

**Changing words and worlds?
A phenomenological study of the
acquisition of an academic literacy**

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Abstract

This study is contextualised within the field of post-graduate, continuing teacher education, and the vibrant and demanding policy context that has characterised higher education in post-apartheid South Africa. Situated within a module specifically designed to address what is commonly understood to be the academic literacy development needs of students in the Bachelor of Education Honours programme at the former University of Natal, it aims to unveil the lived experiences of students taking this module. The module, *Reading and Writing Academic Texts (RWAT)*, was developed in direct response to academics' call that something be done about the 'problem' of students' reading and writing proficiency. As a core, compulsory module, RWAT was informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics and drew on Genre Theory for its conceptual and theoretical framework. It foregrounded the genre of the academic argument as the key academic literacy that was taught.

The motivation for this study came from my own increasing concern that the theoretical and conceptual framework we had adopted for the module was emerging as an inherently limiting and formulaic model of literacy, and was resulting in students exiting the module with little or no 'critical' perspective on any aspect of literacy as social practice. I was also keen, in a climate of increasing de-personalisation and the massification of education, to reinstate the personal. Thus, I chose to focus on *individual lives*, and through an exploration of a small group of participants' 'lived' experiences of the RWAT module, ascertain what it is like to acquire an academic literacy. The key research question is, therefore: What is it like to acquire an academic literacy? The secondary research question is: How is this experience influenced by the mode of delivery in which it occurs?

For its conceptual and theoretical framing, this study draws on social literacy theory and phenomenology, the latter as both a philosophy and a methodology. However, although the study has drawn significantly on the phenomenological tradition for inspiration and direction, it has not done so uncritically. Thus, the study engages with phenomenology-as-philosophy in great depth before turning to phenomenology-as-methodology, in order to arrive at a point where the methods and procedures applied in it, are justified.

The main findings of the study suggest that, despite the RWAT module espousing an ideological model (Street, 1984) of literacy in its learning materials and readings, participants came very much closer to experiencing an autonomous model of literacy (Street, 1984). The data shows that the RWAT module was largely inadequate to the task of inducting participants into the 'situated practices' and 'situated meanings' of the Discourse of Genre

Theory and/or the academy, hence the many 'lived' difficulties participants experienced. The data also highlights the ease with which an autonomous model of literacy can come to govern practice and student experience even when curriculum intention is underpinned by an ideological position on literacy as social practice. Finally, the study suggests that the research community in South Africa, characterised as it is by such diversity, would be enriched by more studies derived from phenomenology, and a continuing engagement with phenomenology-as-a-movement in order to both challenge and expand its existing framework.

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Chapter 1

Context and circumstance

1.1 Introduction

This study is located specifically within the field of teacher education and thus, social and historical comment throughout the thesis relates largely to this field. Nevertheless, such is the complexity of our collective South African past, and the integrated role that education and language play in all disciplinary, service and professional fields, and the everyday lives of all South Africans, that much of what is said here could have equal relevance for other fields. Thus while it is quite clear that the first democratically elected government in South Africa responded rapidly and radically to the imperative to institute a process of transformation and change into multiple social, political, economic and educational policy arenas, the discussion in this chapter foregrounds, in the first instance, that of education in general, and then teacher education more specifically.

The global aim of this chapter is to paint a picture for the reader of the highly complex and textured socio-political and educational context in which the phenomenon that forms the focus of this study must be seen, that is, *Reading and Writing Academic Texts (RWAT)* as a 'lived' module, contextualised within the Bachelor of Education Honours programme. While the phenomenon itself might at first glance be constructed as a single entity, for how else, one might ask, should a (in the singular) 'lived module' be construed, this would be a deceptive internalisation of what is in reality a complex, multilayered and historically embedded unit, a unit incarnated largely through the diverse matrix of forces constituting the habitus (after Bourdieu, 1977, 1992) of those individuals whose experience of the module provides the rationale for the study. So while the end point of the notion of 'context' as it relates to students' experience of the *Reading and Writing Academic Texts (RWAT)* module as a 'lived module' appears to derive its meaning from individual perception and response, and as such might be interpreted as being a-historical, this is not the position on lived experience taken in this study, as the following chapters will confirm.

