, my help, my help,  
All of my help cometh from the Lord . . .

I could see that there was a need for change and I was the person for that change. I knew that when I got there I would be able to do things that I wouldn't be able to do elsewhere. I needed patience if I had to change anything in this school. I needed to be patient with the system, patient with the students and patient with myself.

And the help came . . .

Mr Myesa was the new male principal appointed to the school. He was someone who had been to the same university as me, and he really supported me in what I wanted to do. If he was not there at that time, I would never have been able to get through to the staff who were predominantly male and who really didn't understand who this Hlo was was. They commented that perhaps I wanted to be too big in a very small space. The female staff

were very old people and about to take packages and not interested in change at all. Mr Myesa was impressed with my hard work and he gave me that opportunity of being seen as the person that I am, a person who wanted to help, and make things work at this school. I learnt a lot from that man as well. There was always that constant pressure to develop and be the best I could. And it was through his recognition and my hard work that I became HOD in my second year of teaching.

Being in management, I was in a position to approach companies and negotiate with businessmen from around, something I enjoyed because I was familiar with the community. I managed through fundraising and sponsorships to have toilets and drinking taps installed in the school. I was able to create an environment that was conducive to learning, to teach the best way I knew, to make them interested in learning. I taught them to look at the bigger picture. One of my students is now an anthropologist.

### **The mentor**

I remember that day when I walked into school and realised that all the chairs had been stolen from the school, stolen by a guy who started a beer hall in the area. After requesting permission from the principal, all the male students and myself walked to the beer hall and returned with all the chairs. That day was an important day in my life as a teacher at Bongudunga Secondary School because I succeeded in developing in learners a sense of ownership, a skill for life.

Part of my whole mission was to inculcate in learners Ownership and Empowerment. I found playing sport with the learners developed closeness and a lot of easiness in the teaching and learning. Many of the learners were older so obviously they knew things that I did not know and I was comfortable admitting that, and nurturing that relationship, creating the space where we could engage with issues and learn from each other.

Very often I would narrate the story of my life to them. I would remind them that I also came from a home that had no electricity and no running water, just like them. I really feel that to succeed as a teacher you have to be willing to take the challenge of opening up to the learners, to understand that it takes more than the content that is offered to get them to look beyond. I needed to make them believe and accept the school as a tool that could empower them, because that was what I believed it to be.

### **A common shared vision**

Teaching is not just about books and I was brave enough to say that to my students. I started the SRC because the students had no voice. We also needed feedback from the students, to know what they think about the way we are teaching and about the school. Starting up the SRC, was something that was strange because it never existed way back then. But the main challenge was instilling in the teachers minds the fact that you just don't impose things on learners as we have been doing all along. I remember the school meetings where parents had to attend to discuss important school matters without the learners being present. I challenged that too. In spite of the confrontation I faced, I believed there should be a common shared vision involving all the stakeholders. Policy could not be implemented in a vacuum.

I wanted the teachers, management, parents and the learners to work together towards a common goal but the teachers took a lot of time to buy into it. Some people hated me for

that, while others liked me. I believed there needed to be constant negotiation among all the stakeholders so I just looked ahead.

And just like the gardener who cannot guarantee that all the seeds will thrive, as a teacher you see something in the learner that he or she does not see and does not believe in, and you ending up being an enemy in a way. Those that did like me were fascinated by my ideas. I also experienced problems with the students who never liked me at all and who could not stand me openly. Learners would say, "you think you can change everything, you think you are better" but I chose not to be affected by such people. It meant that I was doing things the right way. But with enough love, patience and passion of trying to come up with something I managed to improve the overall performance of the learners.

I had to believe I could get to where I have come now. At that stage I think I promised myself that I will grow up to be this person that I will love against the odds, and that goes far back to the time when I was still really struggling at home. I think I psyched myself to believe that one day I will be this role model to myself, it was not just being me, it's also about mentoring other people in terms of what I do. I'm not saying that I'm perfect but whatever I do I try to give it my best shot and I think that works all the time.

### **A teacher at heart**

When I think of what it means to be a teacher, I have the image of the sea, a lot of pleasure and never still. The waves are like a teacher's life, in constant motion, resulting from the change and resistance, being pushed and being pulled by the authorities, colleagues and learners. That passion that I feel is similar to the force that I see as the waves form and break unceasingly; it captures for me the energy that seemed to flow through me, the energy of being a new teacher with new ideas and new teaching methods. But over and above the methods, I'm a teacher in whatever I do and that's what I believe. I loved teaching at Bongudunga Secondary School, I love teaching and I love the person I have become.

(Hlo was awarded the "Best Teacher in the circuit" Award in 1995 for her effort as a young and novice teacher at Bongudunga Secondary School.)

At the end of 1995, after three years of teaching at Bongudunga Secondary, I applied for another teaching post as a teacher at the Westville Prison Youth Centre.

### **Westville Prison School**

#### **Teaching behind closed gates**

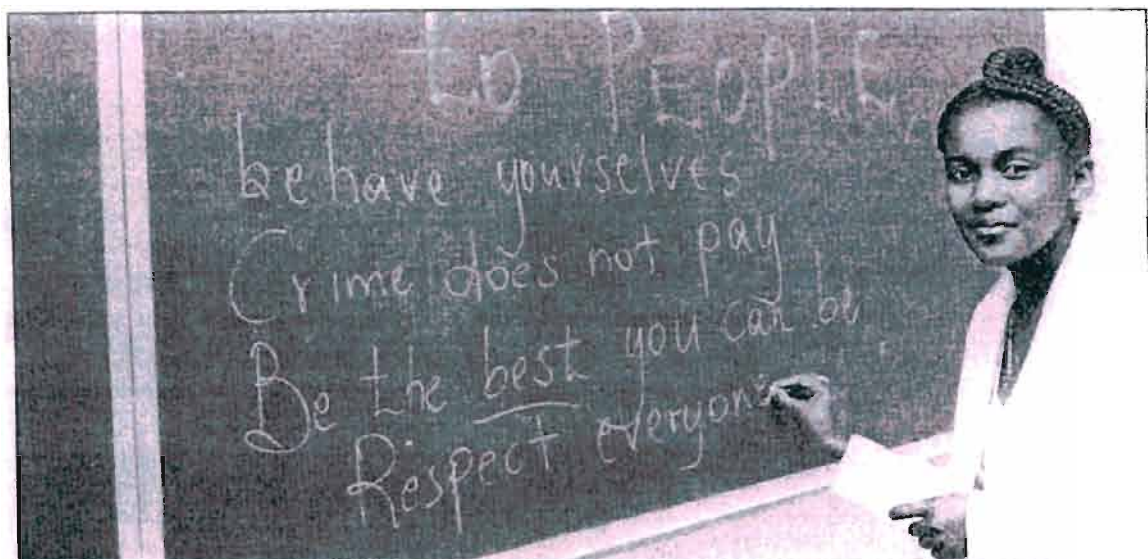
##### **It was not easy**

I have come this far through faith,  
No matter, I did not have the best family background.

I have come this far!

No matter, the emotional abuse, the challenges,  
But by faith I have become the teacher,  
Friend, teacher and a role model I always wanted to be!

(Hlo Kunene 2001)



**LESSONS OF LIFE:** Hlo Gabela teaches those youngsters in prison who want to learn.

DAILY NEWS, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, (1997)



The advert read that they were starting a school in prison and immediately I knew I wanted to be there. Coming to work here in the prison was a calculated move. I've been in situations where I have been challenged and I know how difficult it is to believe in yourself and to have no one believe in you. When prisoners go out of prison, facing their community is one of the greatest challenges for them. How do they portray this image of, *"Look, I have undergone rehabilitation and this is who I am now"*? I think that is the one quality that I have to offer these "boys", the whole possibility of change and belief in that change. I felt that I was the right person to help them make that change, and I saw the potential of being myself; in fact, that is what attracted me to this place.

In the beginning this school was just some place where you taught young criminals. There was no timetable, no preps, no files, no planning. Although we realised the need to offer a curriculum that would be most relevant to the boys, this was not possible because we did not have teachers with the appropriate expertise. The "boys" (prisoners) often had to work on their own because we did not have teachers in subjects like Maths, Afrikaans, Accounting and Business Economics to help. We ended up with a very "dis-organised curriculum". Everything seemed to be in a mess.

#### **Mr Singh from Medium "B"**

Mr Singh, an ex-principal, had been sentenced for the past 15 years and he did not want to remain in Medium "B", so when we approached him as part of the management team to offer his services as a teacher, he readily volunteered in return for alternate living quarters. Mr Singh really helped us build the school and he is also one of our best Business Economics teachers. Since then, we have engaged two other prisoners in the prison school. Together with Dominique, my friend and fellow colleague and the principal, I managed to set up the necessary structures to get the school working the way it should. I am happy now that we have two curriculum strands to offer the boys.

The most common feature in all the students here is that they have done crime, and they have succeeded. I am faced with the challenge of changing these individuals. And the most crucial aspect to this challenge is to understand them, not to just teach them to learn, but for me to learn how to teach the person behind that face. To teach a murderer is not easy, to look for change is difficult, you have to keep focused. Together with love, patience and understanding, I have got to extend myself to be a teacher, social worker, a mother, a sister, and a friend. I loved being all of that. And then you realise that being a teacher is not about strategies or methods, it is who I really am that really counts.

#### **It is not about methods**

It was Friday afternoon. Michael was in his late teens and convicted twice for armed robbery and murder. He came into my office just to talk. He spoke and I listened:

I think about my mother so much now that I miss her. She hasn't been to prison for a month now, and I'm wondering why. She normally visits me at least once a month and even though I am writing letters home no one is responding. I'm wondering what's happening. My grades are going to drop because I'm not concentrating. I am not in the right frame of mind.

# Aids message taken to prison

By PHUMLA SEKELENI

FOR a few hours yesterday prisoners became actors and dancers as they conveyed their message about HIV/Aids to fellow inmates at an Aids Awareness Day at Westville Prison.

The purpose of the awareness day was to inform prisoners – especially males, among whom homosexuality is rife – that they can make a difference in curbing the killer disease.

Addressing prisoners and Correctional Services staff, provincial Health Minister Zweli Mkhize, said: "It is common knowledge that men in prison have sex with other men. But whatever form of sexual practice is taking place here, condoms must be used."

The minister also said Aids was no longer a health issue but a human rights one, and

that men had to respect their partners' rights to safe sex.

In his speech Durban Mayor Obed Mlaba said the country needed to pull together its resources to fight the disease.

Mr Sifiso Hlongwa, a prisoner who was Master of Ceremonies at the event, said being taught about Aids should "be part of our customs".

"It is my wish to continue my good behaviour so that when I get out of prison I will be of help to the community," he said.

Mr Siyanda Myusi, chairman of the South African Prisoners Organisation for Human Rights in KwaZulu-Natal, said: "Events like this help but we want them to also occur in other prisons.

"When these prisoners are integrated back into the community we want them to be armed with useful knowledge about HIV/Aids," he said.



PICTURE: THEMBA MINGOMEZ

PRISONERS showcase their talents in *isicathamiya* dance at an Aids Awareness Day for correctional service staff and inmates yesterday at Westville Prison



He was a hard working boy. I knew then I had to do something, he was just an ordinary child crying out, like I did so many times before. I could not turn him away, and what I did to help the student was against the rules of prison school but when I think about it now, I am really glad I did what I did, it really helped change the boy's life.

It was Friday afternoon, lock-up time . . .

I pleaded with the social worker to phone Michael's home, to find out about his mother and the reason for not visiting him. Unknowingly he started to cry. We were told that his mother had just passed away a few minutes ago. He could not attend his mother's funeral. He was a criminal. We all prayed for her soul to rest in peace. I prayed for Michael.

We are very close now because of that incident and I had to speak to him on a daily basis. He is doing very well now. He is studying very hard and he is very motivated. He always remembers his mother's wish and I always remember him in my prayers.

### **Tuning in**

Teaching on Mondays and Thursdays are very challenging days to teach. On weekends and on Wednesdays the "boys" make contact with the outside world and they hear a lot of stories from home, about home and many are emotionally unable to cope with the schoolwork. I found focusing on literature lessons as the main content for my Zulu lessons most fulfilling for the learners on these days. It becomes very interesting for me to understand their feelings, by the way they relate to the story and its characters. The learners engage in role-play and dramatisation in these lessons and I find this helps a lot. I focus very much on the relationship, our experiences and a sense of "who" we are when planning my teaching experiences with the learners. There are things that I do intentionally because I try to understand the kind of environment I teach in.

A topic taken from Yizo Yizo was something I chose for the boys because it depicted prison life. I think we spent an hour on some of the issues and it was a real eye opener for me, because I got to hear things that I have never heard of before. I have actually come to understand the issue of gangsterism quite differently now.

I also relied on "baba", a warden who has been working with us in prison for over 30 years now. I often call on him to assist with those aspects of Zulu traditional beliefs and practices that I know little about. Even aspects of Zulu history, King Shaka, Dingaan and the Boer war are things that we should be passionate about and for me the textbook does not do that. The textbook is very brief and captures one perspective only. I think that the willingness to learn from others and the willingness to change and adapt will make life as a teacher less complex.

### **We have writers and directors**

Most of the "boys" are in prison for crime because they are poor. They have spent a major part of their lives in the streets, alone. And the chances of them going back to school or to a tertiary institution are very slim, even if they are bright. I am always aware of that and I am constantly in search of ideas and change to tap into the creative talents of the boys, talents that can give them exposure to the outside world so that they can make something of themselves one day. Dominique and I have become involved in numerous



initiatives and projects at the prison to enable the students to participate in various activities like sport, dance and music. I even went to the extent of inviting a soccer player who lives in KwaMashu to tell them his story and how he got to where he is. I set up a timetable so that they will have allocated times for their varied interests, such as sport, dance and music. But the boys need to be supervised, they love having the teachers there to guide them, and even though I have tried to involve the other staff members in these activities, not many are keen to assist.

Dominique and I have tried to set up links with the Natal Playhouse Company and we have started a project with the University of Natal where the students from the drama department come to the prison and train the boys. We now have boys who are writers and directors of plays. They write their own plays for Christmas or Human Rights Day and they even act it out. It is all about self-worth when they discover something new about themselves. There is so much talent in prison.

I realised that being a teacher is not a "way to get rich" scheme, but it was about having a passion for what you do. At the end of the day whatever interaction you have with the children will determine what will come out of this relationship. It is like a seed and the gardener, two very separate entities, but for the seed to turn into a plant and then into a flower, there must be a relationship that the farmer has to share with the seed. And in this whole process both change: the farmer and the seed.

#### **I was really messed up**

Everyday is a new day, learning about yourself and the kind of person you are in dealing with the learners, the subject and the colleagues you work with. That particular morning, I was in the midst of the morning assembly, conducting our daily prayer . . . but he persisted with his screaming for me to unlock the gates so that he could come in. He always came to work late. And in the presence of the learners that morning, he screamed at me . . . He never really got on with me since I was promoted to a higher management position than he was in. There were other incidents as well. I often question why all the students need to specialise in Zulu, especially if they wanted to become engineers, I believed that they could spend the time improving their Maths and science results. What about learners who were wanting to pursue seven subjects? Why do we have to treat the boys at prison differently? I was called up to the office . . . to be reminded that I was not the principal of the school.

There is no open platform where you can really share what you feel, your vision, and your ideas. That flexibility of trying out new ideas and knowing what works has stopped. I find the atmosphere among the staff, especially the male staff who worked at the prison school for a longer period than I did but who have never been promoted, hostile. The principal is not giving me the space to do what I want to anymore . . . suddenly everything I do is questioned and looked at with suspicion . . . I do not feel appreciated as a valuable member of the team . . . often the feedback that I have been getting is that I am too ambitious . . . that I think I am too clever. That has just killed that spirit of working as a team. That is really killing me . . .

I felt like the turbulent waves crushing against the sphinx-shaped rocks, monstrous and timeless.



Dominic, my colleague, mentor, friend and  
a brother I never had...



I really felt "messed up". I really wanted to pack up and leave because there wasn't much I could contribute to in such "an unhealthy environment". But soon the strong winds inside of me subsided as I strained to listen to my favourite gospel music.

Life can be so rough; there is so much hate and confusion  
 But there is one thing that keeps my spirit high  
 The knowledge of his unfailing love  
 The knowledge of him who never sleeps and watches over me . . .  
 Cause you are my deliverer  
 And you are my protection  
 And you are my comforter  
 When my life is in pain  
 And when I am weak  
 And you say I am strong  
 And you are my source of strength  
 And say you'll pick me up when I am down  
 And you pick me up  
 And you are my Lord and King  
 When the enemy comes  
 Like a fly God let the sun burn against him  
 And even when fear tries to creep in my life and  
 Suddenly I'm surrounded with the joy and my lips  
 Begin to shout Hallelujah it's good to know you are  
 By my side . . .  
 I thank God for salvation and his Son - oh yeah . . .  
 He gave me new life, my soul is singing  
 And that is why I sing . . .

I realised then that God destines everything and has got this master plan and, He helps us fulfil whatever plan. He has in our lives. I realised that my being in prison was never a mistake. I really think that God wanted me to be there and achieve the things I did and that I still hope to achieve.

And then everything begins not ends.  
 And it energises me to work, but differently, to feel "whole" again.

### **Restoring the culture of studying**

I had to do something. I spoke to Dominique about studying . . . I spoke to the new teachers, many of whom were complaining that very often they sat around not knowing what to do. While Dominique and I decided that we would register for our Masters degree, the others engaged in doing their degrees in varying specialisations (ABET, BA). We have managed to restore the culture of studying once again. I feel alive once again. Registering for a degree in Social Justice and Peace Education is just what I needed. For the first time this year I felt I reached out to most of the female teachers on the staff.

### **There is hope . . . I believe in myself**

The good thing about teaching is that once you know the kind of teacher you want to be it becomes very easy to manage your role, because you take yourself away from the politics that goes on in the staff room, it doesn't bother you. I sometimes ask myself, "What is the problem with the staff? Why don't they like me?" At the same time I do remind

myself that I am not prepared to change what I believe in, who I am and what I want to be. I will love against the odds . . .

Since I have been here there has been only one of my "students" that has come back to prison.

I believed in God and  
I believed that I was meant to be that somebody.  
I believed that I wanted to be that person  
Against all odds and  
I think that helped.  
There were times when we had no food to eat, and  
I would look beyond and that helped  
There were times I could have dropped out of school and ended up nowhere  
Like so many of the people I knew did,  
But I did not.  
Because I did not want it to end there.  
There are times I could have packed my bags and left  
But something drew me back  
There is a plan . . .  
And I am part of it  
Against all odds

(Hlo Kunene 2001)

## TEXT TWO

## The dandelion sower

🚗 Ursula Collings 🚗



There is always so much to be fitted in. People to be seen — work to be done, family obligations to fulfil. At times it is so difficult to distinguish between the urgent and the important. And often what is urgent elbows its way to the forefront of my day and the important gets trampled on in the rush.

It is for finding a balance in my life that I often create islands of stillness, in which to have time for myself, time to be rather than to do time to think, to talk to God and most of all to be silent in His presence while He talks to me



As the youngest child in a family of six children, life was not always easy growing up, I had to ~~often~~ fight for my things, my place, my toys... My brothers bullied me a great deal and they taught me how to fight for my rights. I was "gran's pet" and the enemy of my older sisters. I had to grow up to prove that I can make a difference.

Ursula Collings tells this story. She is a Coloured woman, a mother of three children teaching Biology in Bechet High, an institution that was once a Teacher Trainee College for Coloured teachers. This school is an ex-House of Representative school, which was historically created to serve the needs of the Coloured learners who resided in Sydenham. Ursula has been teaching in this school since her career began 11 years ago. The teachers in this school are predominantly Coloured. The principal is male and Indian. Ursula's classroom once served as a dormitory for the Coloured teacher trainees who attended this college. It is a rather large classroom with one side walled half way up. Her classroom is separated from the rest of the school buildings. The building is very old, the furniture grey. She has painted the walls, and adorned them with pictures and works belonging to the learners. At the back of the classroom is a little tiered rotating rack with books and a table displaying projects completed by the learners.

---

### **Growing up Coloured**

My dad died when I was about 12 years old, while repairing the roof to his workshop. He was a victim of apartheid. Death put an end to a very outgoing, friendly and zestful man who was appropriately called "Jollyboy" by his family and friends.

I remember our family life being one of struggle, but we also had some good times. We were a close-knit family and we spent many happy weekends and holidays in Swaziland, where mum grew up as a young girl. On the farm in Swaziland is where I felt at home, where I experienced that spirit of freedom, the great outdoors and adventure. My cousins and I would race across to the kraals, where we could watch the slaughtering of the cows, sheep and pigs. The smell of the farm and the freshly slaughtered cattle always reminds me of my young days. Living on the farm gave me the opportunity to see the dissection of the cattle in a biological way. I watched the farm boys pull the cow strap and skin the hide. The smell of animals and the bush is something I grew up with.

I enjoyed myself. Being on the farm gave me that sense of, "To heck with everybody else, I am enjoying myself".

But back home the reality of being Coloured turned our happy memories into one of struggle and pain. Dad, early in his chosen career set up his business as a spray painter and panel beater and he worked very hard at it. We never went to bed without a meal. He loved treating us with an outing whenever he could. I recall being in grade seven when he took us to a restaurant for supper, but we were thrown out because we were Black. Dad rarely became angry but this really upset him.

Dad wanted to set up his business in the city centre but he was not allowed to, so he was forced to set up his workshop at home in Sydenham, a Coloured township. But the health inspectors would often come and topple things over. "Looking for rats," they said. This really impacted on the business.

One day, while repairing the roof of the workshop, he stepped on a beam, which broke and dad fell to the ground breaking his neck. I am very bitter about what happened to him ... I really hate what happened to him ...





"Gogo and I"

When dad died my mother became a stronger person. She could not linger in dad's shadow any more. There were still the three of us at school and suddenly she had to be the one to make decisions about her life and family. "You have to educate yourself, you have to have a profession. You cannot rely on your husband because the day he dies you have to stand on your own two feet", she often said. She always encouraged me to go on. Dad's death was a "wake up" call that we all needed.

#### **Gogo made me feel proud about being Coloured**

When my dad died my granny - "Gogo" was what I affectionately called her - was the one who helped my mother through this tragedy. I was spoilt rotten by Gogo, my paternal grandmother. My gran was Coloured, born in Matatiel in the Transkei. Her mother was Black, and her father was German. I got a lot of guidance and counselling from her. She made me feel proud about being Coloured.

On a number of occasions I accompanied Gogo to town to collect her pension and I remember not being allowed to use the toilets and entrances to many of the buildings. I also recall the day when Gogo felt tired and we walked towards the benches in front of the city hall only to realise that the benches were reserved: "Whites only". We ended up sitting on the floor. Gogo was my strength, my inspiration and soul mate and she always reminded me, "Never give up, there is always hope."

#### **Turn to nature**

We were not rich and Gogo was the one who taught us to appreciate and to enjoy what little we had. She taught me a lot about the "environment". As a child, around six or seven years of age, I used to collect rocks of different sizes and colours and other little things in nature. I would collect flowers and leaves, pull them apart and press them into books. Nature fascinated me. Gogo developed in me this fascination for what plants can do for you. "Always turn to nature when in need," she told me. How true this proved to be.

I was in standard one, and I developed serious eczema, and because we had no medical aid, mum took me to the state hospital, but the doctors failed to help me. The fungus, which started in my hands, spread to both my feet. I was in great pain and the greater embarrassment was going to school for months on end without shoes. One weekend on the farm in Swaziland, Gogo went out into the fields and returned with what she described as "wild tomato", which she sliced and packed onto my feet. After three years of pain and embarrassment, I was cured forever.

Gogo died ten years ago and it is actually very painful to talk about her because I miss her so much. At the age of 105 she was still able to fill in crossword puzzles and consult the dictionary. I have the bag that she crocheted for me as a wedding gift, made out of different Coloured plastic bags. Gogo also taught me about "recycling".

After Gogo died, mother became an important person in my life. She has become my best friend. I always say to her, "Thank the Lord for mothers."



My childhood and early teens in Moorhoek  
 a remote rural area in Swaziland... the  
 farm... with open mielie fields, dirt roads and  
 wooded gum trees; fruit trees, wild flowers...  
 The smell of fresh cow dung, the endless days  
 filled with laughter, the walks through the country side  
 swim naked in the river and bask in the Swazi  
 sun while we make our clay ornaments.  
 It was there that I felt closest to my Creator  
 and I became inquisitely addicted to Gods  
 natural green gardens. All my childhood I grew  
 up amongst diverse cultural groups Swazi, Muslims,  
 White Afrikaner lady we all grew up together as  
 children and enjoyed each other seeing no difference.

**A lot of work, a little understanding**

I never liked pre-primary school. I often ran away to be home with my Gogo. I would cross the busy street in Sparks Road only to be "whacked" by mum all the way back to preschool. She was the driving force behind getting all of us through school.

St Augustines was a Catholic school, where I spent my early years of schooling. Miss Levine was a very firm teacher, but at the same time I admired her strength. My voice actually sounds like hers. There was a lot of rote learning and a lot of hiding. Maths was my weakest subject. Mr Tiflyn our Maths teacher would hit us on the back of our heads in such ways that we would African out for a couple of seconds, or he would pick up our skirts and hit us with a ruler on our legs. I think that is when I really began to hate maths and anyone who hit me on my head. Schooling was very traditional. Everything was done more out of fear of not succeeding.

In Bechet High school I had an excellent Biology teacher, Mrs Marianna Schreuder. I enjoyed it even more because I loved the subject. Jacky Steinbank and Mr Curtis were my favourite history teachers. Jacky was a "fighter" in the apartheid era. She fought for the freedom of African people and she brought that stance into the classroom and that strengthened my attitude towards life. I think in a way she was my mentor. Mr Curtis would run around the entire classroom. He would never teach from a textbook. He showed me that you don't have to act as a teacher and be this disciplinarian, and have this firm so-called "a teacher should be" attitude. He taught me to "let my guard down, enjoy the children, enjoy the day, enjoy teaching".

But the teacher who was a cut above the rest was my sister Angela. She taught me Biology in standard seven and eight and what I learned from her was to "go the extra mile". Having her at school kept me on track. It made me determined to do better all the time, knowing that there was always someone watching over me. I wanted to improve, to prove that I could achieve and do better. I had to prove that I was good.

Generally schooling was very traditional right through to standard ten. It was like a volume of work with very little understanding of anything.

**Becoming a teacher was not my first choice**

I wanted to do radiology, but there were a limited number of Blacks being accepted into the department. I wanted to do law but money was an issue, so I just didn't follow it up. My last option was to apply to become a teacher. I phoned Mr Jacobs, the rector at Bechet College of Education, and he agreed to accept me although I was a month behind the other students. Looking back I don't think I was ever destined to become a radiologist or a lawyer.

I spent four years at college registered for a Teachers Higher Diploma in Education majoring in Biology and History and I enjoyed every moment of it. Although the lectures did very little for me, I enjoyed having to go out to teach and speak about Biology and the sciences. Biology is real, I loved it. I have always had a fascination for Biology. Teaching Biology and the sciences is what brings out the best in me.



**Back to Bechet Secondary**

Bechet Secondary invites learners from very different backgrounds and experiences. It was originally a school for Coloureds but now we have learners from the various racial groupings. We have learners who came from wealthy backgrounds as well as those children who don't know where the next meal is going to come from. I found that separating myself from the context left me feeling very empty.

I shared with the learners the personal experiences that I had with my grandmother and my family. It is important for a child to see me and not just a "teacher"; they need to see me as a human being. They need to know what motivates me, so I tell them a lot about my past, as a child and as a young girl growing up on the farm, and about my own children.

**I have always wanted to be an actor**

I've always enjoyed and wanted to be on stage as an actor. And now I have my class as my stage and the children actually comment, *"Miss, you belong on the stage"*. I enjoy the freedom of being able to act out or role-play aspects of my teaching. My learners will always remember the looping movement of the hydra and predation and camouflage. I enjoy it. The children initially find this type of teaching really strange, but at the end of the day we have had a good laugh and they remember it. I must do my work and I must also feel good about what I am doing.

I have always done a sort of OBE, not necessarily group work, but I have always done things differently. I found the flexibility that it allowed me as a teacher important. I always felt teaching is not only about talk and chalk. Quite frankly education is a bore when it comes to just learning from a textbook. Engaging learners in activities makes education a lived experience. I love teaching and discussing issues on the school grounds sometimes, but many of the teachers look at me strangely as if to say, *"you are not really teaching the child"*. But I have seen my children having learnt to respect each other, learning to speak freely. They have grown.

But I am really finding it difficult coping with fifty learners in the classroom and only forty minutes to teach. I don't mind the preparation for my teaching but I hate the amount of paperwork that I am expected to do. The volume of recording is unreal. The more I try to put my finger on the pulse, there is something else coming from the office. I really don't like to be delayed. I don't like the cliques among the staff. I hate it. I'm me, accept me for who I am. I'm friend to everyone, it's less complicated and it prevents you from walking away from school being upset.

*"I decided long ago never to walk in anyone's shadow, If I fail, if I succeed, at least I'll live as I believe..."*

**My cup of tea**

Teaching Biology is my cup of tea. It is a medium through which the learners and I discover ourselves. We understand our life and who we are through Biology. We discover the world through Biology. Understanding the child's background and emotions is all biological. We are Biology and we experience it in our entire daily life. It is real and relevant. We live it.



When we go out on a field study, I find it easier to get to grips with the real thing than grapple in an artificial environment like the classroom. Having fifty learners in a class and the amount of paperwork does not allow me to get to know my learners as well as I would like to. I teach them how to grow vegetables, landscaping and design, an interest I picked up from reading. We engage in recycling projects and spend many weekends out in the nature reserve developing leadership skills.

Although we all go back to our homes and to the harsh reality of poverty and abuse, I am trying to continuously encourage the child, *"in your home you can make a difference"*. I know it is difficult but I say to the children, *"your dream and vision will bring you hope, you need to have that hope, so that you can come out of your present situation"*.

### **I want to challenge them**

I want to tap the potential of every one of my learners, so I won't accept the child who does not want to give me an answer. If I do, it means that I have accepted that they don't want to be challenged to think:

#### **"Why miss?"**

Tandeka: "Why is it that you always say I must think about it, Miss?"

Miss, because you know everything, you the teacher.

Ursula: If I had to tell you everything, you would remember it for a very short period of time and then you will forget.

(Tandeka remained silent for a few seconds ... and she asked again)

Tandeka: Why do you not give us notes after I do this, Miss,?

You give us that picture and you ask us to make something of it . . . to make sense of it. Why Miss?

Ursula remarked during the interview with me: Tandeka was questioning the whole approach that I initiated against what she had been accustomed to having. She wanted me to be her book of knowledge.

Ursula: Tandeka why must I tell you? Well, my baby, you are also my teacher.

I give the learners the space to interact with the work, allow them to get their understanding but to guide them at some point according to their understanding.

Allowing learners the opportunity to interact with the work also helps me in understanding the diversity of experiences that the learners bring with them into the classroom. I have Coloured learners in my classes who don't believe that they have a culture of their own and the Americanised culture is what they really appreciate.

I enjoy taking my learners out on excursions. Although the other teachers find it time-consuming and the large classes are difficult to cope with, I find this a very enjoyable way of teaching. It provides learners with the opportunity to research, reflect on their learning, through presentations that take a variety of forms. The whole class assesses the models and posters that are displayed in the classrooms.

### **Robben Island**

I try not to shout and scream at my children. Instead I send them off to Robben Island, an area at the back of my classroom. The learners know that it's a time and a place for

them to sort out and reflect seriously on their work and what's happening within the classroom. When they feel ready to show themselves then they join the classroom community.

Sometimes these activities don't work as well as you want them to, and you have to understand that each class and each child is different. Then I meet with them during the breaks and after school and we have a one-on-one interaction. I find that when you have a one-on-one relationship with the child, I begin to understand what the problems are and how to resolve them. Suddenly the child realises, "Hey, someone does care, someone is interested in me". At times I really feel we need a system of bridging, especially for the second language speakers.

*"Teach them well and show them all the beauty they possess inside, give them a sense of pride..."*

#### **Armstrong: "My mentor, my hero"**

Armstrong left school to become a petrol attendant at the Shell Garage in Sherwood. He returned to our school three years later to continue with his Grade Ten (standard eight). He claimed that he could not speak a word of English. I met Armstrong for the first time when he was in standard eight and he was the joke of the class because of his inability to speak and write English. I saw his potential and his desire. For the next two years we had extra lessons after school and at the end of Grade eleven, he achieved an A pass in Science. He ended up writing Biology on the higher grade in his matriculation examinations and he achieved an A pass again. Armstrong was determined to succeed and he showed me that through determination you could achieve anything. I always tell the children, "dare to dream, dare to have a vision because with vision there is hope".

Armstrong's dream was to be involved in landscaping and I motivated him to pursue that dream. I met him about four weeks ago, now the owner of his own little landscaping business called Armstrong Landscapers. I feel proud that I had a child who had so little and was able to do so much. Even if it is one child that I have touched, then I have touched the world. I call it "*Armstrong's Story*" and I share this with the other learners like Armstrong in my class with the hope of encouraging them too. Armstrong is my mentor, my hero. We learnt from each other.

*"Everybody is searching for a hero, people need someone to look up to, I never found anyone to fulfil my needs... a lonely place to be and so I learned to depend on me..."*

#### **A little grain of sugar to sweeten the cup**

Sally was untidy, from her dressing to her files. She was in a terrible state, a child who failed in every standard. Everyday I would inspire her in a small way about her appearance. Sometimes I would comment on her hair and I didn't expect a drastic change. I wanted her to realise that the little things in life mattered: "*a little grain of sugar to sweeten the cup*" granny reminded me. Eventually it got to the point when she was underlining her headings, putting little frames around the page and gradually she had a very neat book. Before she came into my class for Biology she'd make sure that her shirt was in and she was looking neat. Then her whole approach changed. She saw herself differently and we all saw her differently. She was important and her shoddiness shed away completely to reflect a beautiful child. Even the way she spoke was beautiful. Sally not only changed

physically, I also saw a spiritual change in her. I saw a softer, gentler child, and even her smile is different now.

*"I found the greatest love of all inside of me . . . the greatest love of all . . . is easy to achieve."*

I really believe that as teachers we can teach our children to appreciate themselves, to develop self-esteem and to find the strength within themselves, no matter what the circumstances. Only they can change their lives. I often ask my learners to look into the mirror, stare and say to yourself, *"I love you"*. One child said to me, *"No, Miss. It is scary"*. I agreed. No matter what anybody might say, you need to be strong enough to know who you are, to know your strengths and your limits and to be able to carry on. So it is a matter of learning to appreciate yourself first before trying to appreciate others, because if you are not at home with yourself you are not going to be at home with anybody.

*" . . . learning to love yourself . . . It is the greatest love of all . . . "*

#### **The letter box**

I have had my letterbox now for about three or four years. It occupies a little space in the corner of my classroom, and it allows me the opportunity of really getting to know my learners. I find that it allows for a space which classrooms sometimes don't allow. It allows the learners to ask questions which they don't usually want to talk about in a classroom situation. Letters in my letterbox tell me stories of rape, abuse, pain and suffering.

Through the letterbox, I have managed to get my children into counselling for rape, suicide and abuse and other forms of emotional counselling.

Lucille wrote about her life and her letter spoke about the sexual abuse that she suffered in the hands of her uncle after her granny had died. Lucille does not want to go back home, but she also does not have any other place to live. She doesn't have family to tell so she took it upon herself to go to the district surgeon, and to report the matter. She is a young child but she has to act in an adult manner. She had to go to court today and nobody knows about that.

#### **When the child is shattered inside . . .**

It really gets frustrating at times when I see the pain and there are not enough hours in the day to do what I want to do. There is no support system in place for the child, no social support, no school psychologist or counselling to help children like Lucille.

When the child is shattered inside there, all the teaching and teaching material we provide is meaningless. I cannot just teach and walk away anymore, and if I do, I feel emptiness in my life.

I would very often accompany the learners after school or during breaks or between periods to counselling sessions. I've gained the respect of the principal. He understands that I wouldn't do things that are out of the norm. I have a lot of respect for him.

**The good and the bad**

I have those bursting moments when children are very rude. But I would not say there are many of those moments. I just want the children to find the best they possibly can find in themselves. "*Work to your very best*", is what I tell them all the time. The motto of the school is "*Success through Hard Work*", which doesn't just mean books, it means work on yourself.

**Don't make it end here**

I had a child leaving school whom I taught in Grade 11 and he was going into Grade 12. He left, and that was a very sad time for me. I cried, he didn't. He was not interested. This child had come so far, but he was hooked onto drugs. Maybe it was for myself that I just wanted him to sit for his exams. I've seen him since riding around with his businessman dad and it does make his life easy, but these are low moments for me.

Then I found an article in the newspaper that read, "*there are choices you have to make, whatever you do, be happy with yourself*".

**Who does she think she is**

Sometimes I feel like I'm pushing away or pulling a wagon of stones. I feel that I need to be continuously motivated because people who are not very motivated for change surround me. It is a matter of, "*Oh! What are you doing this for?*" I like change and people don't appreciate me for that. They expect me to be a "clique person" to belong to a group, but I would like to be friends with everyone. So I would say to them, "*Do not try and mould me into your kind of thinking*" and *people don't like me voicing myself. "I don't voice myself* often but when I do you had better listen because at the end of the day it is me and what is best for me and my learners", is what I would reply to the teachers.

Then there is a sadness when children are being raped by uncles and their cousins, it feels like a time bomb waiting to explode. Their lives are continuously hounded by "separated bewilderment"; about 60 to 65 percent of our learners are from divorced families. Some of the children cope. As one child said to me, "Miss, I would rather my parents just leave each other". But other children end up taking to drinking and/or seek a poisoned fix to life: a firm way to numb that separation between the parents.

**Taxi drivers and condies**

I found that our Coloured boys were attracted to being "condies" (taxi conductors) and the girls were going through this phase of going out with taxi drivers and they did not see anything beyond this. That really angered me because this is where they wanted their lives to stop. They had no vision and they were totally bored. As teacher can we separate ourselves from this whole reality? How do we deal with the pain behind that beautiful face, so that learning can become a pleasurable experience?

One morning during assembly, I played a song, "A Hero Lies In You". I had been talking to another colleague and we both realised that this whole school was just in another mood, and one that did not feel comfortable. We announced to the learners that we had a visitor at school and someone who was going to be singing for the morning assembly. The noise quietened down and we played the song,

### A Hero Lies In You

There's a hero if you look inside your heart  
 And you don't have to be afraid of what you are . . .  
 There's an answer if you reach within your soul . . .  
 And the sorrow that you know will melt away . . .  
 And then a hero comes along with the strength to carry on  
 And you cast your fears aside  
 And you know you can survive  
 So when you feel like hope is gone look inside you  
 And be strong and you finally see the truth that a hero lies in you . . .  
 It's a long road when you face the world alone  
 No one reaches out a hand for you to hold,  
 You can find love if you search within yourself  
 And that emptiness you feel will disappear . . .  
 And a hero comes along with the strength to carry on  
 so when you feel like hope is gone  
 look inside you and be strong  
 and you finally see the truth that a hero lies in you . . .  
 the lord knows dreams are hard to follow but don't let anyone take them away  
 Just hold on . . .  
 And there will be tomorrow and in time you will find the way  
 (Mariah Carey)

They listened and I don't know how many of them were touched by the song but they certainly did listen. It is important that in some way the children need to see beyond what is already there, they need to visualise themselves to be whatever they would eventually like to achieve no matter what the stumbling blocks are. It is a matter of just getting your strength within yourself and finding what's out there.

### Zanele's dream

Zanele was an A student, and her dream was to be a medical doctor. But she came from a home where there was no way of ever getting to that point. There were days when Zanele would go without food for days and she would collapse at school. She would put on this facade that everything was fine, but I knew that something was amiss. I started taking her lunch and we talked. "Zanele, what is your dream?" I asked her one lunchbreak. "I want to be a doctor," she replied. "I know your potential and you know your potential. Just believe in yourself because I believe in you." Zanele stayed in my home for almost a year during her final year at school. We wrote letters, applied for bursaries and student loans and Zanele is presently studying for a B.Sc degree.

*"And a hero comes along with the strength to carry on and you cast your fears aside and you know you can survive . . ."*

I realise that she is not doing what she dreamt of, but she can get there. I know that eventually this child is going to be a doctor. The important thing is to be happy no matter what the profession . . . "the hero is not me, it is not education system, it is you", I tell them that.

Whenever I approach management with ideas, I am rarely given the support to carry it through. Ultimately the other teachers look at me and say, *"who does she think she is"*, so I take it upon myself to pursue these ideas with my own classes where I am my own manager, my own boss.



## Past, Present and Future



My gogo/gran will always have a very special place in my heart and home. She was funny and told many dirty jokes. She guided me and taught me how to pray. She was my councillor and she loved and respected my husband, Keith (K.C). She prayed deeply for us throughout our courtship and died six months after we were married. Keith is my sail mate and he is my pillar of strength, ready to share my joys, problems, pleasures and pains.

*"No matter what they take from me they can't take away my dignity because the greatest love of all is happening to me . . .  
I found the greatest love of all inside of me . . ."*

### **My soulmate, my inspiration**

Keith, my husband, is my strength. He is my inspiration for a lot of what I am doing now, in the way that I might approach things, or teach things. I often go to him for advice. He is my soul mate, he is my support system in all aspects of my life. Taking the Enviro-group on an excursion, or going on a hiking trip has become a family thing. We don't separate our family life from my school life. He has always been there to say, "Stop crying about it, deal with the problem and get on with it".

*"And if I chance that special place, that you been dreaming of . . . leads you to a lonely place find your strength in love . . ."*

### **Mind, body and spirit**

I believe that I have not reached the pinnacle of my life and I am definitely a very important part of the future and whoever I come in contact with.

I don't think children know that the destiny they have is shaped by you and your God' because our God knows exactly where you should be, your body is just a matter of flesh but it needs the spirit to continue. To dream is what keeps the spirit burning in you. As teachers we must keep that spark, that flame going, no matter how difficult it is at times, you need to encourage the child to think, to be positive.

Learning to love yourself is also a spiritual journey. There is a need to have a higher power to motivate you to dream, to visualise. I firmly believe that prayer is a powerful way of venting your innermost feelings. I feel there is a need to pray or sing especially during examinations when learners are filled with tension. It actually creates a very calm atmosphere in the classroom. I always say to my children, "no matter what anyone does to you, knowledge is the one thing that no one can take away from you". We have to strengthen ourselves mentally, spiritually and physically and the three put together makes us who we are.

*"The greatest love of all... is easy to achieve . . .  
learning to love yourself it is the greatest love of all . . ."*

### **The Enviro-club**

Starting up the Enviro-club extended the boundaries for me. I do break boundaries in the classroom, but co-ordinating the club allows me to engage with something that I really enjoy doing outside of the school. It is a place where I see the child grow from a little seed in terms of leadership, strength and potential. The Enviro-club is my passion, which keeps me together. It keeps my sanity together.

I am a "bush-baby". I thoroughly enjoy the bush and when the teachers see me coming to school wearing my floppy hat and slops they would often remark, "*what is she up to now*" or "*there she goes again*". I met with such negativity on the path of the members, my colleagues, that it actually ended up being very confrontational and where you think to yourself, "*why am I doing this?*" Then you spring back and say, "*Well, I am doing this*

*because the child enjoys it. I thoroughly enjoy it.* "I am different, and I am certainly not going to change for anyone. I enjoy who I am, what I do and how I do it. My children are the proof of the pudding.

Children need to see you differently, and I get to see the learners differently. The teachers need to accept that I am different and the Enviro-club gives me that space to be different, to be myself. This I believe will provide the learners with the confidence to develop and be proud of who they are. The song, "I believe the children are the future" by Whitney Houston is the theme song for the Enviro-group. It captures what I believe, what I think about myself and my learners and what I want to do as a person and as a teacher.

**Greatest love of all**

I believe our children are the future,  
teach them well and let them lead the way.  
Show them all the beauty they possess inside,  
give them a sense of pride to make it easier,  
let the children's laughter remind us of how we use to be.  
Everybody is searching for a hero,  
people need someone to look up to,  
I never found anyone to fulfill my needs  
a lonely place to be and so I learned to depend on me . . .

(George Benson)

The Enviro-club provides those underprivileged learners with an opportunity to finally do something about their lives. It provides the learner with the challenge to "see yourself for who you truly want to be". We have "TEA" as our motto: taking environmental action, a forum where you are allowed to speak and provide individuals with the opportunity to voice their opinion and at the same time to give the team the ability to respect and to listen to each other views.

**Give them wings**

I always enjoyed playing with the dandelions, and when you think about it, dandelions are actually considered to be a weed in some regard. Like the weed, my children need to have the determination and the strength to seed themselves and start growing anywhere. The dandelion is actually very strong although it may look weak. Dandelions have this tiny little seed, but when it actually roots it is quite firm in the ground and it has this beautiful yellow flower. Yellow has always been my favorite colour: I always liked yellow because it is a symbol of life, vibrancy and vigour. All my classes are painted yellow, even my study at home.

The "shuffled noise" is typical of my classroom, there is always a buzz, and for me when there is constructive noise, there is life. It is not always constructive and those times I really feel low.

The seeds of the yellow dandelions have the potential to lift them up, like I say to my learners: "Find that hero in you and lift yourself up. Believe in yourself and use your weakness to find strength within your seed, the seed of life, the God-given life. No matter how small and insignificant you might feel, or how people might make you feel you have the potential to 'raise up the gentle breeze' and find yourself."

**The Dandelion**

Shuffled noise, scratching chairs,  
chitter chatter my dandelions scatter  
Yellow flowers burst with matter,  
dandelions is all that matters your bright petals marked with  
salted sadness, sweet innocence ripped out,  
in life's madness,  
like large salted tears stains my dandelions cup rise up,  
rise up with the gentle breeze change your tainted life into a challenge  
for a seed there is to celebrate life,  
of life,  
separated bewilderment seeking a poison fix to life,  
dandelions with no compass points seek deep within the seed of life,  
and will succeed.  
in yourself and use your strength,  
for life is a precious gift,  
shuffled noise,  
scratching chairs, chitter chatter  
my dandelions are life's precious gift.

(Ursula Collings 2001)

---

*It's what you enjoy which brings out the best in you.*

**TEXT THREE****The jazzman**

🎧 *Edwin Elisha* 🎧



Connecting with myself  
Connecting with others



Eddie is 43 years old, an Indian male who teaches at Hillview Primary School, an Ex-House of Delegates school. This school was established to serve the needs of the Indian community that lived in the residential suburb of Reservoir Hills. It presently serves the needs of Indian as well as African learners. The African learners live in the squatter settlement a few miles away from the school. Eddie has been teaching in this school for the past twenty years. The staff is all-Indian including the female principal.

This is the third school he has taught at since the commencement of his professional career as a teacher. While he is a qualified music teacher and a professional jazz singer, he is presently teaching in all eight of the learning areas within the new Outcomes Based Education Curriculum Framework.

---

Jazz is an eclectic and sophisticated brand of music. Some say it belongs exclusively to the African people, for it originated out of the days of American slavery. The improvisational skills that one has to possess mean that the artist has to be creative, innovative, motivated, spiritual and knowledgeable. For only if he possesses all of these traits can he truly connect with his audience.

(Edwin Elisha 2002)

It was Sunday morning service and the preacher said, "this is an item to be given by Elisha's two children" and so my sister and I had to sing. I was just a few years old and this was my initiation into the world of music. This was my first love and becoming a teacher became my next. I really believe that being a musician made me passionate about being a teacher.

It all started like this . . .

#### **The runaway kid . . .**

Everyday mother would take me to school, down Alice Street past the big clock and everyday she would always turn back when she reached the big clock, because I was right there behind her. I could not stay in school. I played truant for a major part of the first term. There were other instances where I never went home but hid behind our school where I played in the park and watched the swings move back and forth. "I was a little scamp." That is what they called me. I really made those prefects run. They wanted to take me back to school but they could never catch me. I ran into the market and into Warwick Avenue while they chased after me. I decided to remain in school when they made me the class monitor and gave me all the responsibilities that one could possibly have. I was also chosen to be part of the school choir. Mrs Joseph was our choir mistress, a rather old woman who enjoyed "tugging" at our cheeks. She liked me, I was a good singer.

#### **What does it take to be happy?**

When I think back to my primary school days I remember not having a lot of work, but my father made sure that we studied when there was a test or an examination. My mother would also make sure that I did my bits and pieces of work before dad checked my work. I always remembered dad asking in a rhetorical sort of way, "How much does it take to make

you happy? Does it mean driving a fancy car? There are far more important things in life that will make you happy. It doesn't take a lot."

We had Mr Augustine as our music teacher at Junagarth Primary School in Merebank where I completed standards three, four, five and six. He was an excellent music teacher. Every Saturday I was taken to St Anthony's for choir practice, and we participated in music festivals. I enjoyed it.

I also participated in sport, especially athletics and tennis. I remember the prizes that I took home at the end of the event which usually took place at Curries Fountain. As far as my tennis went, we had Mrs Yvonne Cuddemby from the Eastern Province and she would pick us up from our homes every Saturday for tennis coaching. That really helped. We played pretty well, being doubles finalists in the Natal Championships for three years in succession.

I was pretty good in my primary school years, always featuring in the top three positions. English was my pet subject and I enjoyed being part of the school's debating team.

#### **High School: "The makings of a doctor"**

I did pretty well in standard seven and I was told that I had all the qualities to become a doctor, and S7 was the course direction that I should take. I knew then that I was never going to become a doctor and out of the entire group that pursued S7, only three became doctors.

I found Mr K. Kalideen to be an exceptional teacher. He was very eccentric and also slightly weird. One day he walked into our class without shoes and he had his White socks on and he skated all over the place while he read out a poem to us. It was kind of weird reciting these poems with these actions, and very dynamic. That guy was good. He would take us outside to observe things, to count the different species of birds on the huge trees around the school and then he would ask us to write about it.

I enjoyed English in high school and I will always remember the "weirdo" Mr Kalideen. And by the way, I started playing in a band, Saturn, when I was in standard nine. My dad taught me to sing and to play a little bit of the piano and that really did the world of good for my music.

But what I realised about high school was that I did the work for them, not for myself.

After matriculation I became politically involved in the Merebank Ex-Student's Society and I was quite heavily involved in youth meetings. I also became a part of the then underground wing of the Natal Indian Congress, and was greatly influenced by comrade George Sewpersadh. It opened my mind to things that I never knew existed. It boosted my self-confidence and shaped the way I think and view people. I did not know about things outside my community, I did not know what was going on in Umlazi and Soweto. I thought that everyone was educated the same way that I was. They took me out of my little shell and opened my eyes to the rest of South Africa and I am grateful for that.

When I completed my matriculation examinations I decided to register for a Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Durban-Westville. But dad discouraged me from



On Grad Day  
I was glad to have made them  
proud.