This chapter makes no attempt to offer a comprehensive history of policy changes in South Africa. Rather, it engages with selected socio-political events, policies and processes which, either directly or through historical influence, are considered to have infiltrated the lives of the participants in this study sufficiently to give life to the phenomenon that forms the focal point of it. The chapter takes as its most appropriate 'period of departure', that which marked the end of apartheid rule and the birth of democracy, for reasons which should become apparent as the chapter unfolds.

1.2 1990: The turning point

Although the African National Congress only formally came to power in 1994, the release of Nelson Mandela from Pollsmoor Prison on 11 February 1990 effectively ended apartheid rule. Kraak (2001) characterises the period from just before Mandela's release to 1994, as one in which the ANC was 'preparing to govern'. This "pre- 'taking of power' phase" began when "the possibility of a negotiated settlement had dawned" on the anti-Apartheid movement, and "witnessed the entire anti-Apartheid movement mobilise [ing] its resources behind the task of forging new policy propositions across the entire gamut of human existence" (*ibid*, p.2).

In the context of 'policy propositions' related to education, "competing social movements and political actors vehemently began to stake their curriculum positions in anticipation of what now seemed inevitable – the emergence of South Africa's first democratic state following national, non-racial elections" (Jansen, 1999, p.4). A range of organisations and lobbies (from both the public and private sector), and the apartheid state itself, thus began to engage in a flurry of education policy development activity. Kraak (1999) notes the emergence during this period of a new 'systemic' discourse (particularly in African National Congress and Congress of South African Trade Unions led circles) in preference to the 'radical' People's Education discourse that had dominated the late 80s, and while acknowledging that "continuities do exist between these two discourses" , he sees their differences as 'stark'. People's Education, he says,

was infused with a revolutionary and populist rhetoric, whereas the new 'systemic' reform logic of the ANC and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has been concerned with the implications of a rapidly globalising economy on the functioning of the ET¹ system, particularly in terms of new skill and knowledge requirements (1999, p.24).

Kraak (1999) identifies five initiatives that contributed significantly to the emergence of this 'reformist', systemic discourse' at this time. Perhaps the most significant was the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), which was set up by the anti-apartheid National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC) in early 1991, and which completed its work in late 1992. Out of the NEPI project, a thirteen volume publication was made public, and out of these thirteen volumes, a *Framework Report* synthesised the main findings. According to Kraak, this report adopted 'an explicit systemic approach' by arguing that most current policy options were characterised by four distinctive features viz. articulation, differentiation, finance, and organisation and governance. The primary goal of the NEPI project was to sketch policy options and the possible social implications for choices made. What the project

¹ ET: Education and Training

identified were policy options that ran along a continuum, from those, on the one hand which “emphasised longer term conditions such as economic growth and, on the other, models which privileged the immediate amelioration of conditions of inequality” (Kraak, 1999, p.30). The point was continually stressed that it was impossible to avoid the political tensions implicit in any choice made, since there would always have to be some kind of compromise between equity and development. Though the NEPI project as a whole did not seem to have been promoted or strongly endorsed by its ANC/ NECC commissioners, it did provide a founding framework for how to conceptualise education in a post-apartheid South Africa.

The second initiative that Kraak considers to have contributed to the systemic discourse that has governed Education and Training (ET) policy making since the early 90s, was the *National Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI)*, published in April 1994. For the first time, representatives drawn from the “black progressive trade unions” (Kraak, 1999, p.30) and other ET providers came together and worked with a wide range of stakeholders to create an integrated ET system. The particular significance of the NTSI contribution to changing ET policy lay in its proposal that ‘education’ and ‘training’ no longer be considered as separate entities, but subsumed under the conceptual umbrella of ‘lifelong learning’. Importantly, the NTSI proposal for an integrated approach to deal with education and training as a whole was to have far reaching effects on future ET policy development.

Evidence of systemic discourse in the NTSI was its reference to the four features identified by the NEPI Project. Thus, ‘articulation’ found expression in the proposal for a National Qualifications Framework; ‘differentiation’ through the proposal for a governance structure that established partnerships and links with a range of stakeholders in business, the state, labour etc.; ‘finance’ through the proposal that a set of financial incentives be established “to drive investment in ET” (*ibid*, p.32); and ‘organisation and governance’ through a *National Economic Development Plan* “to link ET to socio-economic planning and development” (*ibid*).

The African National Congress (ANC) and Coalition of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) alliance has also, in Kraak’s view, “played a pioneering role in the evolution of systemic discourse” (*ibid*), particularly during the period February 1990 to April 1994, when early systemic reform proposals were developed by the alliance. During this period, particularly as a result of the unbanning of the ANC and the National Union of Metalworkers’ of South Africa’s (NUMSA) attempt to develop “union policy on industrial training as a counter to Nationalist Party reforms during this time” (*ibid*), there was a consolidated effort on the part of the ANC and COSATU to begin to formulate policy around education and training. In line with NTSI proposals, the ANC/COSATU alliance put forward the idea of “a

nationally integrated curriculum with a single qualification structure" (*ibid*), as a means to rid the education and training arena of the divisions and inequities of the past. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), as Kraak notes, "is the centre-piece of this integrated model" (*ibid*, p.33).

The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) and *The Green Paper on Further Education and Training (FET)* are the final two initiatives which Kraak considers to have made an impact on the nature of the discourse of education and training since the early 90s. The NCHE was established as a Presidential Commission of Inquiry in February 1995 and met with the Minister of Education in August 1996. Kraak describes this NCHE report (1996) as perhaps "the most persistent in its promotion of a systemic framework" (1999, p.35). Identifying the global shift from elite higher education systems with "rigid and impermeable boundaries" (*ibid*, p.36) to mass systems with "softer, penetrable boundaries" (*ibid*), the NCHE report stressed the need for greater 'systemic coherence' across systems through the establishment of a single regulatory framework. In much the same vein, but addressing itself particularly to the FET sector, *The Green Paper on Further Education and Training* (April 1998), also advocated a 'systemic resolution' to the problems besetting the FET sector.

On assumption of power in 1994, therefore, and on the basis of the intensive policy activity described above, the political and ideological drive of the ANC was to establish an equitable and just education system as rapidly as possible. The pressing imperatives to establish new formulations for delivery, control and regulation saw the new government propose and implement educational change at a pace and on a scale unprecedented in South Africa's history. The extensive range of reports, white papers and acts which emerged so soon after 1994, (for example, the Report of the Committee to Review the Organisation, Governance and Funding of Schools (1995c); *The White Paper on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa: First Steps to Develop a New System* (1995d); the Labour Relations Act of 1995; 1995 Norms and Standards for Teacher Education (Revised, 1998); National Education Policy Act of 1996; South African Schools Act of 1996; Curriculum 2005 (1997); the Higher Education Act of 1997; the Language in Education Policy (1997) the South African Qualifications Authority Act of 1996 (which made provision for the National Qualifications Framework), and the Employment of Educators Act of 1998) reflect the commitment to change promised by the new government, and its determination to "construct an inspirational and viable vision of post-apartheid South Africa's education and training system" (Parker, 2003, p.18).

Besides the association of this new education and training 'systemic' discourse with globalisation, however, Kraak identifies another factor that impacted on it viz. massification,

and most certainly in the context of this study, this factor has important relevance. As will become evident slightly further on, one of the key motivations to reconfigure the Honours programme discussed in this thesis was to open access to post graduate studies to those teachers who, by virtue of apartheid educational laws and regulations, had never previously had the opportunity to engage with this level of tertiary education. Implicit in this move, however, was a move to massification of the programme, as statistics provided later show, thus endorsing Kraak's view given above.