Christmas morning ...  
Dressed for church service



pursuing this passion of mine because he believed there was no scope for Black musicians like me in this country. *"You are wasting your time,"* he expressed. I was defiant and I refused to further my studies. Instead I joined a band and started playing in clubs and eating-houses. I was earning a lot of money at that time and I could safely say I was earning more than my dad was.

It was just a regret that I wasn't afforded the opportunity to pursue what I really loved, and circumstances proved otherwise . . .

Ten months down the line, dad approached me on becoming a teacher *"You can become a music teacher"*, he added. He brought home forms to fill in and as much as I did not want to become a teacher I just went for the interview. I remember Mr Bugwandeen at the interview:

Mr. B: So you are a musician?

Eddie: Yes

Mr. B: How many instruments do you play?

Eddie: About four . . .

Mr. B: You're the man we need. You've got your post, just go and fill in your bursary application.

That was all . . .

I went to Springfield College of Education where I specialised in Music and Science. I did not want to become a teacher and I did not really enjoy being at college but I just saw it as a means to getting the diploma. I found it boring and tedious. What I learnt in these three years in music just wasn't fulfilling enough.

At the end of my third year at college I was "kicked out" because of my political involvement, but I was called back to complete my final year. I remember being asked to sign documents which I refused to sign because I wanted to be taken back unconditionally or not at all. Finally they took me back unconditionally but they punished me by appointing me to a school out of the province. I was appointed to Rylands Primary in Cape Town in 1981 where I taught for the next three years.

It was a very proud moment in my parents' life when I graduated as a teacher.

### **Sounds of silence**

I really felt that I was not cut out to be a teacher. When I stood in class to teach, I felt like a musician with a musical instrument playing beautiful notes that nobody could hear. College education provided me with the tools to teach but it was not enough . . . I was not moving the audience.

*"I used to think that I could not go on, and life was nothing but an awful song. See, I was on the verge of breaking down. Sometimes silence can be so loud."*

The inspector was very nice to me, and he was most complimentary of my work. I just did what they asked me to do. I found that some of these kids who passed the aptitude test were not necessarily musically inclined and yet I had to force them to pursue music education. As a result the learners did not do very well in the recorder examination. And





Robben Island

The Limestone Quarry

'ingenuity'

Powerful spaces

the assessment of the teacher was based on how well those kids did. I found this most dehumanising, and I refused to persist with this kind of education. When I finally found my feet and got to grips with the curriculum I began to do things differently. Then the trouble started.

I was called up by the inspector, reprimanded and asked to "wake up". The principal, also a musician, was also present during this confrontation with the inspector. I was castigated. I refused to accede to the inspector's request and was prepared to accept the consequences of my actions. The inspector wrote the report and I signed it.

*"If I could see it, then I could do it. If I just believe it, there's nothing to it. I believe I could fly . . . I believe I can fly, I believe I can touch the sky."*

I think someone "upstairs" heard my pleas, and the amazing thing is that two years down the line, learning to play the recorder was phased out. Instead of teaching exclusively classical music I introduced jazz, pop and other genres of music. No student wanted to specialise in recorder. It was just general class music, and all the learners really enjoyed it.

In my second year of teaching I made a trip to Robben Island and that was one of the most moving experiences for me. I still cannot understand how a person can be put away in such a hellhole for so many years and yet come out with such humility. What makes him so forgiving? I asked myself. If Mandela can care so much and do so much for others, why can't another human being do so? This visit energised me. I began to see my responsibility as a teacher and that feeling just grew and grew.

*"There are miracles I know I must achieve, but first I know it starts inside of me. I believe I can show I see me running through that open door . . . I believe I can fly, I believe I can touch the sky."*

#### **It's like chalk and cheese**

Previously I was told how to teach and there was a dress code that one had to adhere to. That image of the teacher has changed positively and dramatically, but unfortunately you find a lot of teachers still "sticking" to the traditional image. Previously government policies created an image of the teacher that lacked the professional status, and let's be realistic, the union has really made great strides in changing that image created by bureaucracy. Teachers have been given the opportunity to empower ourselves; "they" have given us carte blanche to become the kind of teacher we want to be and not the image that the department wants to see.

#### **Carte blanche**

I have a lot of flexibility with the syllabus now. Teachers are given the flexibility to design their lessons using their individual approaches, although the outcome is specified. For me the most important thing is the flexibility with your syllabus because that flexibility obviously rubs off on the kids. They see the teacher as not being authoritative, and learning becomes a shared experience. I feel that I am empowered to make decisions and take responsibility for my teaching.

But some teachers follow what's imprinted biblically. They are so easily swayed by what's printed and they find no reason to challenge it. Something that I read often says:

The creative artist and poets say, "We must fight the actual as opposed to the ideal. Gods of all society, the God of conformist as well as the Gods of Apathy, material success and exploited power, these are the ideals of society that are worshiped by multitudes of people.

#### **What's love got to do with it?**

I try to make this place here as close as possible to what is happening outside so that I do not escape from the ills and the problems we have outside, but instead develop ourselves to be able to deal with the reality outside. I don't want to present to the learners an idealistic view of what life is all about. The learners in my class are 13 and 14 years of age, and they don't know what love is but they do know about sex. I am not going to "hide" these issues from them. Coming from the townships, and watching programmes like Yizo Yizo on TV, they very often end up having a very distorted image of what love and sex is about. That is why I choose topics and themes that they can relate to, like "Love".

#### **What kind of love? What kind of hope?**

I hear them singing about love and very often the boys remark, "Hey sir, that girl... that girl looks beautiful, sir", and "Hey sir, do you know Boom Shaka? and, (he whistles). The learner's ages vary from 13 to 19 years of age. Many equate love with sex, a misconception that I needed to clear up. I am challenged to choose topics that can help reach out to these learners. Maybe their concept of love is different from mine.

They brought their magazines and pictures of their favourite singers. They wrote their favourite love songs on pieces of paper. They drew about "love". We all discussed "love". What are our feelings and understanding of "love"?

We read articles that describe our concept of love in this Western world and how accustomed we are to living with the beliefs and assumptions that romantic love is the only form of love on which marriage is based. But there is more to true love and there is much that we can learn about this concept of love. But I am only able to have "open" discussions with the learners when the learners "feel" safe and comfortable in the classroom environment. I find the classroom space to be a crucial part of teaching and learning.

#### **The Classroom: "safe spaces"**

I want to be able to get honest opinions from the learners. They must feel safe and they must know that I am not going to infringe on their rights and I am not going to say, "Hey, what nonsense is this!" Learners must feel free to speak out, and express themselves. I am in the process of trying to create that environment, by showing them how much I "care" about them.

I like to joke with the learners to relax them, to create a friendly atmosphere and get rid of the teacher-pupil barriers. A lot of kids look as if they have a lot of fear in them and you are the person that has to break down those barriers. I am also involved in other activities with the kids. I coached volleyball and soccer. I found sport an excellent means of getting to know the learners. They see me as a human being. This relationship that we developed on the sportsfield makes teaching and learning more comfortable. When learners are tired I take them onto the field where we engage in physical activity. I don't follow the timetable rigidly. In this way the learners don't see some alien in front that

they cannot identify with, and they don't sit in my class out of pure fear. But respect and discipline have to prevail at all times for a strong and stable environment.

### **Blocking their minds**

As a teacher I often ask myself, "What happens if we try and block the minds of our children?" It may never cease to exist and you can never reproduce it, it will never come back. Allowing learners to express themselves in their best way possible, is the beauty of being creative, acknowledging that everyone is unique. God's creation, if you want to call it that. As Martha Graham wrote in her poem, "The River Runs":

There is vitality, a life force and energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action and because there is only one of you in a lifetime and if you block it, it will never ever exist through any other medium and may be lost.

### **Children are the future**

The learners of Hillview Primary:

We don't want a teacher that is lazy. We need a teacher that cares about us and we need a teacher who gives us work sheets and runs out things for us. The teacher must joke a little bit and must not be too strict.

(Grade seven learners - Hillview Primary)

Most of the learners in my class are English second language speakers from broken homes, living in the squatter settlement around the school. Some of them come from hopeless situations and they believe that they will never get out of that situation, and that their homes will always be a shack. They came to school looking ragged, tired and angry. I could read the hopelessness on their faces.

How do I make them believe in themselves to say, "I can do it". That was a real challenge for me. I wanted to give them a chance to come to the front to read, no matter how little they could, but they did not have the confidence to do so. I often asked them to do a piece of work and they would just give up. I wanted to make them believe and realise that they can get out of this situation. There is hope because there is still love in their hearts and I had love in my heart too.

I base my teaching on basically George Benson's song, actually composed by Leon Russell. It says:

I believe the children are our future,  
teach them well and let them lead the way.  
Show them all the beauty they possess inside.  
Give them a sense of pride . . .

### **Walking on air**

I went around to different business houses and I managed to secure a box full of school shoes and shirts for those learners, who I came to realise were basically struggling to survive. It made a difference. They felt good standing in the front of the class now and their reading also started to improve.

I played this song, "I believe I can fly," to them often.

I used to think that I could not go on  
 And life was nothing but an awful song  
 But now I know the meaning of true love  
 I'm leaning on the everlasting arms

Chorus:

I believe I can fly  
 I believe I can touch the sky  
 I think about it every night and day  
 Spread my wings and fly away  
 I believe I can show  
 I see me running through that open door  
 I believe I can fly

See I was on the verge of breaking down  
 Sometimes silence can be so loud  
 There are miracles I know I must achieve  
 But first I know it starts inside of me  
 If I could see it, then I could do it  
 If I just believe it, there's nothing to it.

(R.Kelly)

I read them inspirational stories the other day . . .

One was about Anant Singh who worked in a video shop where he earned R1.00 a day and I also read them stories about people who abused their fame and fortune like Sizwe Motaung, a player for the Bafana Bafana team, who is today slightly deranged and kicking a ball in the park. What happens when you let fame and fortune get to your head? What happens when you lose control of your life?

And I told them the story of Ronan Keating . . .

He went from club to club wanting to sing, but many complained that he did not have the talent at all. "You will never make it," they all told him. But he went ahead and learnt the necessary skills and he worked hard at it and he is now a world class performer. He was determined, he was not born with it, he had to work hard at it and he soon blossomed. You got to believe in yourself, and this had to start from the inside.

I find the inspirational stories helpful.

I find that music has a major influence on the way that children think and act and behave . . .

#### **The saxophone teacher**

**Tuesday 11.00 am. (My diary: Log entry: Daisy Pillay February 6, 2001)**

It is an English lesson. Eddie hands out the worksheet (3 visual illustrations of people) and as he does so he shares jokes with the learners.

#### **The lesson begins . . .**

Close your eyes, everyone, sit back and listen. (I watch him adjust the straps to the saxophone as he wrapped it around his shoulder.)



He played for us. (I could see the learners sway to the rhythm of the song. As the notes drifted across I could feel their spirits lost in the dance of rapturous melodies.) He stopped playing and a little girl blurted out, almost in a trance-like state, "Ah sir, you sound just like a CD".

We all awoke. For fifteen minutes I felt the space transformed into splendour, wonder and hope.

The first piece was "Homeland", the second the theme song from the movie "Titanic" and the third song was "Vastrap". Learners had to associate the musical pieces with the visuals on the worksheet and describe the pictures . . . Learners and teacher addressed issues of race, gender, violence, and mass culture.

Except for the odd record book or two, he did not have any of the other familiar books that teachers normally keep. He led me to his little room at the front of the classroom where he directed me to loads of books, magazines, source files, photocopied pictures and articles, boxes of shoes . . .

#### **What books, what time-table?**

*"I always tell people if you want to check what is going on in my classroom, don't call for my books, just come into my class,"* he added, as if he had read my mind. I browsed through, confused. "I don't write down a lesson plan, but what I do have are ideas scribbled on sheets of paper which I use to direct me to the articles and books that we need to look at to explore the content/theme. I don't follow a timetable because often I find that I don't want to break the momentum that has been created in the lesson and the kids are involved, they are enjoying the learning and I believe that is very important". I was hoping that I did not show how uneasy I felt as he challenged the very core of my understanding of what it meant to be a teacher. So when a student requested from him permission to have a game of volleyball now that the task was completed and he agreed, I was not surprised.

I left feeling confused . . . I was uncomfortable and I looked forward to getting to the comfort of my office where the routine awaited me (6 February 2001).

#### **A reflection of my inner being**

There is no point in my life that I can say, *"This is it, I found it and I have everything"*. There is always that something that I haven't found and I am still searching out for. I always remind my kids, when I play to them the song by "U2" appropriately called, "I still haven't found what I am looking for", that the matriculation examination and the university qualifications are not the end of the search. The searching goes on. There is no end to learning. As some wise man once said, "What you know will fill a book and what you don't know will fill a library. No one is too big to say "I have learnt everything and I know everything". I constantly ask myself, Am I doing the right thing? Am I steering these minds in the right direction or am I simply imposing on them my ideas? Is what I do in class a form of indoctrination? That is always my worry. Are these children going to see me and want to become more like me? Or are they going to extract bits and pieces and mould themselves into who they want to be?

I had a Chinese boy Yi Ping Liu and the topic was Darwin's theory of evolution. He shouted out, "There is no God, I don't believe there is a God". I reassured him that he may be right or he could be wrong, but having doubts helps one to keep searching.

I look at my learners now, and I realise I must be doing something right. When I look at them, they are my mirrors, my reflection. I look in the mirror and I do see a happy face reflecting in the mirror and that tells me I'm on the right path.

### **One life-force**

I have such an immense responsibility as a teacher not only to my own kids, but also to the learners in my classrooms. If by any chance I shut that responsibility out, I am going to be the blockage in the pipe, that stumbling block in the web, which in all probability will stifle the future generation. It is this immense responsibility I carry with me as a teacher and I have to constantly imagine what would happen if I had to mess up.

... the pupil comes to our classes hoping for transformation. Can this teacher perform the miracle that everyone is waiting for? There is this scripture that is biblical and it says "Be still and know that I am God". I feel that a lot of children come here abandoned, embittered and tortured asking questions to heal their souls, their minds and their bodies. Can the teacher give them the answers? I am not God, so if you expect a miracle it will not happen. "Being mere mortals, indulge, experiment." We are here to work together and that is what we need to do. I am like the lighthouse, rotating as it shines and turns away to show the way to another. And like the rays of light that reveal and unify all that lies in its path.

### **Chances in life**

I met a parent recently who had his child transferred to our school. I was really taken aback when he said, "I don't think my child is ready for standard four. Can you put my child in a lower standard? He has really performed very poorly according to the teachers in the other school." The teachers agreed but I refused to allow this to happen until we got to know the child better. I sat back and thought about the father who had no faith in his child, I thought about the father who had no faith in the institution that he placed his child in, I thought about the child where the system had failed him.

We never moved the child to a lower standard and he is doing very well in the present grade. I suppose if we put him down to a lower standard he would have lost all faith in himself, it would have messed up his whole life.

### **Happiness**

Happiness looked so sad. She had this faraway look on her face as she walked out of the classroom, always carrying her big hardcover notebook in front of her. I realised soon that she was pregnant and she was trying very hard for us not to know. I realised how alone she must be feeling in all of this. She was an intelligent child. Then she took an entire term off. Her family phoned in to say she had taken ill. She returned two months later, only to realise that the school psychologist wanted to meet with her. I learnt that she had given birth to a baby only one week ago but I never mentioned it to the principal for fear of having her expelled from school. It was policy not to allow single mothers in school. I spoke

to Thoko, the psychologist, and pleaded with her not to mention the "kid's" case to the principal or anyone else. She agreed.

Happiness is presently in high school.

I am a guide to the learners, like the shepherd is to his flock. They go all over the place, tasting, feeling a bit of this and that, and at the end of it all, I guide them back home, where they can feel safe. I am trying to create an environment that is physically and emotionally safe, so that they express their opinions honestly, know their rights, and feel free to express themselves.

I want to be the jazz singer . . .

I want to be the jazz singer who connects with the music he plays; I want to be a teacher who can connect with that which he teaches. There is a lot of passion that comes out of that. I want to provide a little light to each child, to help each child find their own voice and to sing their own song.

I met a past student of mine from Parsee Rustamjee School. He is beginning to enjoy the spiritual freedom and mysticism often associated with the in-depth study of a musical instrument. He was profuse and gracious in his compliments towards me as his mentor and motivator.

Having a musical talent has really helped me find my own voice, who I really am and where I want to be. I want to be with the children, I want to be there for the poor and the hungry. Being involved in music makes me passionate about teaching and the process of transformation. I want to give my best at all times. It inspires me . . .

And we walk light-footed through the wide landscape of jubilation,  
Amongst the ruins of forts where the overlords ruled wisely  
Across to factories, silent on this day, but soon to sing  
A new sound  
Looking at our heritage, built by the workers of yesterday  
For the workers of today, built in slavery to be used in freedom.  
Is this not a miracle? Amazed, we will guide our own destiny,  
We, tell it to all, we were able to do this  
Sing it, for now there is something to sing about, because  
My voice  
Unassisted by other voices, is insufficient to sing this  
Praise song  
Lift it on the wings of music, of thousand, of million voices  
To fill this space with this message:  
Man is free, not a slave to fate  
(An abstract taken from poem: The Tenth Elegy by Peter Horn)

To guide my own destiny

... I need inspirational books, books that are motivational. I don't read novels. If it has no message for me, if it is not motivational, I read the first few pages and I put it aside. It is useless to me. But I know where I want to be in this time of change. This piece of writing reflects what I truly feel right now, as a teacher.

**Forcing change without vision**

It feels like I am sitting at the back of the boat and there is very little that can be done before we bang into that ice block that lurks like a monster in the dark. I believe that no amount of workshops or seminars can help the possible sinking of the boat, unless like the lighthouse, we unite in the decisions and the directions we take to steer the boat through these troubled waters. Management lacks the vision and the knowledge to steer us through these troubled waters, the atmosphere remains cold and uninviting.

There are different ways to empower teachers. Treat teachers as professionals. Teachers are very delicate and they can be hard.

**Teacher, teacher**

Deep . . .  
 in the heart of darkness  
 Lies a lost and forlorn soul  
 Abandoned, Embittered, Tortured,  
 Entangled in a web of confusion  
 Teacher, teacher is it too late?  
 to bring salvation to my emaciated state.  
 Or am I under the delusion  
 that my degenerate state is self-inflicted?  
 Fear not, be still, and know that I am not God  
 Being mere mortals, indulge, experiment  
 Access, empower, ignite, intrude, invent, and meditate  
 Herein lies your lighthouse, your shepherd your guide.  
 (Eddie 2001)

Being a successful teacher and remaining a level one educator can be disconcerting when one looks at the calibre of people who govern and manage. However, as a sincere and honest individual I must rise above these mere mortals who seek to undermine the very essence of "who" I am. I am immortal for my spirit will still linger on long after I have departed from this earth. My vision and focus is steadfast and undeterred, for my reward in heaven far supercedes that which I have encountered on this earth.

**Right now . . .**

Right now, the murky water runs chaotically, threatening to swallow us, but the rocky protrusions stand firm, for twenty years now, rich in wisdom and experience, if only there was more light to see us through, the rocky shapes could reflect on their beauty within, Right now, my classroom is the Only Sacred Place. There is still Hope and Hope is Resistance. Hope is learning to wait. Hope is Risky. Hope is to be lived, Right now, I want to be with the children,  
 Right now, I want to be there for the process of transformation.

## TEXT FOUR

### The adventurer

🐛 *Anna Bressan* 🐛



Anna & Gina  
The Twins  
(1965)



Anna is a White female teacher who came into South Africa with her family as a British immigrant when she was nine years old. She presently holds joint citizenship, British and South African. She teaches at the Cato Manor Technical College, an historically Indian institution offering a range of courses to school-leavers wanting to pursue a more "technically orientated" career. It services a predominantly African and Indian learner population. This college is one of five teaching and learning sites at which Anna has taught. Her experiences are diverse, ranging from teaching the physically challenged, to teaching at a Technikon for African students in the rural area of Edendale.

Through the efforts of Anna and her management team, she has a class of fifty deaf learners at the Cato Manor Technikon. This institution comprises an all-Indian staff and a White male principal who has presently been seconded to another position.

---

#### **These boots were made for walking**

The first song that I remember enjoying at about the age of four was "These boots were made for walking". I remember wearing Wellington boots and dancing around the lounge in our house in England. I also loved listening to "The King and I" and "Pygmalion". I was most enthralled to know that the name of the lady in the "King and I" was Anna. Mum would encourage me to sing and though she wasn't a professional singer herself she appreciated good music. She would always say to dad, "This kids' got such a good voice". With encouragement from mum, I attended classes and learnt how to play the guitar and sing.

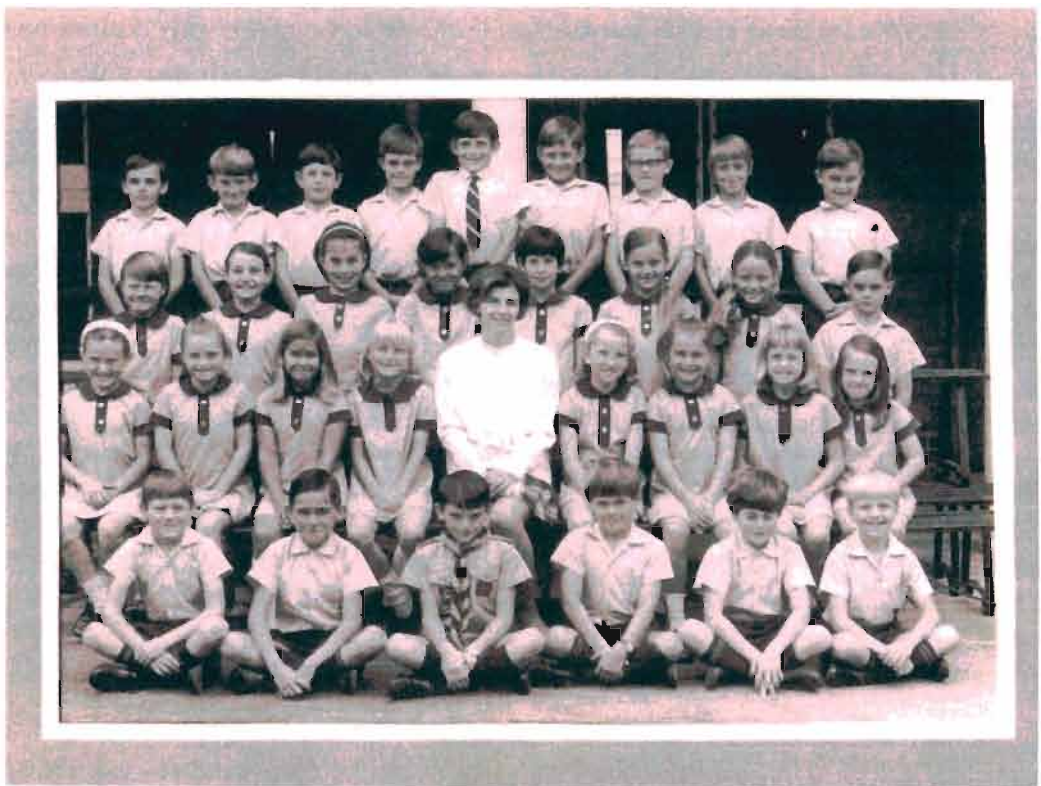
Gina, my twin sister and I started school in England when we were four-and-a-half years old. We left England when I was nine years old. My parents pushed me to do well at school because I was the more academic one of the two. I would always try to make up for what Gina could not do. I protected Gina.

#### **A bookworm**

Mum never worked in England but when we came to South Africa she became a traffic warden and then the chief traffic warden. A real success story. She was very caring, loving and hard working and that rubbed off on us. But Gina and I were very lonely. When mum started working she left very early in the morning, and came home late at night. I think that being left alone contributed in a way to Gina "going off the track". I used to just bury myself in my books. I was a bookworm. I just read and read and read. I was an average student at school. I just loved reading anything from encyclopaedias to books . . . novels and stuff like that. By the time I got to standard three, I could read the entire children's Bible from cover to cover. I entered the Bible competition which I won hands down because I knew every story in the Bible.

#### **I played teacher**

Because we moved so much, we were never able to have friends. Mum bought us a chalkboard and Gina and I played school. I was always the teacher, of course, trying to help Gina learn. My father had a go at Gina all the time. "*Why can't you be like your sister Anna?*" We never knew then that Gina had a learning problem. I always covered for Gina. It was a very maternal or protective feeling, in a sense.



Std 1 Photo  
Athlone Park Primary  
1971

My teaching really started out of the love of helping someone. My dad always expected a lot from me. I had to do so much more to make up for what Gina couldn't do. It became a competitive thing within myself to do better all the time.

### **From England to South Africa**

#### **I am a British citizen . . .**

Mrs Lyle was my standard one teacher and I didn't like her. She was an Afrikaner and she didn't like us British. When Gina and I came into her class she always pushed us aside. I remember the day a boy pulled my hair in class and I got the hiding because I slapped him. She actually shoved me out of the classroom. I thought she was very unfair. Mrs Steenekamp, who was also Afrikaans, loved Gina and I. She loved all of us. I remember her teaching us about London. Gina and I had just come back and we were made to feel special. We had all these postcards and slides that we showed them about London. I enjoyed her and Gina actually did so well in the test.

#### **High school: "A goody two-shoes"**

In 1975 we moved into our very own home in Manor Gardens in Durban and I attended Durban Girls High. I remember my history teacher in high school. She made me love history. I also enjoyed Shakespeare. I was born 10 miles away from where Shakespeare lived in Stratford-on-Avon. Gina became deviant in high school, always in the office because she had detention. I was a goody two-shoes at school. There is a song that I had written during this time, which I called, "I was so confused".

I was so confused, I did not know what to do  
 I had so many fears in my life  
 I was growing so weary and tired  
 When I heard a voice say to me  
 I died on the cross  
 But arose again  
 Is that too much for you to believe?  
 I can heal the wounded heart and make a sinner whole  
 Is that too much for you to believe?  
 (Anna 2000)

I gave my life to Christ at the age of thirteen and Gina followed. I became a very strong Christian. In high school I sang in a youth band, became a youth leader and a member of the Students Christian Association (SCA).

Gina was put into a special class in standard eight, which she completed but she then "got" pregnant. She left home when she was seventeen years old. That really hurt. My whole world collapsed. We were separated in a sense from the age of seventeen when she left to live in Cape Town and other towns until about three years ago when she returned to live here. I always feel that my parents blamed me for what happened to Gina. I had to suffer the consequences for Gina running off and getting pregnant. I think that's what gave me the drive to carry on and make up for what she had lost.

I remained an average student all through high school because I was not really interested in learning.

**Follow my heart's desire**

Deciding on what to study after matriculating was quite a debate. Being immigrants meant that I was not eligible for a loan to study further. If I went into nursing I would be paid and it would help, but mom realised that was not what I wanted to become. I wanted to become a teacher and I remember mum saying, "*We are going to let you follow your heart's desire, go and become a teacher*". Although I would have liked to major in History and Psychology, they insisted that I do commerce at Natal Technikon. "*We are paying the fees,*" mother reminded me. I had never done commerce in my matriculation examinations and I had failed accounting terribly in standard seven. With great trepidation I agreed. When Gina heard about my decision to become a teacher she laughed, "*You always wanted to be the teacher,*" was her response to me.

**A giggling gertie**

I finally registered for a four year Higher Diploma in Education course specialising in Commerce at Natal Technikon. Of course, the first year I failed Accounting. I simply just couldn't catch on to the subject at all. I was a "giggling gertie" I was exceptionally insecure and alone. All of a sudden I was thrown into a situation where I was on my own, without Gina. Towards the end of the first year I realised that if I did not come out of this little shell I had built around myself, I was not going to make it. I did not have any friends. I realised it was my fault. I was struggling with the subject. I felt like I was doing something that I didn't really want to do. I cried a lot.

I had to change.

I spoke to Mrs Prior, my lecturer, about my problems, especially about Gina, and I felt very comfortable with her. That year I excelled in all my subjects except Accounting. I did very well in Shorthand. I was the top student in some subjects.

Early in my second year I was elected onto the Student Representative Council. I was nominated as part of the student representative council for student teachers and then I got elected onto the subsidiary SRC. I also joined the Student Christian Association and became very involved with playing the guitar and enjoying the fellowship. I got onto the Rag committee and became the Nucleus Area Manager for the Bluff. It was such fun. Those days were good.

1981 was the year the first group of Indian students were admitted to the so-called 'White' Technikon. Three of the Indian students who registered were part of the commerce group. Being a part of the SRC, I supported the idea for the rest of the Technikon to open their doors to African students, but when the SRC started moving towards anti-apartheid politics, I became a bit scared because I was an immigrant. I was not "naturalised" and I could be kicked out. I was an uitlander and I heard all these horrible stories about people being deported. So I really did not get involved in political struggles.

At the end of my studies, all my classmates, including the Indian students were able to secure jobs in their own separate schools, and I was not. I was the only one of the six that didn't get a job automatically. I had to go out and find my own job. I felt that I'd been discriminated against simply because I wouldn't take allegiance to the flag and a country that I didn't believe in politically.



'Me Type'



Rene Pender

Can you see he is using  
all his fingers?



Lord, this is what I want to do . . .

Mrs Prior reminded me that I would not be able to get a teaching post immediately. "*You don't have much of a choice,*" she reminded me. But I was quite determined that I was going to teach disabled children. I had something to offer them. God had put this in my heart. She reminded me that such specialist schools wanted people with qualifications in special education and with five or six years experience. But I just prayed . . .

I remember Ms Anne Curry, the principal of Fulton School for the Deaf, interviewing me. She commented on how young I was and that I may not have the necessary experience to work with deaf learners. I reminded her that as a teacher fresh out of college, I would make a much better teacher than someone who had been teaching for six years, because I was open to new ideas and change. She had sixteen applicants for the post.

I prayed.

Lord, that is what I want to do.

Lord, you know my heart, I know nothing about the deaf but I really want to teach them.

I still remember the day. Anne Curry called at 05:10 to say that she would give me a chance but not as a permanent teacher. It was the most fantastic day of my life. I cried. God granted me my prayers.

#### Learning to sign

I started teaching at Fulton in 1985. I will never forget the first day I taught the deaf. I walked into the class and I said "*Morning class*" and they all just looked at me. I realised that they didn't understand a word of what I was saying. I wrote everything on the board for the next few weeks. I realised that if I did not move into the school and become part of these kids' lives I would simply never learn to sign properly. I actually moved into the school hostel in 1986. For the next two years I was eating, breathing and sleeping those kids constantly. If babies can learn sign, so can I.

The deaf, I believe, have something visual, so all my office practice files, the filing systems, source documents and the flow charts, I "drew" to show how the accounting system worked. I really believed in visually making sense of the content. I came up with my own pictures because the textbooks weren't at all visual, the text just provided them with exercises. And we "play-acted" a lot, particularly in Accounting, where half the class acted as the business and the other half as customers, selling, buying and issuing invoices.

#### A whole lot of love, passion and . . .

Very often I would "sign" the songs as I sang. Rene, a thirteen-year-old was one of the kids at Fulton, someone who the world had given up on.

"*Rene Peneder is Cerebral Palsy and deaf. He can't really talk, so just keep him busy,*" Mrs Curry said as she wheeled him into my class. A tone of resignation and helplessness filled the air at this utterance. I looked at him and tried to greet him and I realised he signed very poorly as well. "*I bet you that I'll be able to teach him to type,*" I replied as she turned to leave the room. In his first year at the school, I wrote and drew pictures on his fingers. I drew the letters A, S, D, F and then drew little houses around it and I made up a little story for each one of the letters. He was a Christian and he used to say, "*Jesus*". I spoke to him about Jesus.



Justin Wright  
Deaf & Blind

I took Rene to the beach. He had never seen the waves before.

It must have been about a year-and-a-half and he used to say, "*Me type, me type*". He spent a lot of time with me, religiously copying everything I gave him to type, with just two fingers. The holidays were approaching and his father phoned me and I advised him to buy Rene a computer, which he did.

The holidays came and went by . . .

I will never forget that day as long as I live. Rene wheeled himself into the room and he said, "*Me type*" and I joked back, "*You stupid because you type with two fingers*". . . I always teased him and he would tease me back in his own special way. He said again, "*Me type*" and I replied, "*You look*" and he said, "*Me no look*" and he typed "*Jesus*". I did not believe him. So I wrote on the board "I love Jesus" and I asked him to type without looking. He looked at me and he typed. I was crying with happiness. He was about 14 years then and he asked, "*Why you cry when you happy*", and I cried even more. We gave him everything to type and this boy could type just about anything and everything.

It took just about my whole life and a lot of passion and a lot of love to make this happen. I had to constantly encourage him, virtually take his finger and push it onto the keys. Caring for your students is very important. Justin Wright was a deaf and blind child. He was special to me. I didn't think I could teach him, but writing words on his hand helped me communicate with him. He has a B.Com degree now and he works in London. He always remembers in the e-mails that I inspired him to further his studies. Some of them are still my best friends. Ingrid Foggit, a deaf learner whom I taught in standards seven, eight and nine, is now a full-time teacher and a very good friend. I am Anna to them, they saw me as Anna, their best friend. You have to be a humane person and understand that everyone is different.

I feel like a gardener, you know. The kids here are the little seeds that are scattered about. For that seed to grow there are certain ingredients that the soil needs to have, including a lot of love and care. I watched Rene 'flower'. That beauty of watching that flower open is what teaching is all about. All the kids at Fulton School are special.

It made me realise that you've got to look beyond your teaching, beyond the curriculum and the syllabus for that which is best for that child. I introduced computers at Fulton in 1986 to go beyond the typing curriculum. I also became a part-time lecturer at M.L. Sultan. Centec (Durban Central Technical College) opened a new world outside of Fulton not only for me but also for the Fulton learners. Teaching computers, the many trips to the beach and to the mountains were the experiences that I provided to help the seeds grow.

Music became an important part of my life at the Fulton School. I was their "ears" in a sense because I could hear the words and I could actually give them the words and they could feel the beat. "Thriller" is one song that immediately brings back fond memories of my kids at Fulton. We were driving up to Johannesburg, five students and myself and the song "Thriller" played. Alex, who was most hard of hearing, could "hear" the music and the other kids started moving as well and suddenly it came to me that the kids could "feel" the music. They were beating and clapping their hands and I realised then it would be even better to sign the words to them. When we got back to the hostel I taught them how to

sing it. That was such an achievement and this made me all the more determined to "open the doors" for them. "Thriller" became their favourite song and I realised then that the deaf are capable of anything. Every time I hear this song, I feel overwhelmed. I fitted in perfectly.

During my student teaching years, I never truly believed that I was made to be a teacher. If you ask my twin who has never trained as a teacher, to teach, she would be able to teach, but I don't think anyone can become a teacher. To be a teacher you have got to have that something inside, that caring and empathy. You must love what you are doing. Now I know. It was my destiny to end up in this school. I will always be a part of Fulton School.

My life changed in 1989 when I left Fulton to work at Open Air School for the disabled. I made the biggest mistake in my life leaving Fulton. My heart broke to tell the kids I was leaving. I cried. I sang the last song for them in the assembly, "Jesus loves me, this I know".

#### **Open Air: "I can and I will"**

I hated Open Air from the minute I walked in. I walked in to the staff room and "die hele vergadering" was in Afrikaans. From day one I was ostracised because I could not answer in Afrikaans. I felt very uncomfortable speaking the language. The staff did not make me feel welcome, especially Mrs Steenekamp, the head of department.

"*Anna is here to join us in Economics,*" the principal announced. I was taken by surprise. I had never studied or taught Economics before. But again, I am the type of person who would just take anything as a challenge and do the best I possibly can. I was given a grade twelve class who had not been taught for the first half of the year because the teacher was ill. "*I will do my best,*" was a promise I made to myself.

The deputy principal, Mr duToit, seemed to be the only person with whom I could get on. He was actually a very nice man, and I found him most approachable when I wanted assistance.

The first day I walked into the Economics class and I said, "*Good morning*" to the students and the students replied, "*Goeie more, mevrou*". I was teaching a subject I didn't know on higher grade in Afrikaans. I was really frightened that the students weren't going to make it, but they did and they did well. I remember the kids were doing a section on Forms of Ownership (Business Economics), and I took them in their wheelchairs by bus to places like the sugar terminal and Toyota. The kids enjoyed it. It was real. For those kids who had a problem understanding, I was able to give individual attention after school and that really helped. I am thorough and I wouldn't accept a learner who said, "*I can't do it*". The kids always laughed, "*Miss B, we can and we will*". We had a lot of fun.

I always talk to the learners about my own experiences with Statistics and Accounting, and this helped. I believe that if one perseveres anything is possible. My own difficulties in the subject helped me understand how learners think and enabled me to remediate better.

But Mrs Steenekamp, the head of department, didn't like me. She came up to me one day and said, "*I don't want you taking the kids after school because you are setting a precedent for the other teachers. The kids are wondering why you are doing it and not the*



*other teachers.* "I tried to explain to her that class time was insufficient for some of the learners and a face-to-face interaction was really crucial for the child passing. She did not agree. So I stopped meeting with the learners after hours, and this really hurt me.

I left Open Air at the end of 1989.

December 1989 . . . I was standing in my wedding dress at the altar and I knew that I 'd done something wrong, that actually my folks could be right and three weeks later . . . But I was too proud to let go. I had also applied for another teaching post . . .

### **Teaching at Plessislaer**

#### **What you see is what you get**

In January 1990, I started working at Plessislaer, a technical college for Africans in the heart of Imbali, an African township in Pietermaritzburg. My experience in teaching the deaf prepared me well for teaching second language learners.

I was still a temporary teacher. To nationalise meant I had to give up my British passport. There was no way under the sun I was going to do that. But the laws have changed. Since 1991 I actually hold my British as well as South African citizenship. 1991 was the year I became a permanent member of staff. I had a terrible car accident and my marriage turned out to be a nightmare. I was severely abused. My life was a living hell.

I buried myself in teaching. It served as an escape mechanism for me. I decided to study again so I registered for a B.A degree, majoring in Psychology. I also started part-time teaching at Msunduzi College. In 1992, I started learning Word Perfect 5.1 and in the same year I requested for the installation of computers at our college as typewriters were going to be obsolete in the near future. I literally buried myself in my work.

I remember the day I had a visit from the inspector for a merit assessment: I was doing a "drill" lesson. *"Drill lesson in typing? How am I going to assess your teaching ability on a drill lesson?"* he asked. I was not going to change my lesson. That is the way I would like to approach it. So I went on . . .

The music came on and the students started their drill. The lesson was designed to boost their accuracy, concentration and speed. When I explained to him what I was doing, he nearly died. It was a "noisy" lesson, very interactive and in the one hour lesson I incorporated every single method of doing drill. The students thoroughly enjoyed every minute without realising that one hour had gone past.

He looked at me and remarked, *"I have never seen such an excited teacher and such an exciting lesson as this before."*

#### **Zeph and Petronella: You don't see colour, Miss B**

Plessislaer had between 90-95% pass rate. The students came from as far as the Transkei and other rural areas. They could hardly speak English when they got there but we somehow got them through. I became very loved by the students at Plessislaer and I loved them dearly.





Patricia at my house  
for a student function  
(Plessislaer Technical College)  
1993

In 1991, I met Zeph. He was one of the students at PTC I had taught. He always said, *"Miss B, I will never go further than this because my parents don't have the money."* *"But if I had my way, you will continue. You're too clever to leave now,"* I replied. I made an appointment to take him to Natal Technikon. He actually followed my footsteps in a sense because he always said, *"I want to be like you."* I always believe God has a big hand in everything. God will not lead me to something unless it can be carried through. I'll never forget that day we got him into the Technikon, and he was accepted. But he still did not have the fees. I remember the day he phoned me at work to say, *"I am still in the line Miss 'B' and I still have no letter from Shell Chemicals to say that they're going to pay my fees."* The Technikon phoned me and I pleaded with them to give him a month's grace on his fees. He registered and one month later the bursary came through, all fees paid for the entire four years.

The students see me as an example for what they wanted to be.

Petronella was from a very disadvantaged home. I never taught Petronella but she came to see me that fateful day because she wanted to register for her N4 at Msunduzi Technical College. She was in desperate need of a place to live.

I remember this conversation that we had together:

A: I have three bedrooms and my nephew had just moved out. So why don't you stay at my place? I could do with the company because I was missing Mark (Gina's son) terribly.

P: Your house, Miss B?

A: Yes, my house Petronella. What's wrong with that? I want to learn more Zulu and with you staying with me it would be much easier for me. I could learn more about the Zulu culture, which I felt was important because you can't teach people if you don't know their culture.

P: Miss "B" You don't see colour, do you? Why don't you see colour?

A: That's because I am a Christian.

*Petronella lived with me for over a year in which time she completed her N6. She has been a very big part of my life. Recently Petronella was invited as a guest speaker at Msunduzi College and she mentioned to the audience that Miss Anna Bressan had given her the chance she needed in her life to make her who she is.*

#### **A White party**

I think it was the first time that these students had ever been into a "White area". We had a party at my house and two taxi loads of students arrived. They party just as we do. We had one beautiful evening and I learnt a lot.

#### **"I never touched White skin before"**

I hugged the little girl and she said to me, *"Ma'am, I never touched White skin before."* I am a very tactile person and I believe that to "touch" someone lightly on the shoulder or on the arm is so important. To touch someone in a way that enables you to enter into their personal space where both teacher and learner can be human helps to get through to each other easier. Maybe I felt this way because I taught the deaf.

**1994 . . .**

. . . was a happy year for me. I was asked to act as Senior Lecturer in Computer Studies. I also trained all the staff at Plessislaer in computers to ensure that the lecturers' knowledge was sufficient to cope when teaching. I taught all the administrative staff as well. I made them all computer literate. I also trained lecturers countrywide in word-processing at a workshop organised by the Department of Education and Training in Pretoria. Plessislaer became one of the pilot technical colleges for the new administration programme called Coltech. I was sent for in-service training after which I implemented the system at Plessislaer. I was getting a lot of fulfilment from teaching the new curricula in computers, Information Processing. As a staff we shared a lot in terms of designing worksheets and lessons. I did theme teaching, where people with different expertise helped with teaching in different classes in their areas of expertise.

Initially, the staff at Plessislaer (teaching) was all White. When I became Senior Lecturer of Computer Studies in 1994, I appointed Gugu Msimang as a teacher of Accounting. I became involved with many of their community projects, and there were a lot of friendships that I have nurtured since.

I never did any formal classroom teaching in 1995. They wouldn't let me teach because I was setting up the computer rooms. I was running the new Administrative System that I had implemented and I needed a lot more time to get it running efficiently. This gave me a lot of experience in other areas of administrative functions as well. In 1996 I was asked to act as Head of the Business Studies Division, but what I was doing actually focused on the efficient running of the College. In 1997 I asked to go back to teach because I was losing touch and that was the worst thing for me. Syllabi and curricula had changed radically and I didn't want to be left in the dark. That could happen so easily.

At the end of 1997, the moratorium was lifted and jobs were being advertised. At that point in time, I really wanted to go back to Durban. Although the principal offered me the post as a deputy principal, no amount of coaxing was going to make me stay in Pietermaritzburg.

My divorce had been finalised and I wanted to be with my parents. I left Plessislaer to take up the position as Head of Department at Cato Manor Technical College.

**Cato Manor Tech: "Reverse racialism"**

The minute I walked in I knew I'd done the wrong thing again. I should never have gone there.

The lecturers were disillusioned and angry. They were not happy with the new admissions policy and they blamed the House of Delegates. "*How do you expect us to teach monkeys?*" one of the lecturers remarked. I was horrified. I really felt more comfortable with African people I worked with at Plessislaer than I did with Indian lecturers at Cato Manor.

I wasn't really welcome at Cato Manor Technical College from the day I got there. It was quite hard for me, but I fitted in, I just went my way. I still remember the first weeks of animosity that was directed at me. Being the person that I am, I couldn't accept that. I was just not a "gender" appointment. They were not giving me a chance to see me for who I

truly am. They didn't even want to know where I came from and how I got there. It was not easy. I cried many times.

I was really hurt at some of the comments that came up. But I can't help my skin colour just as much as anyone else can't help theirs and I wish everyone would just see each other as a human being. It's been reverse racialism that I experienced here. It was really terrible.

The first year was very hard for me. I had no appointed Senior Lecturers and although I encouraged the two males who were in an acting capacity to apply for the advertised posts neither one was successful and this created more animosity. I still remember counselling them and saying, *"Come guys, we don't know why these things happen but there is something greater sometimes, God has a different path for each of us."* There were grievances lodged against me and although I did not want this to affect me personally, it hurt me deeply. The staff was unsupportive and I felt ostracised. At times I felt like giving up and just leaving this place. But I knew that God was always there for me and I put my life in His hands. I prayed at home, I prayed in my car on my way to work. I talked to God and remembered his life on earth.

You walked this earth  
Sharing with friends you knew  
And all that you had was  
The work, the joy, and pain

#### **No culture of teaching and learning**

I was also really appalled by the condition of the environment. It was most unwelcome. I said to them, *"We're going to change this place."* I allowed for all the suggestions to come from the staff. I believe whatever the environment, you are training that student not just for a job, but as a whole person.

There was no culture of learning and teaching here. The classrooms had no overhead projectors, no White boards, and no lighting. The students' results were appalling. I cried every night. I wanted to go back to Plessislaer. I couldn't understand why no one had done anything about these conditions.

It took two months to clean up and improve the atmosphere in this place. I managed to secure the support of Angie and Christina, both seniors in the management team. We agreed that the only way we were going to get this place right was by working as a team.

#### **There was no culture of sharing**

I introduced the N2 and N3 courses which the lecturers argued, "Oh no, we can't be teaching babies here." I realised that if we were going to exist and survive, we had to offer N2 and N3 and we had to increase teaching to 24 hours. But these changes met with resistance from the staff.

We met for regular subject committee meetings where knowledge could be shared and networks with universities and industry discussed and established. All the lecturers were affiliated to the Institute of Marketing Management to enable them to meet with professional people in marketing. This enabled them to teach marketing with hands-on experience.



I tried very hard to encourage and create a culture of collegiality and sharing as a way of creating a culture of teaching and learning. Sometimes I actually played dumb to encourage others to contribute and share their knowledge. I did face the wrath of teachers, especially the males who believed that they had all the answers, but in time many realised and commented that I was not a person of words only, but action as well.

We needed to improve. We were actually policing teachers to do so.

### **I made it real**

If as a teacher, you are bored with your own subject, you are never going to enjoy being a teacher. I found Entrepreneurship to be very boring and I wanted to find something to make it exciting. Instead of just relying on the textbook examples of a business, I would always create scenarios that are related to the learners' experiences. You've got to make your subject come alive. Just as an example, the assignment that I set for the students as an introduction to the course required them to record all the buildings that displayed a PTY.LTD or just LTD, on their way home to KwaMashu or down Umgeni Road.

The subject has to come alive and as a teacher you have to enjoy your subject and that must come across in the best possible way. It is like a wave, constantly moving back and forth from learner to teacher and teacher to learner. The classroom should become a dynamic place with splashes of laughter, moments of introspection, and strong arguments and debates about knowledge. Everything changes all the time in the classroom, no two waves are the same and no lesson can be repeated. The students feel like everyday they come to class to learn something "new" and they are using it. I actually watch them use it.

I don't think in the 17 years that I have taught that I can actually recall two days that were the same or two groups that are actually the same or two lessons that were the same. I allow the students to dictate how something can be done and how to arrive at possible answers. There are different ways to do anything in any computer. As a teacher you have to know your subject content. I really believe that anyone can teach but not everyone is a teacher.

I believe that we are not a "sausage machine", churning out sausages. Since my arrival we have introduced "in-service" training, and learners are now able to attend specific work sites as part of their development. This has enabled our students to become far better prepared for the job market. Very often I would physically take the students to a prospective place of employment and I often phone companies seeking placement for our students. This has proved a tremendous success. The report back from the respective companies is just unbelievable.

Being a teacher is not about making money, it's about developing a whole person so they can be better than they were before. To see someone transformed gives me a lot of self-satisfaction. That's what drives me. Seeing someone making a success of his or her life and knowing that you have been part of that success inspires me to go on.

### **I touched their souls and their spirit**

Last year I went back to Pressislaer. The students that I taught in N2 and N3 were now in N6. I was standing in the car park, when one of the students saw me and called out, "Miss B". I had all these students around me, at least 20 of them all trying to touch and hug me. It was just so wonderful. I was crying because I realised that I'd touched their lives and



that is very important. You got to touch people and it's not just touching with words; touch their souls, their spirit and that is important. When you teach you not just a teacher, you are like a mother as well.

I talk to the students because I care for them. God cared so much that He actually gave His son for them as well. So they are Gods' children.

I am:  
A mother . . . a father  
A keeper . . . a guide  
A comforter, a listener  
Caregiver  
Role Model  
Worker  
Committed  
Intrinsically Motivated  
Selfless  
(Anna 2002)

**Section B**  
**Stories of “desire”**

**PART TWO**

*Third person narratives*

**Text Five:     The schemer**

**Text Six:      The super server**

## TEXT FIVE

### The schemer

🐼 *Trevor Gumede* 🐼



'Against all odds'

Trevor is a African male teaching Physical Science in Sithokozile High School. This school services African learners who live in an economically deprived area of KwaDabeka and Clermont. This is a African peri-urban township about 16 kilometers from the city of Durban. Trevor lives in Clermont, which is adjacent to KwaDabeka. He is a father of three children and he has been teaching in this school ever since he began his career. He presently holds a position as a member of management. Our meetings most often took place in the “office” that belonged to the Deputy Principal or in the school’s well-equipped library. However, the library was also used as the staff room by many of the female teachers. Trevor did not have an office. His classroom, which was the school laboratory, looked very much like an “ordinary” classroom, with desks and chairs arranged in rows. A life size model of the human skeleton adorned one corner of the room. The walls were bare and the windows broken.

Trevor was born in the African township of Clermont. His father was a teacher and his mother a nurse. He remembers being surrounded by many family friends who were mainly nurses and teachers. Trevor’s father was an English teacher and from a very young age Trevor was taught to speak and read English.

Trevor spent his primary school years in Clermont and his secondary schooling in a boarding school in Inanda. Soccer was the only cheap and popular sport that was available to him and his friends. And being the only form of socialisation that he enjoyed, he became very good at it. In primary school he played junior soccer and he was part of the school team at boarding school. He proudly remembers the boarding school as one which was built by ANC stalwart, Dr J.L. Dube (Mafukuzela), and a place where he developed in all spheres of life: sport, spirituality, education, music and dance. He believed that the one thing boarding school taught him, was “to learn to share, live together, and work with all kinds of people”. Blessing was his only good friend at boarding school. They played soccer together and he liked being with him because he was bright, open and challenged ideas. Being an African, he recalled the 1976 uprising, and his subsequent arrest for the role he played in fighting for a “better education”. His involvement in political struggles resulted in him being blacklisted from pursuing a teaching career on completion of his matriculation.