The 'systemic' discourse of which Kraak speaks, therefore, is constituted by two quite different pressures, globalisation and the demand (in South Africa and across the world) to redress the social and educational inequalities of previous dispensations. The rise in distance/ open learning systems over the past 15 years can be seen as a direct response to both these pressures. Issues related to these systems and the centrality of this model of teacher education to this study will be picked up again towards the end of this chapter.

Parker (2003) identifies three quite specific periods of education transformation in the decade 1990 to 2000 in South Africa, which he considers were "discernible at a macro or holistic level" and which went on to "frame events in teacher education". Their relevance to this study relates to the timing and nature of the overlap between what was happening at a macro policy level, and the changes that were instituted, at School/ Faculty level, to the Honours curriculum which concerns this study, and as the discussion is pursued, these links will become clear.

The first period Parker identifies ran from 1990 to 1994 i.e. Kraak's 'pre-taking of power phase'. Parker describes this period as one of "structural stasis and cultural malaise" (2003, p.17) i.e. it was characterised by a "creeping deterioration" and though the "legitimacy, authority, efficiency and effectiveness of the apartheid system were in tatters ... no new bearers of the necessary roles and responsibilities required by an education system had emerged" (*ibid*, p.18). However, while it is clear from the above discussion that this might well have been the case in terms of the formal structures and operational functions of the then multiple education departments, there were other forms of transformational activity happening in different but related education arenas at the same time.

The second period Parker brackets is from 1994 to 1996, a period characterised by intense policy activity. If one glances back at the examples given on the previous page, it is evident that this was indeed the case. At this point, the legislative authority guaranteed by the Interim Constitution (1993) allowed various and numerous stakeholder and ministerial bodies to begin their work in earnest. But Parker draws attention to the fact that despite the far

reaching changes embodied in the policies of this period, “there was, at the level of schools and classrooms, little improvement in the quality of education available to the majority of the population” (2003, p.18). This should have come as no surprise to anyone as policy changes at macro level seldom filter down directly to classroom level and effect immediate policy-determined change. In this regard, Christie (1999) cites the ‘sobering conclusion’ reached by studies done by Cuban (1993) into school change in the US viz. “that there has been little fundamental change in pedagogy in the past hundred years, in spite of a wide range of policy interventions” (Christie, 1999, p.286). Cuban distinguishes between ‘first order’ and ‘second order’ school change, where the former tries “to make what already exists more efficient and more effective, without disturbing the basic organisational features, without substantially altering the ways in which adults and children perform their roles” (Cuban, 1990, p.73 in Christie, 1999, p.286). The latter, however, i.e. second order changes, “seek to alter the fundamental ways in which organisations are put together ... [and] introduce new goals, structures and roles that transform familiar ways of doing things into new ways of solving persistent problems” (*ibid*).

This disjunction between policy and practice has been very well documented in South African research (for example Jansen, 1999; Motala and Pampallis, 2001; Mda, 2004; Harley and Wedekind, 2004). For this reason, rather than digress into a more substantial discussion of this phenomenon here, and interrupt the flow of phases being described, evidence of it will be seen to consistently emerge throughout this thesis.

The third phase that Parker identifies, therefore, is that from 1997 to 1999, but here he preferences the transformation of the education system as part of a greater policy thrust, predominantly against the backdrop of, and driven by, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (henceforth GEAR) strategy which was implemented in 1996. However, to put this period in greater perspective it is necessary to consider in more detail, the macroeconomic landscape that gave rise to GEAR as an economic strategy, in relation to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (henceforth RDP) out of which it grew.

In the preface to the RDP document released by the African National Congress (ANC) in 1994, Nelson Mandela says that “the RDP was built on the tradition of the Freedom Charter. In 1955, we actively involved people and their organisations in articulating their needs and aspirations. Once again we have consulted widely ... For those who have participated ... it has been invigorating and reaffirmed the belief that the people of our country are indeed its greatest asset ... Democracy will have little content, and indeed, will be short-lived if we cannot address our socio-economic problems within an expanding and growing economy” (ANC, 1994b).