He always wanted to become a teacher; many people in his community became teachers and they regarded teaching as a good career. After spending a year of his life as a private teacher at a missionary school in Escourt teaching Maths and Biology, he became even more determined to pursue his dream to become a teacher. He subsequently changed his name to Thamsanqa, which meant “Blessing”, to avoid being recognised as a political activist. He was accepted at the Eshowe College of Education where he pursued a Science and Maths curriculum. “Most of the

lecturers were White and inadequately qualified to teach future teachers,” he argued. Soccer, at college was still very dear to his heart. He represented his college in soccer and it is here that he earned the position of “schemer”. He loved Science. He completed a Senior Teachers Diploma at Eshowe College of Education and then went on to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Zululand.

He started teaching Physical Science in Sithokozile Secondary in Clermont, an African township where poverty, crime and other ills of society thrived. He strongly believed that Physical Science enabled one to move with the times, to keep up with technology. Although he loves teaching in Clermont and he wants to “put something back” into this community in which he spent his entire life, he would like the learners to see “beyond Clermont”. His constant reminder to his learners is that only they can change their lives, only they can remove themselves from the poverty and hardship that they experience. He reflects on the 70s and 80s as periods when “White kids dominated the education scene and the education they received developed them into confident and challenging learners, while Black learners grew up with a complex”. He asks, “why?”

The South African education system has many limitations. He emphasised that the education system, especially at school level limits the freedom of choice of teachers, and it limits the choice of the kids. Trevor reiterated that to be a teacher in such changing times, just teaching the learner is inadequate. He explained: “Things are not well. We are trying to rebuild the world and the teachers must teach in a new way because there is something wrong with the old.” He elaborated further that the way he was taught as a learner and the way he was taught to teach was “wrong”. We have to teach in a new way so that we can make a better world. He referred to a song, which he described as one which rehabilitates him and encourages him to look for new ways of teaching.

The powerful thing about being a teacher is helping somebody, not only teaching a child but also developing a child for his/her future. He emphasised, “We have to teach differently.”

*Wake up, Everybody  
Wake up all you teachers, time to teach a new way  
And make them listen to what you have to say  
They are the ones who are coming up  
The world is in their hands,  
when you teach the children, teach them the very best you can.  
The world won't get no better if we just let it be  
The world won't get no better  
We got to change it, just you and me.*

(Harold Melvin)



Ans 'Incomplete Job'  
- '85 -



Mgubane  
 ↳ governing body  
 ↳ ex. Kalisi  
 ↳ 2 succ. & info supplied by DOE  
 ↳ Upgrade? B.P.

He believes that to be teacher in these times one needs to look beyond just passing on information to the learners, you need to consider the child's background because, "year by year there are new problems. Some children are hungry, some don't have any family and some are just in need of love. Look at the learner as a 'whole', consider everything".

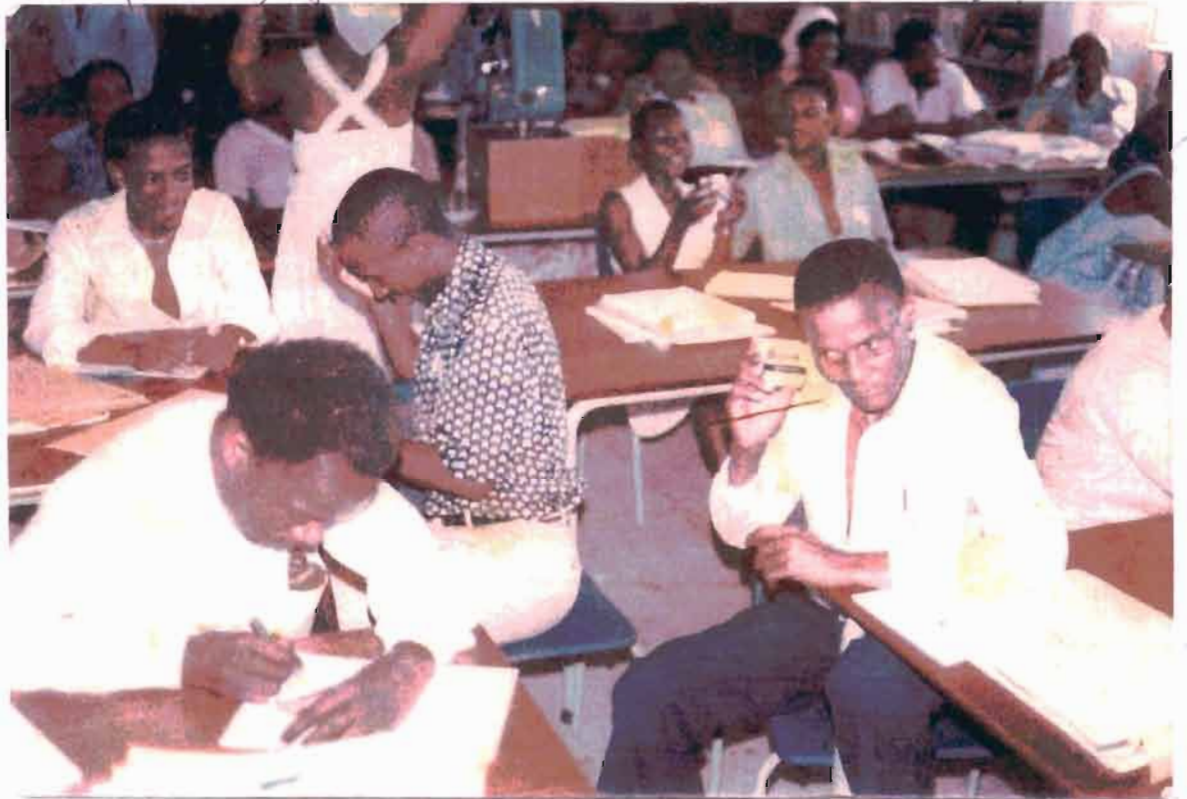
Increasingly Trevor finds that he needs to organise his own thinking, ideas and reading (journals and books). Looking at the education system in other countries and collaborating with other teachers helps him work out what is "okay and what is wrong". He completed a computer course in 1995. He finds Science projects like the one funded by the Department of Education in the 1980s, most useful. Given that the laboratory in his school was poorly equipped, he found the science kits offered to the teachers in this project enabled him to conduct science practical lessons that the learners thoroughly enjoyed. He attended these workshops every Saturday and became one of the teachers who designed worksheets that were printed and used throughout the province by all second language teachers teaching grades eight, nine and ten. He saw this experience as an important part of his professional development. He found that teachers who attended these workshops grew in confidence because this learning space allowed for teachers to practise their lessons. Watching other teachers enabled them to reflect on some of the problems that they faced in their classrooms. Presently the only forum that teachers have are the monthly meetings held in the Clermont area, where "model" lessons are presented and problems relating to the curriculum are discussed. Even though this is the only resource that teachers in the Clermont area have at their disposal, very few care to attend.

### **Some teachers just don't care**

"To be a teacher is like being a sculptor," Trevor said. He explained that the sculptor sees the idea locked in the piece of log or stone and he chisels out the excess to reveal the hidden form. "The teacher," he strongly believes, "has the tools to help the learner discover her/his potential that is locked within." Assisting learners who were financially unable to further their studies, or students who were experiencing physical and emotional abuse, brought him great joy. He remembered the boy he was able to send to Mariannhill boarding school. By the time the boy had reached his final year of schooling, he had secured a bursary from Sasol Refinery. He could not help but wonder the "fate of the boy if he never went to high school". He believes that the best thing a teacher can do for his learners is to develop their way of thinking about "who they are" and "what they would like to be and do with their lives, with their school education".

He remembers with a great sense of pride, Nomzamo Dudu, his student, who is presently practising as a doctor. His proudest moment was when she announced to the people in the doctor's waiting room: "I'm a doctor today because of this great man. He was my science

teaching yourself. → Teachers Centre at Ushulazi.



SEP group. - teachers from townships  
 Since Educ. Project around  
 Site. Durban -  
 ↳ organized by.  
 Brian Grey  
 new teaching strategies - endorsed.  
 ↳  
 Teachers not much involved in learning process.

teacher.” He adds, “It is moments like these that make your task as a teacher all the more fulfilling, it lights up your life.”

But to do this for the learners, Trevor believed that you have to be a “real” teacher: one has to be talented, dedicated, committed and not “just doing the job for the money”. He accuses teachers of passing the blame onto learners when results are poor, but he believes that it takes hard work from the teachers as well as the learners for improved teaching and learning. “Education is a shared responsibility,” he emphasised. He raised the issue of teachers acting like middle-class citizens when really they are working-class people. Because teachers want to live like middle-class citizens with the salaries they receive, their frustration of not being able to do so is passed on to the learners.

Although Trevor initially resisted the whole idea of continuous assessment and Outcomes Based Education, the need to be “accountable and out of trouble” compelled him to read the documents, “only to realise that they have only changed the terms”. Continuous assessment was something he had been exposed to “when we were kids”. He believes that these initiatives lend themselves to the professional growth of the teacher by way of encouraging them to become more committed and accountable. He added, “when properly managed it gives teachers self-confidence and the kids believe in their capacity to do things for themselves”.

Although he has tried to share with the other teachers his ideas for managing the OBE-Curriculum 2001 and continuous assessment, very few have expressed any “desire to change”. He found collaborating with teachers from other neighbouring schools most helpful. He explained that when he experienced problems in aspects of the Physical Science curriculum he called on Mrs Shinge for help, and they now work collaboratively, at times sharing their teaching in their respective areas of expertise. He added:

I enjoy working with other interested colleagues. I love Physical Science, I love the learners. This helps me enjoy being a teacher, and a happy person. I feel a sense of freedom working with others, discussing education because there is something inside of me that others must hear and know, that can change our lives and that of our learners.

Trevor was thrilled to add that Mr Ngubane, an ex-teacher of Sithokozile High and presently a member of the school governing body, was able to secure a sponsorship from BP to upgrade their Physical Science laboratory.



Dr.  
 Soccer field  
 driveway - with school athletes - community groups



No school - had friends  
 organized my local business  
 with my Dept.



Together with Mrs Shinge, S'bu and Hlengiwe, they formed the Clermont Youth League (CLY). He emphasised that this social gathering helped keep the youth off the streets by providing them with opportunities to develop their own talents, organisational skills and engage in “domestic” politics. He reflected that through the efforts of such a grouping, the township of Clermont has since enjoyed the “privilege” of having clean running water, ablution facilities and electricity for its community. Happy Hlope, one of the youth of CLY, is presently employed as a councillor in the Inner West Council.

Trevor enjoys teaching in his school, and expressed great admiration for the kind of support that he received from his principal, in allowing him the space and time to initiate new ideas. Working during weekends with learners, having an extra one-hour lesson in the morning before school actually starts, helps learners perform better and learning becomes more meaningful. Although some of the learners complain about starting school at seven o'clock in the morning, he reminded them that “good things don't come easy, and if you suffer for your education you are going to enjoy the fruits of suffering. But, if you take the short cut it won't last, like those buying false certificates”.

#### *In the spirit of transparency . . .*

Trevor found sharing the Physical Science programme with the learners at the beginning of the year in keeping with the spirit of transparency. From the outset learners and their parents were aware of what was expected of them and what was expected of the teachers. He made a point of asking all teachers to provide learners with their respective programmes, but very few of the teachers have complied.

As an ardent jazz fan and singer he started up a jazz group, and a school choir was formed. Zulu dancing became a regular feature of the more creative activities that he has encouraged. He has referred learners to social workers, provided lunch for the hungry and moral lessons have become an integral component of his time-table.

Trevor found playing soccer with the boys a very good way of relating to and understanding the learners. Together they have managed to form Clermont Celtics. Learners felt comfortable to discuss issues with him and this strengthened the relationship between the learner and himself. He explained how the games of soccer and tennis helped him explain concepts in Physical Science. He strongly advocated that subject content does not only “belong in the classroom. Teachers must teach beyond the subject, and teachers must use the subject as a tool to feed into society, to make it better”, he added.

Trevor's poem aptly captures his feelings about the kind of teacher he constantly strives to be.

***The teacher I am***

*Creating remote controlled robot kids is crime  
When teaching, a child must discover himself  
He must know his strengths and weaknesses  
Together we must mould the strengths  
Strengthen the weaknesses  
This will make us face the challenges of life.  
As a teacher I must create a complete human being  
Using Science as my carving knife  
I patiently shape up a being  
That will fit into the human race,  
With an open mind  
Contributing positively to the upliftment of the human race.*

(Trevor 2001)

Trevor believes that:

Being a teacher is not about teaching a child, but developing yourself to provide them with better ways so that their lives could be better. It is about life, it is about helping and sharing and if we can all do that I think the world will be a better place.

## TEXT SIX

**The super server**

👤 *Daryl Franks* 👤



*My frst Sermon.*



8 yrs

Daryl is a White male teacher and manager of a private school in Umhlanga Rocks, an historically White suburb. He teaches Maths and Physical Science to predominantly White learners who reside in this elite suburb. As a private school, the fees are comparable to other private institutions and only accessible to a select group of learners. Daryl previously taught at two government subsidised schools that were historically White in the provinces of Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal respectively. He resigned to become a part-time tutor and eventually set up Super Tutor, at which he is the principal and teacher of Maths and Physical Science. Super Tutor is a residential building that has been refurbished into classrooms and offices. Adjoining the main building is Daryl's living area, which opens out into a beautiful garden. Many of our meetings took place at the school, during which time extensions to the already existing building were being done and an additional second level was added. His two dogs were always on guard.

*I have often told my story  
to young people  
we can only really be happy when we are solidified  
not like a blob moving in space but  
a comet moving in a specific direction*

(Daryl 2001)

Daryl described his middle class home life as stable and secure. He also described himself as apolitical, and not really aware of the political environment because he lived in such a lovely "cocooned" environment in a northern suburb in Johannesburg.

His mother stayed home to take care of his brother while his dad worked. Although his parents were never regular churchgoers, Daryl became an active church member. His father was British and his mother was an Afrikaner, and they were not able to find a church that would accept them. He was involved in youth groups and by the time he was in standard eight he became a Sunday school teacher. He was youth Leader for the next 18 years.

Daryl always felt like a "second class" person while in high school because he was never a sports person like his friends. Coming from a strong arts background, in which his grandfather played the violin for the London Philharmonic Orchestra and his dad attended the Royal College of Art, it is not surprising that Daryl played the guitar, was a keen photographer, and enjoyed creating graphic images on the computer. He loved participating in the school's dramatic productions, much to the disapproval of his parents. This they believed had a negative effect on his academic grades.





STD. 7. (14 yrs.)

His performance at high school was not up to scratch. "Mum and Dad always compared me to my very bright cousins, Barbara and Russell." He added, "I suppose I was intelligent too, but I was just lazy and involved in a lot of other things. My church life was very important."

Growing up in a middle-to upper-class neighbourhood in Gauteng provided Daryl with a particular orientation to the meaning of success and wealth. Although Mrs D, the school guidance counsellor, advised him that teaching would be the most appropriate career for him, he did not intend becoming a teacher. His father was a scientist for Anglo-American, and he had introduced Daryl from a very early age to minerals and mining. He also introduced him to Don Enwright, the man with an unbelievable intellect, and who had been studying Geology through UNISA. Daryl eventually developed a fascination for rocks. Through the efforts of his father, who managed to secure him a place at Rand Afrikaans University for a degree in Geology, he was able to secure his leave as a photographer for the military intelligence, after just one year of national service.

### **My mentors**

Daryl commented that because of the lecturers he hated Maths and enjoyed Chemistry and Geology at university. The Chemistry lecturers, he added, "had a real passion for lecturing. They made Chemistry come alive and inspired us to want to study it. They did not speak down to us. They spoke with us."

At university he struggled with Organic Chemistry. He eventually left university to take up a temporary teaching post, during which time he made his fifth attempt at Organic Chemistry. He enjoyed being a teacher and believes that teachers, like him, who themselves experienced difficulty in passing, understand better why learners make the kind of mistakes they do. They also empathise with fears and misconceptions that learners have. He was able to turn his hatred for Maths into a passion once he was able to conquer his fear for the subject.

Daryl strongly believes that for him becoming a teacher, was a calling. He explained how he woke up at about 4 o'clock one morning because he distinctly heard God saying, "You have need for suffering" and he asked, "God, Why?" Daryl remembered God distinctly saying to him, "I've been calling you to teach and you have been ignoring me. I'm the Lord your God and I shall supply all your needs according to my riches and glory." He left university to take up a teaching post in Hyde Park High School in Johannesburg. Daryl believes that each of us has a destiny; he was destined to be a teacher. He emphasised that the whole essence of being a teacher and influencing lives makes teaching spiritual. He was convinced that teaching is a gift that cannot be ignored. He is often reminded of a song he sang in church as a youth.



young youth leader

*I have a destiny I know I shall fulfill  
And I have a destiny on that city on the hill  
And I have a destiny that is not an empty wish  
For I know that I was born for such a time as this  
Long before the ages God released me  
to walk in all the ways he has prepared for me.  
You giving me a part to play in history  
to help prepare a bride for eternity and  
I did not choose you but you chose me  
and appointed me for bearing fruit among  
and I know you will complete the work you have done in me  
by the power of the spirit God almighty,  
I have a destiny I know I shall fulfil.*

He soon realised that university taught him little he did not already know. That which they wanted him to know, he knew would not work in the “real” classroom situation.

Daryl thoroughly enjoyed his teaching at Hyde Park High and he attributes much of his success to his Head of Department and mentor, Jenny Nicholson. He commented, “For me the first three years were very crucial, and especially teaching Math and Science which is very strong on content.” He admits that he learnt more about the subject and its content from his mentor than he did from the Chemistry and Physics lecturers at university.

As a novice teacher, mentoring proved most valuable as it provided him with the support for the ideas and views that he wanted to initiate in his classroom. “Being part of a team is strongly lacking in most schools,” he explained. “Teachers”, he complained “often work in isolation, living in glass boxes encrusted with chalk dust. This does not allow the learners to see teachers as real people. Learners experience the relationship as a ‘us and them’ type of thing.” He believes that as a teacher you need to be able to transgress those boundaries that have been erected so that the learner sees the teacher as a “real” person. He firmly believes that mentoring of young teachers is vital. He went further to suggest that novice teachers should serve a period of apprenticeship in which time they may decide to continue, or if unsuccessful they should be allowed to leave.

The most daunting task he experienced as a teacher was the amount of administrative work which he found time consuming and often un-useful. This inadvertently landed him in trouble with the management, and to his eventual resignation from Hyde Park in 1993. He still argues that administrative work “kills the passion and the enthusiasm of a teacher”.







Daryl left Johannesburg to take up a teaching post at Beechwood High in KwaZulu-Natal. He described his teaching in this school as a traumatic experience. He had never taught in an all-boys school before and he did not believe in “caning” the boys. The first week proved to be “sheer hell” when fifteen boys were caned. He emphasised how he tried to fit into the system. “It was a case of sink or swim. I actually underwent a personality change. I became a harsh tyrannical bastard and that was something that I wasn't very pleased with.” What concerned Daryl was that he was not being true to himself.

He believes that the “respect you command as a teacher should not come from the position you hold or what you stand for, but for who you are.” He added that a teacher who has a high degree of self-esteem and self-confidence is a teacher who can get alongside a pupil.

Furthermore, teaching Science at Beechwood High School was a “cut and dried story”. He found that the Science curriculum had already been designed for him to teach and the notes had been prepared in advance and were “still being used seven years later with the same mistakes”. This he found disconcerting because he had always considered being a teacher a developmental craft, more especially because the learners were changing all the time. “Good teachers have a teachable spirit,” he argued.

After teaching at Beechwood, which was subsequently renamed Northwood High School, Daryl realised that he needed to “get out” of this situation. He argued that to be a successful teacher “one needs to work in a safe and secure environment”.

He left Northwood High and started tutoring learners in the afternoon after school. This eventually developed into a private school called Super Tutor College in 1999. He thoroughly enjoys working and heading such a school. He believed that getting alongside individual learners is when real teaching happens. Having the four P's: Preparation, Perseverance, Passion and Personality, gives him the satisfaction and enthusiasm to remain in the teaching profession. He never sees teaching as a vocation or as an eight to five job. Instead, “to be a successful teacher you actually have to live, eat, drink and sleep your profession”.

Daryl regards himself as a passionate teacher, passionate about teaching young people and passionate about his subjects. He considers his role as one of service. He makes reference to a church song, “Brother let me be your servant, let me be as Christ is to you,” to emphasise this view. He views teaching as a service industry and he adds, “as teachers we are called to serve. As teachers we also need to see our learners as clients who are paying for a service.” Because of the varied interests and talents that he had developed during his schooling years, he is convinced that

teachers should be developed holistically. He finds that his musical and drama skills form an integral part to his teaching.

He explains, “To be a teacher is to be an entertainer. It is not about standing up in the front giving lectures. I sing to them, it kind of just happens. Normally it is a song that will make them laugh. You need to keep your pupils with you, they need to actually hang onto every single word that you say and the only way that that can happen is for you to capture their minds with humor. I’m never sarcastic, I always make the joke on me, not on them”.

He believes that “learning is language bound”, and the different talents he possesses he uses in his teaching to make sense of the subject, “because individuals see things from different perspectives and as a teacher you need to create a teaching and learning environment that allows for those differences”. Being a teacher is like being a gardener. Just as you would provide the plant with adequate care (love, water), eradicating the weeds to provide the right environment and the space for the plant to bear fruit, so too, must the teacher care, love and provide the appropriate learning environment for learners to discover their true potential.

### **Like an open book**

According to Daryl, life as a teacher “is an open book”. He believes that learners need to know and understand where you are coming from, where you are going and what you have achieved in life so that they can be inspired to take that step forward. He enjoys the challenge of taking on a student who is a “struggler” and making him/her successful. He enjoys seeing the incredible value in people and the realisation that what you are investing as a teacher in another human being is working. This for him is an inspiration for him to go on.

He remembered with pride and fondness Roland Selmer, the student who invited him for his twenty-first birthday and openly thanked him for inspiring him to study and pursue his engineering career.

### **Having a teachable spirit**

“Teachers”, he argued, “should not see their career as a way to become ‘rich’, but as a chance to influence and enable change in as many lives.” He strongly believes that “teachers who don’t become passionately involved in their occupation do not influence lives. Teachers should be role models to their learners.” He maintains: “You’ve got to have a teachable spirit, and a positive attitude.” He added, “the most important thing is the teacher’s attitude, not the subject matter. If the teacher displays a positive attitude, and the learner is “praised with heart and passion for whatever little steps he takes forward”, that is when you start seeing success.” He



contemplating 16  
next step.

elaborated, “I have a passion for Maths and Science and people, relationships which gives integrity to who I am.”

### **Good days and bad days**

Daryl took on the role of teacher with all the commitment and realisation that there are bad days when the learners “infuriate me and there are days when they are a joy to me and I am a joy to them”. While he argued that as a teacher you have to become relevant and it is only when you are relevant that you can stimulate students. He believes that one needs to be an avid reader, and listener of current programmes, documentaries, and books to keep abreast with the latest. He summed up his teacher life as one that is two-fold; playing the role of teacher and parent. While he argued that teachers can never take the place of parents, he stressed that they should be approachable, as parents are.

The following poem, captures his thoughts and feeling about being a teacher

*Teacher . . .  
Teacher a different creature,  
don't be a preacher  
You're a farmer: till the soil that brings life  
Tend your flowers with love and patience  
Encourage the growth by giving knowledge,  
Insight and understanding  
prune, discipline, admonish, order  
so that lives will grow strong  
Pour your life into others,  
Make them beautiful colours  
When you're nothing to take with you, when you have left  
You will leave richness that will self-perpetuate.*

(Daryl 2002)

**CONCLUSION**

This chapter reflects the emerging learnings for me at the conclusion of the storied narratives of teachers' lives. Two levels of analysis are provided:

- How the storied narratives were told: details concerning the choice of representation of different narrative forms are explored.
- What was told through the storied narratives: details of the propositional contents is presented.

As the researcher it was interesting as well as important to learn how the interpretations "varied" in interpreting the "memories" differently. I discovered how the sense and purpose of the meaning also changed in my role as ventriloquist, evangelist and activist in producing the storied narratives. The storied narratives re-present selectively constructed information and through the employment of different representational forms I have troubled the use of the first person and the third person, through multiple personas and voices, inhabiting different thoughts and moments.

The first four stories attempted to maintain the researcher and the researched as co-creators of meaning, while in the latter two stories, the reporting was constructed predominantly by the researcher and the power and evocativeness of "the story" was lost in the intellectually constructed outline. Narrating the stories differently enabled me to explore ways of meaning making, changed my ways of thought and highlighted the active agency of researcher in different but interesting ways.

The act of narrating allowed for a possibility to see we are different people, learning from difference and from other ways about how to live a life. The story reconfigures time into moments, moments that can be studied. I see the possibility of understanding narratives with multiple truths and as such to explore the self as process and in a continued state of becoming. The stories become sites to other stories, a web of connections that are constitutive of teachers' subjectivities.

In constructing a variety of representations, stories moved around, alluding to an infinity of possible tellings. There is never a fixed story being told, no narrative closure. Stories are powerful means of understanding teachers' lives, and within the poststructural framework, life history approaches provided me the tools for understanding teachers' identities as fluid, never fixed, and continually in a state of flux.



Through conversations about their remembered experiences, photographs, songs and poetry, the participants and I co-constructed a research text, one that I refer to as a “storied narrative”. These storied narratives show a life as a unique “lived experience”, made up of relationships and shared understandings of the world and different from other kinds of existence. The storied narratives are but one facet to the cube, one of the multiple viewpoints I have taken in the construction of my work of simultaneous vision. I feel compelled to ask at this point, “What shaped the telling of these stories?”

In deconstructing what has been muted and elevated tells us of other stories, stories and storying necessary for them to make meaning of their world. As the cubist artist I felt compelled to move my stance. Shifting from a single unified perspective, I am able to look “below the relief”, beyond the coloured facets that seemed to protrude close to the surface in order to make sense of the intermeshing, intertwined and fluid relationship it shares with the fragmented, cubist background (refer to illustration, Chapter Three, 80). As researcher, I feel compelled to read between the lines and probe for the unsaid, which will add to another level of reality, and offer yet another one of the multiple interpretations to understanding teachers’ lives. For this study, I am also compelled to understand the social context that has shaped the telling of the events and happenings, which are crucial to understanding these teachers’ subjectivities. In asking, “How have these teachers, marked by the brutality and racialisation of apartheid in South Africa, created the conditions for desire of particular discourses and practices within which disruption and change happen in powerful and productive ways?”

If what I have explored is limited to scratching the surface, it does provide the best way to break through to the next level of understanding. This is presented in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Storied vignettes

#### Fluid images and potential spaces

**Cubist Principle:** Spatial ambiguity and multiple spaces.

*We cannot always be sure whether they are concave or convex, some look like chunks of solidified space, others like fragments of translucent bodies. The figures are essentially indistinguishable from comparable planes composing the environment in which they existed.*

*(“Culture Shock: Flashpoints” 2002)*

Employing the cubist principle of spatial ambiguity and multiple viewpoints, I have sub-titled this chapter “Fluid images and potential spaces”. This chapter written as storied vignettes, is my attempt to seek out an alternate way to work with, but not romanticise, subjugated voices searching for moments of social change through the creation of alternate strategies for qualitative analysis.

Chapter Four served to foreground the consciously articulated discourses in/through which the private/public discourse is constructed in teachers’ lives. However, still intent on meaning, and entertaining the possibility that all might not be what I have been led to believe, this chapter attends to the gaps, the evaded and the absences in local discourse, as a strategy for conceptualising the limits of conscious articulation. The process of identity-construction is one upon which the contradictions and dispositions of the surrounding socio-cultural environment have a powerful impact. And while teachers’ subjectivities are constructed within relations that are situated within discourse and cultural practice, they find it difficult to describe the sources and nature of his or her various identities.

The important fact that the experiences of teachers in South Africa are different, contradictory and complex needs to be considered in our account of teachers’ identities. The purpose of this chapter is to open up the category teacher to understand the other identity categories for our understanding of the complex set of interrelationships that exist across other identity categories, for example race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity in specific socio-cultural contexts. Such specificities are important to consider in order to understand how they have constrained as well as enabled teachers and their performance of success.

Apartheid education, as a framework, has impacted on the making of teacher. It is impossible to understand the making of teacher (identity) without understanding class and race codes that are constitutive to teacher identities. In poststructural theories, identity (teacher) is presumed to be created in the ongoing effects of relations and in response to society's codes. Defined as a function of society's codes or statements, and as an effect of practice, I want to show how power exists within and among discourse and practice and how the teacher is subjected to the effects of that power (Foucault 1980).

This macro layer highlights the blurring of boundaries between the individual and the social context. This is the spatial ambiguity that I will show in this chapter. By focusing on particular discourses and critical moments in the lives of these teachers, these vignettes serve to foreground or highlight selected positions of power (selected from the storied narratives) that these teachers occupy, inherent in the specific discursive positionings (codes) relevant to the description of the formation of subjectivities. The argument in this thesis is that teachers create the potential for performing their success but always within "concrete social circumstances" (Connell 1995, 86). Examining the ongoing effects of other cultural categories, including race, class, sexual orientation, I want to understand its impact on the creation of teacher and teaching as a discourse. I will also show how teachers invest in particular subject positionings rather than another in a different discourse.

Teacher discourses influences what happens outside the school and feed on broader national discourses of race, gender and class equality. The coalescence of outside dynamics and those within is taken into consideration in each of the storied lives. Written as vignettes, these stories offer a dramatic yet elusive discussion of particular positionings, (like a portrait with only the head and shoulders showing while the background is shaded off), the six teachers take up in these uncertain, and challenging times. Within these ongoing shifts between the individual and society, potential spaces open new ways for what there might be. Unlike the stories which were produced by the researched (the teachers in this study), these narrative vignettes are produced by myself, as the researcher. I must admit that searching for this data was a seductive process. However, as I began to understand this unidentified and unnamed data, I also needed to address my role – as the cubist artist would describe the moment of reconfiguration of space when:

Background and foreground shapes integrate, blurring outlines, with the edges looser and opened . . . and a moment of final liberation from the imitation of visual reality that challenged the Renaissance world of nature observed by means of the arbitrary principle of geometric perspective. (Arnason 1969, 129)

This chapter presents storied vignettes of six teachers written up as thematic ensembles to highlight selected and specific discourses and positions of enabling and constraining moments that have ongoing effects on teachers' lives. These vignettes provide the platform for me to ask significant questions about teachers who are being regulated and inscribed by discourse and cultural practices, and are able to simultaneously resist them to some extent and practice power in productive ways.

In developing these thematic ensembles in the form of storied vignettes, I was able to firstly shift my stance as narrator to another layer of making meaning in which I critically explore the effects of particular relations and teachers' response to society's codes.

### **VIGNETTE ONE: COLLECTIVE SPACES**

Hlo's personal history intersects with broader cultural changes, the challenges and choices she makes reflect the impact and radical shift in her views about gender and the social positing of women in the family, work and society. Up until the early 80s, woman, especially those living in rural areas (a context which generally lacks material resources and has limited access to schools), spent a life dominated by a privileged male hierarchy exerting authoritarian control. Hlo's life was no different. Although many households were financially supported by women who were engaged in unskilled, semi-skilled and professional vocations, women within the household and in the workplace were relegated to the powerless periphery.

As Hlo extended her personal account of her life, larger contexts became more apparent. Growing up in a African rural community, within a specific time and place, has made available to Hlo a limited range of meanings of what it is to be woman. Like many precocious girls growing up in a male-dominated household, she experienced and understood the significance of gender inequality at an early age. A central issue here is her discussion of specific cultural forms that contribute to asymmetrical relations of power. Her daily life was full of patriarchal drama: "*Father drank a lot . . . he was very violent with us, he would hit all of us.*" The use of violent punishment, coercion and verbal harassment was a daily occurrence to maintain male domination.

While she constructs the culture that exists as static and unchanging, Hlo invests her ability to resist these cultural definitions that are placed on her. Although she comments on her admiration for her mother and the unbounded love and care she afforded them as a family and a good serving wife, she takes on a questioning position with regard to these core values, marking the onset of her resistance to being treated differently. Her experiences of physical and emotional abuse from her father, her sense of admiration for her mother, a professional

nurse, who managed to remain strong and determined throughout the abuse, set her apart from her father whom she describes as irresponsible: *"I never really looked up to father in that sense of being a parent. Mother was the one who provided for us."* This knowledge of male dominance was further exacerbated by her father's discriminatory treatment of her brother and herself. She says, *"being upset for being treated differently, created in me that constant pressure of having to prove that I am female and I can do anything."* As a young girl, as schoolteacher and as member of the management team, she lives through the battle of the sexes.

As an African, Hlo's experience in the world of education, her racial identity and gender were crucial in shaping access to and success as an academic. She went to an African rural primary school where she excelled in her school work, an experience that provided her the space to challenge, disrupt and defy those dominant powers that marginalised her.

Faced with enormous unfairness and exclusion as an African and as a woman, Hlo found very little to lose when she attended *"one of the best Catholic boarding schools"* staffed by White nuns and one Zulu teacher. At this early stage of her life, her questioning position of the hegemonic values of that culture and her resistance to the identity made available to her by the apartheid state were evident. Hlo succeeded in reworking an alternate identity, one of resistance and rebellion.

Accounting for the multiple dimensions of Hlo's life in her desire for change, also maximises the multiple and potentially contradictory constructions in the discourses she sets up for herself. Perming her hair, which was against the school rules, and questioning the indoctrination of Christian values, were some of the more overt struggles Hlo engaged with. She described:

*There were no excursions and even the movies that we watched were about David and some story from the Bible. I was the first person to object to this. Why should we come to a place that was just showing something that we know and read in the Bible? If it is entertainment they should get us movies that we could identify with.*

This contradicted the dominant views that positioned girls as quiet and obedient. Being meted out severe physical and emotional abuse and being treated differently from the boys, created in her the desire to challenge and disrupt these brutalities. A central issue here is how boys, girls and teachers engage and which contribute to the asymmetrical relations of power. However, the potential to threaten them exists. Positions favourable to gender equality are



occupied in contradictory ways. She explained, *"I managed to mobilise the female students against this violation of individual rights."* Her resistance to these gendered stereotypes is enabled because she is educated.

This position Hlo takes up in the future as well as teacher and as member of the school management team. As much as they threatened to summon her parents to complain about her "political activities", she realised that "being intelligent" gave her added protection because, *"they wanted people like me for their marketing strategy."* Hlo invests in her ability to resist the fixed definitions that are placed on her as Black, woman and learner, and this resistance is enabled because she is intelligent. Her intellectual capacities provide her with the experience to question and resist forms of power to subvert the dominance of oppressive reason and (re)engage her with desire for different ways.

Within the oppositional discourses in which she locates herself, Hlo continually shifts in the significance of the stances she adopts. She admits, *"By the time I reached standard nine, I was the cream of the crop and I decided to concentrate on schoolwork and forget the hard life we were experiencing at boarding school."* While she seems to be keen on taking on a more "conservative" position as a learner, this is based on her need to progress academically, thus limiting the threat of being suspended like her friends. Within these discursive spaces that she creates for herself, she explains, *"I became close to my teachers and they also understood me for who I really am."* Aligning herself with the teachers also meant that she needed to adopt a more passive stereotypical role of learner. Despite this, her position offers her a sense of pleasure and moments to threaten the dominant forms of reason that articulate gender and race and class as a fixed and regulatory position. In this transgression, her resistance takes on a more self-reflexive and introspective stance and a more acceptable position as a learner.

Hlo shows how dominant and authoritative discourses, which restrict the move towards race, gender and class equality, are not immovable. In the English class, she successfully manages to exert her resistance to the cultural values underpinning education at boarding school. In an essay she was asked to write, she remembered with fondness her mentor Mrs V, the lady who taught her what it means to teach and respect the rights of learners. Being asked to read out the composition in the assembly reinforces her sense of who she is and what she wants to be, and confirms her academic identity as a site in which her identity as a African woman can be foregrounded. Rebelling against and resisting the core values within this apartheid construction foregrounded her potential for change and the potentiality for success.

Her decision to leave Edendale, *"because I don't want my life to end here"*, marks a powerful moment in her life for which she now claims personal agency. At university, pursuing Human Movement Studies (HMS) was something she *"liked because it was physical"*, but more important was the fact that it was different: *"there wasn't a single Black woman pursuing HMS. I felt strongly about this and I think that pressure of proving that I'm female, that I can do anything, made me realise that HMS is exactly what I needed."* Her need to be seen as different locates her contradictorily to the identities made available to African women by the apartheid state, identities of exclusion and inaccessibility to certain careers and opportunities. These ambiguities and contradictions create in Hlo the desire for change, for possibilities of new ways of knowing and being.

Through individual challenge, Hlo constructs a life with a potentiality for change, not only for herself but for her community: *"Where I grew up people are very poor and they were always saying to me, 'Hey Hlo, we depend on you. Go out there and do your best.'"* While it placed her in a position of power, the deep sense of connectedness she shared with the women aroused in her a deep sense of commitment to her responsibility as teacher. This is captured in this statement she makes: *"So there was always that pressure of having to do things not just for me but also for the community because they had this trust in me."*

Hlo reiterates how social context is integral to gender relations and moving out of a material reality that limits the articulation of positions creates the position for doing gender differently. Leaving the rural community of Edendale created possibilities for better ways. The teacher position offers her the space for possibilities to perform her success as an African woman.

In fashioning her academic identity, Hlo is also able to successfully negotiate her power as woman and as an agent for change: *"I got into a lot of trouble with the White lecturers because they could not identify with Black females who were as confident and direct as I was."* However, within such educational institutions involved in the propagation and selective dissemination of discourses, Hlo felt *"proud to have part been of the committee which was instrumental in bringing about change in the curriculum and assessment procedures. I managed two distinctions in my first year at Unizul and I ended up being one of the top students in the HMS classes"*. Constructing herself as agent, she locates herself in discourses that constitute and give form to her different subjective selves.

In her desire to change and the pressure to prove, she also manages to construct other related identities. Hlo describes how as "head" of the hostel, she had the opportunity to start a gym and aerobics class for her floor mates and the closeness she managed to forge later developed

into the “Women’s Interest Group”. Hlo reflects on the friendships she forged with the group of women “*to discuss issues that were close to my heart*”. As a leader she attempts to create a community of women through love and compassion for change and dialogue. These relations she sets up become clear indications of her decision to recognise her gendered and academic identities as potential terrain to disrupt and challenge those hegemonic discourses that silence and exclude. These alternate discourses are an expression of ongoing and changing resistance.

Hlo’s choice to return to her childhood community school in Edendale became a site in which her active engagement as a woman teacher is framed by the contrasting passivity, lack of involvement and motivation by both teachers and parents, and the general resistance to any desire for change. Realising from her own experiences how girls and women have been positioned, she was alert to gender discrimination and her intervention is enabled because she is “educated”. Consciously choosing to teach in Edendale offered her the space to assert her identity alternate to the dominant discourse that homogenise woman, especially rural woman. Within the spaces in which she shares a closeness and a deep sense of connection with the community, are disrupting moments which account for possible gender-fair relations to develop. She explains:

*Within this site I wanted to do more than just teach, and Mr Mihazi, the new male principal, was impressed with my hard work and supported me in what I wanted to do in this school . . . the staff who were predominantly male really did not understand who this Hlo was. They thought I wanted to be big in a small space.*

Being challenged by the unsupportive and arrogant stance of most of the male staff placed a constant pressure on Hlo to develop and be the best. With the support of the principal, she was able to negotiate her emotional, social and intellectual skills as a woman in her professional position, to disrupt and challenge existing forms of male power. In this way she claims and confirms power for herself with the ability to challenge and contest cultural definitions. Within the contradictory positionings that Hlo took up in the school site as a novice teacher, gender becomes a site of constraint and challenge. She asserts her power as a woman and as activist:

*I succeeded in developing in the learners a sense of ownership and empowerment and the potential for change. I taught them to look at the bigger picture...all the male students and myself walked to the beer hall in the residential area and returned with all the chairs . . . I realised on that day that being a teacher is not a way to get rich scheme, but it is about having a passion for what you do. I was*

*able to create an environment that was conducive to learning...to teach the best way I knew how, to make them interested in learning.*

Hlo's reference to "physical space" and her conscious shift from book learning to experiential learning foregrounds the cultivation of desire and informality as the aim of learning. She creates the possibility of being a different kind of teacher and better relations with her learners open up the potential to threaten. Positioning herself differently as facilitator, foregrounds her resistance to the stereotypical image of being teacher. These ways make teacher's power productive.

Hlo left Edendale High to take up a teaching post in a prison school for juvenile criminals. As the only female teacher and member of the management team, these conditions offered her the space for disruptive moments for progress and change. Within the multiple and potentially contradictory positions she takes up in this institutional site, the exercise of power by a female teacher enabled a more sensitive approach to the enhancement of the quality of human potential and indicates prospects of change for better ways. She explains:

*I felt that I was the right person to help them make that change, and I saw the potential of being myself. I think that is the one quality that I have to offer the "boys", the whole possibility of change and to believe in that change.*

While particular subjective positions open up for her emancipatory potential, she simultaneously disempowers herself in this process of self-empowerment. Hlo soon realises that challenging the male dominated teaching practices cannot overturn the effects of gender power. As she points out:

*When I started to question certain aspects of the policies, on language, and about learners wanting to pursue seven subjects; I was called up to the office, to be reminded that I was not the principal of the school but, I did not think it was right treating the "boys" at prison differently . . .*

Hlo's continued questioning, as a member of management, of the oppressive forms prevailing in the school, positions her as other in this male dominated arena. Within the particular context of the prison school, she lives through the battle of the sexes as the male teachers, including the principal, threaten to undermine her. The cultural climate that prevails does not allow for these cultural biases to be challenged and changed. Hlo points to the particular practices which inscribe unequal power relations. She experienced hostility, especially from

the male staff who had worked at the school for a longer period than she had but had never been promoted. While she emphasised that the space should invite the voice of the individual and the voice of the group, these discourses become exclusionary, making Hlo's voice less authoritative. She explains: *"The principal was not giving me the space to do what I wanted to do anymore, I was being ostracised from the "rest of the team" . . . I felt alienated . . . it killed the spirit of working as a team, I really felt messed up . . . I wanted to pack up and leave."* Her feelings of being imprisoned and constrained by the dominant structures are constructed as static and unchanging. Thus particular positions based on hegemonic masculinities are damaging for Hlo.

However, she claims and confirms her power to challenge and contest through her intellectual capacities and spirituality. Practices never occur in a vacuum (Connell 1995, 65). These spaces provided her with the sustenance to shift the significance of her adopted stance: *"I realised that being in prison was never a mistake. I really think that God wanted me here and achieve the things I did and still hope to achieve."* In her transgressions she reorganised her priorities, altered her perspective and embodied a range of relevant and useful repertoire of discourses, enabling her to realign with her different subjectivities.

Within the prevailing contestations, Hlo negotiates her professional experiences as a potential terrain for playing out the disruption and creating . . . new ways of knowing and being.

## **VIGNETTE TWO: LIVING SPACES**

Sydenham, a residential area for Coloured people in KwaZulu-Natal, was a place/space that brought Ursula immense pain, embarrassment, powerlessness and her fathers' untimely death. Her reference to some of the critical incidents when "being Coloured" opened their lives to inalterable injustice to the heart and mind, assisted me in making sense of the kinds of relationships and practices that she invested in and the meanings she cultivates in such spaces to align with her categorisation as desirable teacher.

Life as a Coloured trapped her in a Coloured culture and placed her in a racially segregated township. Exiled in her own land, her personal history is also reflective of the intersection with the broader cultural, political and ideological climate in South Africa. Both her challenges and choices reflect the impact of the apartheid legacy on her ways of knowing and being. However, emerging from these conditions are potential spaces for Ursula and the performance of better ways.



Ursula confided, *"I remember our family life being one of struggle, but there were good times that we spent 'away from home' in Swaziland."* She remembers with great pain living on the edge between her unique world with "Gogo", father, mother and her siblings, unable to enter the culture of the alien social world. The inalterable injustice her family suffered left her feeling cast as an outsider, as a person who did not count, destroyed directly and indirectly. However, within the discourse that serves to constrain and regulate her and her position as teacher, are moments of disruption.

As a teenager living in a racially segregated country in the late 70s, she remembers their daily lives marked by barriers, a hierarchical power-based relationship between the "Black" and the "White" population groupings. No matter how hard they tried to live 'normally' in their own country, as a young girl she never experienced a sense of confirmation from the world at large, for such confirmation was denied to her being 'Coloured', and what alienated Ursula from life, was White people. It was only the familiarity and commonality of relationships established in a 'space' outside the borders of this province, that their racial status as Coloured was affirmed. She reminisced:

*The many happy week-ends and holidays spent on the farm in Swaziland,  
made me feel at home. Swaziland is where my mother grew up as a young girl.  
It is there that I experienced the sense of freedom, great outdoors and  
adventure.*

Within the normative boundaries of apartheid, Ursula's race is rationalised as repulsive, her positioning as inferior, while simultaneously she experiences differential access to power in Swaziland. She realises that she can exercise power within certain spaces, places and people. Alternative messages do exist.

In Swaziland her exoticness does not make her feel like a "outsider". She felt safe, and free, in a space and place in which she need not fear visibility, and the great outdoors rejuvenated her. She experienced a sense of connectedness with the people and the environment. This self-knowledge of what she wanted to do and how she wants to do it, gave her confidence, *"that sense of to heck with everybody else, I am enjoying myself"*. Differential access to power happens simultaneously, in different spaces and places. The making of identity is thus fluid and also characterised by oppositions and alliances.

This connection later provides an important additional clue for understanding Ursula's choice of Biology as a college major. *"Back home and our happy memories returned to struggle and*

*pain.*" The following excerpts from the interview tell us of some these moments: *"One day dad decided to give us a treat, and he took us to the restaurant for supper. We were thrown out because we were Black. This really upset dad."* This incident and the many others she described constructed her life as apart from others. She described the times she went with Gogo into town, and they could not sit on the benches, use the "normal" entrances to the building or even the toilets.

Her father's death marked a powerful moment in her life. She went on to add with uncontrolled emotion but with a sense of determination, *"Dad's death was a 'wake up' call that we all needed"*. Ursula invests in her ability to resist and disrupt the prejudicial and her resistance is enabled through self-knowledge, the desire to discover *"who I am and what I can become."* In this way she claims and confirms power for herself as Coloured with the capacity to question. These prejudicial, oppressive barriers that worked against Coloured people are not fixed but dynamic and open to change.

Ursula's determination to renegotiate her "outsider and strangerhood" identity altered her despair and sense of disconnectedness to one of hope. *"Gogo was my strength, inspiration and my soul mate"*, highlights the special significance of her granny in her personal life/world. *"Gogo made me feel proud about being Coloured. She always reminded me, never give up, there is always hope."* Gogo's strength, love and caring for Ursula positions her with possibilities, to not fear visibility, not to "play down" her difference, and selfhood (Witherell and Noddings 1991). Within the domesticated space of the home, with Gogo, Ursula's uniqueness and difference was affirmed. Here she was able to question, to change, to hope and to act on the taken for granted realities and routines that seek to imprison her. She was alert to racial power-effects and hierarchies that constrained Coloured people and this signified her potential to question, change and succeed in life.

In coming into a sense of her own power, she tries to create a "new" relationship within the schooling context. In trying to acquire a more positive orientation to who she is, she constantly positions herself in relation to people who have shared the same experiences, to have strength and strive to fight against the atrocities of apartheid. She described Mrs L. whom she admired endearingly:

*Mrs Jacky. was my favourite History teacher. She was an activist who fought in the struggle for democracy and she instilled this in her teaching in class as well. My voice actually sounds like hers. That strengthened my attitude towards life. She was my mentor.*

In these spaces, Ursula realises that alternate ways exist, and that she has power. In re-negotiating her life as a learner, she positions herself relationally to people and to subjects that gave meaning to her life. She identified Mrs Jacky, her History teacher as her mentor not only because of the subject she taught, but spaces affirmed in positive ways. In these moments are spaces that open up that make her visible in the real world within public spaces in which she could question, challenge and disrupt the unnatural barriers that imprisoned her. *"Having Angela, my sister, as my Biology teacher made me determined to do better all the time, knowing that there was someone watching me all the time I had to prove that I am good."* Ursula reinforces her need for communities of affinity, teachers as well as family, as they give her the confidence to "step-out", reorganise her priorities and create the spaces to disrupt, defy and challenge the dominant, hegemonic forces that "trap" her.

While the choice to become a teacher was a serendipitous one, it came as no surprise when she chose to major in Biology and History. *"Biology is real, it's about living. Biology is life,"* she emphasised. This subject discipline offers her the space to explore the magic of creation, the uniqueness of life and the beauty of living. Biology gave meaning to her life, it also assisted her to make sense of her fixed homogeneous identity. Biology provided her with the space to negotiate her ecological identity. She explained, *"Although the lectures did very little for me, I enjoyed having to go out to teach and speak about Biology and the Sciences."* Engaging in such discourses, Ursula is able to create the spaces to resist and break old patterns of knowing and being. When she describes her experiences as a Biology teacher she reinforces her connectedness with the subject as a space where she can think, feel and act in ways that empower her. Biology affirms her, it makes her more active and productive.

Choosing to teach at Bechet Secondary School, which Ursula attended as a learner, enables her to honour her life experiences. In this familiar space she could choose how to exercise her power, to make her unique ways of sense-making visible through Biology. This school is a significant site in the reproduction and production of the "inferior castaway Coloured identity" which is further influenced by the harsh conditions of poverty, social dislocation and general material inequalities. These conditions as they operate in this working class urban Black school, fuel unequal race and class relations (Morrel 2001). In this space, Ursula realises her desire, despite the obstacles, to generate better human relations. This space offers her powerful moments to challenge stereotypical ways of being and knowing through her uniqueness, her different ways of being and doing.

This teacher position provides her with the space to disrupt the singular definition of what it meant to be a teacher. Violence against racism becomes the point of her practice, and an

extremely useful position to perform her success as Biology teacher. In so doing she also challenges private and public relations in making meaning of her life and the world. Through her position as Biology teacher, she consciously creates the “spaces” *where “we can be real, where we can see each other differently”*, spaces that can be shared, hospitable, open and safe, spaces where students can find their authentic voices and spaces that support solitude.

Blurring the private/public relation is a continuous challenge. In this fluid state, discourses enable and constrain her. In this shifting, ongoing and changing resistance, Ursula expresses her struggle:

*I love teaching and discussing issues on the school grounds sometimes, but many of the teachers look at me strangely as if to say, You are not really teaching the child, are you? . . . I don't like the cliques among the staff. I hate it. I'm me, accept me for who I am.*

In negotiating her identity within this institutional site, the traditional and dominant forces inherent within educational practice become evident as a constraining reality to the social visions her practices support.

She re-affirms her ethical and political limits when she articulates, *“I am different and I am not going to change for anyone. I like to look into the mirror and say, ‘Ursula, I love you’.”* These powerful moments mark a celebration of the dialectical notion of human agency. In the face of rejection of her “ideas” and not wanting to be part of the clique, Ursula’s mediation and response to the intersection between her personal aspirations and the structures of domination and constraint highlight her power of resistance. She is able to move out in resistance to the general apathy to change, to create a community where teacher and learners could provide mutual support and opportunities to develop a shared vision of hope. Within the familiarity of her family, and the open veld, spaces are created for her and her learners, to explore their life and living, in unique ways.

The blurring of work and family life that Ursula and her husband Keith have been constructing and reconstructing suggests several implications of a relational conception of identity. Multiple subjective positionings suggests a shift from the assumption of singularity to different degrees of integration and differentiation with the public role. Multiple identities are constructed and foregrounded in her teacher position, organised around demands, obligations and responsibilities. Once again Ursula threatens the stereotypical and habitual



ways in her position as teacher. This offers her rejuvenating moments to perform success by drawing strength from continually challenging her private/public relations for better ways.

### VIGNETTE THREE: SACRED SPACES

In Chapter Four, I described Eddie as the Indian teacher who teaches in a historically Indian school. Clearly in Eddie's telling of his life and his choice to become a music teacher, the relations he creates in this position have been based on the racial structures of apartheid. The continued seeking out for practices that reveals his desire to be a teacher who can "connect" with the learners in a way that makes him desirable, and that can evoke in them a desire to progress, is prompted by particular forms of racialism he experienced as an Indian.

Eddie's love for music was the main reason for his becoming a teacher. His love for music goes back to his early years as a learner, actively engaged in the school choir and music festivals. The church was another site where he could engage his musical capacities, further defining his participation in the creative dimension and characterising his way of being in the world.

His conscious decision to become politically involved in the Merebank Students' Society and the Natal Indian Congress, one of the political groupings created as a resistance to apartheid rule, signified a powerful moment for Eddie: "It opened my mind to things I never knew existed." His alliance with political groupings created another space that rejuvenated him and *"took me out of my little shell and opened my eyes to the rest of the world"*. He claimed: *"I never knew what was going on in Soweto and Umlazi."* Eddie's seeking out of discourses in which to experience the world in unique ways, moved him beyond his closed "Indian" society. He set out to integrate himself within the world at large, foregrounding his political identity as an alternate discourse.

On completion of his matriculation examination, Eddie was convinced that he would like to train to become a professional musician. However, his father's resistance to such positioning provides the lens through which his imagined future as a Black musician in a racialised context is understood. His father's words, he remembered, were: "What can you do with a music degree as an Indian in South Africa?" It suggests that there is something fixed about music and its reserved status for particular racial groupings in South Africa who have access to such "elitist" discourses. His father's rejection of Eddie's imagined future in it arises from economic dislocation and possible unemployment. Within the Indian normativity, becoming a teacher was a more secure option.



Although he initially resisted his father's advice to become a teacher, Eddie realised that attaining a teaching qualification was a useful and positive positioning for him to take up. This positioning offered him the space to engage with those discourses that he found most relevant to his personal modes of thinking and for his unique ways of making sense of his world. Within this space, he is able to engage with his academic discourses, train as a music teacher and also engage actively in the political struggles against the atrocities of apartheid. His active engagement in political discourses constructed him as a student activist and "trouble-maker", a construction of racial other within an Indian normativity that produces unequal power relations in the college at which he was being trained. As a perceived threat to a "homogenous" Indian student teacher identity, he suffered suspension from his training, and after re-instatement a few months later, he was confronted by a further challenge when he was blacklisted and transferred to a school in Cape Town, where he began his career as a novice teacher.

Becoming a music teacher enabled him to embody a useful and positive repertoire of subjective, multiple positionings as spaces for resistance and struggle against the discourses of authority. As a qualified music teacher and as a member of the teacher union, he was inspired by his music to disrupt and resist the prevailing dominant structures in his struggle for professional autonomy within educational institutions that locate such discourses as propaganda. As a flexible and responsible teacher who does not follow the time-table, he makes curriculum choices that invite diversity and ambiguity. He described education as a shared experience and a shared responsibility, a position in which power relations are fluid and shifting. Within the spirit of transformation, he argues, *"the image of the teacher has changed dramatically by and large, but unfortunately you find many teachers are still sticking to the traditional image which lacks the professional status."* He adds:

*SADTU (teacher union) has made great strides in trying to change the image of the teacher. Teachers have been given the opportunity to empower themselves, they have been given carte blanche to become the kind of teacher you want to be, and not the image the Department wants to see.*

Music provided Eddie with the capacity to connect with the world, and to critically make choices in his relations with that world, for the potential to change it and to be successful within dominant discourses. Negotiating his identity as a novice music teacher, was challenging. He explained, *"I just did what they asked me to do."* However, in constructing himself passively in this prescribed role he claims:

*It was like a musician with a musical instrument playing beautiful notes that nobody could hear. College education provided me with the tools, but that was not enough. I was not moving the audience. I found that the kids who passed the aptitude test . . . were not musically inclined but according to policy I had to force them to pursue music education. I found this most dehumanising.*

While alternative messages do exist, Eddie creates the possibility of being and doing teacher differently. Within these conflicting and contradictory discourses as a music teacher, Eddie described his teaching as a “dehumanising” experience, forcing learners and positioning them as passive, and voiceless people. Herein lie the possibilities for better relations in what he wants to teach and how he wants to teach music. The possibility of providing teachers the space to make choices based on what he/she feels and thinks about what he/she is doing in schools does exist. Within the discourse which serves to constrain and regulate the teacher are better prospects, which act against his responsibility. He thus cultivates a “desire for change”. With increased self-understanding and knowledge of his capacities as music teacher, he actively resists this position of domination. He says, *“When I finally found my feet and got to grips with the curriculum, I began to do things differently ... then the trouble started ... and I refused to persist with the oppressive kind of education.”*

In questioning and challenging policy requirements, Eddie was negotiating his professional status as a teacher. He openly challenges the traditional passive role that teachers are expected to “play”, for which he was castigated by the music inspector who verbally asked him to “wake-up”. At this moment the institutional space does not acknowledge and respect his individuality. The learning community which he seeks out is challenged and inhibited by the traditional group norm that asserts itself in a manner in which both speech and dissent is stifled. As an active subject, he resists, *“I refused to accede to the inspector’s request and I was prepared to accept the consequences for my action.”* This becomes one of many emancipatory, agentic moments when Eddie seeks out alternate discourses that enable him to understand the barriers that constrain and open up spaces for “new” ways of knowing and being. This conflictual situation shows that human agency and structures come together most visibly in opposition and resistance to hegemonic process, giving rise to alternate discourses. At this point Eddie intentionally chose to re-negotiate his teacher identity, and positioned himself separately and autonomously in his teacher role, one that required a strong sense of social responsibility and engagement in transforming society. Resistance and desire for change become the spaces for teachers like Eddie to “Hope for...”

This personal autonomy was a conscious decision informed by his understanding of his role as a professional, to be accorded the right to make choices. At the same time it foregrounds his political identity and the struggle for a greater democracy. Visiting Robben Island, the prison that housed political prisoners including Nelson Mandela, was yet another rejuvenating moment for Eddie. He was especially moved by the “cave” in the limestone quarry in which Mandela and his friends spent many precious hours discussing their plans for the Black people of South Africa. His repulsion at apartheid is expressed when he explains how cleverly Mandela and his friends kept the prison warders out by urinating in the cave. His visit is described in the following extract: *“It was one of the most moving experiences for me. I felt energised and I began to see my responsibility as a teacher just grow and grow.”* He experiences his classroom as a sacred place as well, where his agency as a teacher occurs in powerful ways. In further defining his responsibility as a teacher in relation to the “humility and care” which individuals like Mandela displayed in the struggle for democracy and freedom, he asks, *“How can one human being care so much and do so much for others? I want to be there for the poor and hungry.”* In foregrounding the context of poverty linked to apartheid, he also aligns himself with political freedom fighters like Mandela, signaling once more an alternate meaning he gives to his position as teacher. For him, his classroom becomes the “sacred” site for this struggle against the overwhelming sense of school life.

*“Being involved in jazz music makes me passionate about teaching and the process of transformation.”* Eddie’s music, a symbol of his own resistance to the racist exploitative ideology, arouses in him the desire to “connect” with the Black learners in his class who suffer a similar loss of assertiveness and identity. As Desmond Tutu (1988, 6) says:

*. . . even the bureaucrats were smart to ban cultural events and provide them the kind of education aimed at dwarfing the minds of Black children and so preparing them for a life of servitude. They knew that culture can undermine racist exploitative ideology.*

Eddie’s confidence to be able to contribute responsibly to the process of change is enhanced by his close affiliation to the teachers’ union that stresses the teacher as a professional. He realises that within this redefinition, he has the potential to initiate change. *“Treat teachers as professionals, who should be given the space to make decisions and facilitate their role in a way that is most relevant to them,”* is a core force that constituted Eddie as activist, contrary to the dominant forms and norms.

Within the discourse which serves to constrain and regulate the teacher are better prospects. Eddie creates the possibility of being teacher in a different way. *"There is hope, because there is still love in their hearts, and I have love in my heart."* He expresses acknowledgement of openness-to-all possibilities for human attachment and expression. Hope grows from his commitment to responsibility, the hope to imagine an alternative world. Alternative messages do exist. Power is exercised through his music, inspirational books and stories about "real" people. These ways re-engage Eddie with the desire to intervene the world in different ways, to make meaning and to change it. Thus teaching discourses which define teachers in a fixed and singular way have been revealed as regulatory and fragile and the potential to threaten them through alternate discourses exists. Positions that are created for performing success in the teaching position are occupied in contradictory ways and involves uncertainty. Not taking up these alternate positions means self-closure and imprisonment. Eddie says:

*I have such an immense responsibility as a teacher, and if by chance I shut that responsibility out, I am going to be that blockage in that pipe, that stumbling block in that web which in all probability will stifle the future generation. It is an immense responsibility I carry with me and I have to constantly imagine what will happen if I mess up.*

While a seemingly homogeneous and fixed notion of teacher will offer him security, these perceptions will "shut" him off from his responsibility and "block" the progress of learners. A separation of the private life from his public responsibility will result in a "mess up". The stability of hegemonic life comes at the cost of potential moments of pleasure and fulfilment and the "death" of a future generation. This is a favourable position from which to begin the work towards a successful life in the teacher position.

#### **VIGNETTE FOUR: PRIVATE SPACES**

Growing up in a middle- to upper-class neighbourhood in Gauteng provided Daryl with a particular orientation to the meaning of success and wealth, crucial signifiers of class and elitism, forces that have shaped and continue to shape his varied and contradictory subject positionings.

Being of middle-class background marked out the territory where pleasure, status and vocation circulated in close proximity to a life of success and wealth. There was always something forbidden about this culture. He was separated, cocooned, protected and unaware of the "false realities" within which his stability existed. Born in the middle 50s, and

attending private schooling (Catholic) till the late 70s and 80s, he was never aware of the crisis within the apartheid regime, which his African contemporaries struggled with outside this false reality. Daryl described himself as being a very timid person with a gentle spirit, a contradiction to a 'White rugger bugger masculinity' (Bhana 2002, 159). He was also "apolitical". The new transformation process he explained made very little difference to him and his position as teacher. Daryl suggests that democratic issues bear no relevance to a White person like himself. This assumption of Whiteness as an assumed norm making the salience of racialised identity irrelevant is not new.

Daryl's father was a scientist who worked for Anglo-American, and he had introduced Daryl to minerals and mining from a very early age. His father also introduced him to Don Enwright, "*the man with an unbelievable intellect, and who had been studying Geology*". Daryl's father wanted him to be a geologist. Clearly, this plan is based on hierarchical class/race structures of apartheid, an alignment to a particular imagined future of a rich, White man. Daryl developed a fascination for rocks, but his grades at school were not good. Repulsed by his own lagging academic potential, he explains this conflictual dilemma: "*I remember trying to crib a report card and I got into serious trouble for that.*" This dislocation he experiences is associated with a fixed homogeneous identity associated with being a White male.

Race as a claim to power is negated by Daryl's academic weakness. His parents continued to compare him to his two intelligent cousins, Barbara and Russell, but his results continued to get worse, indications of alternate patterns of being. While his parents continued to affirm and regulate a White, intellectual masculinity that framed a "good solid life" at the same time it produced a range of other subject positions for Daryl which work to make certain power positions accessible. Positions are shifting and contradictory. Daryl shows how these positions were not passively inherited but actively taken up by him to make meaning of his life and make visible his identity.

Generally White men and boys in South Africa are seen as privileged, and positioned as academically high achievers (Bhana 2002). With Daryl there appears to be contradictions in that he is part of the hegemonic group but simultaneously uncoordinated, not sporty and not academically inclined. The hegemonic pattern of White male and middle-class is not fixed and unchangeable. Daryl was not sporty, he was not academically inclined, especially in Mathematics (at which boys are supposed to excel) (Gilbert and Gilbert 1998), but he was an active member of the schools' Dramatic Society. He participated in every dramatic



production, and this ensured his visibility in school. During his free time he rode around the countryside on his bicycle.

Daryl became a devoted and dedicated member of the church. Differential access to power occurs simultaneously when Daryl's devotion to the church presents him as an independent agent acting without family ties, "*since his parents very seldom attended*". This space that Daryl inhabits, hints at a disruption of his parents' values and ways of being, as well as a critical time in his life. He remembers a man saying to him, "*if you want to live a life which is as exciting as going down the Amazon River on a raft, you have to give your life to Jesus Christ*". Daryl added, "*I did take on the Christian faith, although my dad was an Anglican and my mother a Dutch Reformist.*" He became very involved in youth groups and was a Sunday school teacher for the next 18 years. Daryl is able to develop an alternative to the dominant hegemonic pattern that has "intellectual muscularity" (Epstein and Johnson 1998, 181) and created the possibility of doing teacher differently. The making of identity is thus fluid and also characterised by oppositions and alliances. Dislocating himself from particular practices aligned to being white male and middle class he was able to open himself up to different ways of knowing and being. The alternate linkages and connections outside of his family enabled him to rework meaning and make visible identities as fluid and multiple.

In the same way, Daryl's particular status in the National Military is rationalised. Daryl spent two years serving his term in the National Service, where he engaged himself as a photographer, a hobby he developed while still a student at school. While Daryl may not be able to enact a desirable male, White masculinity through his involvement as a photographer, it presents a moment that disrupts the illusion of a hegemonic performance. Being locked away in some dark little room was also a way of resistance to advertising his less than celebrated pattern of conduct. He cannot meet the normative pattern of conduct here, but he chooses what behaviours are power investments for him. Symbolically, Daryl chose to see the world through the narrow lens of the camera, to selectively choose and portray his version of reality.

Daryl can exercise power in productive ways. He knows this, but he decides when and how he can choose to exercise power. For example, Daryl was keen to leave the National Military Service and take up a career in Geology at the Rand Afrikaans University, a position secured for him by his father although he was advised by the career counsellor at his school to become a teacher. Aligning himself to this career would offer him the means through which he could establish hegemonic patterns that confer a particular status. His repulsion at a career in teaching provides the lens through which his imagined future as a White middle-class male, is

understood. As much as he wanted to be a good Christian, and to serve, he also wanted to achieve success and wealth and maintain his stable and cocooned existence as a White middle-class citizen. Academic achievement would make him successful and wealthy, but this position maximises the multiple and potentially contradictory constructions in the discourses he sets up for himself. He wanted to be wealthy. He wanted to be successful and he wanted to be doing something that was of real importance, and becoming a teacher would not give him access to that.

Daryl's middle class, White family values seemed to have had a greater influence on his career choices. A degree in Geology, Daryl realised would provide him with certain capacities for "success and wealth", and create certain conditions for power. However, his dislocatedness within these discourses is revealed when he explains, *"I struggled as a student. It took me five years to complete this degree, managing to pass Organic Chemistry only after the fifth attempt"*. The dilemmas and struggles he faced and the experiences thereof cultivated in him the desire to break the old patterns, and he left university, suggesting an alternative to hegemonic pattern.

Daryl faced many contradictions and tensions, and he reached out for spiritual sustenance as a way of making sense of the dilemmas and tensions. During these self-reflexive and rejuvenating moments, the voice of reason answers Daryl's fragile identity. He struggled with the need to connect with a vocation that tugged at his heart (spirituality), but which he "believed" would not provide him with the resources to continue his middle class existence, to be comfortable, safe and stable. He struggled between his need to "satisfy" his parents' wishes to pursue a career as a Geologist or take on a vocation that would honor his "inner voice", a desire which he refers to as "his destiny". In these powerful moments Daryl realised that there were alternatives.

Daryl considered becoming a teacher as a useful and relevant positioning which would enable him to serve like a good Christian teacher, a hegemonic religious grouping of White South Africans. He realises he has the power to choose. Taking up a temporary teaching position in Highcourt High School, an ex-House of Assembly school in Gauteng, opened up spaces for him to teach Maths and Science. He wanted to teach Math and Science not only because his Geology courses had capacitated him to do so, but also, because he would understand better the learners who struggled like him. Daryl creates the possibility of teaching Mathematics differently, and a favourable position from which to begin to teach differently. There are definite social relations embedded in subjects like Maths and Science, enabling Daryl to enact a desirable masculinity through teaching such subjects. However, his prowess in Mathematics

will also serve as a representation of the mental strength of the male mind (Gilbert and Gilbert 1998, 19). Teaching Mathematics and Science would endorse his intellectual spirit. The hegemonic pattern of masculinity is changeable and this position is extremely useful for beginning to work towards opening up spaces to be and do teacher differently.

Daryl's choice in "opening" up a home and private school provided the space to resist and defy hegemonic and traditional patterns of practice. As the name "Super Tutor" suggests, it was also not accessible to all. While this ensures a safe and secure environment, it also secures the cultivation of a particular middle class value system, but it serves as a contradiction of *"wanting to serve as a Christianised teacher"*. As much as Daryl "escaped" from the "closely knit family unit" and the pressures of middle-class lifestyle, the need for a secure space, brilliantly points to the ambiguities that define and shape "who I am". He manages to construct a conjunct identity between two strong and persistent motives in his life: his dedication to the Christian faith through his service to humanity in his role as teacher, and the secure middle-class White male status as a private tutor in an upmarket residential suburb.

These experiences highlight the fluidity of the personal and the public. Living up to middle-class values as a young man disempowered Daryl. It was his spirituality that sustained and re-energised him to re-organise his priorities. Super-tutor as the name itself implies, constructed Daryl as one who has the potential for greatness, the desire to create something new and different, and to teach beyond what is "normal". In this "secure space", learners felt invited, secure and cocooned from the harsh realities that exist beyond the gates.

#### VIGNETTE FIVE: CHALLENGING SPACES

From my many readings of Trevor's personal account of his life, multiple positionalities have emerged. For the purposes of this study and in terms of the critical question that this study seeks to answer, I have chosen to explore his political identity as one such positioning and the discourses that he has taken up within the teacher position as a way of making sense of this identity. He asks, *"how is it that the White learners in the 70s and 80s developed into confident and challenging learners, while we Black learners grew up with a complex, taking in information that the teacher passed down to us without question?"* This adequately shows his need to reach into his own sedimented history and attempt to understand how issues of class, race, gender and culture have left their imprint upon how we think and act. More importantly, it creates the possibility of doing teacher differently.

Trevor, an African, lives in a township community in Clermont. Townships such as Clermont were engineered by apartheid to keep African people separate, apart and economically impoverished. Poverty and apartheid legislation created unevenness and a sense of powerlessness for the majority of the people. It is in the townships specifically, that official apartheid violence was used to quell the struggles against it. Apartheid thus validated violence as a way of dealing with power inequalities, producing race and class hierarchies and hostilities. It created the condition of differential public spending, and the provision of schooling also reflects this differentiation. White schooling reflects the material and human resources of privilege. Being a child of the 60s, Trevor spent his early years growing up in a township demarcated for African people and received an education designed specifically for African people. An education preparing them for certain forms of labour only. The schooling experiences for African people like Trevor reflect their particular class experience.

While primary education for Africans were accessible to many, it was only in the 1970s that there was a large increase in the number of secondary school students because primary education for Black learners was moved into secondary school. However, secondary schools were away from home. Like Trevor, many youth had to leave home to complete high school education in a boarding school, another apartheid construction to fragment and disrupt the lives of black learners. Leaving Clermont to complete his secondary education did little to change the educational environment for him. Trevor spent five years of his life at Inanda Seminary, a boarding school for Blacks. He described the general conditions as bad, saying:

*There was a shortage of qualified teachers and a shortage of classrooms. Teachers came and went. Teachers were poorly qualified and some with no qualification at all. Our Mathematics teacher was unqualified, but he was good. We did not have a Science teacher in Standard Nine and Ten. There was this guy that they employed as a private teacher to teach us Physical Science but he did not stay long because he did not know the subject. Life was tough but good. We learnt how to survive. I was given one slice of bread in the morning with jam or butter with a mug of coffee. We would not eat the porridge because it had worms. For supper at six o'clock we were given two slices of bread and a cup of tea. Very often I went to bed hungry.*

The learning and living conditions at boarding school continued to fuel unequal educational opportunities, reproducing through unqualified or underqualified teachers “dwarfed minds” that cannot challenge and question. Trevor describes this as a critical time in his life: “*We learnt how to survive.*” The crowded classrooms and the ill-equipped teachers assisted very little in improving the lives of the African youth. He found company with Shortboy and



Blessing from Alexandra Township in Gauteng as a space to challenge, question and discuss issues. There was also Mr S.D. Ngcobo, the school principal, who challenged the normative construction of authority and control. He spent many hours teaching Trevor and other African learners African jazz as well as Latin American dancing. *"He also taught us how to speak and write English."* Trevor describes him as one who prepared them for life. In the company of such individuals, Trevor articulates possibilities for better relations and power to challenge stereotypical ways through which education is regulated in African schools.

Trevor's involvement in the 1976 Soweto uprising articulates his repulsion at apartheid education and this alignment provides the lens through which his imagined future as teacher in poor African schools is understood and experienced. His participation in support of the Soweto Uprising makes visible the disruption of the homogeneous African learner identity. Branded as a political activist, he had a short period of imprisonment, a common form of punishment for African "trouble-makers". Developing an alternative to the dominant hegemonic pattern of *"being a passive unquestioning Black"*, this activist position and practice of power makes visible his contestation against apartheid education. This period marked a critical time in his life. He completed his formal secondary education to train as a teacher, the onset of his personal involvement in the fight against apartheid education and the birth of his working class identity, challenging the pattern of African teacher identity as fixed and unchanging. Within the discourse that constrains him, he hints a resistance to such a positioning and confirms power for himself with the ability to challenge and change for better ways. When his subsequent blacklisting prevented him from gaining access to Eshowe Training College, he realised that he could exercise his power differently. He changed his name.

Trevor experiences his teacher role as a great responsibility to society. He sees the youth as instruments in the shaping of African identity within the new democracy. He realises that the youth can precipitate or inhibit the process of change in society. Therefore his role as teacher in a changing African society was dialectically linked to the active intervention at the level of youth learners, to counter the degenerating cultural forms which were becoming increasingly endemic in his community: crime, violence, alcohol and drug abuse. He confided:

*To be a teacher in such changing times, just teaching the learner is inadequate. We have to teach in a new way because the way we were taught was wrong. We were just given information.*



He emphasises the centrality of the teacher in these changing times, particularly African teachers and their role in determining the future of South Africa, because they are able to mediate and define the educational process. But he realises that “just teaching” the learners will not change the way things are. He explains in the following extract:

*Teachers must not just teach as the department would rightly expect teachers to do, teachers must be more actively involved in the democracy, in transforming society . . . and through transforming themselves and their practices learners will be better equipped to change future society.*

Once more, his positionality as teacher becomes a site to foreground his political identity, a process that inevitably ensures his commitment to teaching and learning discourses. Contrary to the images of violence and rioting to which African schools and teachers were aligned, and which Trevor confirms, “*has resulted among youth, social crime, disaffection from schoolwork, and gangsterism*”, reproducing the hegemonic structures, Trevor believes very strongly now that “*teachers need to keep out of that kind of resistance, keep out of trouble*”.

Contrary to the normative structures and bureaucratic control which confer particular oppressive homogenous meaning of what it is to be a teacher, he argues that teachers need to “*resist their own authority, something they were exposed to as learners, when information was just passed on to us*”. In striving for accountability as teachers in these changing times, “*teachers must not just teach, they must take students experience into account, and ‘stories’ are an integral aspect to one’s teaching*”. He realises how important it is to understand “*what society has made of us, what teachers need to believe in and how to minimise the same effects on the students*”. Within these complexities, he seeks out alternate practices as spaces to imagine the not-yet. He points out that for education to be emancipatory, it must be able to stimulate learner’s imaginations, their passions and intellects so that they will be moved to challenge the social, political and economic forces that weigh so heavily upon their lives. Trevor creates the possibility of doing teacher differently, and power positions are fluid.

“*More and more I need to re-organise my own thinking and ideas,*” he adds, a reminder to himself of the alternatives that exist. Unequal educational opportunities can be addressed by teachers:

*Reading journals and books, looking at the education system in other countries, attending workshops and collaborating with other teachers, helps me work out what is okay and what is wrong.*

However, in cultivating the desire to continue to struggle, resist and question the dominance of oppressive reason that he and other African teachers were taught and learnt, there needs to be continuing agentic shifts in consciousness as a site for new ideas, for what might be. “*To rehabilitate oneself, because what we were taught was wrong,*” he emphasises. Through self-reflexivity, he argues, there can be more creative forms of mediations within the dominant discourses that have been set. Being reflexive contradicts the dominant discourses which position teachers as “implementers” and sole producers of knowledge – a power position. Dominant and authoritative discourses that restrict teachers from unique experiences in different ways, are not immovable. The potential to threaten them does exist.

While Trevor realises that the school is a formal institution linked to the state, within which structural and ideological discourses silence and alienate teachers who desire change, it can create opportunities to develop new ways of knowing and being. Through particular collective culture, ideas can be discussed and challenged. Continued questioning of these normative structures can assist teachers to change “*how we taught and learnt*” for new ways. While the teachers in his school choose to address their “disadvantaged” status through the material environment that they inhabit, he stresses the need for an alternate perspective, through professional development and collegial support. He explains:

*The degree of intellectual and moral leadership for the process of transformation necessary for the construction of a new nation of teachers also happens through regular workshops attended by teachers in our respective regions.*

The experience derived from these alternate practices creates alliances and lends credence to the extension of democratically informed social relations in other public spheres. Even as Trevor constructed his academic identity as a committed and dedicated teacher, we cannot dismiss that it was also a political task as it made teachers better informed citizens and more effective agents for transforming wider society.

Social forces in his life and his music “rehabilitate” him and encourage him to continue to look for new ways of teaching, to be creative and open in the struggle for transforming his society. The song he referred to “Wake up, Everybody” is one such powerful moment when Trevor articulates practices that open up rather than close down spaces for potential change.

**VIGNETTE SIX: SEDUCTIVE SPACES**

Anna's desire to excel becomes a powerful force in shaping her experiences as a teacher. Being the author of multiple meanings and desires, her life story is an interesting exemplar of understanding how she continually positions herself in opposition to the dominant discourse within the different educational settings she consciously and unconsciously chooses to experience, and foreground her individualism. Unlike the other vignettes, Anna consciously attempts to be "Exotic Other" in the contexts she chooses to work. In this section, the telling of Anna's story is presented in the form of different layers, each offering different interpretations of the same plot of events. The aim is to resist a linear interpretation, and to show how researching the everyday world of teachers' lives and understanding how they think, live and know, meant that I have to be in the middle of things. This is the way I have chosen to represent the tensions, the challenges and possibilities and how I had to deal with the messiness of it all.

Her desire to "*be and do the best she can no matter what the circumstances*" enables her to take up a range of conflicting discourses that position her oppositionally. During these moments she creates possibilities to "*be active, productive and display the capacity to change and defy order, break old patterns and create the spaces for different ways of knowing.*"

**Anna, the outsider**

Anna's story, revealed to me the story of a stranger. For many years after her arrival to South Africa as a British immigrant, she found herself being part of another world that she did not inherently belong to, and not being fully part of, a world in which she often came up to be very different – very other. Being British, the type and degree of her strangerhood varied. As much as Anna wanted to enjoy the experience of inclusion, her attempts to be open and be receptive to exchange, were hindered by her "dualistic status". While she wanted to enjoy her life as a White South African female, her continued shift to remain and "do" as a British citizen prevailed. Being British constrained, as well as enabled her. She knows she can exercise power and decides when and how to use it.

Despite living in South Africa, the strong ideological umbilical cord between her British status and her South African residency had not been severed. She remembers with much fondness her life in England, her teachers and the blossoming of her singing career. When reflecting on her move from England to South Africa, there are signs that are symptomatic of a fractured and dislocated identity described by her infantile desire never to give up her British citizenship, a duality which is referred to as the mind/body split. While her "British" identity enables her in learning discourses (Shakespeare and History) and made her believe that she

had a sense of a special and sovereign identity, it also belies the dislocation she experiences by virtue of her gender and class. As little girls she and her sister were very lonely in the neighbourhood they lived in, because they had no friends and they were not allowed to play with the Indian children from across the road. She confessed, *"My sister and I spent our days alone until my mum arrived home at six o'clock every evening."* While she experiences her race as something fixed and immovable, her idea of *"wanting to play with the Indian"* hints at alternate messages and provides the condition for exploring the unfamiliar and strange.

Wanting to be challenged is a seductive experience for Anna: to be able to explore her strangeness within and without her, to "cross-pollinate" ideas from within and without, from one to another, from one place to another.

As a young girl, Anna explained how, together with her twin sister, she faced the wrath of their Afrikaner teacher. In this construction she described, *"Mrs. Lyon my grade two teacher was Afrikaner and she didn't like us British. When Gina and I came into her class she pushed us aside."* Contradictorily, Anna takes up a teaching position in Open Air, an Afrikaans speaking institution. The following extract describes her experience:

*I hated Open Air. From the minute I walked in. I walked in to the staff room and "die hele vergadering" was in Afrikaans. I walked in and the whole meeting was Afrikaans. From day one I was ostracised because I could not answer in Afrikaans. I felt very uncomfortable speaking the language. The staff did not make me feel welcome, more especially Mrs Steenekamp, the head of department in an all Afrikaner medium school. I was an uitlander. I was teaching a subject I didn't know on higher grade in Afrikaans, a language I never really knew.*

However, there are contradictions to this deficit. Her position as British works invisibly as a claim to power (as historically privileged). Constructing herself as exotic other is reinforced further when she admits, *"I refused to nationalise and give up my British passport. There is no way under the sun that I would take allegiance to the flag and a country that I did not believe in politically."*

The mind/body dualism is a clear explication of a fragmented and contradictory self, one that privileges, authorises and legitimates particular subject positions while simultaneously (de)authorising, (dis)privileging and (de)valuing others. Within these conflicting discourses, Anna faced many contradictions, ambiguities and challenges. Anna searches across the

different sites, pivoting her identity, her self-representations and her audiences with her mobile positioning of contradictions. As author of multiple selves, she relentlessly searches out for “pigeonholes”. The making of identity is fluid and characterised by oppositions and alliances.

Her teacher position here also foregrounds her desire to be challenged by the unfamiliar and unknown, an appropriate description for an immigrant. This experience not only became the nexus for power to be exercised in productive ways, disrupting and resisting homogeneous and unchangeable notions of ‘the Afrikaner Identity’ as well as stereotypical ways of thinking and working. This she points out when she says, *“I taught against all odds, I even took the learners in their wheelchairs to the sugar terminal.”* Within these contradictions and tensions as “stranger”, and challenged by the “strangeness” she locates herself in, Anna opens up spaces for disruptive moments to perform her success.

### **Anna, the English**

Choosing to teach at Plessislaer, a technical college for Blacks in the heart of Imbali, an African township in Pietermaritzburg, was yet another cross-pollinating experience for Anna. She confirms this when she says, *“My experience in teaching the deaf prepared me well for teaching second language learners.”* But, her desire to teach in this specific context, again locates her as exotic other as well as one with linguistic purity and English arrogance and superiority. She explains, *“The students came from as far as the Transkei and other rural areas. They could hardly speak English when they got there but we somehow got them through”.* This foregrounds how such subject positioning is dependent on fashioning her superiority. In this space, her power works in productive ways to develop specific skills and capacities for specific types:

*I trained all the staff at Plessislaer in computers to ensure that lecturers’ knowledge was sufficient to cope when teaching. I taught all the administrative staff as well. I made them all computer literate. I also trained lecturers countrywide on word-processing in a workshop organised by the Department of Education and Training in Pretoria.*

In this way she validates and celebrates a particular form of superiority and performance of success. She confirms this: *“1994 was a happy year for me. I was asked to act as senior lecturer in Computer Studies.”* She likes the challenge, the uncertainty and the risk taking involved in new practices, ideas and discourses. The practice of power is thus dependent on performing particular strategies or methods, which include teaching drill lessons in typing for



the school inspectorate, employing music. While this shocked the inspector, she added, "He looked at me and remarked: *"I have never seen such an excited teacher and such an exciting lesson like this before"*. It enabled her to disrupt fixed notions of teacher and what teachers do.

Within the insitutional site of Plessislaer, fashioning a 'linguistically superior identity' creates conditions for power to be reconfigured and displaced in multiple ways. Within this changing and shifting position she also creates the condition for learners to become producers of knowledge, *"teaching me to speak Zulu"*. Blurring teacher taught power relations becomes a pleasurable experience. When she invites Petronella to live with her, she creates another space in which she disrupts what it means to be a teacher, the normative context of Whiteness, and her linguistic superiority. The following extract taken from her story explains this. *"Miss B, You don't see colour, do you? Why don't you see colour?"* She explains her reason for this, *"I want to learn more Zulu and with you staying with me it would much easier for me."*

She also described the party she had at her home for the students. *"I think it was the first time that these students had ever been into a 'White area'. We had a party at my house and two taxi loads of students arrived. They party just as we do. We had one beautiful evening and I learnt a lot."* This explanation reiterates power relations as fluid and can be blurred by learners and teacher. It simultaneously enhances her desire for cross-pollination.

### **Anna, the White woman**

Once more, Anna chooses to leave Plessislaer to teach in Cato Manor Technical College, a historically Indian institution staffed predominantly by Indian males, with the exception of the principal who was a White male. While she perceives herself as a threat to the homogenous Indian identity associated with this institution (indicative of the inferior position that Black schools generally occupy in South Africa), her power derived from an historically privileged race group is simultaneously negated by her gendered identity. Within these contradictory positions she occupies, lie the prospects for better ways of being a teacher and for performing her success.

Further readings reinforce Anna's racialised identity as a powerful discourse competing for dominance as ways of giving meaning to her world. She explains, *"taking up her managerial position at Cato Manor, left her feeling isolated"*, and *"I wanted to pack up and leave"* because the Indian lecturers challenged and resisted her appointment. While such a position holds authority of which she was aware, she experiences this discourse as exclusionary. Differential access to power happens simultaneously. She says:

*I wasn't really welcome from the day I got there. I was really hurt by some of the comments that were made by the male staff. But I can't help the colour of my skin as much as anyone else can't help his or her colour. I still remember the animosity that was directed at me. Being the person that I am, I could not accept it. The lecturers were not giving me a chance to see me for who I really am. I cried many times.*

The mind-body dualism that is imposed upon her in this institutional context is a struggle that results in her realising she has the power to change. In reconfiguring her “White visibility”, she emphasises, “*I had to show the staff that I am not just talk, but a person of action*”, and in so doing she was able to invert and invent her authority in new ways. In other words challenging the mind/body relation, she wanted the staff “*to see me for who I really am*” and she resists the fixed and immovable race position and opens up spaces for powerful moments of being and doing teacher differently. The realisation that alternative messages exist is expressed by her comments about “*being really appalled by the condition of the environment, I cleaned up the place*”. Within this position, she disrupts the homogeneous White privileged and superior identity by actively drawing attention away from her race and moving out of her managerial position to physically changing the environment. However, in doing so, she simultaneously maintains what she values and what she does not, and within these are powerful moments in which she performs her success. Thus contradictory discourses with differential access to power proliferate.

Annas’ conscious shifting from institutional contexts that welcome both silence and speech reinforces her desire to explore teaching and learning spaces where words are not the sole medium of exchange. Choosing teaching and learning discourses that emphasise other ways of teaching and learning focuses on her unique subjectivities and experiences where education happens with silence (deaf, and other physical challenges) as well. While her own training as teacher limited her experiences as a teacher, as author of her multiple selves she constructs herself as an active subject, with the power to be creative and to locate herself in discourses that challenge traditional ways of thinking about teaching and learning. As she flitted from one country to another, from one educational site to the next, she appropriated different knowledges and experiences that elicited different forms of exchange in the different institutional spaces. Her colonial identity endowed her with attributes that enabled her to challenge barriers in some instances, but alienated and excluded her in others. Nevertheless, new educational spaces cultivated in her the desire to challenge and create newer forms of exchanges as spaces for unique possibilities and different forms of knowledge.

**CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I have focused on the complex and multiple-interlocking ways in the formation of teachers' subjectivities and the making of teacher.

Many different people are slotted into the category teacher, and their differences across other identity categories have and continue to be subsumed under the single identity category teacher, in order to be manipulated and oppressed by narratives already codified by others and populated with others meanings. In this chapter I have troubled the structures that oppress teachers. Understanding teachers' lives through life histories has opened up the category of teacher as a single identity to a framework in which other categories (race, sexual orientation, gender, class) are able to explain the complexity of everyday lived experiences and why teachers make the choices that they do. The vignettes selectively identify particular discursive positionings within the bizarre framework of apartheid in and through which all six teachers in this study have been produced into relations of power. Teachers' personal biographies and experiences (of family, community life, schooling experiences) are shaped by specificities of race, class, gender, and have been identified as the crucial sites to understand the construction and regulation of teachers' identities. It is through these specificities that these individuals can become powerful or powerless depending on the terms in which her/his subjectivity is constituted, as subject or object.

The meanings that are cultivated in the positions that teachers invest in across these other identity categories are constituted through the range of discourses teachers locate themselves in their everyday experiences. Simultaneously, the discourses influence the practices and relationships teachers invest in, to resist being slotted into hierarchical grids that serve to regulate and oppress teachers. Meanings are continually being reworked and can be strategically interpreted. Agency of teacher is therefore continually open to formations that are not fully constrained in advance and identity is constructed in the desire to make sense of the world in better ways. Meanings and identity produce each other in a dynamic manner. Therefore any attempt at understanding and exploring the formation of teachers multiple, fluid and complex subjectivities requires an account of the positions teachers invest in, and meanings are produced and reproduced in the identities of successful teachers.

Making visible the specificities in and within each life points to the variation in the construction of teachers' identities, and also varies the potential for change. Individuals constituted as subjects and objects within a particular framework are produced in that process into relations of power. For example, the experience of inhabiting the identity of African male (Trevor) is very different from White male (Daryl), but also different from White female

(Anna). The process of identity construction is therefore one upon which the contradictions and dispositions of the social context have a powerful impact. However, meaning of what it is to be African male, African female or White female as the storied vignettes have shown, can be strategically reinterpreted, reworked (for example Hlo as manager). According to Spivak (1993, 6) we refigure ourselves through “deidentification”.

Foregrounding these individuals through categories created by discourse and social practice in the vignettes highlights how categories function to create regularity, control and exclusion. Though they are regulated and inscribed by discourse and cultural practice, the teachers have created a range of possibilities to resist those normalising structures and forces of oppression by moving and locating themselves in alternate discourses where their unique ways of experiencing the world are made possible. Identity is thus an ongoing activity, and teachers’ identities are created in and through particular social relations and are deeply infiltrated by race, class and gender issues.

In the case of the teachers in the study, what is highlighted here, is that power is never uni-dimensional. It is exercised not only as an act of resistance to the hegemonic forces, but as moments of cultural and creative expression. Within particular homogenous contexts created by apartheid, teachers have ascribed particular meanings to themselves, and the people around them and their world. For example, Ursula has learnt that she is Coloured, female, working class, teacher/facilitator, with all the baggage of complex and contradictory meanings and significations such concepts imply. And as much as these labels had the potential of ‘closing spaces’ for her, “emancipation only became possible within such formations through resistance and continued shifts, for example becoming a Biology teacher. Through the adoption of alternate discourses and practices, and the creation of a range of discursive possibilities, these individuals view each “new” situation in unique ways, relevant to their subjective self.

To illustrate by example, I would make reference to the second category of storied vignettes. Anna, the White woman and an emigrant to South Africa, continues to experience her life through a mind/body duality. While she locates herself as a South African citizen, a position (in body) she experiences with uncertainty and immense challenge, ideologically (in mind) she still remains British. Through continued shifts between the two she constructs herself as subject with power and knowledge to be challenged and seduced by the “unknown” as one that is unfamiliar and exotic. In such challenging contexts, her agency as subject is continually reconfigured and renamed as is the subject itself.



While the residues of domination linger heavily within these storied vignettes, as subjects with power and knowledge they dismantle the very categories that narrate them, resisting the sedimented pillars of apartheid and the dominant, oppressive structures that want to group them with others of its kind in various structures to “silence” them. I hear them struggling with the tensions as they consciously and unconsciously locate themselves in a range of discourses, seeking for moments of possibilities to perform their success. In writing up the sixth vignette, Anna the English, Anna the White, Anna the British, I have shown that power exists within and among discourse and practice. These multiple positions explain how Anna constituted as subject and object within a particular framework, is produced by that process into relations of power. While she exhibits agency as she constructs herself by taking up one discourse and occupying particular positions in it (as White woman in an all Indian staffed technical college), she is also subjected, forced into subjectivity by those same discourses and practices (Alienated from the staff as White woman). As manager, she was able to actively construct her identity in an alternate discourse, in which her power was produced in more productive ways. Spivak (1992, 803) says, “Our lesson is to act in the fractures of identities in struggle, in the struggle filled passage from one position to another”(Felman 1987, 89). We need to know what happens in these fractures, these agentic moments in and through which the subject can be constituted again and again. This implies that the subject is open to formations that are not fully constrained in advance (Butler 1995, 135).

While these vignettes have shown how the six teachers braided the specificities of race, gender, class, and ethnicity into their biographies in which they moved from hot spots to safe spots, sliding from Coloured castaways to dandelion sowers, from abused daughter to first woman manager, I want to move a step further and ask, how is it that these teachers become available to a transformation of who am I?, and what enables those tiny but explosive moments in the individuals self that refuse humanisms’ singular grid of normalcy and regularity? These answers will not emerge within an essential, autonomous self, but in relations among a multiplicity of forces, between the individual (desires, interests, needs) and the “plethora of codes produced by regulating discourse and practice” (St Pierre 2000, 504).

Opening up the category teacher to include other categories (differences across other identity categories) makes teachers’ lives a fertile site to understand what it means to be and do teacher differently. The next chapter compels me to break open the codes and explore this agenda of agency through practice.



## CHAPTER SIX

# Agenda for agency

## Patterns of desire for change and continuity

### Orientation

**Cubist Principle:** The Geometrical Framework imposing a new kind of integrity and continuity.

*The figures constitute a unique kind of matter, which imposes a unique kind of integrity and continuity on the entire canvas. Each individual figure is united by a general geometrical principle which superimposes its own laws onto the natural proportions . . .*

*(“Culture Shock: Flashpoints.” 2002)*

In this chapter, I turn to view another facet of the cube, another point of view to understand teachers’ agenda of agency in their struggle with “desire for”, “desire to be” and “desire to please” as successful teachers. I want to understand these moments when teachers’ think and act differently to the set of everyday, concrete practices that has become commonplace or “natural” to perform their success. In these moments of teachers’ freedom they struggle with desire (subjective self), moving from one position to another in a different discourse, opening themselves up for new forms of thought and action. I want to know who gets to be subject in a particular discourse, in a particular set of practices? I want to know who is allowed a subject position and who is not, and who is subjected and why? In their struggle-filled passage from one position to another, I want to know what enables teachers to make the transgressions they do? I want to understand better the gaps that open up possibilities for difference in the respective institutional sites? This chapter shows that there is play within discourse and practice, and in the slippages teachers’ agency is open to new formations.

However, these teachers’ lives should not be read as being representative of whole social groups, and that what is offered is a perspective, a description of experience from which we might learn. In capturing their unique ways of experiencing, I have attempted here to listen to six teachers, occupying different and similar locations within the formal and non-formal education and training sector, but who nonetheless share common and threatening patterns to enable “new” possibilities and disrupt traditional and dominant forms of reason within a shifting cultural society.

These shared positions within an agenda of agency are the concern of the following sections. I will focus on the specificities of each teacher marked by their socio-cultural experiences, within the broader, shared patterns as a way of finding commonality in the experience of difference without compromising each distinctive reality and effect. Just as each figure in the cubist painting, “Les Demoiselles d’ Avignon”, (see Chapter Three), is united by a general geometrical principle that superimposes its own laws on to the natural proportions, counterpoint to the still life painted according to classical convention, this chapter is organised in thematic categories foregrounding those practices and discourses in and through which teachers perform their success, transgressing the categorical framework that functions to exclude and manipulate them. Through these practices I make available the “Patterns of Desire”. Interdependent and mutually constructing, they form an overall framework which unify to create “Patterns of Desire” for change and continuity, and constitute these teachers lives as successful ones. Sometimes I use a range of interview data to represent the practice or teaching discourse, at other times diagrams as well as appropriate data from the interviews.

In Section A, *practices of the self* will explore those alternate *practices and discourses* teachers occupy in/through which they constitute particular definitions of being successful teacher.

In Section B, I will explore the *dominant structures* (the politics, and plethora of codes produced by regulating discourse and practice) that prevail within the respective *institutional* sites as a useful way to articulate how teachers’ struggle with desire to create spaces/gaps for moments of freedom. Teachers’ freedom happens within constraints.

Section C entails a discussion of *practices on the self*, in which I will explore particular practices teachers impose on themselves as a way of resisting the constraints and states of domination for affirmation of their “own” voice, identity and unique ways of knowing and being. These practices are one of many moments of “displacement” in and through which teachers seek out alliances to envision a re-imagined future. Selecting and fore-grounding these particular investments and subject positions and not others made visible in the storied narratives (i.e. teachers’ spirituality) is a conscious decision in my position as researcher to extend rather than elaborate on what other related teacher studies have shown.

### SECTION A: PRACTICES OF THE SELF

This section identifies four shared teaching practices that open up spaces for desire to think and work as teacher differently. These spaces for performing their success are:

- Desiring knowledge: “If you love your subject, you love your job”
- Blurring barriers: “I don’t like this teacher-pupil thing”
- Collective knowing: “From producer to facilitator”
- Desiring experience: “It’s not about methods, it’s about who I am”

The distinction to be made here is that the emergent practices, values and ideas above, are alternative or oppositional to the dominant forms and norms of being a teacher. These emergent practices and ideas that I have identified in the six life histories are rooted precisely in what the dominant social order excludes, represses or simply fails to recognise. It is these elements which form the basis for opposition and incorporation and change within the dominant order. I believe that these practices and ideas (which I see as active, under-articulated), are capable of transforming the educational field. They disrupt and challenge the dreary, boring, pedantic and passionless image of teacher. In moving beyond the traditional concerns of teaching practices, these practices offer teachers the opportunity to experience joy in learning, to transgress, to depart from conventional norms. They transform teachers’ consciousness and ways of knowing to enable them to live better and know differently. This is possible because of the presence of desire to be transgressive, and the desire for practices that evoke a sense of pleasure and fulfilment. This section explores how success happens in its everydayness and provides ways of understanding it. I will show in these practices how fixed definitions of teacher are actively contested by the teachers and, how they do so? Understanding how teaching practices are articulated, and what the effects are, are crucial to understanding how teachers can perform their success within their respective schooling sites.

#### **Desiring knowledge: “If you love your subject, you will love your job”**

Teachers in this study identified closely with the subject discipline/s they taught and through them they were able to position themselves as passionate, challenging, creative and unique. The subject discipline offers the space to disrupt, resist and change those dominant forms of oppression (values, assumptions and strategies), that shaped them in harmful ways. Within these subject disciplines teachers take up positions that give meaning to who they are and how they make sense of their lives. The subjects they teach become the potential spaces for transformation of prevailing thoughts and action, and exploring new knowledges.

**Hlo: “I realised that it was where I could be my best”**

*I wanted to do something that was physical . . . I realised that it is where I could be my best. But the main thing is that I wanted something different. Pursuing a qualification in HMS meant I could open a gym in my area . . . something that I really felt that I needed to do. What I realised in the four years . . . there wasn't a single Black person . . . a single Black female . . . pursuing HMS . . . I felt very strongly about this . . . so I also think that pressure of proving that I'm a female . . . that I can do anything. And I soon realised that Human Movement Studies was exactly what I needed; I hate being an ordinary person.*

Choosing Human Movement Studies (HMS) at the University of Zululand enabled Hlo to assert her identity as an African woman differently from the subject choices made by other African woman. While such a discourse seek to exclude and silence Black woman, it becomes the site for her to challenge, resist and disrupt these forms of domination and closure. Her resistance is created through a critical, historical reflection on herself. While the subject discipline offers her new forms of knowledge and the capacity to connect with the world in different ways, she was also simultaneously honoring the experience of the poor working class African women in her community. She commented: *Where I grew up the people were very poor and the people where always saying, “Hey Hlo we depend on you, You go out there and do your best . . .”* Inhabiting such a discourse enabled her to disrupt issues of gender and class which has been continually reinforced by *“that sense of connection between me and my community”*, who remain in materially underprivileged class positions.

**Daryl: “An active and creative maths teacher”**

While Hlo chose HMS to connect herself with her underprivileged community, Daryl chose Mathematics. Daryl also experiences the subject discipline as a space to challenge dominant stereotypical structures that not only balkanise subjects into hierachical structures, but which become the discourses to exclude individuals and balkanise them into different intellectual clusterings. He struggled with Mathematics as a learner but subsequently flourished with Mathematics as a private tutor. What previously constrained and excluded him as a lesser intellectual he now finds enabling, offering the space to resist this dominant form of traditional academic reasoning for his own liberating divergence and for learners in similar past poor learning experience to engage in learning effectively.

His desire to develop an identity as a Mathematics teacher is created and sustained through the invidious status distinction that such a subject holds and the students who take up such

subjects. Given that he was labelled “*not as intelligent as his cousins because he struggled with maths himself*”, locating himself as ‘super tutor’ in Mathematics cultivated the desire to subvert the dominance of oppressive reason, and to resist and challenge traditional barriers for knowing and being. His desire to be challenged and to construct himself as a teacher who teaches a “subject that is content driven, and academic”, was a conscious effort to foreground his intellectual capacity”.

***Ursula: “Teaching biology and the sciences brings out the best in me”***

Ursula experiences her “Coloured” space as one that closed her in, while her subject discipline and the resources she could invest through it, opens up spaces for her to be free. As she said, “*It gave me the freedom to be myself*”. How she understands herself and gives meaning to the world is formed and constituted through the subject of Biology. As opposed to being closed up by her racial identity, Biology provides her with space to disrupt, question and resist those boundaries in this new situation. Engaging with such a discourse opens up spaces where she can be “real”, and where she could assert herself as one with power in meaningful ways. Her self-knowledge empowers her with capacities to be an active participant in the pedagogical process. She explains:

*I enjoyed having to go out to teach and speak about Biology and the sciences. Teaching Biology and the sciences is what brings out the best in me. Teaching Biology is my cup of tea. I enjoy every moment of it. Biology is real and I loved it. It is real and relevant. We live it.*

The subject of Biology offers her new knowledge with which to subvert and challenge oppressive forms of reason which make her (race and class) an outsider. This educational space (teaching Biology) enables her to cherish the beauty of her life and her uniqueness. In, with and through the subject of Biology she could be herself. Ursula illustrates that she feels at home with Biology, thus further qualifying her experiences within this space as one where she is an insider. Being with nature is a space that she inhabits comfortably. Biology offers her new ways of experiencing the world and as a teacher she is able to creatively invent ways to shape the experiences of others and alter the dominant structures.

She says:

*It is a medium through which the learners and I discover ourselves. We understand our life and who we are through Biology. We discover the world through Biology. Understanding the child’ background and emotions is all biological.*



**Eddie:** *“It really helped me find my own voice, and find who I really am and where I want to be”*

His love of music cultivates in him the desire for locating himself in an ever-present range of alternate discourses that open him up to the rest of the world. Music empowers him actively and productively with knowledge and capacity to connect with his second language learners through alternate texts, outside of language. He also explains:

*Having a musical talent has really helped me find my own voice, and find who I really am and where I want to be. As I found my feet and got to grips with the curriculum, I began to do things differently. I wanted to pass on that inspiration and motivation to the kids. I want them to change their lives.*

The subject of music provided him with the terrain to question traditional teaching and learning practices for new practices through which he was able to re-engage the silenced “other” of desire. This viewpoint is most clearly evident when Eddie said, *“I want to provide a little light to each child, to help each child find their own voice and to sing their own song.”* This desire to teach in a way that opens up dialogue between teacher and learner and for learners to create spaces for their unique experiences challenges and disrupts those hegemonic forces that constrained and imprisoned him as a Indian and a learner himself. In this way, he embraces pedagogical processes that seek to question, challenge and rupture the established order and reason because he believed that *“music was a major influence on the way that children think and act and behave”*. His desire for music is cultivated through the desire experienced by the learners, a dialogue of reciprocity. Thus he confirms: *“I have love in my heart, and I want to be a jazz singer that connects with the music I play. I want to be a teacher who can connect with what I teach.”*

**Trevor:** *“If you love your subject, you love your job”*

Trevor believes that only through active integration between himself and the subject of Physical Science and Mathematics, his desire to be a teacher will provide the condition for being successful and a desire for sharing knowledge. He describes his experiences of the subject in the following extract:

*If you love your subject, you love your job, and you are happy, and once that is developed through workshops and projects, you enjoy sharing that knowledge with the learners in a more passionate way.*

He emphasised also that only through new experiences would new forms of knowledge become possible, which would in turn become the foundation for shaping the experiences of his learners.

Trevor reflected on his own educational experiences of the subject discipline as spaces which cultivated feelings of inferiority, and where the absence of constructive dialogue enforced silence and the inability to challenge and question like the White kids did. Shaped by his race and class experiences, Trevor's choice to teach the Sciences was not just for pedagogical progress, but provided a space to arouse the body and mind and propel it out of a state of inferiority. He explained that subject knowledge information was just passed down to them.

Inhabiting a space that the subject discipline offers him in his teacher position, cultivates in Trevor the desire to alter the position of passivity and to engage in ongoing reflexion through reading and creating collective cultures where new ideas and practices can be challenged and discussed. He believed that through continued questioning, reflexion and collaboration through various forums he would be able to engage with the subject discipline in new ways and this in turn would make possible new forms that shape the experiences of the learners in his class. *"Through new ways of teaching"* he hopes to engage learners in constructive dialogue with/through the subject, to realise their true potential and critique relations of domination for a better society.

In these shifting times, the "new" discoveries teachers make of themselves in/through the discourses they are able to set up in their respective practices offers them the space to create possibilities to change and be better teachers. The subject discipline provides these teachers the terrain to seek out their moments of freedom, their capacity to go beyond forms imposed by others (e.g. the department, inspectorate), to transgress constraints imposed by other forces and to create new forms of thinking and working. Continued shifting and altering subject positions within the teaching discourse and seeking out moments of freedom prevents teachers from falling into self-closure and sterile self-repetition of practices and ideas. Introducing new and unexpected ways of teaching helps to keep the dialogue open between teacher and learners. The desire to be a successful teacher constituted through the subject discipline also fuels students' choices of subjects and disciplinary identities. It becomes a kind of a metaphorical seduction because the subject discipline becomes intimately connected to the relation with the passionate, desirable teacher. The love one receives from the learners also fuels one's desire to continue to teach and be desirable.

### **Blurring barriers: “I don’t like this teacher pupil thing”**

How do teachers who see beyond their teaching role make themselves “real”, and who do not fear who they are as teachers? Who are those teachers who are able to disrupt traditional teacher taught barriers and create different kinds of space for their learners? What kinds of classrooms provide the space for new knowledge that will enrich and enhance learners? How do teachers encourage learners to take a shared responsibility for their choices? Why do some teachers make themselves vulnerable to their learners?

#### ***Anna: “To touch and be human”***

Anna realises that within this fluidity and continuous change, sharing power between teacher, subject discipline and learner make her desirable. Re-engaging the silenced “other” is of great importance. For her this meant:

*To touch someone in a way that enables you to enter into their personal space where both teacher and learner can be human and in that way you can get through to each other easier. I am a tactile person.*

When she says: “I hugged the little girl” and the girl responded, “Madam, I never touched White skin before”, she not only alludes to racial difference, but the physical experience of touching, and hugging each other, a space for intimacy in which one’s exoticness becomes seductive and desirable. As much as Anna experiences the tactile as a way of blurring teacher-taught boundaries, power is produced through her Whiteness and makes being desirable teacher a seductive challenge. This empowers her and strengthens the learners’ capacity to learn together. Authorising spaces for commonality in the educational experience, in/through her exotic self, she performs her success.

#### ***Hlo: “Playing sport and narrating my story . . . a lot of easiness ”***

Hlo, an African woman, categorises herself as being a non-traditional female teacher. She gains immense pleasure from being involved in particular practices and relationships with her learners that affirm such a categorisation. She invests in particular practices in getting right her view of being a non-traditional teacher. For example, when she walks with her learners to the neighbouring shebeen to retrieve the stolen chairs. She reinforces her desire to challenge the traditional barriers between teacher and learner when she adds, “*I found playing sport with the learners helped develop the relationship between them and myself. This closeness reflected a lot of easiness in the teaching and learning.*” While other teachers in her school refuse to assist, these public spaces, (sports fields) provide Hlo moments of freedom, disrupting teacher-learner relations and subverting unequal gender power relations.

Being able to relate bodily and spatially easily blurs teacher-taught power relations. While learners' power through their agency is validated she escapes teachers' authority by playing sport.

As a non-traditional female teacher she experiences immense pleasure from being involved in certain practices and relationships that affirm her non-traditional categorisation. She invests in getting her view of non-conformity "right" (Davies 1989), while simultaneously being viewed by the predominantly male staff as "someone who wanted to be too big in a very small space".

Furthermore, Hlo also believed that these barriers between teacher and learner could also be addressed in the space of the classroom. It is interesting to understand how discourses the teachers embody mesh through an intricate network of the private/public relation and give form to particular identities. Hlo's desire for a communal commitment based on class issues clearly illustrates this. She explains, "*I would narrate the story of my life and remind them that I also came from a home that had no electricity and no running water.*"

Teachers' power plays are contradictory. While the confessional narratives help to connect with the learners, it also offers her the space to assert her difference. Poststructuralists like Weedon (1987) believe that discourses enable particular groups of people to exercise power in ways that benefit them. As an African woman, Hlo has always been "under pressure" to prove to herself that she can be just as good as her brother and now she can be just as good as the male teachers. Playing sport with the boys, walking to the shebeen, and confessional narratives and issues of poverty, are ways of diffusing Hlo's power relations in the schooling site, but just as importantly, these power plays assist her as an African woman to disrupt and challenge normative masculinity.

**Eddie: "*The sportsfield and a lot of humor to get rid of that teacher pupil thing*"**

Eddie, like Hlo, experienced sporting activities as spaces to cultivate informality:

*I am also involved in other activities with the kids. I coached volleyball and soccer. I found sport an excellent means of getting to know the learners. They see me as a human being. This relationship that we developed on the sports field makes teaching and learning more comfortable.*

Eddie continually seeks out spaces outside and inside the classroom where teacher and learners can collectively resist normative organisation of teaching practices. Being together



through humor, sport, or music, is a key feature of how Eddie and the learners relate to each other. These practices provide the space within which he validates and amplifies his reputation as a desirable teacher.

Eddie comments about his joking, *"Using a lot of humour in the lessons helps to relax them, too. Lots of kids I teach, have a lot of fear in them, and you are the person that has to break down those barriers."* By doing this he consciously cultivates the desire to disrupt traditional patterns, as someone who wants to shift from a perspective of authority to a stance in which he enters into a personal relationship with the learners. He experiences the classroom as space for everyone, to be inhabited without fear. Humour and laughter are used as a strategy that diffuses power and hierarchies. He emphasised, *"The learners don't see some alien in front that they cannot identify with, and they don't sit in my class out of pure fear . . . my classroom is a sacred place where I can teach the way I want to."*

Collective action with learners is thus a means by which Eddie asserts his agency. And among the overwhelming sense of school life Eddie's classroom offers him the space where his desire for change occurs in powerful ways.

***Daryl: "To entertain, to sing and to capture their minds with humor"***

Daryl reinforces the educational experience as a space to cultivate the desire for informality and for unique ways of experiencing the world. Teachers and learners often fail to see themselves as unique beings shaped by personal biographies and modes of thinking because the dominant discourses create barriers between private lives and public positions. He challenges the dominant structures and categories in/through which many teachers think and work by bringing into his classroom humour and song through which power is produced to rupture the teacher-learner boundaries and at the same time to exalt his own reputation as a teacher. For him the best place to start this relationship as active, embodied human beings is in the classroom. He says:

*I want learners to call me Daryl. I don't have a problem with that. I want to be a teacher who can get alongside a pupil, who has a high degree of self-esteem, who is self-confident and who is humble. To be a teacher is to be an entertainer. I sing to them, it kind of just happens, to capture their minds with humour. I'm never sarcastic, I always make a joke on me, not on them. I think that it is important for successful teachers to make their students comfortable. I believe there is a divide in that a lot of teachers are very careful in keeping their profession as an intellectual activity.*



Daryl loves to act, to entertain, to sing. By combining his entertaining spirit and his mathematical prowess, he ensures his visibility as one with special skills for his successful performance as teacher. His passion for Mathematics (a subject discipline that sustains an invidious status) serves as a representation of his mental strength of the male mind (a reference to sex role theory and the left/right use of brain hemisphere), while simultaneously disrupting the academic emphasis for a more informal, practice orientated approach (Alloway 1995, 14; Walkerdine 1989). The humour and the intimacy that he forges with learners in his own private space called “Super Tutor” offers Daryl the space for collective resistance to the normative organisation within which he practices as teacher. Being teacher and the new forms of knowledge that are made possible through such a discourse, cultivates in him the desire to change the classroom dynamics. The classroom space opens up possibilities for transformation in social relations where the false dichotomy between the inside world of the academy and the world outside are disrupted.

***Ursula: “A space to be different, to see me differently, to know about me”***

Ursula’s desire to create spaces that signify shifts in power relations to disrupt and resist hegemonic patterns of teacher-learner conduct, is most evident in her interviews. Drawing from her personal experiences of seeking out spaces where she could be herself, and where her difference is acknowledged and not silenced, Ursula continues to create and seek out spaces in which she knows learners and teachers can experience a sense of freedom. Ursula explains:

*We have “TEA” as our motto: taking environmental action , a forum where you are allowed to speak and provide individuals with the opportunity to voice their opinion and at the same time to give the team the ability to respect and to listen to each others views . . . When we go out on a field study, I find it easier to get to grips with the real thing. Children need to see you differently, and I get to see the learners differently. I thoroughly enjoy it. The children need to accept that you are different. This I believe will provide the learners with the confidence to develop and be proud of who they are.*

Ursula also believes that in such spaces, hearing each other’s voices, individual thoughts and sometimes associating these voices with personal experiences makes teacher and learner more acutely aware of each other. This also serves to explain that both teacher’s and learners’ voices need affirmation, and both desire the space to create new forms of thinking and being. Ursula also emphasises her desire for confessional narratives as a way of drawing and integrating family and work life. Her racialised experiences have clearly impacted on her

continued desire to create spaces where her Coloured identity is welcomed, empowering her with capacity to challenge that which constitutes being a teacher. She cultivates the desire to share personal experiences as moments of collective participation and dialogue when she added:

*I don't like this teacher-pupil thing, they must see me as being human and they should not put you on this level that you are super human where you can't have the same feelings as they do. I shared with the learners my personal experiences that I had with my grandmother and within my family . . . to see me as a human being . . . to know what motivates me. I tell them a lot about my past, as a child and as a young girl growing up on the farm.*

Confessional narratives offer Ursula the space to assert her difference, the power that is produced through these narratives assists finding commonality as human beings but as a space to blur private and public relations, to make audible other significant relations that give meaning to her life and the world. In these moments Ursula experiences a sense of pleasure and freedom.

***Trevor: "Free to talk and discuss issues, about the subject, about life, to joke with them"***

The moments of collective participation and dialogue create moments *"to respect each other,"* Trevor emphasised. When he said: *"Playing soccer with the youngsters didn't mean that they won't respect me"*, he was emphasising the desire for teacher and learner to look at each other, and engage in acts of recognition with one another as unique beings in spaces where teacher-learner power relations are blurred. Sport, he remarked, *"strengthened the relationship"* between the learner and himself. In re-ordering the school curriculum he enables the force and affective energy of other kinds of texts (including music, dance, the school choir, soccer) to combine with the critical thinking activities allotted to the written texts. Trevor believes that by using these various popular texts like song, dance and soccer, teachers will be able to break down the resistance in youth culture (of violence/crime) and promote student authority and collaborative engagement. In this way he seeks to challenge and disrupt fixed notions of what constitutes knowledge. Trevor desired the transforming of pedagogical processes that enable common spaces and disrupts forms of authority that perpetuates domination. He added: *"Sharing the Physical Science programme with learners and parents at the beginning of the year was in keeping with the spirit of transparency."*

Within particular teaching positions, teachers open up spaces to particular ways that constitute certain possibilities of thought and action. In the analysis above, I was able to

examine the multiple and creative positionings teachers occupied within the teaching discourse to constitute particular meanings to their lives as teachers. Through music, sport, fieldtrips, humour, oral narratives, teachers contested fixed notions of being teacher. Through practices that aroused desire for different ways of thinking and acting, these teachers challenge the stereotypical image of teacher as boring, pedantic and passionless. These cultural investments teachers take up rupture the traditional boundaries between teacher and learner, between the private life and public position, between mind and body. These practices make visible teachers' identities as fluid and multiple and power as productive. These ways of knowing open up spaces for teachers and learners to assert difference in different forms and manifestations while simultaneously creating a commonality in the educational experience. These shifts do not do away with power but reconfigure power in differing ways. These reconfigurations are examples of progress, cultivated through the desire for different ways of knowing and being.

### **Collective knowing: "From producer to mediator"**

In challenging existing systems of domination, from one of being confident educator and source producer of knowledge to facilitator and commentator involves uncertainty and risk-taking. This decentring and loosening of boundaries of teachers' authority and control from established patterns of working and thinking suggest the plurality or displacement of power relations. Power relations are obliged to change with teachers' resistance to dominant forms of thinking and working. Blurring boundaries through power reconfiguration offer teachers opportunities to perform their success.

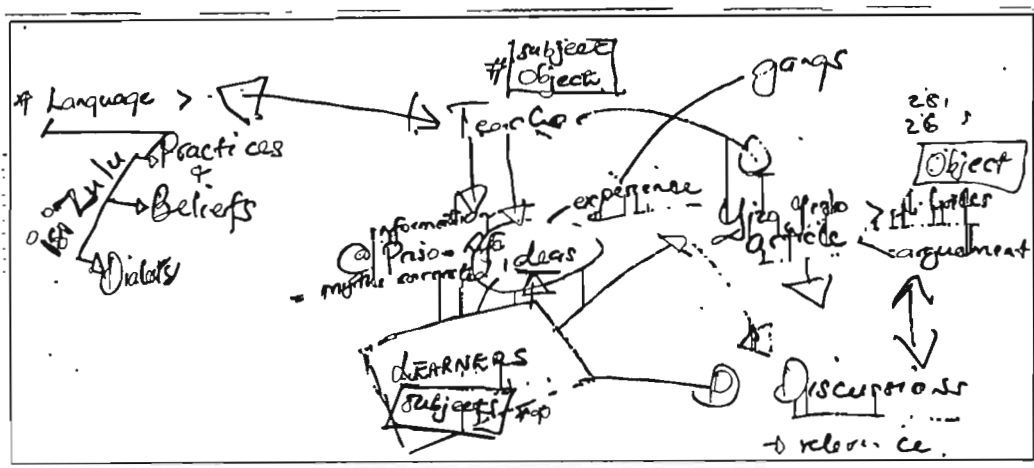
In the case of the six teachers in this study, this fluid state was not seen as a problem. Instead the constraints and shifts they encountered, in these present times, are identified as pleasurable. In their ongoing resistance for new forms of thinking and working for curriculum transformation and transformatory pedagogical practices they find themselves excluded and not valued. The urge to experiment with pedagogical practices that are transformatory are also not welcomed by students who expect teachers to teach in a manner to which they are accustomed. The teachers' struggle for renewed and revitalised practices propel them to resist and transgress boundaries and limitations to create possibilities for change.

My knowledge of how teachers create such possibilities are represented through diagrams produced by the teachers during the course of the interviews. The diagrams offered teachers a space to represent through an alternate mode how they experience the power plays in their daily teaching practices and are complemented by a discussion of the described experience.

While this enhanced the data production experience from me asking about the experience (told), to teachers actually illustrating it through diagram (experienced), it also shows how I have diffused my power within the research production process.

Some of the diagrams produced by the six teachers are illustrated below, as texts for you to make sense of and to open up to other interpretations.

**Hlo:** *"In this way it encourages that sense of assertiveness and it brings up a debate"*

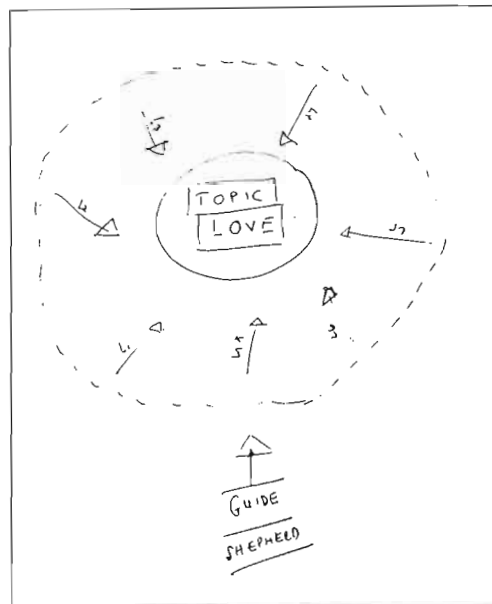


A topic taken from Yizo Yizo (a television series) was something I chose because it depicted prison life. I think we spent an hour on some of the issues and it was a real eye opener for me, because I got to hear things that I have never heard of before. I have actually come to understand the issue of gangsterism quite differently now. I encourage the learners to challenge my ideas especially if what I am saying does not make sense and maybe it is not what they know and this encourages that sense of assertiveness and it brings up a debate.

Hlo finds the educational experience a crucial site to understand these social ills which plague and bankrupt especially poor communities, including the one she comes from. At the prison school, she is able to put into practice the skills developed over the years of living in the rural community. Being a young African girl living in a rural community also meant becoming surrogate mother to her younger siblings when her mother, the sole provider went out to work. By arousing debate in this way with the juvenile criminals, Hlo deepens her own understanding of male power, and engages with specific cultural forms which contribute to asymmetrical relations of power among rural men and women. But here she shows how women do have the power to change their positions in society, thus disrupting definitions

that are fixed and static. In these moments of freedom the educational terrain offers her the space to resist cultural definitions that are placed on her as adult woman manager, thus challenging fixed meanings of what it is to be an active, embodied teacher.

**Eddie:** *"Like the shepherd is to his flock"*



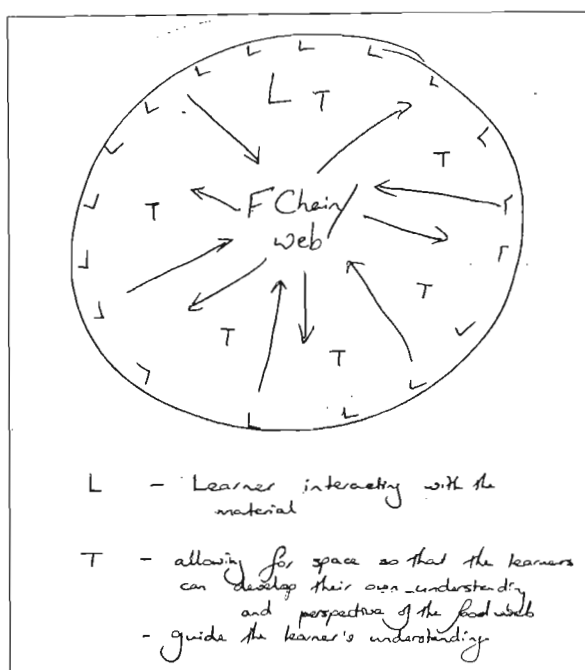
The learners' ages vary from 13 to 19 years of age. Many equate love with sex, a misconception that I needed to clear up. I am challenged to choose topics that can help open up our view as learners. Maybe their concept of love is different from mine. They wrote their favourite love songs on pieces of paper. They drew about "love". We all discuss "love". I am merely the guide, not the leader, like the shepherd is to his flock, they go all over the place, tasting, feeling a bit of this and that, and at the end of it all, I guide them back home, where they can feel safe. I am trying to create an environment that is physically and emotionally safe, so that they express their opinions honestly, to know their rights, to feel free to express themselves.

Eddies' continued resistance to thinking and working in ways that are conservative and exclusionary for creative and inclusionary moments that can enable him to connect with the learners he teaches, is clearly evident in this interview. Through this diverse range of practices he challenges the superiority that the English language holds as a medium of making sense of the world. In the security of the classroom his Black, second language speakers make sense of who they are outside of language, through music and art. In this "sacred" space of the classroom, Eddie and his learners can find commonality in their experience of difference. In this space power is exercised in ambiguous and diffused ways.



While it offers Eddie the space to assert his identity as musician and to participate in the formation of his political will, it also offers the learners the space to affirm themselves as active and embodied beings with power to change. Disrupting the hegemonic forces that create boundaries between Eddie and the learners, between private/public relations for moments of freedom, makes Eddie a desirable teacher.

**Ursula:** *"Why is it that you always say I must think about it, Miss?"*

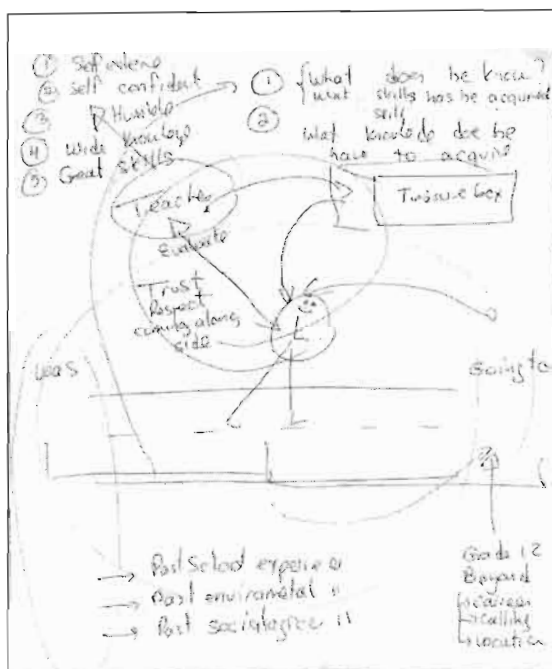


*I give the learners the space to interact with the work, allow them to get their understanding but to guide them at some point according to their understanding. Allowing learners the opportunity to interact with the work also helps me in understanding the diversity of experiences that the learners bring with them into the classroom. Initially the children found roleplay and movement and this type of teaching really strange, but at the end of the day we've have a good laugh and they remember it. I must do my work and I must also feel good about what I am doing.*

Creating moments of freedom for teachers and learners to assert their difference echoes Ursula's desire for affirmation as a Coloured. Being desirable is made possible through the range of practices she creates. These practices make visible her identity as a creative, spontaneous teacher, and provide occasions for her learners to experience the world in unique ways made possible by their personal biographies and unique modes of thinking. While it offers Ursula the space to assert her difference and unique ways of knowing and

being, she opens up spaces for “freedom” for the Coloured learners to inhabit as well. These moments of power play between teacher and learner through role-play assist in disrupting the stereotypical images as Biology teacher, and alternate perspectives for her learners to view themselves and the world. In these moments of freedom, Ursula makes visible her vibrant and passionate nature, intertwining and intermeshing her private desires and thoughts with her public responsibility to be a teacher who loves what she does and chooses how she wants to do it.

**Anna:** *“It’s like a wave, constantly moving back and forth from learner to teacher and teacher to learner”*



*I don't think in the 17 years that I have taught that I can actually recall two days that were the same or two groups that are actually the same or two lessons that are identical. It is like a wave, constantly moving back and forth from learner to teacher and teacher to learner. The subject has to live and as a teacher you have to enjoy your subject and that must come across in the best possible way.*

Anna's desire for challenging and seductive spaces is clearly visible in her description of how she experiences the fluid teaching and learning site. Her continued resistance to states of domination, sterility and self-closure finds Anna continuously shifting in the significance of the stance she adopts in her position, as power-knowledge formations change. Affirmed by her Britishness and White superiority she is empowered with capacities to take risks, cross-

pollinating ideas and adopting different practices, through which her agency as teacher is produced in desirable ways. Metaphorically, her continued shifts back and forth meshing and intertwining her multiple identities (British/South African, teacher of the deaf, learner and teacher of the physically challenged), accent her unique modes of meaning making that resemble waves, each one as different and unique from the one before and the one after.

The cultivation of desire and informality in this fluid and constantly changing context has been identified as pleasurable by the six teachers. While breakdown of fixed patterns of thinking and working creates uncertainty and risk-taking, these teachers are able to create moments of freedom when particular meanings of being teacher are made visible and which challenge the fixed and static definitions imposed upon such a position. With all the teachers in the interview, the subject discipline is centrally located, opening it up for relationship with the other. As they try to interact with subject discipline within this collective knowing, they enter into complex patterns of communication, contradicting the linear, static and hierarchical, for circular, interactive and dynamic patterns. The classroom becomes a space where all are in power in different ways. While it may be argued that these alternate shifts or subject positions in the classroom may not necessarily be more humane or democratic, the fact that these teachers inhabit momentarily an alternate position creates the possibility for potential change.

In defying centring, the teachers actually offer spaces that threaten the dominant hegemonic forces or the conventional norms and forms that define teacher. Within these collective cultures they engage their learners in the process of knowing not through sophisticated techniques, but through practices and methods that constitute particular meanings of their lives as teachers.

### **Desiring experience: “It’s not about methods, it’s about who I am”**

The shift away from book learning by the teachers, to an emphasis on experiences as a resource for learning, is what I have described here as a shift from the “discursive to the figural” (Usher and Edwards 1994, 199). Through different knowledges generated from a wide number of sources, a diversity of experience is constantly constructed and reconstructed. Associated with this is their desire for informality and the creation of different practices that do not do away with power but reconfigure and displace it in differing ways. The teachers choose to adopt a facilitatory and mediatory role for moments of freedom while giving recognition to the normative framework within which they think and work.

Even while these teachers remain members of a particular teaching community, they “breach its boundaries” by virtue of their own/personal wider networks. By embracing the best of both worlds they are able to create the conditions for engendering and interpreting the knowledges and tastes produced by others in surprisingly diverse ways, not necessarily arranging learners in a circle and having a conversation. A sense of uniqueness as well as openness, created through the methods they chose happened in different kinds of spaces, inside classrooms, on the school grounds, on fieldtrips, inside sugar terminals, through lectures, through song and in role-play and dramatisation in prison classrooms.

The overarching effects of experiential learning and a shift away from book learning is the shift from discursive (word only) to figural (the image) discourse, creates the potential for different ways, for a sense of freedom and fulfilment. The following excerpts are taken from different moments in the interviewing process:

**Hlo:**

*Mondays and Thursdays are very challenging days to teach because on weekends and on Wednesdays the “boys” make contact with the outside world and they hear a lot of stories from home, about home . . . many are emotionally unable to cope with the schoolwork. I found that focusing on literature lessons as the main content for my Zulu lessons most fulfilling for the learners on these days. It becomes very interesting for me to understand their feelings, by the way they relate to the story and its characters. The learners engage in role-play and dramatisation in these lessons and I find this helps a lot. I always enjoyed Speech and Drama, and I loved dancing and role-playing, it was something I wanted to specialise in as a teacher. Dominique and I have also set up links with the Natal Playhouse Company and with University of Natal. We now have boys who are writers and directors of plays.*

**Ursula:**

*I want to tap the potential of every one of my learners, so I did not accept that there were children who were silent did not have anything to say. Sometimes these activities don’t work as well as you want them to, and you have to understand that each class and each child is different. I have a letterbox that occupies a little space in the corner of my classroom, and it allows me the opportunity of really getting to know my learners. Letters in my letterbox also tell me stories of rape, abuse pain and suffering.*

**Anna:**

*It made me realise that you've got to look beyond your teaching, beyond the curriculum and the syllabus for that which is best for that child. I play the guitar and sing for the learners. Thriller became a favourite song for my deaf learners and I realised then that the deaf are capable of anything. The deaf I believe have something visual, so I came up with my own pictures because the textbooks weren't at all visual, but just provided them with exercises. And we play acted a lot, particularly in Accounting.*

**Eddie:**

*I think someone "upstairs" heard my pleas, and the amazing thing is that two years down the line, learning to play the recorder was phased out. I started doing classical music and I introduced jazz and pop ballads. No student wanted to specialise in recorder. It was just general class music, and all the learners really enjoyed it.*

**Daryl:**

*I am able to create learning situations where I could actually have a teacher getting together with twelve students and actually going through the lessons. You can lecture to 400 people, but you can only tutor three to twelve at a time.*

**Trevor:**

*The learners reproduce stuff, and I am trying to develop them to start thinking, to understand and analyse the diverse positions they may take up. They must ask questions about questions and understand that there is no one answer. I think the best way is to engage the learners in thinking critically in every subject, to make it clear to learners that they have a responsibility in addressing such issues. I offered the learners and parents my teaching programme for the year so that parents know what is going on and learners can prepare and work ahead, or make some inclusions or exclusions.*

The shift to experiential learning provided the space for a range of innovative practices and ideas for teaching and learning. This educational experience enables the teachers who share a desire to teach, to enact practices that are imbued with creative unpredictability, spontaneity and passion. This teaching discourse offers teachers the space to take up a range of practices that are useful and relevant to particular subject positions they occupy, as well as provide them with the opportunity to challenge dominant normative patterns of knowing and representing, outside of language. These new experiences in turn become the candidates for shaping the experiences of the learners. The foregrounding of experience and the cultivation of desire for non-traditional, unconservative socially-constructed practices happens through



constraints and struggles within the different teaching sites. The different teachers shaped by their racialised, gendered and classed experiences give experiential learning its own particular flavour. While the intentions are emancipatory and progressive, we cannot escape its tensions, contradictions and ambiguities. But as a nexus for continued questioning and resistance to forms of power and self-closure, experiential learning offers moments to re-engage the silenced other of desire to change for better ways. Experiential learning has the potential to subvert oppressive reason and these are common elements for all.

Within the particular context of the prison school, Hlo invests in alternate practices that cultivate desire for spaces where private/public relations are affirmed. She is able to assert herself through a range of desired practices that give value to her life. In constructing their own texts and engaging in a variety of texts, (role-play, writing plays), she creates for herself an expanded notion of pedagogy, the definition of teacher and the ethics of responsibility. In doing so, she also introduces her learners to alternative “languages” that broaden the notion of education for “the prison youth” beyond the sphere of the school.

Ursula’s desire to take up particular discourses enable her to create spaces for certain possibilities to assure her unique ways of experiencing the world. Her constant repositioning and creation of special and private spaces through which learners and teacher can assert each others’ differences in all its forms and manifestations such as “the letterbox” and “Robben Island”, create the conditions for subverting oppresssive reason and possibilities for better ways. Within the restraints of her own classroom, “Robben Island” offers such moments of freedom to be who you want to be, for self-reflexivity and change.

Just the physical experience of hearing, of listening intently, to each particular voice strengthens Ursula’s capacity to learn “together”. Even though some students may not speak again after this moment, the student’s presence has been acknowledged and continues to be. In these moments Ursula situates herself within discourses in which her authority is rendered visible, as an ethical, political and social construct. She offers different meanings to the term ‘teacher’.

For Anna, learning from experience meant engaging herself in a variety of teaching and learning sites, unfamiliar and without the relevant book knowledge or academic qualifications. In doing so she had consciously moved into ‘new territories’ and creates spaces in which she is able to reaffirm her potential to engage in new dialogues (different from her own), and simultaneously expand the possibilities for those dialogues. Within these bold moments, she became the author of her own script. Rather than assuming a kind of

security within a context for which she has been trained, she moves into spaces where she takes the specificity of different contexts, geographies, languages, and of otherness, to recognise the otherness in herself (Giroux 1994, 168). Her desire to explore other subject areas in which she has not been trained, meant that she was able to forge new links academically (she was excellent at cross-pollinating), spaces that enabled her to progress as an academic. Her desire to be a spontaneous, passionate and challenging teacher becomes cathected by the learner as part of the learning process, also fueling the desire in students for challenge and unique experiences. These teaching sites became spaces for affirming her potential to be, and the differences in the classrooms invoked possibilities for the emergence of new subjectivities, new identities and new languages. Her desire to hybridise the concept of identity, curriculum and schooling cultivates in her the desire to become attentive to the language of transit, difference and hybridisation. Choosing to teach the deaf or the physically challenged foregrounds her capacity for teaching and learning where words alone are not the sole medium of language. Like Ursula, Anna also engages with deep respect the physical experience of hearing and listening intently, to each particular voice. This strengthens her capacity to learn together.

Eddie's locatedness is alternate. Within the discourse as music teacher, one which he experienced as exclusionary, he finds an appropriate space for himself and his learners to find commonality. Through agency Eddie is able to invert and invent existing exclusionary discourses in new ways as possibilities for imagining what could be. Challenging and disrupting the exclusionary status of music also assists in rupturing the forces that hegemonise language which burden and violate those outside of it. Music offers the space to learners (second language learners), who have been locked up and trapped in painful categories, to feel and experience affirmation. He expresses through this experience resistance to the forms of power that situate him as a subject of epistemological and ethical violence. Eddie's continual shifts or "state of homelessness" clearly reflect the ever-becoming possibility of seeking and searching for "Who we are". His recognition that in this vastly shifting world there is no need to stand still, results in his classroom becoming a space for the use of alternate texts (magazines, pictures and love songs) which enable 'openness' and 'hope' for new and unique ways of being.

What Eddie alludes to, is his awareness that through the learner's personal experience and engagement with "new knowledge, new problems and new language", their identities, as well as his own, are at stake. He makes the partiality of his own position clear when he explains that he found that music had a major influence on the way that children think, act and behave. He emphasises, "*many of the lessons I teach, are inspired by songs that relate to*

*the subject and to the learners*", thus inviting learners to enter into the discourse of the class and to speak in a common voice. At the same time inviting them to engage, challenge or question as they see fit. Providing a variety of other texts, (magazines, pictures, inspirational stories) enables learners to have the space to theorise their own positions so that learning about themselves and the world become ways of deepening and expanding the possibilities of hope, responsibility and change for new knowledge.

While four of the teachers in the study employ a diverse range of texts in their interaction with the learners, two choose to confine themselves and their students in a safe space created by using text, or a body of data that keeps them focused on the subject at hand. Within the boundaries of the classroom space, students are free to talk, work and engage, guided toward the topic not only by the teacher but by the materials at hand.

Clearly Daryl's script is based on an alternate position to that of White male, but contradictorily reflects the hierarchical racial and class structures of apartheid and the depiction of particular demarcated spaces as stable and secure. Within the boundaries of a privileged, private and secure space his desire and passion for non-violent teacher is cultivated, resistant to hegemonic forms of reason for more informal and caring approaches. Daryl's power in the classroom was derived from the coherence between his method and himself, his ability to understand himself and take up discourses relevant to that.

Within the spirit of transparency in the new democracy, Trevor finds that this is an opportune time to cross boundaries, the barriers that may have been erected by race, class and professional standing and a host of other differences. In these moments when powerful things can happen, the notion of the teacher being the sole producer of knowledge which he blames for depriving learners like him from thinking and asking questions, are disrupted. Creating a cultural climate between school learners and family was a good place to begin crossing barriers. Creating such spaces welcomes students, parents and teachers to share their views, offering the possibilities for citizenship, growth and action. Trevor positions himself in a way that he is able to link the question of learning to forms of activism, which enhances the desire to change. He believes that learners should leave the course believing in a form of social responsibility (to their community) that necessitates taking a position they believe in and defend; that being in the world demands that they are accountable for what they do. He engages the classroom space that cultivates desire for new ways of thinking and acting as a way of challenging the social ills prevalent in African township communities, or dysfunctional societies created by the dehumanising atrocities of apartheid. Trevor, who is himself actively involved in the process of public life, experiences the educational space as a

terrain to address issues that bear some relationship to the everyday lives of the students he teaches. Trevor's classroom becomes a text, for engaging the world, by recognising the political and ethical significance of deepening and expanding the possibilities for change, for different ways of being and knowing.

What all of these teachers' subjectivities foreground is the desire to challenge and struggle for change, not for what is but what could be. In engaging in very diverse and alternative ways of meaning-making and experience, they seek to expand the notion of what it means to be a teacher and the ethics of responsibility, simultaneously introducing students to alternative languages that broaden the notion of education beyond the sphere of the school. In moving away from just book learning, they create a range of discursive possibilities for the emergence of new subjectivities, new identities and new languages as spaces for performing their success. Thus teaching discourses which articulate being teacher as unchangeable and fixed are threatened in and through discourses that resist static definitions.

### **Conclusion**

Within the shared understanding of what it is to belong to a particular teacher/teaching community and to aspire to be "good", teachers act out particular practices to embrace change as potential moments for better ways of knowing. Embodying a range of alternate discourses and practices, teachers' freedom is made up of moments when the private/public dualisms are disrupted, and an ongoing resistance to how they are being constituted and constituting themselves as subjects. While these particular practices enable teachers to experience a sense of exaltation and "good" reputation, their desire to continue to act out such practices is propelled by the desire evoked in the learners. Creating the desire for practices in which to experience thinking and working as teacher in unique ways makes being teacher desirable. Their constant refusal to remain confined within existing limits, and the resurgent willingness to experiment, disrupt, challenge and change, gives expression to ongoing and changing resistance, through continual forms of transgression of the stereotypical practices and dominant forms and norms of reason. It is this irrepressible desire for creative transgressions and unique ways of experiencing the teacher position that makes their transformation possible.

The practices enacted during these moments open up spaces for teachers to perform their success through unique ways of thinking and working that give their lives a sense of pleasure and fulfilment. These unique experiences become the candidates for shaping the experiencing of the learners when teachers resist and disrupt the traditional barriers of teaching and learning for new practices and discourses in which power is reconfigured and

displaced as symbols of progress. What these practices oppose are the states of closure, of theoretical closure and political domination. Being desirable in these ways makes the task of being teacher an aesthetic one.

In their continued shifts of engagement within a range of alternate discourses, the teachers “plant the seeds of hope”, and expand the potential for resistance and disruption. These teachers experience their lives in a state of homelessness, constantly changing and shifting in the stances they adopt in the new situations in which they find themselves. Each movement, each space, becomes a possibility for making meaning of the world in different and unique ways. The potential to threaten dominant and authoritative structures exists. Positions favourable to performing success are occupied in contradictory ways and hence can be occupied in the future. Though the messages that the different teachers provide may be imperfect, the prospects are still better for some change and moments of success than none at all.



**SECTION B: DOMINANT STRUCTURES**

To talk about these teachers who struggle, challenge, and create possibilities for change is to understand these positions as being created in the ongoing effects of relations and in response to a plethora of normative principles. Disciplinary mechanisms, like institutional practices or what Foucault (1975, 223) describes as “the panopticons of everyday life”, want to maintain surveillance of people and arrest relations of power. School becomes such a space of domination, arranging objects. Teachers themselves internalise these systems of surveillance to the point that they become their own overseer, fixed and imprisoned in established practices. Teachers have learnt how to establish routine ways of thinking, working, marking and classifying. In the Foucauldian framework, the talking circle represents an expression of disciplinary power - the regulation of the self through the internalisation of the regulation by others. Learners are also subjected to surveillance and teachers’ responsibility falls into ossification and self-closure.

While politics assumes a certain fluidity in the present educational context, marking a shift from a kind of “death” to possibilities for change in how teachers think and work, the pedantic, stereotypical image continues to offer a comfortable, stable and secure position to work from. School practices become routine and the changing educational context is viewed with great uncertainty and fear.

The poems that I have inserted in Chapter One, by the learners of Hillview Primary, offer through implication, dangerous versions of the kinds of teachers that teach in our schools. While politics assumes a certain fluidity and change in how teachers should think and work in our shifting educational context (discussion in Chapter One), many schools refuse to discard their monarchical conceptions of power.

What becomes of the teachers when forms of social ordering seek to suppress difference and arrest dialogue? What happens to teachers when the discourses they are subject to, are silenced, or their voices are made less authoritative? In the first section of this chapter, I offered an interpretation of those moments when teachers who refuse to be at the disposal of disciplinary, monarchical power, continue to shift from one discourse to another creating spaces for difference. In this section I want to explore the power that exists within and among discourse and practice, how the teacher is subjected to the effects of that power, and how it serves to exclude and alienate teachers. Exploring these discourses will help me understand in its specific context – what is normal and natural, and how difficult it is for teachers to think and act outside of it.

Moments of agency happen within constraints. One can never be outside relations of power whether disciplinary or otherwise, this is what makes resistance possible. This section turns to these relations of power, to know about the panoticans of every day and how they function in these relations of power.

### **Constraining moments**

In this section the primary concern is to explore the micro mediations, to make visible the hierachical structures that continue to block teachers from circulating in unpredictable ways, and which brutalise teachers by slotting them into a single category of teacher, in which their differences are erased.

The changing educational context (exemplified by a plethora of policies) celebrates, through different policy initiatives, changes through which it hopes to cultivate the desire in teachers for new ways of knowing and being. In recognition of these changes, some realise that there is no need to stand still as they are being narrated by a new set of socially fixed meanings (curriculum policies, teacher development policies, teacher evaluation policies, institutional vision). But as meaning takers teachers respond to these shifts in these present times in different ways and there are no fixed and agreed definitions on restructuring as its meanings are contextually specific.

This study shows that within the individual institutional structural constraints, these six teachers consciously choose to transgress these single identity categories that oppress and manipulate them. In this process these teachers became strangers, adopting strange ways in their search for other statements, to resist the establishment of closure and domination within the specific teaching learning sites.

These teachers, as the data suggests, soon realise that engaging in alternate discourses, and being dissident, involves risk taking, and uncertainty. They find themselves alienated, treated with suspicion, and excluded from the clique. What I will attempt to explore in this section are the struggles and constraints these teachers face within their specific school contexts, in their move from “what is” in search for “what could be”. From the lengthy interview data, I have selected certain points to explicate some of the issues that I have identified to be the dominant and constraining forces within the everyday lived experiences of the six teachers. This brief exploration is here to show how the residues of bureaucratic forms of organisation and traditional forms of authority continue to impact on how teachers and school managers think and work. These issues relate to:

- Forcing change without vision: *"Teachers are delicate"*
- Collective cultures: *"They are like pushing away or pulling a wagon of stones!"*
- Singular definitions of teacher expertise: *"Some teachers just don't care"*
- Singular cultural definitions: *"I'm not given the space . . . that's killing me"*
- Particular kind of masculinity: *"I became a harsh tyrannical bastard . . . a sheer hell"*

These issues highlight how teachers are subject to the pressures of hegemonic patterns of thinking and working in different ways and how they struggle in the constitution of their teacher identities.

***Ursula: "I hate the cliques, It's like pushing away or pulling a wagon of stones!"***

For Ursula, the ideological and structural constraint limits and threatens how she legitimately wants to think and work. The dislocating and (dis)inviting material condition of the classrooms, and the conservative nature of the existing theoretical ideologies of the school culture, continue to imprison and constrain her. She complained, *"But I really found it difficult coping with fifty learners in the classroom and only forty minutes to teach. I hate the paperwork that I am also expected to do in that time. The volume of recording is unreal."* Her discussions on the constraining realities of time restrictions and large classes are a vital source of the nature of her constructed identity within the teacher role. She cannot put into practice her pedagogy that can allow for learners to develop in leadership, strength and potential. *"It does not allow me to see the learners differently and where they can get to see me differently,"* she argued.

In this educational context, the absence of vibrant and vigorous teacher cultures is visible and limited by the existing structures in which many teachers work. The need for teachers to interact more flexibly, to discuss and explore new ideas and practices, and to learn and work collectively is sadly lacking in Ursula's school. *"Oh! What are you doing this for"*, is a constant reminder of the lack of desire to change by the other colleagues in her school. Consequently, bureaucratic imperatives and the risk-taking and uncertainty associated with new practices and ideas, justify the way teachers teach and produce commonality. These patterned sets of activities and actions articulated by the teachers in Ursula's school explain the nature of the constraints she faces and how they threaten and overcome her otherness. She says: *"When I take my learners out into the school grounds for discussion teachers would comment, 'You are not really teaching, are you?'"* Ursula thus positions herself as disruptive of the norms of what and how teachers should teach. The implication is that no serious teaching can happen outside the classroom space. Ursula tries to construct her identity in

opposition to her colleagues and they react to this with some sense of attack, suspicion and animosity. These comments range from, “*Oh! What are you doing this for? What is she up to now?*” or “*There she goes again*”. Thus to be defined as a teacher means to think, act and work in set and immovable ways or risk being labelled, alienated and belittled. This suggests the complex means and pressures under which Ursula forges her identities. Ursula summed up her feelings about being a teacher in this school:

*I feel that I need to be continuously motivated because I'm surrounded by people who are not motivated for change. Whenever I approach management with ideas, I am not given the support to carry them through and ultimately the teachers look at me differently because I don't belong to their clique. I hate cliques.*

Ursula's experiences in her school bring to the fore crucial issues about collective cultures and cultivation of the desire for change. The pursuit of collective collegiality is important for multiple definitions of teacher expertise. The collective cultures that Ursula attempts to create in her particular schooling site as a space to adapt and integrate new and diverse approaches without necessarily implying the total rejection of the old, fails to shake off teachers' habitual ways of thinking and working. At the same time her resistance and transgressions to go beyond these limitations individually are punished in pursuit of the collegial norm. As an eccentric, prima donna-ish teacher, who likes to sometimes go to school wearing her hat and slops, the ideological inflexibility of her fellow staff respond to her teaching practices with much suspicion and animosity. This also highlights the need for collective cultures in schools to enhance personal meaning and professional progress without reinforcing paternalism and parochialism.

***Trevor: “Teachers just don't care”***

For many teachers, acknowledging expertise in another teacher and teaching style is difficult as it opens up one's own practice as inadequate. This fear of change is evident when dominant structures are established and teachers continue in sterile self-repetition and self-closure. Trevor expresses his desire for the creation of collective cultures in his school site as a space to disrupt the boundaries between teacher, learner and parent, and to cultivate the desire for shared responsibility of the educational experience. Realising the educational experience (subjects teachers and the way they teach) as the terrain to counter hegemonic discourses created by the apartheid system, he struggles to convince the other teachers in his school to question, challenge and subvert oppressive reason and re-engage the silenced other. While participating in the complex issues surrounding the process of producing instructional material within the spaces created in the new curriculum for Outcomes Based Education, he



expresses a sense of disappointment when the other teachers in his school resisted the need for collective action.

Positioning himself as change agent by creating the discourses that express emancipatory potential, he meets with others who don't want to transgress. He explained:

*I think our principal is a guy who is open-minded and he actually likes change, but the teachers do not want to change. I made a point to the teachers that we are going to improve our teaching. Because we have up-to-date records does not mean you teach in class. In this new time in South Africa, of transparency and democracy, why not be transparent for our kids? I spoke to the teachers about giving the learners our programme. I believe that each and every kid in the class should know what is supposed to be done. They must show that programme to their parents so that they know what they are supposed to do. I found that the teachers just don't care.*

Resisting practices that open up spaces for collective action highlights teachers' fear of challenge and question, producing and reproducing the boundaries between teacher and learner, and limiting possibilities for teachers, and how they judge and act.

***Eddie: "Forcing change without shared and moving vision: Teachers are delicate . . ."***

Schools are places where power is everywhere. While teachers' power to be productive has been acknowledged through numerous policy initiatives, it has also intensified bureaucratic imperatives in certain institutional sites. Eddie also feels constrained by the authoritarian principal. Power is one-sided and constructed in a linear fashion. He feels "betrayed" by management's power to effect discipline through relations of oppression. Speaking on behalf of others from her (the principal) institutionally privileged position, she continues to run the risk of perpetuating domination and silencing others from speaking for themselves:

*I believe, as a principal you cannot do things on your own. But you can make up a family of people, people who share the same political ideals and the same aspirations. This is where your strength comes from. And when you do want to do something, change something, you can't do it without them because this is your support and your strength . . . I believe that no amount of workshops or seminars can help the possible sinking of the boat, unless like the lighthouse, we unite in the decisions and the directions we take to steer the boat through these troubled waters. Management lacks the vision and the knowledge to steer us through these troubled waters. Teachers are delicate, but they can become hard . . .*



In the above transcript Eddie also suggests that his school vision, besides being so fixed to enable potential change, as a form of authority is used to exclude teachers from mission and purpose. This uni-dimensional power relationship that the school principal continues to assume, sets the limitations for how teachers may renew and redefine their purpose over time. The absence of a shared vision, of working together towards a common vision and mission, discussing views and ideas of how to initiate the change process, is sadly lacking because the school principal continues to exercise her position in unproductive ways. In this fixed view of what teachers should and could do, she fails to recognise that the purpose for teacher change cannot be given, that purpose for change comes from within. When Eddie emphasises that no amount of workshops or seminars can help, this notion of change is reinforced. Moreover, the absence of collective resolve and working together is tied to the principal's construction of her position as one of authority and control. Teachers are constructed as the doers. This essentialist notion works to constrain teachers in exercising power. If teachers and implementers/doers are naturalised, singular, unchangeable, regulated and defined, then the possibility for change is constrained and limited. Dissident teachers like Eddie are left devalued.

***Hlo: "I'm not given the space. That's killing me"***

Hlo's visions for change are also pitted against entrenched patterns of power. Her positionality as change agent becomes a struggle within a male-dominated arena. The principal and the authority that this position holds, functions as a discourse that authorises the male teachers and members of management to speak, and correspondingly "silences" Hlo. The male principal articulates a position through which power is constructed in a linear fashion. Power is oppressive and possessed by the male teachers and the principal of the school. Embodying discourses of struggle as spaces for otherness, Hlo experiences a sense of closure and exclusion by the male-dominated management team. She explained:

*There is no open platform where you can really share what you feel, your vision, and your ideas. That flexibility of trying out new ideas and knowing what works has stopped. I find the atmosphere among the staff, especially the male staff who worked at the prison school for a longer period than I did but who have never been promoted, hostile. The principal is not giving me the space to do what I want to anymore . . . suddenly everything I do is questioned and looked at with suspicion . . . I do not feel appreciated as a valuable member of the team. Often the feedback that I have been getting is that I am too ambitious . . . that I think I am too clever. That has just killed that spirit of working as a team. That is really killing me.*

This is an example of the ways male teachers and managers recreate systems of masculine power. When Hlo talks about the male staff being hostile to her because she occupies a higher position than they do, she illustrates how the production of identities are linked with the production of certain discourses and their entitlement to power. Being hostile to her shows how they try to get their gender right because she resists cultural constructions as an African woman. The hegemonic patterns of thinking and acting by the male principal privileges the naturalisation of masculine power. In this instance, Hlo struggles to be part of the team. But naturalisation of male power works to create and sustain masculine power that has specific consequences for Hlo: "It was killing her." Hlo constructs power negatively. She does not have the power to change these views because she does not have a platform to air her views. Her feelings of alienation and complete isolation mean that she believed that she could not discuss her ideas and visions for change in the school, because power resided somewhere else: with the principal as the more influential member of management.

***Anna: "Playing dumb"***

Anna in contrast, faced similar challenges as a White woman manager. While positioning her White and privileged "exotic" other in an historically Indian institution, she could not control the conditions in the college even as manager because power resided somewhere else "more powerful" with the Indian male staff. She says:

*The staff were unsupportive and I felt ostracised. At times I felt like giving up and just leaving this place. Sometimes I actually played dumb to encourage others to contribute and share their knowledge. We needed to improve. We were actually policing teachers to do so. I did face the wrath of teachers, especially the males who believed that they had all the answers, but in time many realised and commented that I was not a person of words but action as well.*

In the extract above I have highlighted how Anna enacts a particular version of herself as woman manager in relation to the social and material context of Cato Manor Technical College. It foregrounds her experiences of the hegemonic patterns of male conduct in her institutional context. It suggests the complex means and pressures under which woman managers have to forge their identities, and being good and capable within it can be read as a resistance to these dominant definitions of masculinity and male power. However, creating the spaces to exercise her power productively in such a position also means diffusing her power as woman for a more stereotypical image of "dumb White woman manager".

While Anna exposes male power as being seduced by “female dumbness”, she also reinforces this hegemonic masculinity by “playing dumb”, the quiet world where they follow orders and are overpowered and overshadowed.

***Daryl: “It’s sheer hell. I became a harsh tyrannical bastard”***

Daryl’s experiences, whilst similar to the constraints highlighted by the other teachers, are as unique to his specific material and social context. There are three main concerns that he raised during the interviews that served to explain his eventual resignation from the public schooling system. Daryl raises the issue of the absence of collective cultures among teachers, which has also been raised by the other teachers in the study. His view is captured quite well when he says:

*Being part of a team is strongly lacking in most schools. Teachers work in isolation, living in glass boxes encrusted with chalk dust, which does not allow the learners to see teachers as real people, but experience the relationship as an “us and them” type of thing.*

His argument stresses the individualism and isolated nature of teachers’ approaches to their work, supported by structures of teacher isolation which have their roots in schools that have been organised like egg-crates since the mid-19th century (Lortie 1975; Darling-Hammond 1989). However, there is a counter argument to this. The collective cultures that do exist are exhausting and contrived as they become appendages to the regular day. Furthermore, collective action as a space for exploring new practices and ideas brings about uncertainty. Teachers’ fear of being seen as inferior and the realisation that their practices are lacking, justify the way in which they teach and produce commonality and routine habits rather than uniqueness and difference. This point Daryl elaborates further:

*Teaching Science at Beechwood High School was a cut and dried story. The Science curriculum had already been designed for me to teach and the notes had been prepared in advance. These notes were still being used seven years later with the same mistakes. I found this very disconcerting because I always considered being a teacher a developmental craft, more especially because the learners were changing all the time.*

This struggle that Daryl raises about teachers and the choices they make about how they position themselves in schools reinforces the hegemonic structures that arrest dialogue for states of control and domination. His arguments about the Science curriculum being “a cut and dried” story and the amount of administrative work that teachers are burdened with,

further reinforce the ways in which teachers' work identities are constructed. Teachers either sink or swim. Through the personal dilemma he faces, he exposes how forms of bureaucracy are played out through the emphasis of administrative work rather than the teachers' professional progress. These structures remain unsympathetic to professional collaboration. As he quite rightly sums up, "*Administrative work kills the passion and the enthusiasm of a teacher.*"

Daryl's final decision to leave the public schooling system is described by his experience of teaching in an all-boys school. While this school is a clear example of the ways in which boys re(create) systems of masculine power, Daryl's views are actually contradictory to the dominant definitions which, he argues, are an act of violence against boys. Daryl explains:

*The first week proved to be sheer hell when fifteen boys were caned. It was a case of sink or swim for me. I tried very hard to fit into the system. But I actually underwent a personality change. I became a harsh tyrannical bastard and that was something that I wasn't very pleased with.*

When teaching discourses lump boys in this way, constructing them as naughty, rough and deserving of harsh punishment, they actually serve to construct particular versions of boys. The effect of these discourses constitute and determine "normal" masculinity. However, this discourse is open to contradictions. Daryl describes himself as having a quiet disposition, not sporty but loves to act and sing. His version of masculinity is pitted against entrenched patterns of maleness. Engaging in such practices turns him into a "tyrannical bastard" and these damage social relations and hinder his work as a teacher.

## **Conclusion**

I have represented discourses and practices in which certain rules function to regulate and inscribe teachers in particular ways. Within the rules of these essentialist structures, other statements and other ways of thinking remain unintelligible and outside the realm of possibility. Discourses are powerful enough to simultaneously constitute and exclude certain possibilities of thought and action, privilege particular ways of thinking, judging and working what it means to be a teacher. These power relations that are produced and reproduced have implications for teachers' freedom which is significant in the production and regulation of teachers' identities.

Teaching discourses make teachers powerless, passive, dysfunctional and without agency. These teaching discourses serve to perpetuate teachers' identities as unchangeable and

singular and leads to silencing and imprisoning all those who take up such a position. While the data highlights how these relations of power are blocked at the personal and institutional level, teachers can resist these “natural” inscriptions and their material effects to avoid being fixed. These junctures in teachers’ struggles are crucial. To refuse alterity, like many teachers do, is nearly to be buried.

As Palmer (1998) confirms, “Many people give up in the face of institutional resistance, but others seem to find in that resistance a source of energy for their campaign.” This study shows how teachers act in these fractures of identities in struggle. Among the multiplicity of forces through which these teachers struggle to be free, fragile, eruptions of the self emerge. In the last section of this chapter I explore these fractures to better understand the slipperiness of teachers’ identities in their desire to “denaturalise” themselves and renew discourse.

The movement mentality out of these forms of self-closure and states of domination is a *strategy of resistance*, not to engage in a kind of separatism but to struggle with the existing cultural context through which new social practices or relations in which they exist can be created. In the analysis of resistance within power relations, Halperin (1998) adds, something always escapes from the reach of power to a place outside power. In exploring the lives of these six teachers and their agenda for agency, I now turn to those powerful moments which compel teachers to move to a place outside power, of dislocation and particular linkages and practices in and through which power is distributed in an irregular fashion, is mobile and transitory. We need to excavate, and make available to you, what happens in this trouble filled passage from one discourse to another when these teachers become available to mutation in their desire to be successful.



**SECTION C: PRACTICES ON THE SELF**

In this section I show what happens in these tiny, but elusive moments when teachers are able to shift through the contradictions between their public responsibility and private lives, sometimes without notice, rejuvenated and energised to continue to commit themselves to change. Through the poststructural analytical framework employed in the study, I am able to focus on these less articulated, unconscious desires and thoughts to explain the rapidly shifting, elusive moments of power through which teachers rethink and make themselves available to a transformation of thought and action. These practices of self are episodic and offer teachers the space to attain a certain state of happiness and rejuvenation. At the same time, we need to remind ourselves that what is felt as solid and real at this moment may subsequently separate and refigure.

In these moments of creative resurgence, teachers effect practices of resistance. Acted out in irregular fashion, these moments of resistance are spread over time and space, at varying densities, at times mobilising groups of individuals, inflaming certain points of their bodies, certain moments in life, certain types of conduct/behaviour, to decode themselves and attain a certain state of affirmation and rejuvenation. These particular practices and relations, that teachers invest in, propel them out of the state of self-closure and constraint. I want to draw on these positions teachers invest in, to understand the shifting relations between teachers' private lives and their public positions in performing their success.

The primary concern is to explore the negotiations as teachers' private/public bonds are challenged anew in/through which agency of teacher in its multiplicity is up for grabs. These moments open up spaces for the disruption of singular definitions of teacher and traditional practices for different possibilities and potential change. There are different types of rejuvenating processes that emerge. In turning to their own histories, particular cultural investments and desires in order to make sense of their lives, teachers realise that their ways of thinking and acting are potentially changeable. These practices constitute teachers' "Resistance Identity" to the emphasis on singularity, and it reveals not the discovery of a true self, but identity formation as slippery and multiple. Three types of alterity practices were revealed emerging from the axis – practices on the self, the rehabilitators, the soul seekers and the movers and the seekers. For the purpose of readability, I have loosely grouped the six teachers into three different types of practices. While I have created such categories of agency, my intention is not to name the categories in any fixed way, but to explore spaces of possibilities. These possibilities are local and unique to the six teachers in the study.

While these practices are of temporary coherence, the seemingly solid characteristics or structures I offer in the descriptions below, are only *one* of subjectivity's many possible expressions or forms in teachers' history. Teachers' lives are in continued states of innovation, seeking out spaces to ascertain the real nature of their thoughts, desires and interests.

### **The rehabilitators**

The rehabilitator is defined to include Trevor and Hlo, whose lives have been imprinted by a sedimented and brutal history. Historically the apartheid state harnessed and deployed dangerous versions of oppressive forces for its own ends in the suppression of liberation struggles. Apartheid played a major role in the racial, class, gender and cultural construction of township and rural life, areas from which Trevor and Hlo have spent a major part of their lives. For Hlo, certain culturally/ethnically charged patterns also work against her.

The educational experience provides the terrain for their *healing and recovery* of their dwarfed minds and hurting bodies. Rehabilitating the mind and body implies an un-blocking process, to engage in relations and practices that give meaning to their difference. More importantly, being teacher created possibilities not only to transform and rehabilitate themselves but enabled them to create a range of alternate discourses in which power was reconfigured and displaced as symbols of their *progress*. For Hlo, this meant investing in her ability to resist hegemonic cultural definitions and to act in the fractures of her category as woman, that have been placed on her and continue to oppress and silence her. Challenging these patterns is an "incomplete process" of recovery (Flax 1993), a continued struggle with desire from one position to another to improve and progress as empowered African woman. For Trevor, whose educational experience as an African has been manipulated and his growth suppressed, improving and recovering from hurtful ways means acting in the slippages, where his agency is rekindled.

### ***Hlo: "Who I am. What I want to be"***

Within the institutionally constructed collective Hlo is punished in pursuit of the collegial norm. The taken-for-granted normative structures of the school and the cultural norms of interaction within the management team exploit her otherness. The following extract suggests Hlo's exclusion from the staff:

*Although I sometimes ask myself, What is the problem with the staff? Why don't they like me? I really felt messed up . . . Its killing me . . . But the good thing about teaching is that once you know the kind of teacher you want to be it becomes very*

*easy to manage your role, because you take away your self from the politics that goes on in the staff room, it doesn't bother you. At the same time I do remind myself that I am not prepared to change what I believe in, Who I am and what I want to be. I will love against the odds . . . And it energises me to work, but differently, to feel "whole" again.*

The above extract also highlights explosive moments in which Hlo refuses to be slotted into a category of teacher in which her differences are subsumed, instead she resists repeating her state of "death". She compels herself to rethink herself and her definition as non-traditional female teacher. In these junctures, getting the match between her practices and her categorisation as non-traditional female teacher, gives her greater pleasure and love. Taking herself away from the politics positions her oppositionally to the administrative and ideological inflexibility that prevails in the prison school and from which her choices to resist and "move out" begin. Propelled out of a state of closure and "death" to moments of life-giving practices and partnerships, her meanings of being non-traditional female teacher are affirmed in/through a collective grouping of new female.

The struggle with desire is her struggle for her freedom, for "what I want to be" against the retention of dominant notions of masculinity and traditional female teacher. Within the space of this collective grouping Hlo is able to give voice to her desires, thoughts and needs of Black woman. In this space she gains pleasure from being involved in relationships that affirm "who I am". She explains:

*I had to do something. I spoke to Dominic about studying . . . I spoke to the new teachers, many who were complaining that very often they sat around not knowing what to do. While Dominique and I decided that we would register for our Masters degree, the others engaged in doing their degrees in varying specialisations (ABET, BA). We have managed to restore the culture of studying once again. I feel alive once again. Registering for a degree in Social Justice and Peace Education is just what I needed. For the first time this year I felt I reached out to most of the female teachers on the staff.*

Studying provided another space for Hlo and her colleagues. Collectively they disrupt old patterns of behaviour, and invent and negotiate an alternate identity, one that foregrounds professional identity and commitment that makes for a healthy community outside of the main community. Through collective resources there is a construction of public mutuality

rather than personal vulnerability, and personal intimacy is not the norm by which they connect. Here, Hlo can make meaning of her non-traditional definition of teacher and its alignment with the current patterns of desire as Black woman, as teacher of male juvenile criminals and as researcher in social justice. She invests in getting her views of gender equity right, in/through which she can continue to construct particular identities to perform her success and freedom in her practice as teacher.

Throughout her life, Hlo is able to find space in different kinds of collective resistance. Within this free and private space in the public site of the school, rehabilitation meant challenging the dominant cultural definitions of woman and actively constructing meanings that were not only in opposition to other African women, but against male power as well.

***Trevor: "Wake up all you teachers, time to teach a new way"***

Trevor's mind and spirit had been put to sleep, blocked from thinking and questioning in challenging ways. Many teachers continue to teach in this way, but he wants to teach differently. He explained:

*Things are not well. We have to rehabilitate ourselves, because what we were taught was wrong. We are trying to rebuild the world and teachers must teach in a new way . . . Education is a shared responsibility.*

Trevor finds more and more that he needs to organise his own thinking, his ideas, to help him work out what is, "*okay and what is wrong*". Trevor finds a need to move out, to search for another community of colleagues who are willing to share his spirit in the process of self-transformation and to become an agent of transformation. More importantly, he realises that in order to survive and achieve the vision he has planned, he has to mobilise new constituencies, including radical women who are "new" political subjects but part of the wider project of democracy. The data described below makes visible his desire for resistance and these moments of creative chaos, in which he creates the spaces to "rehabilitate" himself, to bring his mind back to a state of "functionality". He explained:

*I enjoy working together with other interested colleagues, especially Mrs Shinge from the neighbouring school. I love Physical Science, I love the learners. This is what helps me enjoy being a teacher, and a happy person. I feel a sense of freedom working with others discussing education, because there is something inside of me that others must hear and know about that can change their lives and their learners.*

Investing in particular collective cultures outside of his own school provides the terrain for questioning and challenging the established norms of teachers' practice, while offering Trevor the space to create relationships that affirm him in/through which he can give voice to what is inside of him. Through these practices and relationships he is able to make meaning through which he can actively construct particular identities to perform his success and freedom.

However, getting his definition of non-conformist teacher "right" means being involved in different kinds of social practices and relationships that affirm such a categorisation. He elaborated:

*Together with Mrs Shinge, S'bu and Hlengiwe, we formed the Clermont Youth League (CYL). This social gathering helped keep the youth off the streets by providing them with opportunities to develop their own talents, organisational skills and engage in "domestic" politics and through the efforts of such a grouping, the township of Clermont has since enjoyed the "privilege" of having clean running water, ablution facilities and electricity for its community. Happy Hlope, one of the youth of CYL, is presently employed as a councilor in the Inner West Council.*

These are exalting moments for Trevor. During these episodic moments, particular forms of power/knowledge position him to invest in particular subject positions in/through which he is able to fashion particular identities to make sense of the fluid context. Books and journals offer him moments of understanding himself and builds his capacity to engage with new systems of knowledge. He realises how critical it is to develop a wider knowledge base from which he can assert his agency (power), and moving out of the resistant situation and altering his perspective enables him to engage in practices with others that energise him to continue with the campaign for transformation.

Trevor has always enjoyed the company of friends and peers who continue to question and challenge the ways of life and living as an African. Here, in his practice as teacher, rehabilitating himself included working on science projects, initiated by NGO's (non-governmental organisations), which enhanced the potential of mutually supportive networks as spaces for change and for the creation of new ways of thinking and working as teachers. Moving out of the school space to more public spaces which these workshops offered, meant that African teachers had a "voice". In these spaces the teachers can become audible, and resist and subvert collectively oppressive forms of thinking and working. He became part of



the working committee and designed curriculum packages for teachers throughout the province to use, which contributed to his own professional development. In such alternate spaces, African teachers' voices were affirmed, and new meanings were created for redefinition of their commitment to continue to teach in better ways.

The rehabilitators focused on teachers' resistance to asymmetrical relations of power through mobilising groups of individuals, while soul seekers offers a description of rekindling certain moments in life and certain parts of the body.

### **The soul seekers**

This loosely defined category includes Eddie and Ursula, the two teachers who search for meaning in their lives, and particular ways of relating to themselves through certain life giving forces. For Ursula, this meant being with nature or what I have described earlier as her ecological interests and Eddie, his great love for music. For these two teachers, contesting imprisonment and self-closure involved transitory points of resistance, spread over time, when they were able to slip out of the reach of disciplinary power for moments to replenish the heart, mind and soul.

#### ***Eddie: "Finding my own voice"***

Outside of his classroom, Eddie's desire for collective sharing as a space for reviewing and renewing his purpose in his practice as teacher continue to be subverted by traditional centres of power and control within his school site. The dominant structures prevailing in his school continue to silence his voice, closing up spaces where he can be heard, and where his ideas, needs and doubts can be made audible for the new vision. This singularity of vision and mission in this schooling site opens up a space for dissidence. Eddie is not simply a victim. He has agency and he exercises his power in productive ways generating moments of success. In his search for spaces to threaten the absolutisation of dominant structures, he turns to himself. The desire to shape himself as a certain kind of subject pressures him to move out of the public space where his voice is silenced, into a private space in/through particular practices he effects upon himself, body, mind and spirit, and opens up the space for his own voice. He describes his love for jazz and playing the saxophone as a desire and interest:

*As a one-man band, playing and connecting with different people regularly (Thursdays and Saturdays) really helps me find my own voice, who I really am and where I want to be. I want to be the jazz singer who connects with the music he plays; I want to be a teacher who can connect with whom I teach. There is a lot of*

*passion that comes out of that. I want to provide a little light to each child, to help each child find their own voice and to sing their own song. Being involved in music makes me passionate about teaching and the process of transformation. I want to give off my best at all times.*

Eddie's desire to sustain his commitment to continue to practise as teacher is cultivated in these private moments/spaces when his musical talent offers him "solid" ground to engage in new ways of thinking and working collectively with his learners. In these powerful moments, his music affirms his capacity to teach in passionate and desiring ways. His music gives voice to his wishes and thoughts about his life as a teacher, and puts pressure on him to shake off habitual practices that suppress desire, for new practices that can assist him to connect with his learners and his subject as possibilities for change.

At other times his love for inspirational books arouses passion, renewal and desire for commitment to change in/through his position. Through these practices Eddie is empowered to challenge forms of closure and open spaces where he can actively construct particular meanings in/through which his teacher identities can be made visible. These are exalting moments for Eddie. There is passion in getting the match between these practices and his definition as teacher who wants to find his own voice within the common space of the classroom. In these moments he redefines his commitment to continue to participate in the formation of his political will.

*There is no point in my life that I can say, this is it, I found it and I have everything. The searching goes on. There is no end to learning. The musical pieces I choose and the books I read must be inspirational and motivational for me to go on searching, and I want to pass on that inspiration and motivation to the kids.*

This search for new songs and new connections is a lifelong search. His music becomes a metaphorical seduction for his continuing passion as teacher to connect with his learners in all their differences within the common space of the classroom. In these potent and episodic moments, created through reading inspirational books and his music, powerful meanings for potential change are affirmed and constituted actively through the construction of multiple and fluid identities through which he is able to experience pleasure and freedom.

***Ursula: "A space for sanity . . . and my soul mate"***

*I met with such negativity on the path of staff members, my colleagues, that it actually ended up to be a very confrontational level where you think to yourself*

*“Why am I doing this” then you spring back and say well I’m doing this because the child enjoys it. For me everything that I do I thoroughly enjoy and I wanted my children to enjoy it.*

This comment from Ursula focuses on the struggles and dilemmas of working in a schooling site in which asserting difference is seen as “abnormal” and a threat to the institutional culture or collegial norm. Ursula became the stranger with the strange habits. Intimacy is the most important thing that can happen between people and in Ursula’s case it has become insistent, manifesting itself in the pseudo-communal ethos of the “do or die” phenomenon. Between a state of “Who am I” and “What do I want” tiny explosive moments within her compel her to rethink and reflect on her thoughts and desires. Feeling despondent and “wanting to jump ship”, is to refuse the possibility for innovation. But she is not a victim.

She turns on her self. Her movement out of this toxic atmosphere is affirmed in another space, another place, alone yet enhanced by mutually supportive networks. She abandons the institutional space that has ostracised her, to escape to a place that always gives her back her sanity, the bush. Working within the normative structures of practice, the Enviro-club as a collective project becomes the key feature of how Ursula relates to each of the learners differently and provides the space within which to validate and amplify her ecological identity. In these moments of turbulence, she “goes back to nature, to the bush to get her sanity back”.

*Starting up the Enviro-club extended the boundaries for me. I do break boundaries in the classroom, but co-ordinating the club allows me to engage with something that I really enjoy doing outside of the school. I am a “bush-baby”. It is a place where I see the child grow from a little seed in terms of leadership, strength and potential. The Enviro-club is my passion, which keeps me together. It keeps my sanity together.*

Her investments in these social practices and the relationships she forges through these investments give her pleasure and sanity. In this way resistance through togetherness is accomplished.

In this private space which nature offers her away from the oppressive spaces of her school, family and work life mutually affirm her and rejuvenate her with fresh ideas and desires to continue. The meaning and the sense of togetherness she forges with nature and her family in

this space, transgresses the boundaries that separate teachers' private lives and public responsibility. She confirms this bond:

*Keith, my husband is my strength for a lot of what I am doing now, in the way that I might approach things, or teach things. He is my soul mate. Taking the Enviro-group on an excursion, or going on a hiking trip has become a family thing. He has always been there to say, stop crying about it, deal with the problem and get on with it.*

This can be seen as breaking free from the rigid stereotypes of work and family, of private/public boundaries and thus testing out other ways of being and doing teacher. These moments and spaces through which teacher is redefined against the traditional static definitions of what teachers do are powerful. In these spaces meanings are created that have the potential to recast teachers as subjects with agency.

However, through the medium of their respective passions and talents, Eddie with his musicalities and Ursula with her ecological capabilities, create the spaces to experience a deep commitment and connectedness to their subjectivities. Within these spaces, these teachers "feel free" to be themselves, and fill their hearts and minds with love, hope and dreams to *continue* to resist and change oppressive forms and reason, and to re-engage their learners for better ways of being.

### **The movers and the seekers**

While four of the teachers took "spiritual leave" of their institution Daryl and Anna, physically left their institutional sites to take up alternate teaching spaces. Their agency as successful teachers are continually reconfigured and renamed as they move from one institutional setting to another, seeking out spaces in and through which they could call on their difference, their desires and wishes. Thus, defining Daryl and Anna as "movers and seekers" implies a setting free or a release from a discourse that has erased or subsumed their other differences in search of another discourse where such differences and interests are made possible. Movers and seekers involve an ongoing activity of seeking out different spaces, places and mobilising different groups of people, inflaming certain types of behavior. Even in these instances, the resistance pointed to something new and pleasurable in the production and regulation of teacher identities.

Rather than attempting to offer a representative account of both teachers separately, I have decided to represent this knowledge differently. In selecting one discourse, "movers and

seekers”, I draw attention to experiences from the excerpts that articulate how private meanings and desires and public definitions are embedded in the negotiation of teachers’ identities and how they contribute to changing and movable definitions of being and doing teacher.

### ***Desirable moves***

Unlike the other four teachers in this study, who were able to invest in particular social practices and relationships to resist the hierarchy of the normative structures of teachers’ practice while remaining in their specific institutional contexts, Anna and Daryl experience their resistance to states of domination differently. Giving voice to their desires and interests meant not just shaking off routinised ways of thinking and working as teacher, but moving out of the circle of sterile self-repetition and prevailing order. Anna and Daryl exercise agency through a *movement mentality*.

For Anna and Daryl, the power of movement evolves an alternate discourse of power/knowledge formations around spaces and practices they value and experience in a pleasurable way. As Anna moves out of one institutional site to another, the movement also grows and it empowers her with capacities to cross-pollinate and germinate new ideas, practices and values. Anna starts her teaching career at Fulton School for the Deaf, then she moves to Open Air, which is a school for the physically challenged. She leaves Open Air for Plessislaer, a Technical College for African students in the heart of an African township, a part-time post at Msundusi College, and presently she teaches at Cato Manor Technical College, an historically Indian College, staffed by predominantly Indian lecturers.

At Fulton School she acquires the skills of learning how to sign. Furthermore, she also taught them how to sing. She says: *“That was such an achievement and this made me all the more determined to ‘open the doors’ for them.”* However, she leaves Fulton, with an exalted reputation. She expressed, *“My life changed in 1989 when I left Fulton to work at Open Air School for the disabled.”* Against all odds, her position at Open Air offered her the space to learn to speak and teach in Afrikaans. She also introduced the learners to different learning spaces, by taking the students to visit the sugar terminal even though they were confined to wheelchairs. She found this challenging, but left behind an exalted reputation when she decided to leave Open Air at the end of 1989. The same can be attributed to her experiences at Plessislaer, as well as Cato Manor Technical College. She confessed:

*1994 was a happy year for me . . . I became involved with many of their community projects and there were lot of friendships . . . Although the principal offered me the*



*post as a deputy principal, no amount of coaxing was going to make me stay in Pietermaritzburg.*

As the movement accelerates from one site to another, Anna's agency gains momentum in the act of the movement itself, and she is seductively challenged by the "strange places and people", en route to unknown destination. To elaborate further, Anna's movement from teaching through sign language, to teaching through Afrikaans, teaching second language speakers, teaching adult learners and teachers computer skills and typing also foregrounds the idea of cross-pollination, of acquiring skills of communication from one site to use in another but at the same time germinating new ideas teaching and practising these skills along the way. While she commented "*my experience in teaching the deaf prepared me well for teaching second language speakers at Plessislaer*", she leaves Plessislaer to teach at Cato Manor Technical College, then commenting, "I should never have gone there". The affirmation she does not receive from colleagues in the institutional site is redefined and redirected towards the ends to which the movement has inspired, i.e to cross-pollinate ideas and practices and germinate new ones. This pressure she puts on herself to adopt particular identities for herself as desirable or loved teacher is propelled by her power and the meanings she creates for herself in/through movements. She says, "*It was almost like a competitive thing within myself.*"

Movement shakes off states of blandness and sterility, without which there will be "certain death". Movements are fragile and involve risk-taking and uncertainty, but her desire for new land and a fertile site for the growth of new ideas is challenging and seductive. It creates the space for her to perform her success. For Anna the world is her classroom and moving from one geographical site to another (Pietermaritzburg to Edendale, Edendale to Durban) highlights that the potential to be teacher is found everywhere.

Daryl's desire for movement and the search for "new" sites to practise as a teacher involved the movement out of public institutional sites to the creation of his own private space which he names "Super Tutor". In this heterogeneous process, he is able to create a range of different possibilities for himself and his learners without being constrained by hegemonic forces that continue to impose structures on his White male identity. Investing in this private, secure home/school, he is able to move away and release himself from the public gaze of surveillance and regulation. Moving away from fixed harsh modes of thinking and working in search of private spaces rekindled moments of warmth and closeness that he struggles for. Super-Tutor provides him such moments. He explains:

*His teacher life as one that is two-fold; playing the role of teacher and parent. While he argued that teachers can never take the place of parents, he stressed that they should be approachable, as parents are.*

Through a more informal and intimate learning approach, he is able to challenge anew the relations between his public responsibility and his quiet and private nature. This two-fold role as parent and teacher, blurs teacher power relations and foregrounds the permeability of the private/public boundaries. Opening up the category of teacher in his private space to include other categories, his agency is reconfigured in productive ways, which includes non-violent practices against boys and freedom from administrative inflexibility. These spaces inflamed kinds of social relationships and practices for thinking and doing teacher differently. For Anna and Daryl, the challenge for the unknown catalysed a process of re-alignment, marked by a passion, love, perseverance and determination to be the best.

## Conclusion

In this section I have explored those practices of the self that teachers effect by their own means on themselves, an activity in which they become available for a transformation of who I am, a resistance which coerces teachers to rethink their lives as successful teachers. Resistance is generally local and unpredictable (St Pierre 2000), and analysis of resistance within power relations proceeds on a case-by-case basis. However, in the context of this study, I have created three different types of agentic practices, and while these are very loosely organised groupings intending to give temporary coherence, they serve to emphasise what I believe to be one of subjectivity's many possible expressions within the South African educational context. The agency revealed in the slippage of the fragmented and essentialised category of teacher, is unique, different and explains that opening the category of teacher does not mean death of an autonomous individual, but the space for creating difference in how we think and work as teacher.

These fragile but explosive moments, moments of "slipping out" were not to reflect on what is, but to examine their own complicity in the maintenance of the social order. Analysing these gaps within which the teachers act, uncovered teacher's less clearly articulated desires, interests, thoughts, anxieties and wishes and how pursuing those (other categories of identities) affirmed them in mind, body and spirit, and providing the agency to continue in their personal and social transformation. Whether it meant being in the company of friends and special colleagues who love to challenge and question, out in the bush where the body and mind are free, playing jazz music, forming a woman's study group and connecting with oneself through the saxophone, these practices that teachers invest in, offer moments to

question their attachment to certain habitual practices within the prevailing systems of order, in order to create new ways of life as teachers. In these moments the slipperiness and multiplicity of teachers' identities is open to "new formations that are not fully constrained in advance", through which the possibilities are created for denaturalising themselves (Butler 1995, 135).

These fractures make visible teachers' other categories that have been erased, silenced and absent from the singular definition of teacher. However, in their struggle with desire to be, desire for, desire to please, they act on those gaps created in the play between the practice and the discourse. Opening up the other categories, the subjects realise that meanings (being teacher) by which they are defined, categorised and classified can be strategically reinterpreted and reworked in productive ways. Within these social practices and relationships teachers create, that affirm their categorisation as successful teacher, teacher's identities are potentially fluid and multiple. In the construction of teachers' multiple and fluid identities, relations of power are reversible, they can be unfixed and hierarchies dismantled.

However messy, uncertain, and conflictual they experience such discourses, the choices they make in and through it, is ultimately a struggle for moments of freedom. In these bold moments, offered in/through their particular cultural investments, new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships are continually being created as rejuvenating moments that cultivate, inspire and sustain the teachers' desire for continuity and change. Thus the space for freedom available to teachers is that they have the capacity to contest, resist and disrupt practices that are being used to construct them and their world, and to enact practices that open up rather than close spaces for unique experiences.

In analysing these relations of power in order to learn what is being produced and reconstituted, are strategic games (Foucault 1984a, 298). In these power games, resistance inflames strategies that are drawn from teachers' immediate social networks and in society as a whole. These historically emergent investments renew teachers' awareness of the contingency of their existing forms of life, and undermines the fixed and absoluteness of their current practices. They also offer the possibility for freedom as teacher, and challenge anew the public/private alignment.

## SYNTHESIS

This chapter has drawn from excerpts taken from the interview transcripts of teachers and the complex ways of identity formation in South Africa, and encapsulates the fluidity of identity formation. Such recognition opposes any attempt to present the forms and norms of life as absolute. But at different points in time each form is revealed as finite and potentially changeable, open to space for other. The life histories of the six teachers provided the fertile site for reinscription in the production of their lives as successful teachers. These practices teachers use in their daily lives highlight how private/public relations are embedded in the negotiation of teachers' identities and in their performance of success. Realising that all forms of knowledge and practices of thinking and working are contingent, makes the space for freedom possible. The agency of teachers to refuse to be grounded or buried, empowers them to disrupt and contest routinised practices that are employed to create a singular identity category. Slotting different subjects into these singular structures are dangerous to teachers' lives and they need to be dismantled in order to reconstitute their other identity categories, which open up the possibility for being and doing teacher in desirable and fulfilling ways.

This chapter has drawn attention to some of the desired practices in/through which success is performed and which occur within states of domination. Using the metaphor of the cube, I have tried to understand this facet of teachers' lives as data:

- To produce different knowledge
- To produce knowledge differently

### Producing knowledge differently

Employing the cubist principle of the geometrical framework of unity and integrity, I have created for this chapter a framework called Agenda for agency: *Patterns of desire for change and continuity*. Patterns of desire provide a dynamic framework in which a range of disconnected and fragmented data elements are made to cohere in a different but explanatory way. This layer of meaning offers another facet of the cube, engaging teachers' lives in a way that avoided a one-sided version of knowing. While this may imply that no dominant forms of reason should prevail, against which teachers' lives are to be understood and interpreted, I want to argue that the knowledge I have produced through the thematic patterns are formations I have chosen to foreground. They have arisen from my dialogue with teachers and their narratives. Again, while these impositional forms are contingent constructions and fabricated ensembles that arise out of the dialogue between myself and the

teller, they are practices imposed upon and by the teacher as possibilities for desire, disruption and change for a potential to be.

There are many other layers of interpretation, and many layers of truth in this dialogue. To arrest the dialogue will create another set of hegemonic discourses, and we will become imprisoned once again in a sterile enclosure, in fixed forms of knowing and being. Such enclosure is a constant possibility and danger through which I consciously reflect upon as my ethical responsibility to the subjects in this study. In my learnings as a researcher, representing the knowledge produced thematically or as concepts, is only one way in this ongoing dialogical combat of interpretations, of the many competing ways of interpretations.

At this point I would like to present this version.

### **Producing different knowledge**

In producing different knowledge, I have mapped teachers' practices and the construction of teacher identities along two dimensions. The first dimension explores practices *of* the self and the second dimension explores practices *on* the self. Practices of the self foregrounds those practices teachers enact in their daily lives that make visible their successful teacher identities in/through which they experience moments of freedom and pleasure as potential spaces for change. In these spaces active partnerships are created between teacher, learner and subject discipline in knowledge production.

These emergent practices, that teachers engage with, do not in any way attempt to contribute to the establishment of new forms of closed thinking and domination within one's own grouping. Rather, they serve as a nexus for understanding the shift from dominant forms of reason and totalising forces to the cultivation of desire to struggle for new ways of being and knowing. These practices not only create potential spaces for change and for teachers' performance of success, they make visible identities as multiple and fluid in these present shifts.

Through these practices teachers embrace the idea of the emergence of a particular kind of teacher, not as victim, but as subject which must be constituted again and again, open to unique formations that refrain from silencing the learner. In these active partnerships teachers refuse to tell learners what to do, instead they create ways that are particular and different and in turn these different ways open up spaces to be respectful to other as a way of being accountable to the change and to their own subjective positioning. While these aesthetic tasks enable an attitude of willingness to let learners speak and be heard, it means



taking risks, abandoning habitual practices, certainty and stability. Continued privileging of particular practices in the teaching and learning situation enables teachers to experience the uncertainty and continued shifts in a pleasurable way because these particular practices offer them the spaces to be the best.

These teachers leave behind them an exalted reputation as desirable teachers who have not only opened themselves up to transformation but have created opportunities for change and possibility for others. As Anna described, *"The students see me as an example for what they want to be."* Ursula reiterated, *"I enjoy who I am, what I do and how I do it. My children are the proof of the pudding."* Eddie also commented, *"When I look at my learners, I realise I must be doing something right. They are my mirrors, I got to look in the mirror and I do see a happy face reflecting in the mirror."*

This chapter has drawn attention to "Practices on the self", which foregrounds those powerful moments that happen in the fractures of identities in struggles, between the normative structures and their teachers' freedom, as spaces in which teachers invest emotionally in particular social practices and relationships. These are mobile, transitory moments (they materialise as quickly as they disappear), crucial to teachers' agenda of agency. These cultural investments reflect the long interplay of forces (race, gender and class), which provide the codes through which teachers make meaning of their existing forms of life (what is) and what they want to be (what could be). Opening up their other categories through particular relationships and social practices affirms them to continue in their political transformation and as non-stereotypical teachers.

The fluid public/private relations that happen within and between each of the dimensions (practices of the self and practices on the self) reflects the continued shifts to get the match right. There is pleasure in getting the alignment right between the social practices and meanings and their teaching discourses which constitute particular definitions of success.

Between practices of the self and practices on the self are the dominant structures in which I present an analysis of the oppressive, hierarchical structures that block relations of power in it, and try to fix teachers under its gaze, not allowing them to work outside of its rules. In these states of domination and constraints disruptions happen or "loss of presence in the subject" (Derrida cited in Spivak 1993: 287). The match within and between the private/public, the mind and body is disrupted and misaligned, and binaries operate privileging one over the other for example, mind over body. Teachers experience pain, feel messed up, like death, and undergo a personality change. But at these junctures, small

explosions to the self erupt that refuse to remain in this way. There is hope . . . and possibilities for agency for what might be.

In this chapter the rich and complicated lives of the six teachers are emphasised. The image of teacher as pedantic and passionless is not one which stands up to scrutiny when one looks at what can happen when teachers are given the opportunity to reflect on their life experiences. These life experiences suggest desires and struggles and significantly their passion and agency. All this suggests that teachers can be very thoughtful about how they position themselves as successful teachers. The teachers in this study show how their lives are complex, contradictory and shifting within the teacher positions, circumscribed and organised within normative frameworks in which they think and work. In understanding this complexity and the contradictions I have utilised postructural tools which seriously acknowledges the teachers in this study as subjects with capacities to think and work in successful ways, despite the overwhelming constraints that teachers in South Africa face.

There is hope . . .

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Cubist lives

#### An exhibit of metamorphosis

*Cubist Principle:* The cubist work, an exhibition of all those concepts of metamorphosis, of simultaneous consecutive vision and the final liberation from the imitation of visual reality that challenged the Renaissance world of nature observed by means of the arbitrary principle of geometric perspective. (Arnason, 1969)

This quotation represents metaphorically the excitement I feel through my realisation of a new voyage of understanding the lives of successful teachers. To speak therefore of the “death” of the traditional, stereotypical teacher is not to censure its usage, but to survey it as a site of failure, to resignify the very category and move beyond, to uncover other worlds, and other categories as resources from which to articulate different possibilities. Like a cubist work, this study of the lives of six teachers is an exhibition of “openings for teacher,” of different ways of how we live, know and act as teachers. In this study, employing the poststructural analytical framework offered me the opportunities to shift my understanding and to consider these other worlds and other categories. Focusing and documenting the absences and presences in the teachers’ stories, the conscious positions taken up by teachers and their less clearly articulated positions, their differences rather than identity, I produced an interpretation of the teachers’ worlds.

I began this study attempting to understand the lives of teachers who are able to successfully commit themselves to their teacher position in these present times. I was able to understand and make sense of the contradictory, ambiguous and multiple teacher positions that are possible in performing success. Significantly, this study illuminates the idea that teachers continue to be burdened and violated by the social order. Trapped on the wrong side of vicious dualism’s within a singular identity category teacher, they continue to struggle with desire within these multiple forces (politics and the plethora of normative codes), acting in the fractures of identities in struggle in their agenda for agency. In their struggle with “desire to be”, “desire for” and “desire to please” as a condition for their successful lives, teachers’ resistance to this surveillance and objectification is made possible. As agents, teachers rethink their own complicity in the maintenance of the state of domination through creating

and inhabiting spaces which invert the conservative forces which work to stereotype teachers.

The main argument posited here is that teachers' resistance can never be outside relations of power, whether disciplinary or otherwise, thus resistance is always possible. Most importantly, teachers' power relations are obliged to change with resistance in productive ways. The necessities for understanding success meant attending to teachers' lived experiences, their thoughts/unthoughts, and with them, making sense of what they tell. Throughout the study and listening to their stories of their lives, I see the teachers differently, I see myself differently. Our co-constructed narratives are recreated constructions within a fixed and essentialised world. Their life histories reveal struggle and pleasure experienced on a daily basis. I see the teachers' stories calling into question the dialectic reproduction of hierarchical and oppressive structures and the resistance to the passionless and pedantic images of teachers. I show, in this study, what teachers do in moments when they slip out of the gaze of the normative principles within which they know, live and act. These spaces between discourse and practice were important to consider knowing what has been erased or is absent in how we understand and think about teachers and their performance of success.

Employing the cubist metaphor as a heuristic device I was able to move away from an essentialist and stereotypical position of understanding teachers' lives and their performance of success to a position where I created opportunities for those teachers who have participated, to act and speak on their own behalf. The cubist framework was developed as a unique and personal response to my interpretative struggles that I faced, knowing full well that there are multiple ways of making sense of the teacher's world.

My exploration of teachers' potential for being and doing teacher differently has meant moving beyond the fixed and traditional ways of knowing. What are the different descriptions I have created about the world of teachers who commit themselves successfully to their teacher lives, and what different ways have I created to produce these different descriptions? This chapter serves as an exhibition of all the concepts of the cubist work: an overall commentary and synthesis of the data collected, a discussion of the key constructs emerging out of this study, the presentation of possible theoretical and practical implications for consideration.

### SECTION A: METHODOLOGICAL INTERESTS

In this section I will discuss the two constructs that have extended my way of knowing and understanding teachers' lives during the process of data production and representation.

These are:

- the inclusion of alternate methods as spaces between lives lived and lives written and;
- the employment of a cubist metaphor as a heuristic device.

Explanations of these emerging constructs follow.

#### **Alternate methods as spaces between lives lived and lives written**

The first construct arises out of my desire to document both the "life as told" (conscious positions), and "life as experienced" (their less clearly articulated practices). While these alternate methods and data sources contributed to a particular construction of "a life", a naming of teachers' conditions by myself, it is my hope that these methods preserve some diversity and influence composing other ways of knowing (Bach 1998, 229).

Initially, I found the narrative inquiry, more specifically the life history approach offering more "rounded" three dimensional and believable characters in my understanding teachers' lived experiences. However, as I progressed into the study, I found that the teachers and I were still very much bound by particular discourse structures leading to a limited range of expression and understanding. Life histories are narrative accounts delivered orally by the individual herself/ himself (Wallace 1994). These discourse conventions shape and in many ways limit how we construct our versions of a life. Life as "told", is a conscious act of creating oneself. It offers the cloak, the overt, conscious position articulated in the telling. In this study I explored ways that extended my understanding of this description, and created possibilities to listen for descriptions of those other differences that have been muted, silenced or absent in teachers' narratives. Including alternate methods, enabled me to explore the gaps in discourse, the contradictions, silences and other absences. I see these practices in the teachers' narratives, tackling and subtly overturning habitual practices of teaching and being teacher perceived and nourished within the normative culture. Conceptualising these investments, as I have shown, offers a description of the sources and nature of teachers' formation of subjectivities.

These elaborate and diverse ways are alternate methods which enabled the teachers and myself to move beyond the limitations imposed by the discourse of language itself, to transgress and open up spaces where teacher and researcher could engage in unique ways.

Taking very seriously Stanley's (2002: 2) comment:



*Never forget the importance of remembrance, of the joys as well as the pains of memory, and the past is never over and done with. Never forget either, that the lives lived are not so simple and obliging as lives written, and they have a recalcitrance that intrigues and provokes.*

Starting off from what Stanley wrote about lives lived and lives written, left me in the middle of things, with spaces between. It put pressure on me to find ways that honour the powerful moments that happen between. Using Bruner's (1984) explanation, "life lived is what actually happens and life told is the narrative", then the spaces in between for me are "life as experienced". Life as experienced (Bruner 1984) "consists of the images, feelings, sentiments, desires, thoughts, and meanings known to the person whose life it is".

Challenged to explore as well as to honour the life that lies at the root of the remembrance, to make their remembrances awaken the life it encloses, so that there is "no" division between what is actually happening and what has happened, teachers included into their telling: photographs, favourite songs, personal poems and diagrammatic representations. As potential ways to entitle teachers' to voice and name their stories, their other categories of identities and experiences within their lived lives, these other ways of listening refuse the divide between the material and the immaterial, and the past and the present. In this way, we went beyond the description inherited only by language in "the act of creating oneself", to think differently about teachers' lives. Using these strategies to represent the different "voices" of the teacher, I was able to evoke feelings and innermost thoughts to capture the complex ways that the past and its remembrance invade and pervade the present.

Presenting an argument for greater experimentation in the manner in which we present data about teachers' lives, does not mean that we abandon standards for judging a good text, but it may mean that we develop dramatically different judgements about what counts as good text. My suggestion enables us to think about different ways to present material, and consequently different ways to learn about those whom we study and teach (Tierney 1995, 4).

The specific techniques used in this study includes participants:

- Writing poems about themselves
- Selecting particular musical pieces
- Memorable places, people and times in photographs
- Diagrammatic representations
- Moving and poignant statements in a letter, statements, poetry, inspirational books

Employing these unique and particular ways during the life history interviews at different times over the year provided for more richer and textured experiences of teachers' lived lives. While they provided me with opportunities to understand the contradictions and ambiguities of teachers' identities, these multidimensional strategies enabled me to ask similar questions differently during the interview and provided the space for me to listen and speak less. The interventions moved me to see myself as well as the teachers "as actors similarly compromised, and actively involved in co-creating a lived experience" (Sollers 1983, 88).

However, each of the six storied narratives is in a real sense a construction of a life. Teachers have their own purposes for framing the stories in certain ways. While I acknowledge that this life may be different at different times with a different audience, told with a different purpose, I also acknowledge my own agendas and priorities in this process. Throughout the analytical process I have acknowledged my co-authorship in writing the narratives and life histories. However, through my heightened awareness for ways in which social science researchers reduce respondents' lived experiences solely for the benefit of the research and researcher, I have realised the importance of my ethical responsibility towards the teachers who have invested many hours of their lives with me. Including alternate data sources produced by the teachers was also a consequence of this responsibility and power that I exercised during the study. In a study of this nature, not doing harm to people who have shared their lives with me also meant that my responses were muted or even silenced to an extent.

Excavating the silence (the feelings, desires, thoughts and meanings of memories), locked away in the deep recesses of their unconscious through songs, photographs, illustrations and poems, enabled them to resignify these selectively manipulated resources (which are not readily accessible otherwise) as investments from which to articulate the future. However, I cannot pretend to live the lives of these teachers and it will be bad faith if I try. We can but listen to what, in words, images, and actions, they say about their lives. "It's all a matter of scratching the surfaces" (Geertz 1986, 373).

Even if I am limited to scratching the surface, the employment of the cubist metaphor has assisted me in interpreting and representing the lives of teachers in a way that encourages ambiguity and multiplicity as represented in the multi-layered interpretations. There are different meanings that can be made from the multi dimensional data sources that I have produced and collected from the teachers. My interpretation is one of the multiple ways of meaning making.

***The cubist metaphor: A dynamic strategy for interpreting and representing the non-unitary, multiple and shifting nature of teachers' identities***

Compelled by the desire to think differently about teachers' multiple and shifting identities and subject positions, I sought the employment of a metaphor as a heuristic device to help me move toward the unthought. The cubist metaphor, drawn from the field of visual art, was developed as a response to the interpretative dilemmas I faced in a study of understanding the lives of teachers who successfully commit to their professional lives in ways that enable them to experience a sense of joy and fulfilment. The challenge for me was to create the space to investigate, interpret and represent these lives and their sense of agency, through their continued shifting and altering positions. As St Pierre (1997, 177) elaborates, "A metaphor reorients experience by helping us understand one thing in terms of another". The cubist metaphor provides me with the opportunities to enhance the trustworthiness of the storied narratives that were produced through the life story interviews, by fashioning the facts into several kinds of fiction, each serving a different purpose within the disciplined experience (Gough 1994a, 8). The different layers of interpretations facilitated by the different cubist principles, assisted me to address the issues of voice, the relationship between the individual and the social context as well as the representation of these continually shifting and multiple identities.

Interpretation of the narratives through the employment of the cubist metaphor also provided me with a dynamic framework within which to think differently about data, or what St Pierre describes as "placing the data under erasure" (1997, 177). The cubist framework, created from the different principles underpinning a cubist work, offered the spaces for a reading that produced multiple layers of meaning, each layer narrating the "production of truth" (Gough 1991) from a different perspective, serving a specific experience. Each layer is an exploration of meaning through a cubist principle, interpreted and produced as different types of stories for different audiences (Richardson 1990, 1994).

Employing the different cubist principles which I have described in Chapter Three, I was able to "fashion the facts" that the teachers and I constructed during the three yearlong data production process, into four different kinds of fiction. Each layer of fictionalised interpretation enabled me to cluster the formation of teachers' subjectivities and their multiple subject positions from a different point of view. In this way I was able to move from the dispersal of the teachers' lives reconfigured in time through the storied narrative, to the constitution of teachers' subjectivities through discourse represented through storied vignettes, then the constitution of the subjectivities through their practice represented through thematic patterns. In being able to shift my gaze from one single and fixed point of

view to multiple views and positions, I was able to interpret and represent teachers' conscious positions and their less clearly articulated and often silenced desires, thoughts and meanings. Finally, in this chapter I have represented an understanding of all of these concepts of metamorphosis, of simultaneous and consecutive images challenging anew the bond/alignment between new ideas and meanings of thinking and working as teacher, and the new discourses that constitute and give meaning to these subject positions.

These shifts and moves between and across layers are not discrete entities or binaries and should not be read so. Instead relations are intricately enmeshed and connected, each layer serving as another facet of the same cube. Enhancing the stories each facet reflects a dynamic, complementary and dialogical process. There is nothing particularly privileged about the multiple interpretations that I have made each one no less plausible than the other. They resulted from the interpretative struggles I was challenged to face. The different fictionalised narrations were produced through the cubist framework as a "serendipitous resolution" (St Pierre 1999, 272).

I have struggled, learnt and understood in the process of being an actor in a story telling practice, to become acutely aware of the issues of voice, representation and power of the researcher in the research process. Through the employment of the cubist framework, I am able to represent teachers' identities as fluid and multiple while displacing and reconfiguring the concentration of power at any one point. These multiple spaces created possibilities for the disruption of the linear conventional narrative by encouraging multiple interpretations and representations in this study of teachers' identities.

The employment of the cubist metaphor was a means of weaving my own subjective position as a visual artist into the study. It is my way of making meaning of the struggles I was challenged with in this research process. I hope I have managed to show how representing knowledge through narratives not only produces new knowledge about teachers' lives as potential spaces for pleasure and fulfilment. This has also enabled me to represent knowledge differently for the potential and imagined audiences that read my work. It has, I hope, created the space for many more interpretations.

While this study provided me with the opportunity to go beyond the traditional qualitative textual interpretation and representation of teachers' lives in dealing with issues of voice, power and the complexity of a life, the cumulative effect of narrative reasoning is a collection of individual cases in which thought moves from case to case instead of case to generalisation. The collection of just six storied narratives provides the basis for

understanding new situations and practices by means of analogy. This decision to understand the new situation and practices is left entirely with the reader. The new episodic moments can draw upon previous understanding while being open to the specific and unique elements that make the new situation different. These six storied narratives provide in-depth and qualitatively rich textured data about how specific teachers teaching in very different schooling sites create the conditions to experience the fluid educational context with some sense of pleasure and fulfillment. These experiences are contextually specific, but at the same time the study also reveals that the potential for teachers to perform their success always exists. The analogical understanding recognises the improvisation and change that make up the flexible nature of human behavior.

### **Theoretical interests**

In this section I bring to focus a few crucial ideas which have already been embedded in the previous section, but which I want to discuss in greater detail to advance the theoretical conclusions I have come to. I have focused on teaching discourses and practices both common and specific, and I have shown how they offer teachers the spaces to perform their success. Teachers work within the contradictions and constraints to assert their agency.

These constructs have emerged as theoretical issues related to teachers' lives and their performance of success within the institutional constraints through which they think and work as teachers. Within the framework, Agenda for agency: "Patterns of desire", teachers' potential for success is understood on two dimensions:

- Dimension One: Change as a space for moments of teachers' freedom.
- Dimension two: Continuity as a space for affirmation and refiguration.

The first dimension documents the conscious positions taken up by teachers and it foregrounds the creative and complex ways through which teachers' identities are forged in their daily practices. Practices of the self show that teachers are agentic and powerful, and they are able to contest and change practices that are being used to block and constrain how they make sense of their lives and the world, for practices that give shape to their arbitrary desires and interests. The range of discourses and practices the teachers embody in (re)negotiating the socially and culturally generated meanings provide teachers with the opportunity to perform their success. In so doing they disrupt the fixed and essentialist definitions and arguments of what it means to be a teacher.



I have named these practices as follows (Chapter Six): Desiring knowledge focuses on the subject discipline as a space to disrupt and challenge oppressive reason and for the transformation of prevailing ways of knowing and acting. Blurring barriers presents a description of different cultural investments teachers take up to rupture the traditional boundaries between teacher and learner, between the private/public lives. Collective knowing examines the fluidity of teachers' power relations in the different learning spaces. Desiring difference describes the shift from book learning to an emphasis on a diverse range of experiences. In these spaces teachers create a range of unique experiences shaped by their own interests and desires. These unconventional practices and ideas to perform their success makes us understand the complexity of teachers' agency, and the possibility for deconstruction and reconstruction.

These practices not only create potential spaces for better ways of being and doing teacher, but they make visible teachers' identities as multiple and in a state of fluidity. While I have chosen to foreground four of these practices of the self, there are many more. Through continual shifts and multiple subject positions, these teachers reveal an attitude of openness for that which is other. Continued privileging of particular practices that open up spaces for teachers' unique ways of experiencing the world, blur private/public boundaries, enabling them to experience their redefined positions in a pleasurable way. Such notions of being and knowing, I argue, challenge the private/public dualisms and lead to the (re)production of teachers' successful lives

The second dimension documents teachers' less clearly articulated positions and it explains what happens in those fragile and inflaming moments when teachers in their struggle with desire slip through the discourse, to rethink and act outside of it. Singularity becomes the space for resistance and dissidence. These moments of creative resurgence inflame particular practices and relationships that have been erased or silenced in the category of teacher. I have offered an exploration of these practices and relationships that I have named **Biographical Investments**. A detailed description of this theoretical construct is provided below.

***Biographical investments: Powerful spaces for continuity and change***

Through historical reflection of their lives, the teachers in this study repeatedly remember moments in their lives in which they experience constraint and self-closure and those practices and relationships they effect on themselves, by their own means that liberate them. These historically emergent resources call on teachers to shake off their habitual ways of thinking and working, and the multiple threads of their other identity categories are given

voice that powerfully awakens them from their pain and self-closure, surprising and forcing them to reconsider their position. They acknowledge teachers' difference and re-open spaces for new ideas, thoughts and acts for what could be. Three types of social practices and relationships have been described, not as fixed categories but as loose groupings according to particular historically emergent practices drawn from teachers' cultural resources, personal and social. They are:

- The rehabilitators
- The seekers of new land
- The soul seekers

The rehabilitators present a description of resistance to asymmetrical relations of power that happens through mobilising groups of individuals or collective cultures in which the teachers' current patterns of desire as African and activists for personal and social justice fit with their definitions of being passionate, vibrant and desirable teachers.

The soul seekers provides an explanation for those moments of resistance which inflame certain parts of the body and certain types of behaviour that rejuvenate and inspire teachers to continue in their personal and social transformation in their position as teachers.

The movers and the seekers refer to focuses of resistance spread over time and space. These teachers' agenda for agency happens over time, accumulating ideas, cross-pollinating and germinating new ideas as they move from one geographical space to another, seeking out places in their struggle with desire, to perform their success.

These three types of practices offer a description of the absence rather than the presence, teachers' difference (other identity categories) rather than identity (teacher) in producing and reproducing successful moments. Affirmed by their own histories that recreate and nourish their cultural experiences that make up the texture and history of their daily lives, they open up spaces for their unique experiences. For these teachers the educational sites provided the space for re-problematisation and the dissipation of dominant and conventional familiarities, leading to a realisation of their agency as particular beings.

Ursula describes this moment as one that gives her back her "sanity", Hlo feels "energised" and affirmed of her purpose in life, Eddie feels "connected", Daryl and Anna experience a sense of "passion" and Trevor feels "free". Immersion in literature or great music, communicating with nature or continuing to hone in and expand the mind through study,

become vital to mental and spiritual renewal. These self-creative activities (re)open dialogue between body and mind to cohere, in creative mutation to renew, hope and desire new forms of thoughts and action. The agency of the teacher is open to new meanings, meanings that can be strategically reworked, and teachers' agency in its multiple and fluid state is renamed and reconfigured. Investing in these practices, teachers learn that there is pleasure in getting the alignment/match between their practice and category right. Instead of framing the fluid and multiple identities of teachers as a problem or an obstacle to be silenced, it acts as a powerful means through which teachers can "denaturalise" themselves and embrace change.

These emergent practices, ideas and values in all of the six subjects, I have found to be rooted precisely in what the dominant social order excluded, repressed, or simply failed to recognise. Opening up these categories which have been subsumed and muted in the category teacher, acts as a powerful means to understand the slipperiness of identity and the inability to fix teachers' identities. In relations among a multiplicity of forces that I have explored in this study, these are practices that teachers struggle with desire for, struggle with desire to be, struggle with desire to please as a condition for their successful lives. These culturally available resources from teachers' immediate social networks "put pressure" on teachers to realise the contingency of their existing ways of living, knowing and acting. They form the basis for these teachers to move from what is to what could be. In this heterogeneous and incomplete process of identity construction, teachers adopt alternate discourses in which to perform their success.

### **SECTION B: OVERALL CONCLUSIONS OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY**

This study has attended to the lives of six teachers who experience the dynamic educational context in a pleasurable and committed way. They experience their reconfigured and renamed positions (from sole producer of knowledge to facilitator, from curriculum implementer to curriculum developer, etc.) as energising rather than paralysing, as possibilities for freedom rather than sterile self-repetition and imprisonment. However, in the absence of dialogue and resistance within the normative structures within which they practice their lives, hegemonic life comes at the cost of suppression and imprisonment of the teachers' unique ways of thinking and working. This ongoing dialogue in which hegemonic forms of life are challenged to open thoughts to other ways, happens in complex, complementary and contradictory ways. This narrative research is an exploratory and analytical text revealing the elisions, blindspots and the unsayable in teachers' lives.

This play, this possibility for deconstruction and reconstruction of teacher is what makes this study so exciting. Trying to make intelligible how teachers who have been constructed

within grids of hierarchy for normalcy and regularity, actively open up and rework the category of teacher, makes teachers' lives a fertile site for reinscription.

I have chosen to use the analogy of metamorphosis to explain how the play happens, and for teachers' ongoing commitment to continue and change in ways that are successful. Contrary to what the term teacher has signified for a long time, and the idea that teachers' self is fixed, normalised and immovable in positions of subordination, and that teachers strategically mimic ideas of change as symbols of their progress in these shifting contexts, this study shows otherwise. Opening up the category "teacher" opens up possibilities for difference. In this dialogue between discourse and practice, teachers' freedom is possible in pleasurable ways. Teachers have learnt that there is pleasure in getting the alignment "right" between the particular practices and relationships they invest in and their categorisation as successful teachers. These invested practices and relationships identified in Chapter Six proscribe certain positions, in which teachers locate themselves. In Chapter Six I have provided a detailed analysis of the teaching discourses and practices which are constitutive of these meanings and practices. Also in Chapter Six, I have shown that any description of the formation of subjectivities requires an account of the biographical investments the teacher have in taking up particular positions rather than another in a different discourse.

The ongoing dialogue for teachers' agenda for agency as Patterns of desire, act out in simultaneity and consecutive vision challenging anew the bond between teachers' private/public through which they experience pleasure. Teachers' freedom in the oppressive grids of normalcy and constraint, involves an ongoing process of (*inter-conscious*) *recoding* teachers' agency created through a range of discourses and practices that happen *simultaneously* in teachers' consciously articulated positions. Agency of teacher in its poststructural multiplicity is a ceaseless field of recoding, making identities effaced in the category teacher visible in play between discourse and practice. Getting the alignment right between ones' categorisation as non-stereotypical teacher within the dominant structures and teachers' less clearly articulated positions (between the self and itself), is desirable. Renaming their agency, teachers' power circulates in fluid and unpredictable ways performing their success in ways that make being teacher desirable. In the context of this study, being desirable is channeled and controlled in unique and personal ways by the different teachers.

This self-reflexive change happens at two levels and it moves sequentially and consecutively. Their *refusal* to reduce themselves to functionaries of the totalising and dominant forms of thought and reason which serve to mould or silence them, and self-



enclosure is followed *consecutively* by moments of resistance and creative resurgence in which spaces are created for (*intra-conscious*) *decoding* through particular *biographical investments*. Awakened by their desires and interests which have been evaded or unarticulated, teachers are compelled to rethink themselves and open themselves up for difference and new realities.

Teachers' agenda for agency seems to lie in these unique patterns of desire, *of recoding and decoding identity* within the range of discursive formations and their cultural practices. Teachers *experience* the world through *deep change* and by being fully aware of their participation in the human-world relation. This conception of being aware or the notion of *awareness* is never fixed or stable, but in a continued state of fluidity alerting itself to the private/public connections-outside-in and inside-out . . . within and in relation to time, place and space. *Variation* in the ways of experiencing the world, allow for new thoughts and actions to emerge, injecting the personal into the public space, into practices of who, what, when and where. *Deep change* affirms teachers commitment to continue to connect appropriate experiences in a meaningful way, a renewal of dialogue for more life-giving spaces in which teachers can be, know and act differently in performing their success. Until the play between discourse and practice is blocked and routine sets in, the movement to get the *alignment* right continues for spaces to live, desire and hope. In these ongoing shifts of recoding and decoding for getting the bond right, teachers work their own personal agenda for agency. Recognising the inability to fix teachers' identities, or to block the fluid relations between teachers' public and private lives is what creates the possibilities for teacher's commitment to continue and change in desirable and fun ways.

I use the term *continued metamorphosis* to describe these looping, reflexive recursions of *decoding* and *recoding* to understand the potential for change that happens within the institutional constraints for teachers' freedom. Without this continued metamorphosis teachers' lives are stable and comfortable, but they remain prisoners of their own limits. The self is never fixed in its desires, interests and thoughts. As the study shows teachers strategies for resistance to forms of constraints happen in different ways. In these shifting and episodic moments of identity construction, teachers refuse to repeat the same I (St Pierre 2000, 504), in how to think and work as teachers in this constantly changing educational context. Through agentic shifts in consciousness they challenge *anew the bond* between the *self* (person) and *itself*, opening up the category teacher for possibility of differences we have never been able to make visible before.



While this commitment to continuous mutation by teachers is necessary for teachers' freedom, it should also be explored cautiously. Interminable shifts for alternate positions and discourses can lead to burnout, or teachers may lose sight of certain values or practices to which specific institutional sites aspire. While some teachers may be habitual explorers, or "incurable change addicts", for example Anna and Hlo, there are other teachers, like Trevor and Eddie, who prefer to change in powerful ways where it matters most, in their classrooms. While no teacher should be closed to opening up spaces for their unique ways of meaning making, this dialogue for freedom should not preclude the normative organisation within which they judge and act.

This understanding of teachers' identities makes it impossible for me to come to any fixed understanding of teachers who commit themselves to their practice with some sense of pleasure and fulfilment. The nature of teachers' personal and social transformation is slippery. Just as the unfinished cubist painting, I want to regard the slipperiness of teachers' identities as work in progress, as an appropriate place to embrace ongoing change. We are always in the midst of dialogue, even in states of domination where teachers are temporarily silenced and imprisoned, to the resurgence of buried voices, to ongoing dialogue and transformation. Or we merely survive and await "death" . . . a different choice, a different kind of resistance.

### **SECTION C: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS**

I have mentioned this before and I ask again here: How can teachers assert their difference in all its forms and manifestations, and find commonality in the experience of difference without compromising the kind of teacher "I desire to be"? This study has shown how opening up the category teacher for possibility of difference and moments of freedom are woven through in complex and contradictory ways. Teachers' freedom is painful and pleasurable. Their faking/mimicking change and deceiving themselves, by not having shifted from their existing categories, is also painful. It is a pain that is accompanied by fear and frustration. How can teachers, schools and policies open up powerful spaces for moments of creative resurgence and desire for new ways of thinking and working as teachers? How can teachers genuinely open up spaces for their less clearly unarticulated positions and constantly changing desires and thoughts, while recognising the prevailing normative structures within which they judge and act as teachers? This study has opened up several layers to address the implications that have arisen. The implications which follow will focus on the levels: micro, macro and meso levels.

**Micro level: “Bio-power”**

Teachers must first create the spaces to restore their awareness of how they came to be, to reflect on the long interplay of forces that has given rise to “who I am”, in order to transform and open up spaces for “what I could be”. Through biographical or autobiographical reflections, this openness to teachers’ unique experiences and modes of thinking restores awareness of the forces that have given rise to existing forms of life and thus assists teachers to challenge their existing categories and habitual ways of thinking. Challenging one’s existing ways of knowing and being, means taking risks and foregoing the security of a common set of values, norms and perspectives, holding similar dispositions and doing the same sort of work. Similarly, if teachers in Ursula’s school could cultivate desire for practices which serve to unsettle habitual thinking and prevailing ways of thinking and working, they will not punish her for her desire to seek out difference. A similar position can be adopted to explain the teachers in Trevor’s school. They do not care about changing the way they think and work as teachers, as this will mean acknowledging their limitations. Entering into a dialogue with themselves to transform thought and action will mean forsaking security and stability. While many choose to continue to remain in “survivor” mode, accountable to nothing, Trevor continues to seek out ways to change and be accountable to his self and his responsibility. All of these shifts mean challenging the dominant structures for new ways of thinking and working as teachers.

In this study, understanding and exploring teachers’ lives is one of the many sites where change can start through the emergence of new practices, ideas and values of how to “be and do” teacher. I have shown repeatedly that the analysis of teachers’ daily practices provides a more nuanced understanding of teachers’ pleasurable moments and identities as successful teachers. Particular knowledge of successful identities forms a network of discourses, and while they may be contradictory and constraining, they also include knowledge about how teachers can produce power for pleasurable and fulfilling moments. These threatening, non-stereotypical positions provide hope for teachers’ freedom and change. Understanding teachers’ lives, as this study has suggested, always has the potential to offer reflections about what it means to construct oneself as successful, within the shifting and fluid boundaries between teachers’ private lives and public responsibility, and the constraints within which teachers judge and act.

Asserting one’s difference, shaped by one’s biographical experiences and personal modes of thinking in all its forms and manifestations in the position of successful teacher, happens in complex and contradictory ways. What does it mean to position oneself within a shared

understanding of what it is to belong to a particular teacher community (specific sites) and aspire in practice to create moments of freedom?

While recent academic and professional literature subsumes a wide array of teacher-to-teacher exchange and collaborations that emerge in the course of institutionally sponsored initiatives, this study extends the conception of these collective cultures to include those historically/biographically emergent relationships and practices which teachers draw on for their successful commitment to change and continuity in these times. These cultural investments from their immediate social context offer an understanding of the individual needs and desires of teachers as a significant and critical part of any genuine change process, and the self-renewal of one's purpose and "function". As teachers living and working in South Africa, these cultural/biographical investments create the spaces for very powerful and life-altering moments. As raced, classed and gendered individuals, these spaces (whether it means to give oneself up to the harmony and rhythm of nature, or to immerse oneself in great music or alliances that have been created, forged and negotiated out of a process of dialogue), affirm teachers as subjects with the power to change, for renewal of social dialogue. New practices, principles and ideas in turn offer teachers moments that constitute and give meaning to "who I am" and "how I make sense of the world". Spaces for these kinds of shifts need to be created for all who live and work as teachers in South Africa.

This movement "out" of the institutional site for biographically invested practices and relationships throws light on the specific nature and significance of collective cultures that affirm teachers as raced, classed and gendered individuals with particular desires, anxieties and needs. Understanding and creating the space for these biographically invested practices offer teachers and managers the opportunity to denaturalise and deconstruct what it means to be a successful teacher, and through these practices to find out what has been previously erased, silenced, and rejected from the essentialist understanding of teacher. These practices and partnerships disrupt the dualisms between teachers' conscious positions and their unarticulated desires and needs; furthermore, they reveal the complexity and interrelatedness of the term "teacher".

Researchers have described these singular models of collaboration as "contrived collegiality"; forced rather than facilitated collaborations (Hargreaves 1995, Little 1990), confirming the need for spaces for more naturally formed relations to be recognised. Through such an understanding teachers can use their professional autonomy to assess the extent to which particular practices are liberatory or subjugatory. This demands an explicit understanding of lived experiences and their interlocking with race, class, gender and other

kinds of constraints, and the fluid and shifting boundaries between the private/public in constructing spaces to perform one's success.

Teachers' biographical investments proscribe particular positions in which they invest emotionally for their affirmation to continue to think and work differently. In these spaces, teachers' autonomy is grounded in norms of privacy and non-interference prevalent in naturally formed collective cultures and is sustained by the very organisation of teaching work. These investments proscribed through relationships and practices inside or outside the institutional space, with learners in a Youth Club or Enviro-club, or with colleagues in a study/ working group, they plausibly produce, nourish and sustain different practices that inspire and cultivate in teachers the desire to continue to participate in the formation of their political will. Gould (1988, 18) confirms, "this dimension of teachers' struggle to affirm oneself . . . pits organism against the harshness of surrounding physical environments . . . These forms of struggles . . . are best waged by cooperation by members of the same species -- by mutual aid."

This study extends the conception of these collective relations to understand the nature of relationships and partnerships created, to reveal its historical emergence and its impact on teachers' successful commitment to change and continuity in this present time. Affirmation through these kinds of partnerships and practices will cultivate desire in teachers to create different spaces for pleasure and freedom. Being a successful, desirable and passionate teacher must be a priority in South Africa's educational context.

More research is required into broader structures of control and domination and how they impact more specifically on teachers' lives. A longitudinal study needs to be conducted in order to understand the nature of these recursive and continued shifts, especially as organisational and ideological cultures in the school sites change or the teachers themselves may have moved to a different schooling site. A more deliberate analysis needs to be made of these collective relationships and practices to understand in greater depth the form and content of such investments over a longer period of time, in different contexts. For example, how do "successful" teachers in rural schooling sites engage with the educational shifts? What kinds of practices do teachers in rural schools create as symbols of their progress? What are their biographical investments and what kinds of positions are proscribed through these practices and relationships? This would be really interesting to know.

In my study, teachers are key people in the change process. While teacher change is an important goal of policy initiatives and the re-education plan for all teachers, the cliché, "the more things change the more the stay the same" clearly characterises the ways teachers think



and feel about their lives. While the emphasis of this study has been the lived experiences of teachers, I will refer briefly here to policy implications and their impact on teachers' lives.

### **Macro level**

If teachers are to engage in ongoing dialogue for inward reflection and renewal of their agency as affirmed individuals with power to dissipate conventional familiarities, they need the space to do so. How can policies open up those powerful spaces in which teachers can be affirmed as unique embodied beings, in order to find commonality as a community of teachers?

I have argued in Chapter One, and I continue to argue here, convinced by the learnings I have come to at the end of this study, that policies do have a place in these ever-changing contexts. However, as the study shows, policies are as good as the paper it is written on. There are choices. From one point of view, teachers and managers can experience policy as an all-embracing framework of universal principles, according to which they organise how to think and act. In this position, these subjects refuse to recognise or comprehend the historical emergence of these principles. Instead they are viewed as abstract, timeless and in a social and historical vacuum. Teachers think and act within this normative organisation as disembodied beings, mis-aligned and passionless. So while teachers act without thinking about their acts, dialogue is arrested and states of domination are established. Teachers' lives fall into self-closure, imprisoned by their own organising forms. Without freedom to think and act in particular ways, their practices become repetitive and sterile. Teachers become "living ghosts".

On the other hand, making a decisive break from self-enclosure depends on continuing resistance. Continuing resistance does not preclude the normative organisation of teachers' practices, nor dismiss the idea that there are normative frameworks in terms of which teachers make certain judgements and undertake particular actions. Rather, it is a position in which teachers realise that these policies can be engaged with dialogically, to escape from self-enclosure, to resist a state of domination, by transgressing existing limits for moments of freedom. Introducing new and different practices, discourses and ideas will reopen dialogue with the fluid context and become the candidates for shaping the experiences of the learners. In this way teacher power in the classroom shifts from being one-dimensional to multi-dimensional. Ursula and the Enviro-club are an example.

But teachers need to invest in particular practices and relationships to rejuvenate and sustain unique ideas and practices. One such space I have identified within the schools. This is the



Development Appraisal System (DAS), and its intended emergence of the voices of those who have been previously excluded, subverted and silenced. While acknowledging one's limitations involves uncertainty and risk-taking, DAS provides fertile ground for the personal and professional development of teachers, because it creates the conditions for them to develop within their own particular areas of need/desire.

The Developmental Appraisal System parades an intention to open up spaces for teachers to "have voice". Amongst its many purposes DAS attempts to create spaces which:

. . . have a lively sense of the need for teachers to acquire new knowledge and additional skills if they are to make departmental policy succeed. Uses all opportunities to become familiar with fresh and further thinking in a number of educational areas. Uses the experience of implementing new thinking to report to colleagues and the department on the effects of such new approaches to education in an actual school situation.

However, DAS presently fails in schools because managers and other relevant stakeholders themselves are lacking in knowledge and experience in supporting teachers who continue to locate themselves in alternate practices. Instead, these teachers are viewed with suspicion and alienated. Fear to acknowledge one's limitations seems to be a greater constraint than the policy. Research in progress of Gounden (2002) points to the possible limitations and potential of DAS.

How can we locate these calls by policy for teachers' voice to be more respected? Is the attempt to empower teachers to find and articulate their voices a controlling process, one that demands verbal collaboration? An analysis of whose interests are served when teachers are called to speak is needed. What happens to teachers who refuse the solicitation of teacher voice? As this study has shown, many institutional sites fail in creating the spaces for teachers to share their fresh ideas about change, or in the change for new visions/missions. It leaves teachers feeling excluded, alienated and treated with suspicion.

Thus merely listening to teachers' voices should not be the only priority of educational change. Instead authentic spaces for sponsoring of resistance and dissidence should be created. Whole School Evaluation Programmes based on the realisation that the call for change should not only be on the part of the teacher, and the teacher should not be the only person who gets "worked" over. There is hope still . . .

If effectively explored, the Department of Education's, *Norms and Standards for Educators* and the South African Council of Educators (SACE) are potential spaces for furthering the human condition, to allow teachers the latitude to create their own agenda for agency, personal and social. Taking into consideration teachers' practices of the self in and through which teachers' agency is asserted in multiple and unpredictable ways, these policy initiatives have the potential for framing the fluidity of teachers' identities and the inability to fix teachers in any definitive way. If SACE continues to offer specific programmes for teachers, I believe teachers will be able to experience a different space in which to affirm their unique modes of thinking and acting. Ongoing professional development offers teachers the space to cultivate the desire for change, to realise that their prevailing forms of life are historically emergent, and that "what is" has not always been. This space opens up the possibility of what could be. The objectives of SACE (2000, 2) include but are not limited to:

- Developing resource materials to initiate and run, in consultation with an employer, training programmes, workshops, seminars and short courses that are designed to enhance the profession.
- Promoting in-service training of all educators (Department of Education 2000,4 - 8).

While policies and structural frameworks create the space for new visions, it is the micro level power relations that are important to consider, and to explore how this wide range of competing interests work enforceably to create oneness and thwart the creative mind. While it is the hope of national government that policy will drive the process of teacher redefinition/reinscription the distance between the hope and the happening, as illustrated by the learners of Hillview Primary School, this suggests how opening up the category teacher is a struggle. Normative frameworks are necessary, and policies do matter. However, I also want to argue for the need to pay greater attention to teachers' lives, and to open up spaces for teachers to inform policy. This study has been conducted against the backdrop of the different policies described in Chapter One, but everyday living cannot be fully understood solely within the confines of policy. Policy decisions should also be determined at the institutional site where teachers will have to realise them (Corson 1990). To speak about being and doing teacher differently is not a given, and cannot be taken for granted. Significant to the fuller picture are the practices and the patterns of desire, and the contested and competing meanings through which teachers enact their everyday lives as successful teachers. These patterns of desire must be considered to understand and support teachers' agenda for agency as personal and unique ways of making sense of the world.

There is urgent need in South Africa to develop an education system that will work to free teachers and I continue in hope that policies can open up the spaces for that to happen, provided adequate support is offered to all relevant stakeholders.

### **Meso level**

Reculturing the school to create collective cultures among teachers as spaces to share new ideas, practices, developing expertise and shifts from traditional implementers to active participants, is one way to challenge existing forms of thinking and working. While this study has revealed collective relations as formations occurring within and across schooling sites, creating these collective relationships within each school enhances the climate of trust in which teachers can pool resources, work collaboratively on projects, initiate new practices and deal with complex and unanticipated problems. However, creating collective cultures as a way of enabling teacher change does not happen in a vacuum.

For teachers' successful commitment, a crucial position that I want to draw on surrounds the negotiations that happen in the schooling sites and the intentions and thrust of many policy initiatives at this time. While I believe that each school's journey is likely to be unique in some ways, in that the material and ideological conditions vary, school managers have to be made aware of their power and location within the school. School managers must begin to understand the dialogical nature of their practice. In this sense, there is a need to recognise that no perspective or vision is absolute and all embracing. School managers need to create the space for dialogical interpretations, of competing ways of interpretation, sharedness of mission or vision statement. For example, Eddie has highlighted the states of domination that have emerged in his schooling site. In arresting dialogue with teachers like him, the school manager has suppressed teachers' power. Eddie has become imprisoned in forms of sterile enclosure, assimilated by the managers fixed forms of thinking and working, closed to the new and innovative.

However, of significance is the realisation that suppression of the new and different ways is not a foregone conclusion. Engaging reflexively with self, enables managers to recognise and acknowledge the finitude of their points of view, a view that has itself emerged historically. This attitude of openness does not mean the abandonment of existing organising principles, but makes one realise and acknowledge other perspectives, principles and forms of action different from one's own. Openness towards teachers puts pressure on school managers to reject the absolutisation of rules and principles to be imposed, as it is a sure recipe for insensitivity and violence towards teachers. As Eddie warned, "teachers are delicate, treat them with care or they can become hard".

My research has also shown that the construction of successful identities is also deeply infiltrated within and across race, class and gender issues. For example, the investments of inhabiting particular positions for Hlo (Black woman) is different from Trevor's particular position as Black man, but also different from Daryl's (White man). This study includes understanding why exercising power (as with Hlo) in some contexts is minimised through the sheer threat of being excluded, alienated and treated with actual violence. However, even in these conditions, power is fluid and runs through different relations. Dominant discourses that implicitly subscribe to and endorse hegemonic definitions of masculinity are complicit in the production of gender inequalities. Daryl found Beechwood High complicit in endorsing and naturalising violent masculinity. He found this school to be least friendly to his quiet disposition and an inappropriate site for his freedom and the construction of his identity as vibrant, passionate and caring teacher. Gender issues vary from school to school. This study has identified different forms of hegemonic masculinity in schools and it also shows that creating the conditions for being a successful teacher means challenging hegemonic masculinity. For example, Hlo used sport to blur the boundaries between the juvenile prisoners and herself. She also walked with her male students to the shebeen to retrieve the stolen chairs. She wanted to change her ways of knowing and being for better ways. Potentials do exist. My research has confirmed the position in which poststructuralists theorise the inability to fix identities, and it provides a powerful means to examine the complex ways in which meanings, power, identity and success come together in teachers' lived experiences. It is important to address the specificities of gendered experience.

Managers need to stand opposed to the hegemonic thinking and practice which silences teachers. Understanding the micro-politics of power will enable managers to see how their schools are constant bids for the construction of identities of successful teachers. Recognising how power always shifts, rendering one powerless at one moment and powerful at the next, makes managers realise that teachers' identities as successful teachers cannot be developmental and psychological or understood through fixed categories of socialisation theories. Being a successful teacher is a fragile and fluid construction and teachers choose to privilege particular subject positions through their identity formations and not others. It will be most interesting to research the experiences of the learners who are in the care of these specific teachers and how they experience the different practices that teachers create for them in which power is reconfigured and displaced in different ways.

School managers and teachers need to create visions and missions specific to their desires, needs and agendas. In this way the purpose for teacher change comes from within, and

teachers experience pleasure because it gives meaning to their particular social practices and investments.

However, while the attitude of openness to the other is made possible, it has to be balanced by a need for unity and organisation. Thus there is need for every school to engage continually in intra-organisational research activities, to understand the specificities of their school and the specific needs of the teachers and learners who teach and learn in these specific contexts. In this way teachers will realise that not all unity and organisation is oppressive. Singular vision is open to multiple voices of teachers, reflecting the personal values and histories of teachers as affirming symbols of progress for ongoing dialogue in the shared vision and team learning. Creating temporary visions/missions will keep the creative tension alive, continually re-aligning school missions within the broader changes taking place.

Teachers have demonstrated their own agency, their “power from below” that has enabled them to shift from moments of just “surviving” and being accountable to nothing, to active embodied beings accountable to her/his own actions. We need to hear their stories. We need to hear from school managers, to listen to their stories about what it means to manage school sites and the teachers who teach in them, in a pleasurable way. Providing a forum for teachers and school managers to share expertise, challenges and successes as a way to disrupt the hegemonic practices and totalising forms of thinking that come at the cost of suppressing what is unique and complex.

In my position as a teacher educator, I hope to reinforce the challenge for teacher education discourses to shift as well, from being specifically intellectualised, disembodied spaces, where social forms are absolutised, and to challenge hegemonic forms of theoretical closure and totalisation as spaces for re-envisioning cultural transformation. While these hegemonic forces offer certain stability, they do so at the expense of the innovative and new. The possibility of being challenged and transformed requires courage and involves uncertainties and risks as well the spaces for new forms of thought and action. Thus far, in educational institutions the call for voice has been directed at student teachers. The time has come to listen to those who have been asking others to speak.

There is urgent need in South Africa to develop an education system that will work to free teachers and provide them with the spaces to be truly and fully human. To think and work in institutional spaces that are challenging yet less constraining, where teachers are encouraged to take risks, experience anxieties and express desires in order to transgress the constraints



that the term teacher imposes on them, is a potential space to embrace change. Like Bateson (1994, 93), I yearn for changing the composition of a teacher's life:

From the point of view of composing a life or managing an institution, the ability to recognise any situation as representing both continuity and change makes it possible to play that double recognition in tune with changing needs, to avoid the changes that reduce flexibility and the constancies that eat away at the necessities of survival.

### **JUST TO SAY . . .**

In researching teachers' lives, I see that the effort of asking critical questions is at times frightening and may not always produce the desired results. Yet the questions need to be asked in these times that we live in, or they become lost to social mandates that shadow these experiences for ideological or dominant notions of knowing and being. What are these socially inscribed constraints imposed on us teachers? How are these boundaries personally negotiated and transgressed? How do I play a role in their enforcement and redefinition? These teacher stories told and experienced are moments cracked open by my own desires, needs and anxieties as teacher and researcher, as analytical acts of memory and vision.

I have woven Hlo, Daryl, Anna, Ursula, Eddie and Trevor's lives throughout these pages as a way of composing a cubist work that depicts the lives of teachers who experience being teacher as pleasurable and fulfilling, changing and continuing, as a space of possibility to metamorphose ways of knowing and being, and to seek the silenced and unarticulated within the lives of these teachers. Questions remain:

- Who are these 'successful' teachers?
- How are the identities of successful teachers constructed through discourse?
- What are the broader social practices that successful teachers inhabit and through which they perform their success?

I have attempted to address these lives as moments for understanding the making and remaking of successful identities, which put pressure on us to abandon the idea that teachers have to be told how to think and act. Through life history interviews and other personal resources teachers' memories and remembrances were aroused to understand the formation

of their subjectivities. This study employs an analytical framework to document the conscious positions taken up by teachers as well as the gaps, silences and other absences in the discourse as an important strategy for conceptualising the limits of the conscious articulation. Through the employment of a dynamic analytical framework I have drawn attention to and made visible those powerful moments when teachers' less clearly articulated desires, wishes and needs are called up and given voice, as a space for their affirmation as unique and embodied beings with the capacity to change and challenge anew the bond between their own subject position and their social responsibility. In doing so, I have tried to fill the gap in teacher lives and identity literature in South Africa, which has no close-up accounts of how teachers construct and (re)produce being and doing teacher differently for their freedom, pleasure and desire to be successful.

My hope is for them to continue as active beings, of lives filled with possibilities to remember and imagine a new way. The teachers' stories are exuberant, subversive works in all their colour and texture. I hope their stories will add new dimensions to our understanding of the ways that shapes what it means to be teacher, our notions of success and exalted reputations, and thus the way we see others and ourselves.

## Bibliography

- African National Congress (1994) *A Policy Framework for Education and Training*. Johannesburg: ANC Education Department.
- Aguilar, J.A., MacGillivray, L. and Walker, N. (2000) 'Latina Educators and Dominant School Discourse: The Costs of Success'. Paper presentation at the American Educational Research Association Conference April 2000. New Orleans.
- Akyeampon, K. (2000) *"On the Threshold": The Identity of Student Teachers in Ghana*. Brighton: University of Sussex.
- Alloway, N. (1995) *Foundation Stones: The Construction of Gender in Early Childhood*. Carlton, Victoria: Curriculum Corporation.
- Altrichter, H., Posch, P. and Somekh, B. (1993) *Teachers Investigate their Work: An Introduction to the Methods of Action Research*. London: Routledge.
- Armstrong, T. (1994) *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*. Virginia: ASCD.
- Arneson, H.H. (1969) *A History of Modern Art: Painting. Sculpture. Architecture*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Aronowitz, S. and Giroux, H. (1985) 'Teaching and the Role of the Transformative Intellectual'. *Education under Siege*. USA: Bergin and Garvey.
- Ashmore, R.D. and Jussim, F. (1997) 'The Personal Self in Social Context'. *Self and Identity Fundamental Issue*. New York: Oxford.
- Aspin, D.N. et al (1999) 'Restructuring Education in the Interests of Quality: The School, the Community and the System'. *Quality Schooling: A Pragmatic Approach to some Current Problems, Topics and Issues*. London: Cassell.
- Atkinson, R. (1998) *The Life Story Interview*. Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Avalos, B. (1991) 'Approaches to Teacher Education: Initial Teacher Training'. Quality in Basic Education Background/Policy Paper: Education Programme Human Resource Development Group. London.
- Avenant, P.J. (1986) *Guidelines for Successful Teaching*. Second edition. Durban: Butterworths.
- Bach, H., Kennedy, M. and Mickelson, J.R. (1997) 'Bodies at Work: Sensory Knowing'. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago.

- 
- Bach, H.E.F. (1998) *A Visual Narrative Concerning Curriculum, Girls, Photography etc.* Edmonton: Qual Institute Press.
- Bakhtin, M. (1986) *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (V. McGee, trans.). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Ball, S.J. (1994) 'Education Policy, Power Relations and Teacher's Work'. In Ball, S.J. (ed.) *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-Structural Approach*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Ball, S.J. (1997) 'Better Read: Theorising the Teacher'. In Dillon, J. and Maguire, M. (eds) *Becoming a Teacher: Issues In Secondary Teaching*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Ball, S.J. and Goodson, I.F. (eds) (1985) *Teachers' Lives and Careers*. New York: The Falmer Press.
- Barasa, F.S. and Mattson, E. (1998) 'The Roles, Regulation and Professional Development of Educators in South Africa: A Critical Analysis of Four Policy Documents'. *Journal of Education* 23: (40–72).
- Barone, T. (1992) 'A Narrative of Enhanced Professionalism: Educational Researchers and Popular Storybooks about Schoolpeople'. *Educational Researcher* 21(8): 15–24.
- Beecham, R. (2000) 'God's Child'. *Teaching in Higher Education* 5(1): 127–130.
- Beijaard, D. (1995) 'Teachers' Prior Experiences and Actual Perceptions of Professional Identity'. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 1(2): 281–294.
- Bell, J. (1999) *Doing your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science*. Third edition. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Belsey, C. (1980) *Critical Practice*. London: Methuen.
- Bennett, C., Foreman-Peck, L. and Higgins, C. (1996) *Researching into Teaching Methods in Colleges and Universities*. London: Keagan Page.
- Best, R. (1996) *Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child*. New York: Cassell.
- Best, S. and Kellner, D. (1991) *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations*. London: Macmillan.
- Bhagawat, L. (2001) 'Redefined Role Functions of the Secondary School Principal in the Light of Democratic School Governance'. MA thesis, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- Bhana, D. (2002) 'Making Gender in Early Schooling: A Multi-Sited Ethnographic Study of Power and Discourse: From Grade One to Two in Durban'. PhD thesis, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- Biehler, R.F. and Snowman, J. (1990) *Psychology Applied to Teaching*. Sixth edition. Boston:

- Houghton Mifflin.
- Bird, J. (1996) *Black Students and Higher Education: Rhetorics and Realities*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Bloom, L.R. (1996) 'Stories of One's Own: Nonunitary Subjectivity in Narrative Representation'. *Qualitative Inquiry* 2(2): 176–197.
- Bloom, L. R. and Munro, P.(1995) 'Conflicts of Selves: Nonunitary Subjectivity in Women Administrators' Life History Narratives'. In Hatch, A. and Wisniewski, R. (eds) *Life History and Narrative*. London and Washington: The Falmer Press.
- Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. (1998) *Qualitative Research in Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods*. Third edition. Boston, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo, Singapore: Allyn and Bacon.
- Boomer, G., Lester, L., Onore, C. and Cook, J. (1992) *Negotiating the Curriculum: Educating for the 21st Century*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Bove, P. (1990) 'Discourse'. In Tricehia, L.F. and McLaughlin, T. (eds) *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Britzman, D.P.L. (1991) 'Contradictory Realities in Learning to Teach'. *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*. Albany, NY: University of New York Press.
- Broin, V.E. (2001) 'Standing in the Way of Truth: Understanding Narratives of Domestic Violence'. *International Journal of Philosophical Practice*, Fall.
- Bronowski, J. (1965) *Science and Human Values*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Bruner, J. (1984) 'The Opening up of Anthropology'. In E.M. Bruner (ed.) *Text Play and Story: The Construction and Reconstruction of Experience*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Bruner, J. (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1990) *Acts of Meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Buckland, F.P. (1987) *Curriculum and Reality in South African Schools*. Cape Town: Education Policy Unit, University of Cape Town.
- Burgess, R.G. (1988 ) 'On Diaries and Diary Keeping'. *Improving Educational Management*: 300–310.
- Burke, P.J. and Franzoi, S.L. (1998) 'Studying Situations and Identities using Experiential Sampling Methodology'. *American Sociological Review* 53: 559–568.
- Burke, P.J and Reitzes, D.C. (1981) 'The Link between Identity and Role Performance'. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 44: 83–92.



- Burns, N. (1997) 'Water is to Chocolate like Story is to Qualitative Research: Questioning Credibility and Narrative Studies'. Idnmccoy@uidaho.edu
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1992) 'Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of "Postmodernism"'. In Butler, J. and Scott, J.W. (eds) *Feminists Theorise the Political*. New York: Routledge: 3–21.
- Butler, J.(1993) 'Poststructuralism and Postmarxism'. *Diacritics* 23: 3–11.
- Butler, J. (1995) 'For a Careful Reading'. In Benhabib, S, Butler, J., Connell, D. and Fraser, N. *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange*. New York, Routledge: 127–143.
- Butt, R.L. (1989) 'An Integrative Function for Teachers' Biographies'. *Interpreting Curriculum Research: Fringes and Argument*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Calderhead, J. (ed.) (1987) *Exploring Teachers' Thinking*. London: Cassell
- Carrim, N. (1994) 'Academic Support and Transforming Knowledge Systems: The Case of South African Education Transition'. *Curriculum Studies* 2(3): 273–288.
- Casey, K. (1993) *I Answer with my Life: Life Histories of Women Teachers Working for Social Change*. London: Routledge.
- Casey, K. (1996) 'The New Narrative Research in Education'. *Review of Research in Education* 21: 211–253.
- Chambers, R. (1999) *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the First Last*. Bath: Bath Press.
- Chisholm, L. (1999) 'The Democratization of Schools and the Politics of Teachers: Work in South Africa'. *Compare* 29: 111–126.
- Christie, P. (1987) *The Right to Learn: The Struggle for Education in South Africa*. Braamfontein: Ravan Press.
- Christie, P.(1998) 'Schools as (Dis)Organisations: The Breakdown of the Culture of Learning and Teaching in South African Schools'. *Cambridge Journal of Education* 28(3): 283–300.
- Clandinin, D.J. and Connelly, F.M. (1994) 'Personal Experience Methods'. In N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage.
- Clandinin, D.J. and Connelly, F.M. (2000) *Narrative Inquiry Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Clifford, J. (1992) 'Travelling Cultures'. In L. Grossberg, C. Nelson, and P.A. Treichler (eds) *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge: 96–116.
- Clifford, J. and Marcus, G.E. (eds) (1986) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Coare, P. and Thomson, A. (1996) *Through the Joy of Learning: Diary of 1,000 Adult Learners*. Leicester: NIACE.
- Cochran-Smith, M. and Lytle, S.L. (1993) *Inside Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Connell, R.W. (1987) *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Connell, R.W. (1995) *Masculinities*. Sydney. Allen and Unwin.
- Corbett, J. (1993) 'Postmodernism and the "Special Needs" Metaphors'. *Oxford Review of Education* 19(4): 547–551.
- Cornbleth, C. (1991) 'Research in Context'. *Handbook of Research on Social Studies, Teaching and Learning*. New York: Macmillan: 265–275.
- Corson, D. (1990) *Language Policy Across the Curriculum*. Clevedon Avon: Multilingual Matters.
- Coultas, J. (1999) 'Similarities and Differences in Responses on the Teacher Identity Questionnaire across Four Sites (Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Trinidad)'. A draft report prepared for MUSTER workshop in Durban. University of Sussex: Centre for International Education.
- Covey, S.R. (1989) *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: Fireside.
- Cross, M. (1999) *Imagery of Identity in South African Education: 1880–1990*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press.
- Crouch, L. (2001) 'Turbulence or Orderly Change? Teacher supply and demand in South Africa – Current status, future needs and the impact of HIV/AIDS'. Abridged and edited by K.M. Lewin. Multi-Site Teacher Education Research Project – work in progress. Centre for International Education, University of Sussex Institute of Education, UK.
- 'Culture Shock: Flashpoints: 'Vis...: Picasso's Les Demoiselles d'Avigno'.  
<http://www.geocities.com/rr17bb/LesDemoi.html> (accessed on 02.01.2003).
- Dahlstrom, L. (1995) 'Teacher Education for Independent Namibia: From the Liberation Struggle to a National Agenda'. *Journal of Education for Teaching* 21(3): 273–289.
- Darling Hammond, L. (1989) 'Accountability for professional practice'. *Teachers College Record* 91(1).
- Davidoff, S. and Van den Berg, O. (1990) *Changing your Teaching: The Challenge of the Classroom*. Western Cape: Centaur Publications.
- Davies, B. (1989) *Frogs and Snails and Feminist Tales*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Davies, B. (1994) *Post-Structuralist Theory and Classroom Practice*. Geelong: Deakins

- University Press.
- Davies, L. (1988) 'Contradictions of Control: Lessons from Exploring Teachers' Work in Botswana'. *International Journal for Educational Development* 8(4): 293–303.
- Day, C., Calderhead, J. and Denicolo, P. (1993) *Research on Teacher Thinking: Understanding Professional Development*. London: The Falmer Press.
- De Clercq, F. (1997) 'Policy Intervention and Power Shifts: An Evaluation of South Africa's Education Restructuring Policies'. *Journal of Education Policy* 12(30): 127–146.
- De Lauretis, P. (1986) *Feminist Studies/Critical Studies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- De Lauretis, P. (1987) *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Denscombe, M. (1995) 'Teachers as an Audience for Research: The Acceptability of Ethnographic Approaches to Classroom Research'. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 1(2): 173–192.
- Denzin, N.K. (1989) 'The Biographical Method'. *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Biographical Method*. Third edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall: 181–195.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. California: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1998a) *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*. London: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1998b) *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. London: Sage Publications.
- Department of Education (1996a) *National Education Policy Act, 1996: Norms and Standards for Educators Act 27 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Department of Education (1996b) *South African Schools Act*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Department of Education (1997) *White Paper on Higher Education*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Department of Education (1999) *Status Report for the Minister of Education*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Department of Education (2000a) *Norms and Standards for Educators*. Government Gazette no. 20844. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Department of Education (2000b) *South African Certificate for Educators (SACE)*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Department of Education (2001) *Education in South Africa: Achievements since 1994*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

- Dewey, J. (1938) *Experience and Education*. New York: Macmillan
- Dhunpath, R. (1998) 'A Tapestry of Teacher Development in KZN through the Eyes of Cynthia Mpati'. MA thesis, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- Doll Jr, W.E. (1993) *A Post-Modern Perspective on Curriculum*. Vol 9. New York: Teachers College.
- Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) (1998) *Manual for Developmental Appraisal*. Resolution Number 4 of 1998.
- Educational Projects Unit (EPU) (1988) *Learning through Action Research*. Durban, University of Natal.
- Educational Projects Unit (EPU) (1994) *Education in South Africa: Achievements since 1994*. Gauteng, University of Witwatersrand.
- Eisner, E.W. (1981) 'On the Differences between Scientific and Artistic Approaches to Qualitative Research'. *Educational Researcher* April: 5–9.
- Eisner, E.W. (1998) *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Enquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Elliott, B. (1995) 'Developing Relationships: Significant Episodes in Professional Development'. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 1(2): 247–264.
- Elliot, J. (1993) *Reconstructing Teacher Education: Teacher Development*. Basingstoke: Burgess Science Press.
- Ely, M., Anzul, M., Friedman, T., Garner, D. and McCormack Steinmetz, A. (1991) *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles within Circles*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Epstein, D. and Johnson, R. (1998) 'Conclusion: Sexuality and Education Otherwise'. *Schooling Sexualities*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Esland, G. 1977. *Legitimacy and Control*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Falzon, C. (1998) *Foucault and Social Dialogue*. London: Routledge.
- Felman, S. (1987) 'Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight'. MA thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge.
- Flax, J. (1993) *Disputed Subjects: Essays on Psychoanalysis, Politics and Philosophy*. New York: Routledge.
- Fleisch, B.D. (2002) 'Managing Educational Change'. *The State and School Reform in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Heinemann Publishers.
- Flick, U. (1998) *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Foucault, M. (1977) 'Truth and Power'. In C. Gordon (ed.) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*. Sussex: The Harvester Press.

- 
- Foucault, M. (1978) *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge* (C. Gordon, ed; C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mephram, K. Soper, trans.). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1982) 'The Subject and Power'. In Dreyfus, H. and Rainbow, P. (eds) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, M. (1984a) 'On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress'. In P. Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books: 340–372.
- Foucault, M. (1984b) 'Polemics, Politics and Problematisations' (L. Davis, trans.). In Rabinow, P. (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1997) 'The Ethics of Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom' (R. Fornet-Betancourt, H. Becker, and A. Gomez-Muller, Interviewers, P. Aranow and D. McGrawth, trans.). In P. Rabinow (ed.) *Ethics; Subjectivity and Truth*: 281–301.
- Frank, A. (2000) 'The Standpoint of Storyteller'. *Qualitative Health Research* 10(3): 354–365.
- Freeman, D. and Richards, J.C. (1996) *Teacher Learning in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Freire, P. (1998) *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Continuum Publishing Company.
- Frielick, S. and Mentis, M. (1992) 'Teaching Thinking and Thinking Teaching: Adaptations of Feuersteins's Cognitive Theories in a University Setting'. Paper presented at the Congress of the South African Association for Research and Development in Higher Education, Bloemfontein.
- Frosh, S., Phoenix, A. and Pattman, R. (2002) *Young Masculinities*. New York: Palgrave.
- Fullan, M. (1993) *Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Fuller, B. and Snyder, J.R., (1991) 'Vocal Teachers, Silent Pupils? Life in Botswana Classrooms'. *Comparative Education Review* 35(2): 274–295.
- Garcia, J.H. (2000) 'The Social Constructions of Race in Two Border Cities: Geographically Close, Conceptually Apart'. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 24–28 April 2000, New Orleans.
- Gardner, J.W. (1965) *Self-Renewal: The Individual and the Innovative Society*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Geertz, C. (1973a) *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, C. (1973b) 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture'. In *The*



- Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Geertz, C. (1986) 'Making Experiences, Authoring Lives'. In Turner, V.W. and Bruner, E.M. (eds) *The Anthropology of Experience*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press: 373–380.
- Giddens, A. (1986) *The Constitution of Society*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Gilbert, R. and Gilbert, P. (1998) *Masculinity Goes to School*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Giroux, H.A. (1983) *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition*. Massachusetts: Garvey Publishers.
- Giroux, H.A. (1994) *Disturbing Pleasures: Learning Popular Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Giroux, H.A. (1996) *Fugitive Cultures: Race, Violence and Youth*. New York: Routledge.
- Giroux, H.A., Simon, R.I., and Contributors. (1989) *Popular Culture: Schooling and Everyday Life*. New York: Bergin and Garvey.
- Gitlin, A. (1990) 'Understanding Teaching Dialogically'. *Teachers College Record* 91(4): 537.
- Glaser, B., and Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Goodlad, J.I. (1984) *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future*. San Francisco: McGraw-Hill.
- Goodson, I.F. (1988) *The Making of Curriculum: Collected Essays*. Sussex: The Falmer Press.
- Goodson, I.F. (2000) *Social Histories of Educational Change*. Norwich, Norfolk: University of East Anglia, School of Education and Professional Development.
- Goodson, I.F. and Cole, A.L. (1994) 'Exploring the Teacher's Professional Knowledge: Constructing Identity and Community'. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, Winter.
- Goodson, I.F. and Marsh, C.J. (1998) 'Studying School Subjects: A Guide'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 30(5): 593–611.
- Goodson, I.F. and Walker, R. (1991) *Biography, Identity and Schooling: Episodes in Educational Research*. Basingstoke: The Falmer Press.
- Gough, N. (1991) 'Narrative and Nature: Unsustainable Fictions in Environmental Education'. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education* 7: 31–42.
- Gough, N. (1994a) 'Narration, Reflection, Diffraction: Aspects of Fiction in Educational Inquiry'. *Australian Educational Researcher* 21(3): 1–26.
- Gough, N. (1994b) 'Plotting Research: Educational Inquiry's Continuities with Detective Fiction'. Deakin Centre for Education and Change Working Paper 35: 1–35.
- Gough, N. (1998) 'Narrative and Educational Inquiry'. *Horizons, Images and Experiences: The Research Stories Collection*. Geelong: Deakin University: 118–127.

- Gough, N. (1999) 'What Troubles a Travelling Textworker? Troubling "Freedom": Silences in Post-Apartheid Environmental Education'. *South African Journal of Environmental Education* 19: 40–49.
- Gough, N. (forthcoming) 'Narrative Experiments: Manifesting Cyborgs in Curriculum Inquiry'. Science Fiction Curriculum, Cyborg Teachers, and Youth Culture(s): Curricular Visions for the Third Millenium. New York: Garland.
- Gould, S.J. (1988) 'Kropotkin was no crackpot'. *Natural History* 12(21).
- Govender, M.D. (2001) 'The Role of the Media in Teacher Rationalisation and Redeployment in KwaZulu-Natal'. MA thesis, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- Green, A. (1994) 'Postmodernism and State Education'. *Journal of Education Policy* 9(1): 67–83.
- Greene, M. (1995) 'Educational Visions: What are Schools for and What Should we be Doing in the Name of Education?' In J.L. Kincheloe and S R. Steinberg (eds) *Thirteen Questions: Reframing Education's Conversation*. New York: Peter Lang: 305–313.
- Gross, S. (1988) *Teacher Education and Learning to Teach: A Research Agenda*. Michigan State University: National Center for Research on Teacher Education.
- Grumet, M.R.(1991) 'The Politics of Personal Knowledge'. In Witherell, C. and Noddings, N. (eds) *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education*. New York: Teachers College Press: 66–77.
- Haack, S. (1998) *Manifesto of a Passionate Moderate*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Halperin, D. (1995) *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography*. New York: Oxford Press.
- Hammersley, M. (1993) 'Reading Ethnographic Research: A Critical Guide'. *Aspects of Modern Sociology*. Sussex: Longman.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994a) *Changing Teachers, Changing Times: Teachers' Work and Culture in the Postmodern Age*. London: Cassell.
- Hargreaves, A. (1994b) 'Restructuring Restructuring: Postmodernity and the Prospects for Educational Change'. *Journal of Educational Policy* 9(1): 47–65.
- Hargreaves, A. (1995) 'Renewal in the Age of Paradox'. *Educational Leadership* 52(7). EDT: [www.ascd.org/readingroom/edlead/9504/hargreaves.html](http://www.ascd.org/readingroom/edlead/9504/hargreaves.html) (accessed on 04.08.2002).
- Hargreaves, A. (1999) 'Professional and Parents: A Social Movement for Educational Change'. *Times Educational Supplement*.
- Harwood, V. (2001) 'Foucault, Narrative and the Subjugated Subject: Doing Research with a Grid of Sensibility'. *Australian Educational Researcher* 1(19).
- Hatch, J.A. and Wisneiwski, R. (1995) *Life History and Narrative*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1962) [1927] *Being and Time* (Macquarrie, J. and Robinson, E., trans.). New

- York: Harper and Bros.
- Higgs, P. (1998) *Metatheories in Educational Theory and Practice*. Johannesburg: Heinemann.
- Higgs, P. and Smith, J. (2002) *Rethinking Truth*. Lansdowne: Juta.
- Hoadley, U. (2002) 'The Regulation of Teacher Work Identity: Core Considerations'. *Journal of Education* 28: 39–62.
- Hogg, A.M., Terry, J.D. and White, K.M. (1995) 'A Tale of Two Theories; A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory With Social Identity Theory'. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 58(4): 255–269.
- Holt-Reynolds, D. (1994) 'When Agreeing with the Professor is Bad News for Preservice Teacher Educators: Jeneane, Her Personal History, and Coursework'. *Teacher Education Quarterly* Winter: 13–36.
- hooks, bell (1984) *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*. Boston: South End Press.
- hooks, bell (1989) *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. Boston: South End Press.
- hooks, bell (1994a) *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*. New York: Routledge.
- hooks, bell (1994b) *Teaching to Transgress: Education as a Practice of Freedom*. New York. London, Routledge.
- Huberman, M. (1993) *The Lives of Teachers*. London: Cassell
- Huberman, M. (1995) 'Networks that Alter Teaching: Conceptualizations, Exchanges and Experiments'. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 1(2): 193–212.
- Huggett, F.E. (1986) *Teachers*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Ilmer, S., Snyder, J., Erbaugh, S. and Kurz, K. (1997) 'Urban Educators' Perceptions of Successful Teaching'. *Journal of Teacher Education* November–December 48(5): 379–384.
- 'Inner-City School Teacher Blues'. <http://www.rjgeib.com/biography/inner-city-bules/innerblu.html> (accessed on 30.05.2001).
- Jacklin, H. (2000) 'Teachers, Identities and Space'. In Adendorff, M. et al (eds) *Being a Teacher: Professional Challenges and Choices*. Cape Town: SAIDE and Oxford University Press.
- Jalongo, M.R. (1991) *The Role of the Teacher in the 21st Century: An Insider's View*. Indiana: National Educational Service.
- Jansen, J.D. (1996) 'Does Teacher Development Work? True Confessions of a Hardened Evaluator'. Paper presented to the Faculty Research Seminar Series in the University of Durban Westville, Senate Chamber, 12 April.
- Jardine, A. (1985) *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

- Jessop, T. and Penny, A. (1998) 'A Study of Teacher Voice and Vision in the Narratives of Rural South African and Gambian Primary School Teachers'. *International Journal Educational Development* 18(5): 393–403.
- Jofili, Z. and Watts, M. (1995) 'Changing Teachers' Thinking through Critical Constructivism and Critical Action Research'. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* 1(2): 213–228.
- Juta's Education Law and Policy (1999) *Hand Book*. Western Cape: Rustica Press.
- Kallaway, P., Kruss, G., Aslam, F. and Donn, G (1998) *Education After Apartheid: South African Education in Transition*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.
- Kehily, M.J. (1995) 'Self-Narration, Autobiography and Identity Construction'. *Gender and Education* March 7(1): 23–31.
- Kennedy, M.M. (1988) 'Teacher Education and Learning to Teach: A Research Agenda'. National Center for Research on Teacher Education Issue Paper 88(7).
- Kennedy, M.M. (1991) *An Agenda for Research on Teacher Learning*. Michigan: Michigan State University Press.
- Kenway, J. and Willis, S. (1997) *Answering Back: Girls, Boys and Feminism in Schools*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Kenway, J., Gough, N. and Hughes, M. (1998) *Publishing in Refereed Academic Journals: A Pocket Guide*. Geelong: Deakin University.
- Kettle, B. and Sellars, N. (1996) 'The Development of Student Teachers' Practical Theory of Teaching'. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 12(1): 1–24.
- Kinney, S. (1997) 'Looking into "Rear Window": Experiential Knowledge in Educational Inquiry'. *Horizons, Images and Experiences: The Research Stories Collection*. Geelong: Deakin University: 135–145.
- Knox, D. (1998) 'Designing a New In-Service Course of Science Education? Some Pressures in South Africa'. Paper presented at the Teacher Education Conference, Durban.
- Kunje, D. (1998) 'Primary Teacher Education: The Malawi Perspective'. Paper presented at the 1998 Teacher Education Conference, Durban.
- Lacey, C. (1977) *The Socialisation of Teachers*. London: Methuen.
- Langellier, K.M. (1989) 'Personal Narratives: Perspectives on Theory and Research'. *Text & Performance Quarterly* 9: 243–276.
- Lather, P. (1991) 'Post-Critical Pedagogies: A Feminist Reading'. *Post-Critical Pedagogies*. Albert Park: James Nicholas Publishers.
- Lather, P. (1995) 'Feminist Perspectives on Empowering Research Methodologies'. *Debates and*

- Issues in Feminist Research and Pedagogy*. London: Open University: 292–305.
- Leggo, C. (1998) 'Open(ing) Texts: Deconstruction and Responding to Poetry'. *Theory into Practice* Summer 37(3): 186–192.
- Leming, J.S. (1991) 'Teacher Characteristics and Social Studies Education.' *Handbook of Research on Social Studies, Teaching and Learning*. New York: Macmillan: 222–235.
- Lieberman, A. and Miller, L. (1999) *Teachers Transforming their World and their Work*. New York: Teachers College.
- Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R. and Zilber, T. (1998) *Narrative Research*. Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Lighthall, F. F. (1989) with Allan, S.D. 'Local Realities, Local Adaptations'. *Problem, Process and Person in a School's Governance*. London, New York, Philadelphia: The Falmer Press.
- Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985) 'Establishing Trustworthiness'. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications: 289–331.
- Lipka, R.P. and Brinthaupt, T.M. (1999) *The Role of Self in Teacher Development*. Albany, NY: University of New York Press.
- Little, A. (1994) 'Learning for All: Bridging Cultures'. International Perspectives on Culture and Schooling: A Symposium Proceedings. Department of International and Comparative Education Institute of Education, University of London.
- Little, J.L. (1990) 'The Persistence of Privacy: Autonomy and Initiative in Teachers' Professional Relations'. *Teachers College Record*. New York: Columbia University Press: 509–536.
- Lockheed, M.E. and Verspoor, A.M. (1991) 'Improving the Preparation and Motivation of Teachers'. *Improving Primary Education in Developing Countries*. Washington: World Bank: 90–116.
- Lortie, D.C. (1975) *School Teacher*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Louis, K.S. (1994) 'Beyond "Managed Change": Rethinking How Schools Improve'. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 5(1): 2–4.
- Mackwood, G. (2000) 'Unlearning the 3Rs (Relativism, Realism, and Reflection): Narrative as Figural'. Draft chapter from 'Figuring Inventions: Education in the Wake of the Postmodern'. PhD thesis, University of Alberta.
- Macleod, C. (1995) 'Transforming Pedagogy in South Africa: The Intersection of the Teacher as Subject'. *Perspectives in Education* 16(1).
- MacNaughton, G. (1998) 'Improving our Gender Equity "Tools": A Case for Discourse Analysis'. In Yelland, N. (ed.) *Gender in Early Childhood*. London and New York:



- Routledge.
- MacNaughton, G. (2000) *Rethinking Gender in Early Childhood Education*. Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Mardle, G. and Walker, M. (1980) 'Strategies and Structure: Some Critical Notes on Teacher Socialisation'. In Woods, P. (ed.) *Teacher Strategies: Explorations in the Sociology of the School*. London: Croom Helm.
- Marquard, J. (1978) *A Century of South African Short Stories*. Johannesburg: Ad Donker.
- Mattson, E. (1999) 'Teacher Identities in Policy and Practice'. MA thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.
- Mattson, E. and Harley, K. (1999) 'That's How We Teach Them: Teacher Roles and Competences in a Globalising South Africa'. Paper presented at the Kenton Educational Association Conference, October, Salt Rock.
- McCall, G. and Simmons, J. (1978). *Identities and Interactions*. Rev. ed. New York: Free Press.
- McCracken, G. (1988) *The Long Interview*. Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- McDonald, J.P. (1992) *Teaching: Making Sense of an Uncertain Craft*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- McIntosh, E. (1964) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*. London: Oxford University Press.
- McLaren, P. (1993). 'Border Disputes: Multicultural Narrative, Identity Formation, and Critical Pedagogy in Postmodern America'. In McLaughlin, D. and Tierney, W.G. (eds) *Naming Silenced Lives: Personal Narratives and the Process of Educational Change*. New York: Routledge.
- McNeil, L.M. (1988) *Contradictions of Control: School Structure and School Knowledge*. New York: Routledge.
- Mead, G. (1934) *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Measor, L. and Sikes, P. (1992) 'Ethics and Methodology in Life History'. In J.F.Goodsan, (ed.) *Studying Teachers' Lives*. London: Routledge: 209–233.
- Melnick, C. (1997) 'Autobiography: Discovering the Self in a Teacher Education Program'. Paper presented at AERA Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, 28 March.
- Middleton, S. (1993) *Educating Feminists: Life Histories and Pedagogy*. New York and London: Teachers College Press.
- Mishler, E.G. (1999) *Storylines: Craftartists' Narratives of Identity*. London: Harvard University

- Press.
- Mitchell, W. (1992) *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Mlamleli, O., Mabelane, P., Napo, V., Sibiyi, N. and Free, V. (2000) 'Creating Programs for Safe Schools: Opportunities and Challenges in Relation to Gender-Based Violence in South Africa'. *McGill Journal of Education*. 35(3): 267–289.
- Mnqayi, A.Z. (1999) 'Attitudes of Secondary School Principals towards the New School Governance Policies'. MA thesis, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- Moore, B. (1994) 'Multicultural Education in South Africa: Some Theoretical and Political Issues'. *Perspectives in Education* 15(3): 237–263.
- Morrell, R. (2001) (ed.) *Changing Men in South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, London: Zed Books.
- Mouton, J. (1996) *Understanding Social Research*. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik.
- Mullen, C.A., Cox, M.D., Boettcher, C.K. and Adoue, D.S. (1997). (eds). *Breaking the Circle of One: Redefining Mentorship in the Lives and Writings of Educators*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Murtadha, K. (1995) 'An African-Centred Pedagogy in Dialog with Liberatory Multiculturalism'. *Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, and the Politics of Difference*. New York: University of New York Press.
- Naidoo, M. (2002) 'Exploring Management Members' Attitudes towards the Developmental Appraisal System'. MA thesis, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- Ndhlovu, D.T. (1998) 'Teacher Professionalism in Context: A Case for Locating the Professionalisation of Teaching and Teacher Professionalism within Educational Change Management Theory'. Paper prepared and presented at the International Trends in Teacher Education Policy, Politics and Practice conference, 22 July, University of Durban-Westville.
- Nielsen, L., Patronis, P. and Skovsmose, O. (1996) *Connecting Corners in Europe: A Greek-Danish Project in Mathematics Education*. Patras/Aalborg.
- Oakley, A. (1981) 'Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms'. *Doing Feminist Research*. London: Routledge: 30–59.
- Oplatka, I. (2001). 'Building a Typology of Self-Renewal: Reflection upon Life Story Research'. *The Qualitative Report* 6(4). <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR6-4/oplatka.html> (accessed on 12/01).
- Orner, M. (1992) 'Interrupting the Calls for Student Voice in "Liberatory" Education: A Feminist

- Poststructuralist Perspective'. In Luke, C. and Gore, J. (eds) *Feminism and Critical Pedagogy*. New York: Routledge: 74–88.
- Paisey, A. (1983) *The Effective Teacher: Primary and Secondary Schools*. London: Professional Library.
- Palmer, P.J. (1998) *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Pamphilon, B. (1999) 'Zoom Model: A Dynamic Framework for the Analysis of Life Histories'. EDT: [www.pqdlink?Ver=1&Exp=03-31-2003&FMT=TG&DID=000000044581843&REQ=1&Cert=Obua8/17/01](http://www.pqdlink?Ver=1&Exp=03-31-2003&FMT=TG&DID=000000044581843&REQ=1&Cert=Obua8/17/01) (accessed on 17.08.2001).
- Pattman, R. (2000) 'Schooling "Sexualities": Review'. *Gender and Education* 12(1): 122–127.
- Patton, M.Q. (1990) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Second edition. London: Sage Publications.
- Payne, M. (1997) *A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory*. Massachusetts: Blackwell.
- The Personal Narratives Group. (1989) *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Perumal, J. and Pillay, D. (2002) 'The Bina Gumede Story: Exploring the Ethics of Researching the Other'. *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 51: 92–100.
- Perumal, J., Phurutse, C., Nsibande, N. and Luneta, K. (2000) 'The Poverty of Education Researching Marginalised Communities'. A panel presentation at Kenton Ebayi, University of the Witwatersrand, Department of Education.
- Peshkin, A. (2001) 'Angles of Vision: Enhancing Perception in Qualitative Research'. *Qualitative Inquiry* 7(2): 238–253.
- Peters, M. (1996) *Poststructuralism, Politics and Education*. Westport, Connecticut and London: Bergin and Garvey.
- Pillay, D. (1997) 'Primary Art Education: Some Political, Theoretical and Practical Issues'. Paper presented at the 1998 Teacher Education Conference, Durban.
- Polkinghorne, D.E. (1988) *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Polkinghorne, D.E. (1995) 'Narrative Configuration in Qualitative Analysis'. In J.A. Hatch and R. Wisniewski (eds) *Life History and Narrative*. London and Washington: The Falmer Press.
- Popkewitz, T. (1994) 'Professionalisation in Teaching and Teacher Education: Some Notes on its History, Ideology and Potential'. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 10: 1–14.
- Pratt, M.B. (1984) 'Identity: Skin Blood Heart'. In Bulkin, E., Pratt, M.B. and Smith, B. (eds)

- Yours in Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism*. Ithaca: Firebrand Books: 11–63.
- Prophet, R. (1995) 'Views from the Botswana Junior Secondary Classroom: Case Study of a Curriculum Intervention'. *International Journal for Educational Development* 15(2): 127–140.
- Prosser, J. (1998) *Image-Based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Rajchman, J. (1985) *Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ramathan, L. (2000) 'Report on Teacher Supply and Demand in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa'. University of Durban-Westville: School of Educational Studies.
- Ramathan, P. (2000) 'Where do Graduates Go? A Tracer Study of University Graduates'. University of Durban-Westville: School of Educational Studies.
- Ramathan, P. (2002). 'Teacher Attrition and Demand within KwaZulu-Natal in the Context of HIV/Aids'. PhD thesis, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- Reddy, V. (1995) 'Redress in Science and Mathematics Education in South Africa: Status of Science and Mathematics Education Research in SAARMSE'. Paper presented at the Third Annual Southern African Association for Research in Mathematics and Science education conference, Cape Town.
- Reddy, V. (2000) 'Life Histories of Black South African Scientists: Academic Success in an Unequal Society'. PhD thesis, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- Rhedding-Jones, J. (1994) 'Girls, Subjectivity and Language: From Four to Twelve in a Rural School.' PhD thesis, La Trobe University, Australia.
- Rhedding-Jones, J. (1995) 'What do you do after you've met Poststructuralism? Research Possibilities Regarding Feminism, Ethnography and Literacy'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 27(5): 479–500.
- Richardson, L. (1990) *Writing: Reaching Diverse Audiences*. London: Sage Publications.
- Richardson, L. (1993) 'Poetics, Dramatics, and Transgressive Validity: The Case of the Skipped Line'. *Sociological Quarterly* 344: 695–710.
- Richardson, L. and Lockridge, E. (1995) 'Writing Stories: Co-Authoring "The Sea Monster", a Writing-Story'. *Qualitative Inquiry* 1(2): 189–203.
- Richardson, L. and Lockridge, E. (1998) 'Fiction and Ethnography: A Conversation'. *Qualitative Inquiry* 4(3): 328–436.
- Riley, E. (2000) 'Annual Meeting 24–28 April, in New Orleans, Louisiana'. American

- Educational Research Association, Holistic Education, Louisiana State University.
- Roget, P.M. (1972) *Roget's Thesaurus of Synonyms and Antonyms*. London: Galley Press.
- Rorty, R. (1986) 'Foucault and Epistemology'. In Hoy, D.C. (ed.) *Foucault: A Critical Reader*. Cambridge, M.A: Basil Blackwell: 41–49.
- Sachs, J and Smith, R. 1988. 'Constructing Teacher Culture'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 9(4).
- Samuel, M.A. (1998) 'Words, Lives and Music: On Becoming a Teacher of English'. PhD thesis, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- Samuel, M. (1993) 'Changing Lives in Changing Times: Preservice Teacher Education in Postapartheid South Africa'. *Teachers Develop Teachers Research*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Samuel, M. (2001a) 'Teacher Education as Critical Discursive Space'. Paper presented at the Oxford conference, Education and Development, 17–22 September, Oxford, United Kingdom.
- Samuel, M. (2001b) 'The Changing Higher Education System: Insights from the Teacher Education Sector'. Paper presented at the Oxford conference, Education and Development, 17–22 September, Oxford, United Kingdom.
- Samuel, M. (2002) 'Working in the Rain: Pressures and Priorities for Teacher Education Curriculum Design in South Africa: A Case Study of the University of Durban-Westville'. *International Journal of Educational Development* 22: 97–110.
- Sanjek, R. (1990) *Fieldnotes: The Makings of Anthropology*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Sarason, S.B. (1982) *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change*. Allyn and Beacon.
- Sarup, M. (1988) *An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf: 1–5.
- Scholes, R. and Kellogg, R. (1966) *The Nature of Narrative*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Seale, C. (1999) 'Quality in Qualitative Research'. *Qualitative Inquiry* 5(4): 465–478.
- Senge, P.M. (1990) *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday.
- Sergiovanni, T.J. (1992) *Moral Leadership: Getting to the Heart of School Improvement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Shacklock, G. (2001) 'Life History and Narrative Inquiry'. *Narrative and Educational Inquiry 2001: Study Guide with Hyperlinks*: 18–36.
- Sharp, R. and Green, A. (1975) *Education and social control*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Sheets, R.H. (2000) 'Trends in the Scholarship on Teachers of Color for Diverse Populations:



- Implications for Multicultural Education'. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.
- Shor, I. (1987) *Freire for the Classroom: A Sourcebook for Liberatory Teaching*. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook Publishers.
- Shrewsbury, C. (1987) 'What is Feminist Pedagogy?' *Women's Studies Quarterly* XV(3 & 4) Fall/Winter: 6–14.
- Sikes, P. and Troyna, B. (1990) *True Stories: A Case Study in the Use of Life History in Initial Teacher Education*. Warwick: University of Warwick.
- Sikes, P.T., Measor, L. and Woods, P. (1985) *Teacher Careers: Crises and Continuities*. Lewes: The Falmer Press.
- Simon, R.I. (1992) *Teaching against the Grain: Texts for a Pedagogy of Possibility*. USA: Bergin and Garvey.
- Singh, S.K. (2001) 'Teacher Resignations: Perceptions of Teaching as a Career'. MA thesis, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.
- Skovsmose, O. (1994) *Towards a Philosophy of Critical Mathematics Education*. London: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Smith, H.J. and Tyler, T.R. (1997) 'Choosing the Right Pond: The Impact of Group Membership on Self-Esteem and Group-Oriented Behavior'. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 33: 146–170.
- Smith, R. (1995) *Introduction to Education: Successful School Management*. London: Cassell.
- Smylie, M.A. and Brownlee-Conyers, J. (1992) 'Teacher Leaders and their Principals: Exploring the Development of New Working Relationships'. *Educational Administration Quarterly* 28(2): 150–184.
- Sparkes, A. (1994) 'Self, Silence and Invisibility as a Beginning Teacher: A Life History of Lesbian Experience'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 15(1): 93–118.
- Spivak, C.G. (1992) 'Activity Bits/Identity Talk'. *Critical Inquiry* 18 (4): 770–803.
- Spivak, C.G. (1993) *Outside the Teaching Machine*. New York: Routledge.
- Spore, M.B. and Harrison, M.D. (2000) 'Stories of the Academy: Learning from the Good Mother'. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.
- St Pierre, E.A. (1997) 'Methodology in the Fold and the Irruption of Transgressive Data'. *Qualitative Studies in Education* 10(2): 175–189.
- St Pierre, E.A. (1999) 'The Work of Response in Ethnography'. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 28: 266–287.

- St Pierre, E.A. (2000) 'Poststructural Feminism in Education: An Overview'. *Qualitative Studies in Education* 13(5): 477–515.
- Stanley, L. (2001) 'Mourning becomes . . . the Spaces between Lives Lived and Lives Written'. Liz.stanley@man.ac.uk (accessed on 29.01.2002).
- Steele, F. and Jenks, S. (1977) *The Feel of the Work Place: Understanding and Improving Organization Culture*. Philip-Pines: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Stein, P. (1998) 'Literacy Histories as Performance: Issues of Memory and Reconciliation in a Johannesburg Classroom'. Paper presented at the Conference on International Trends in Teacher Education: Politics, Policy and Practice, 20–22 July, University of Durban-Westville, Durban.
- Steinberg, D.L., Epstein, D. and Johnson, R. (eds) (1997) *Border Patrols: Policing the Boundaries of Hetrosexuality*. London: Cassell.
- Stockard, J.G. (1980) *Rethinking People Management: A New Look at the Human Resource Function*. New York: Amacon.
- Storr, A. (1988) *Solitude: A Return to the Self*. New York: The Free Press.
- Stryker, S. (1980) 'Toward an Adequate Social Psychology of the Self.' *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews* 9: 383–385.
- Stryker, S. (1987) 'Identity Theory: Developments and Extensions'. In Yardley, K. and Honess, T. (eds) *Self and Identity*. New York: Wiley.
- Stucky, J.E. (1991) *The Violence of Literacy*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Suransky-Dekker, C. (1998) 'A Liberating Breeze of Western Civilisation? A Political History of Fundamental Pedagogics as an Expression of Dutch-Afrikaner Relationships'. PhD thesis, University of Durban-Westville.
- Tabulawa, R. (1997) 'Pedagogical Classroom Practice and the Social Context: The Case of Botswana'. *International Journal Educational Development* 17(2): 189–204.
- Tayack, D. and Tobin, W. (1994) 'The "Grammar" of Schooling: Why has it been so Hard to Change?' *American Educational Research Journal* 31(3) Fall: 453–479.
- Taylor, N. (2002) 'Accountability and Support: Improving Public Schooling in South Africa: A Systematic Framework'. Paper presented to the National Consultation on School Development, 29 January, Department of Education.
- Taylor, S. Rizvi, F. Lingard, B. and Henry, M. (1997) 'The Policy Phenomenon'. *Educational Policy and the Politics of Change*. London and New York: Routledge: 1–21.
- Tedesco, J.C. (1997) 'Teachers in the Change Process'. *Educational Innovation and Information* 93: 1–7.

- Thomas, G. (1998) 'The Myth of Rational Research'. *British Educational Research Journal* 24(2): 141–162.
- Thorne, B. (1993) *Gender Play, Girls and Boys in School*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Tierney, W.G. (1995) '(Re)presentation and Voice'. *Qualitative Inquiry* 1(4): 379–390.
- Tierney, W.G. (1998) 'Life History's History: Subjects Foretold'. *Qualitative Inquiry* 4(1): 49–70.
- Turner, J.C., Hogg, A.M., Oakes, P.J., Reicher, S.D. and Wetherell, M.S. (1987) *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self Categorisation Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Unterhalter, E. (1999) 'Globalisation, Gender and Curriculum 2005'. *Agenda* 41: 26–31.
- Unterhalter, E., Wolpe, H. and Botha, T. (1991) *Education in a Future South Africa: Policy Issues for Transformation*. Johannesburg: Heinemann.
- Usher, R. and Edwards, R. (1994) *Postmodernism and Education*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Van Maanen, J. (1995) 'An End to Innocence: The Ethnography of Ethnography'. In Van Maanen, J. (ed.) *Representation in Ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988a) *Qualitative Studies of Organizations*. California: Sage Publications.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988b) *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Vanhoozer, K.J. (1991) 'Philosophical Antecedents to Ricoeur's Time and Narrative'. In Wood, D. (ed.) *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*. London: Routledge: 34–54.
- Vithal, R. (1999) 'In Search of a Pedagogy of Conflict and Dialogue in Mathematics Education'. PhD thesis, University of Aalborg, Denmark.
- Walker, M. (1998) 'Academic Identities: Woman on a South African Landscape'. *British Journal on Sociology of Education* 19–3: 335–354.
- Walkerdine, V. (1989) *Counting Girls Out*. Virago Press: London.
- Wasley, P.A. (1991) *Teachers who Lead: The Rhetoric of Reform and the Realities of Practice*. New York and London: Teachers College Press.
- Weber, S. and Mitchell, C. (1995) 'That's Funny, you don't Look like a Teacher': *Interrogating Images and Identity in Popular Culture*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Wedekind, V. (2000) 'Friendship, Collegiality and Community in South African Teacher's Lives and Careers'. Paper presented to the British Educational Research Annual Conference, BERA 2000, University of Cardiff, Wales, September.
- Weedon, C. (1987) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.
- Wells, L.E. (1978) 'Theories of Deviance and the Self-Concept'. *Social Psychology* 41: 189–204.

- Wetherell and Edley (1999) 'Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity, Imaginary and Psycho-discursive Practices'. *Feminism and Psychology* 9: 335–356.
- Willcoxson, L. (1998) 'The Impact of Academics' Learning and Teaching Preferences on their Teaching Practices: A Pilot Study'. *Studies in Higher Education* 23(1): 59–69.
- William, E. and Doll, J.R. (1993) *A Post-Modern Perspective on Curriculum*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Williams, D. (1986) 'But is it Rigorous? Trustworthiness and Authenticity in Naturalistic Education.' *Naturalistic Evaluation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers: 73–83.
- Williams, N. (2001) *The Work we were Born to do: Find the Work You Love, Love the Work You Do*. London: Element.
- Witherell, C. and Noddings, N. (1991) *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- World Bank Review (1995) *Development in Practice: Priorities and Strategies for Education*. Washington: The World Bank.
- Yelland, N. (1998) *Gender in Early Childhood*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Zeichner, K.M. (1988) 'Understanding the Character and Quality of the Academic and Professional Components of Teacher Education'. *Research Report* 88(1): 1–28.
- Zeichner, K.M. (1992) 'Connecting Genuine Teacher Development to the Struggle of Social Justice'. Issue Paper 92(1). The National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, Michigan State University.
- Zeichner, K.M. (1993) 'Educating Teachers for Cultural Diversity'. National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, Michigan State University Press.

## APPENDIX 1

Dear Daryl

You will be glad to know that the story is almost complete, after many hours of listening, transcribing and interpreting. Although I may not have had much contact with you over the past months, your life has been my preoccupation and I enjoyed every moment engaging with your lived experiences.

I have tried to narrate to the best of my intentions your thoughts, ideas and practices you have embodied and engaged with over different times in your life. As you would realise, I have included certain data and excluded others, as I believe it to serve the intention of the study. However, this is the story of you and your life and in paying this tribute to you, I believe you have to read it and acknowledge that my narration of the story is acceptable and that it encapsulates your life. **Please provide in writing information on the following:**

- Please read the story and comment in writing, on the layout and its content
- Make inclusions of data I may have excluded but which you believe is crucial
- Please acknowledge the use of the photographs and label them in the most appropriate way
- Comment on the title and if you can suggest a more appropriate title that would be most welcome
- Should we keep your name or do I give you a pseudonym

Enjoy the story! Once again, Thank you for agreeing to be part of this research study, and for agreeing to publish a story, which I know, will inspire all those who read it. I wish you well in your new position

Kind Regards

Daisy

N.B Please include in the story, the incident with the student who invited you to his party and his acknowledgement of your contribution to his life. For some reason I have very little about him and his name is not very clear.

✕ .



### 1.2.6 The 'Private-Server' → (The "Super" Tutor).

Daryl described his middle class home life as very stable, and secure. He also described himself as, "apolitical," and not really aware of the political environment because we lived in such a lovely 'cocooned' environment. *Johan the farm Johannesburg North suburb*  
His mother stayed home to take care of Daryl and his brother while his dad worked. Although his parents were never regular church-goers, (his father was British and his mother was Afrikaner, ~~they~~ <sup>he</sup> were not able to find a church that would accept them), Daryl, on the other hand became a very active church member. He was very involved in Youth groups and by the time he was in standard eight he became a Sunday school teacher and a Youth Leader for the next 18 years.

Daryl always felt like a 'second class' person, *→ while at high school*, "because I was never a sports person like my friends". Coming from a strong arts background, in which his grandfather played the violin for the London Philharmonic orchestra and his dad attended the Royal College of art, it is not surprising that Daryl played the guitar, was a keen photographer, and enjoyed creating graphic images on the computer. He loved participating in the school's dramatic productions, much to the disapproval of his parents, *as it had a negative effect on his academic progress*.

His performance at high school was not up to scratch and, "mum and dad always compared me to my very bright cousins, Barbara and Russell. He added, "I suppose I was intelligent too, but I was just lazy and involved in a lot of other things. My church life was very important". Growing up in a middle to upper class neighbourhood in Gauteng, provided Daryl with a particular orientation to the meaning of success and wealth. *Wealth for him has to do very much with an internal contentedness.*

Although Mrs. D, the school guidance counselor advised him that teaching would be the most appropriate career for him, he did not intend becoming a teacher. His father was a scientist for Anglo-American, and he had introduced Daryl from a very early age to minerals and mining. His also introduced him to Don Enwright, *through UNISA*, "the man with an unbelievable intellect," and who had been studying Geology. Daryl eventually developed a fascination for rocks. Through the efforts of his father, who managed to secure him a place at Rand Afrikaans University for a degree in Geology, he was able to secure his leave as a photographer for the military intelligence, after one year of service.

#### "My Mentors"

*hated but national service & geology*  
Daryl commented that he ~~loved~~ Maths and enjoyed Chemistry as a student at University because of the lecturers. The Chemistry lecturers he added, "had a real passion for lecturing. They made Chemistry come alive and inspired us to want to study it. They did not speak down to the students, they spoke with us".

*Ingenious has developed a passion for mathematics*  
At university he struggled with ~~Organic~~ Chemistry. He eventually left university *after conquering his fear for this subject* to take up a temporary teaching post, during which time he made his fifth attempt at ~~Organic~~ chemistry. *He eventually passed because it was an oral examination.* He enjoyed being a teacher and believes that teachers, like him, who themselves experienced difficulty in passing, understand better why

*leaves in*

*& getting all the marks*

Hyde Rev-10

learners make the kind of mistakes they do, and the fears and misconceptions that learners have.

Daryl strongly believes that becoming a teacher for him, was a calling from God. He explained how he woke up at about 4 o'clock one morning because he distinctly heard God saying, "You have need for suffering" and I said, "God why". Daryl remembered God distinctly saying to him, "I've been calling you to teach and you have been ignoring me". I'm the Lord your God and I shall supply all your needs according to my riches and glory". He left university to take up a teaching post in Highcourt High School in Johannesburg. Daryl believes that every single one of us has a destiny and he was destined to be a teacher. He emphasised that the whole essence of being a teacher and influencing lives makes teaching so spiritual. *Teaching is a gifting that cannot be ignored!*

*I have a destiny I know I shall forefill  
And I have a destiny city on the hill  
And I have a destiny that is not to wish an empty  
For I know that I was born for such a time as this.  
Long before the ages God released in me to walk in all the ways he has prepared for me.  
You giving me a part to play in history to help prepare a bride for eternity and  
I did not choose you but you chose me  
and appointed me for bearing fruit among  
and I know you will complete the work you have done in me  
by the power of the spirit God almighty,  
I have a destiny I know I shall forefill.*

words!

He returned to university three years later to complete a diploma in teacher education (H.D.E). He soon realised that all what they have been teaching him at University he was already familiar with or it just did not work in the 'real' situation.

Daryl thoroughly enjoyed his teaching at Highcourt High and he attributes much of his success to his H.O.D and mentor, Jenny. He added, "For me the first three years were very crucial, and especially teaching ~~maths and science~~ which is very strong on content. He admits that he learnt more about the subject and its content from his mentor than he did from his university chemistry and physics. *lectures!*

As a novice teacher, mentoring proved most valuable as it provided him with the support for the ideas and views that he wanted to initiate in his classroom. Being "part of a team is strongly lacking in most schools," he explained. Teachers, he said often work in isolation, living in "glass boxes crusted with chalk dust," which does not allow the learners to see teachers as real people, but experience the relationship as a "us and them" type of thing. He believes that as a teacher you need to be able to transgress those boundaries that have been erected so that the learner sees the teacher as a 'real' person. *He believes that the mentoring of young teachers is vital. Teachers should serve*

*an apprenticeship*

The most daunting task he experienced as a teacher was the amount of administrative work that had to be done, and which he really struggled with. He found it to be very time consuming. This inadvertently landed him in trouble with the management and to his eventual resignation from Highcourt High in 1993. He still argues that administrative work "kills the passion and the enthusiasm of a teacher."

Daryl left Johannesburg to take up a teaching post at Beechwood High in Kwa-Zulu Natal. He described his teaching in this school as a traumatic experience. He had never taught in an all boy school before and he did not believe in 'caning' the boys. The first week proved to be "sheer hell when fifteen boys were caned. It was a case of sink or swim," he explained. He emphasised how he tried to fit into the system. He went on to add, "I actually underwent a personality change. I became harsh, tyrannical bastard and that was something that I wasn't very pleased with." What concerned Daryl was that he was not being true to himself. He believes that the "respect you command as a teacher should not come from the position you hold or what you stand for but for who you are." He added that a teacher who has a high degree of self-esteem and self-confidence is a teacher who can get along side a pupil.

Furthermore, teaching science at Beechwood High School was a 'cut and dry' story. He found that the science curriculum had already been designed for him to teach and the notes had been prepared in advance and "still being used seven years later with the same mistakes." This he found disconcerting because he had always considered being a teacher a developmental craft more especially because the learners were changing all the time. *you Good teacher have a teachable spirit!*

After teaching at Beechwood, which was subsequently renamed Northwood High School. Daryl realised then that he needed to "get out" of this situation that he found himself in. He argued that to be a successful teacher "one needs to work in a safe and secure environment."

He left Northwood High and started tutoring learners in the afternoon. This eventually developed into a private school called Super Tutor College. He thoroughly enjoys and loves working and heading such a school. He believed that having the Four "P's" Preparation, Perseverance, Passion and Personality gives him the satisfaction and enthusiasm to remain in the teaching profession. He never sees teaching as a vocation or as an eight to five job. Instead, "to be a successful teacher you actually have to live, eat, drink and sleep your profession."

Daryl regards himself as a passionate teacher, passionate about teaching young people and passionate about his subjects. He considers his role as one of service. He makes reference to a church song, "Brother let me be your servant, let me be as Christ is to you," to

*Getting along side individual learners is when real teaching happens*

emphasise this view. He views teaching as a service industry and he adds, "as teachers we are called to serve". *As teachers we also need to see our pupils as clients who are paying for a service*

Because of his varied interests and talents that he had developed during his schooling years, he is convinced that teachers should be developed holistically. He finds that his musical and drama skills form an integral part to his teaching.

He explains:

*To be a teacher is to be an entertainer. It is not about standing up in the front giving lectures. He added, "I sing to them, it kind of just happens. Normally it is a song that will make them laugh. You need to keep your pupils with you, they need to actually hang onto every single word that you say and the only way that that can happen is for you to capture their minds with humor. I'm never sarcastic, I always make the joke on me, not on them."*

*VIE, VIE, VIE is easy*

He believes that, "Learning is language bond," and the different talents he possesses he uses in his teaching to make sense of the subject, "because individuals see things from different perspectives and as a teacher you need to create a teaching and learning environment that allows for those differences." Being a teacher is like being a gardener. Just as you would provide the plant with adequate care (love, water), eradicating the weeds to provide the right environment and the space for the plant to bear fruit, so too must the teacher care, love and provide the appropriate learning environment for learners to discover their true potential.

(refer to diagrammatic illustration on the opp. Page - The learning space)

### **"Like an open book"**

According to Daryl your life as a teacher "is an open book." He believed that learners need to know and understand where you are coming from, where you are going and what you have achieved in life so that they can be inspired to take that step forward. He enjoys the challenge of taking on a student that is a 'struggler' and making him/her successful. He enjoys seeing the incredible value in people and the incredible realisation that what you are investing as a teacher in another human being is working. This for him is an inspiration for him to go on.

### **"Having a teachable spirit"**

"Teachers", he argued, "should not see their career as a way to become rich but as a chance to influence and enable change in as many lives." He strongly believes that, "teachers who don't become passionately involved in their occupation do not influence lives. Teachers should be role models to their learners." He maintains that, "You got to have a teachable spirit, and a positive attitude". He added, "the most important thing is the teacher's attitude, not the subject matter. If the teacher displays a positive attitude, and the learner is 'praised with heart and passion for whatever little steps the learner takes forward', that is when you start seeing success. He elaborated, "I have a passion for Math's and Science, a relationship which gives integrity to who I am."

*and people*

*possess a  
financial*

*which brings  
an inner  
richness*

# Roland Selmer - Selmer.

21st. - Thank you for teaching  
for inspiring me to go to school  
"Good days and bad days".

Daryl took on the role of teacher with all the commitment and realisation that there are bad days when the learners "infuriate me and there are days when they are a joy to me and I am a joy to them." While he argued that as a teacher you have to become relevant and it is only when you are relevant <sup>that</sup> you can stimulate students, he also believed that one needs to be an avid reader, and listener of current programmes, documentaries, and books to keep with the latest.

He summed up his teacher life as one that is twofold, playing the role of teacher and parent. While he defended that teachers can never take the place of parents, he stressed that they should be approachable as parents are.

The poem below, captures his thoughts and feeling about being a teacher

Teacher...

Teacher a different creature / don't be a preacher  
You're a farmer till the soil that brings life/  
Tend your flowers with love and patience  
Encourage the growth by giving knowledge,  
Insight and understanding profession set on sight  
with understanding, prune, discipline, admonish, order  
so that lives will grow strong, and then intrude  
Pour your life into others,  
Teacher when you're in colours  
When you have nothing to take with you, when you have left  
A richness that will self perpetuate.

Pour your life into others  
make them beautiful colours  
when you have nothing  
to take with you.  
when you have left -  
you will leave a richness  
that will  
self perpetuate.

Self taught -  
std 8/9/10  
maths -



I DARY / FRANK

Acknowledge that

this document has been

read by me & is

true in all aspects.

Don

Daisy,

How are you? How is your R going?  
Everything of the best!

I am sorry for taking so long. I have been so busy these past weeks. I organised a career exhibition for Richmond high schools on the 4th of May + that took a lot of planning and running around. The project was such a success, I have been approached by the Dept of Education to organise one for the Ullundi circuit in June-July. I do not think I will manage though. It is so difficult to put something like that together, especially so far from DBN. I am working with <sup>two</sup> other ~~people~~ who are also very keen to help children. With the pregnancy + my Varsity working, I really have no time. I have asked them to take over ---

Anyway enough about me! How was mother's day? I hope you had a great day. My family came over to visit and my mother in law, we went to Royal Hotel for lunch and it was sup

Please find inside the long overdue poems + the plan for the yiao yiao lessons. I hope it is not too late, but you know what they say - better late than never!

Regards to your family,

## POEM.

It was not easy,

I have come this far through faith,  
No matter, I did not have the best family  
background. I have come this far!  
No matter, the emotional abuse, the challenges,  
but by faith I have become the teacher,  
friend, wife and a role model I always wanted  
to be!

Sometimes I felt very helpless.  
Often I thought of giving up...  
Hungry, angry, frustrated!  
Things got really bad at times.  
I would cry, pray, cry...  
when things got <sup>really</sup> abnormal,  
my mother was always there for me.

She kept me going,  
She kept me strong,  
Committed to my vision of who + what I  
wanted to become.  
'Twas but faith

It was not easy, but it was worth it!!

Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital  
800 Bellair Road  
Mayville

18 June 2002

Daisy

An interesting story, well done Daisy- you really worked hard!!! Do not worry about changing names – this is a story of my life – I am proud of it and identify with the experiences as you nicely put them.

I was very touched by the story. I am humbled and I hope people who read will learn a thing or two from it. I nearly cried after finishing reading it, so many things come to mind, so many memories. A lot of those memories were very painful, I still struggle to forget them, but my memories of teaching in Bongudunga Secondary School will always be very close to my heart. I became a teacher I always dreamt of. Not just a teacher, a councillor, a friend in deed, a social worker. Mr. Myeza was so supportive, I have not seen or heard from him, yet I honor him wherever he is - He made me believe in dreams.

When I joined prison, little did I know of the challenges that were ahead of me. Prison has a very strange combination of jealousy, success, joy, pain – you name it, its there. Working in prison taught me so much about myself. I thoroughly enjoyed my stay there. I treasure the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Love, Hlo



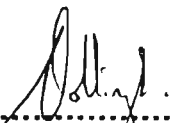
PS. I made the changes as per request. I hope it helps. The name of the school is Bongudunga Secondary School – I am sure you can use it. Zodwa Msimang, Hlengiwe, Dominic are other names you spelt wrongly

Daisy I am Hlo Kunene, used to be Hlo Gabela. I see you have decided to say Hloe Gunene – interesting!!! Anyway – Keep well.

THIS IS TO CONFIRM THAT I HAVE READ MY LIFE-STORY  
RECORDED AND WRITTEN BY DAISY PILLAY.

I HEARBY DECLARE THAT ALL THE FACTS WRITTEN ARE  
TRUE AND I AM GIVING MY NEWFOUND FRIEND DAISY, THE  
RIGHT TO PUBLISH MY STORY.

ALL THE BEST DAISY AND THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE  
PRIVILLAGE TO RECOLLECT FOND MEMORIES.

SIGNED :  .....

DATE : 29 June 2002 .....



I TREVOR ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTENTS  
OF THE STORY AS BEING HONEST  
RECREATION OF CRITICAL MOMENTS AND MEMORIES  
AT DIFFERENT TIMES OF MY LIFE.

OLD PHOTOS HELPED ME TO REMEMBER SOME OF THE  
THINGS THAT HAPPENED IN MY LIFE.

LOOKING AT PHOTOGRAPHS AND REFLECTS ON WHAT  
HAPPENED TO HIM.

I ACKNOWLEDGE THE USE OF MY NAME TREVOR IN  
MY STORY.

*P. Munn*

15-06-2002.

- ① My soprano saxophone and me. We are inextricably <sup>linked</sup> ~~joined~~ <sup>similar</sup> ~~seen~~ to a tied note in music. I ponder to think what it would happen if I was unable to play any more.
- ② My family, the bond and strength of ~~family~~ <sup>life</sup> a safe, secure and happy family life cannot be underestimated, for it can propel it to a cloud to greater height or reduce him to a depth of despair.
- ③ My proud parents on the day of graduation. To them it was the culmination of years of struggle with a rebellious, hard headed individual who had finally found his 'niche'.
- ④ The lone quarry - the urgency of the comrades on Petite Island has been pulled to <sup>re-examine</sup> ~~re-examine~~ <sup>re-examine</sup> ~~re-examine~~ me. This little space was the "legitimate House of Parliament", where decisions taken would ~~be~~ have a far reaching impact on the future of a democratic South Africa.

### The Jazzman

and sophisticated

Jazz is an electric brand of music. Some say it belongs exclusively to the black people, for it originated out of the days of ~~flamboyant~~ America Dancery. The improvisational skills that one has to possess mean that the artist has to be creative, innovative, motivated, spiritual and knowledgeable. For only he if he possesses all of these traits can he truly connect with his audience.

I once encountered a ~~the~~ past student came from Lawrence Ruston School in New York who is beginning to enjoy the spiritual freedom ~~but~~ and system of the associated with <sup>to indicate</sup> studying a manual instrument. He was brave and graceful in his confidence toward me as his mentor and instructor. However I often sit and wonder if ~~of the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~founder~~ <sup>and developer</sup> the set has remained as is or has progressed into a ~~high one building~~ ~~and that is~~ <sup>substantial</sup> ~~substantial~~.

Being a "successful teacher" and remaining a level I educator can be so disconcerting when one looks at the calibre of people who are going on in management. However as a sincere and honest individual we must rise above these mere mortals who seek to undermine the very essence of what you are. I am immortal for my spirit will still live on long after I have departed from this earth ~~and~~ my vision and focus is steadfast and undeterred, for my reward is heaven for surpassing that which I have intended on this earth.

I acknowledge that the contents of this publication  
is an honest and true reflection ~~of my career~~  
of critical moments in my life and specifically  
in the role of educator and as an educator.

growth

impact — future education

L. R. R. Jr.

12/06/2002

① ∴ educate is no easy task.

② commitment!

I have read and acknowledge that the story presented is an accurate account of the events that took place. After reading the mutual story we have further discussed and made inclusions.

The photographs brought back the memories and made it feel like these things only happened yesterday. They give quite substance to the story & add another dimension to the story giving credibility to what I have said.

The story has helped me grow in the reflection gave me a chance to realize that life will always have its ups & downs & challenges but if we face them we come out as victors and a better person.



Add 1

Justin Wright was a Deaf & Blind

child. of taught him Typing, Accounting and Business Studies Std 6 - 9. Justin

is now has his BComm Degree and

lives in London. He was special to me because I didn't think I could teach him but writing words on his hand help we communicate with him. I gave him a lift to school daily - so we became very close \* Pto

Add 2

I introduced computer at Yulter School to go beyond the Typing Curriculum

in 1986

Add 3

The sad thing is when a person is a good teacher they are promoted and put into administrative roles with less teaching.

\* He went to the Bung with me and he came to my wedding. He sends e-mails every day. He said 'If it wasn't for me he would not have been able to further his studies. He was & still is very special to me as he is definitely one of my success stories - against all odds.'

#### Add 4

I told my learners I had difficulties in accounting & stats and that if one perseveres anything is possible. My own difficulties in the subject helped me understand ~~when~~ how the learners were thinking and helped me remediate better.