According to Nicolaou (2001, p.60), the RDP “was based on several underlying principles. These comprised an integrated programme that was people-driven, that argued for peace and security for all, that advocated nation-building associated with reconstruction and development, and that argued for democratising South Africa”. Thus, the vision of the RDP, as a macroeconomic policy, was to address issues of redress and equity within the context of a democratic dispensation.

What one needs to understand, however, are the implications of what it means to adopt a macroeconomic programme of this nature in an existing social and economic context such as that which characterises South Africa viz. one where there is poverty, unequal social services, high unemployment, a critical skills shortage, low literacy levels, and so on. In order for such an economic programme to be effective in this kind of context, there has to be a very high degree of state intervention in the economy. In other words, the state has to be able and willing to implement expansionist monetary and fiscal policies *first*, and for a substantial period of time, before a turn around in levels of poverty, education, unemployment etc. can be expected.

In the South African context, and this would be the case in most developing countries, the state, despite espousing such a development-driven agenda, was clearly reluctant, or perhaps simply unable (in the late 90s), to implement a sufficiently expansionist monetary policy to match the objectives of this proposed fiscal policy. In response to this tension, and in order to disguise the degree to which it had reneged on the ideals of the RDP, Nicolaou (*ibid*, pp.62/63), notes that by the time the White Paper (RSA, 1994) was gazetted “the emphasis of the RDP had changed ... Fiscal discipline was the new beast in the White Paper”. And although the White Paper respected the original principles of the earlier RDP document, “the importance of redressing the past and the fundamental role of the people seemed to have disappeared” (*ibid*). In its place, priority began to be given to reducing government debt (in 1994, 17% of the government budget was spent on servicing its debt) by reducing state expenditure, and increased privatisation of services (including education). In other words, there was a shift towards an overt neo-liberal (conservative) economic position, reflective of a wider engagement with globalisation, and to accommodate this shift more formally, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR) was introduced in 1996.

As with the White Paper (ANC, 1994), the GEAR strategy still claimed an allegiance to the goals of the RDP, saying that it “is a strategy for rebuilding and restructuring the economy [and] is ... in keeping with the goals set out in the Reconstruction and Development Programme. In the context of this integrated economic strategy, we can successfully

confront the related challenges of meeting basic needs, developing human resources ... and implementing the RDP in all its facets" (NDoF, 1996, p.1).

While this may be the position that government still asserts, Fiske and Ladd (2004, p.79) see the shift to GEAR as largely being motivated by "the desire to convince international investors that the new South Africa could manage its fiscal affairs in a responsible manner consistent with the 'Washington consensus' view that fiscal restraint and economic efficiency were to be pursued by developing countries at all costs". Unfortunately, the reality of living with GEAR has countered its original thrust. In 2007, the year in which this thesis was written, foreign investment has not materialised on the scale anticipated thus restraining the development of the type of economy necessary to sustain the principles underpinning GEAR, viz. reduced state intervention and an increased reliance on a market economy. Far from expanding the economy and redressing social inequity, unemployment is higher than ever at close to 40% in real terms, poverty is on the increase, crime has reached critically damaging levels, the gap between schooling 'elites'/ 'haves' and 'have nots' is growing, the ravages of the HIV/AIDS pandemic remain uncontained, and interest rates are once again on the increase.

But what does all this mean for Higher Education specifically? The significance of this third phase of policy growth, and reflective of the state claiming tighter fiscal control of the economy as described above, is that it was during this period (1997-1999) that the major restructuring of the higher education landscape began.

Although this reconfiguration was not carried out solely for economic reasons, it does bear testimony to the shift in emphasis heralded by the GEAR strategy, as opposed to that of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). To recap, whereas the latter foregrounded equity, redress and the provision of basic needs to counter the legacy of poverty and inequality engineered by apartheid governance, the GEAR strategy was based explicitly on a buy-in to capitalist and global market forces. Allowing the goals of the RDP to be overshadowed by GEAR, thus signalled an important moment in post 1994 ideological realisations, and it is against this backdrop that transformation of the higher education system began, and in particular, for the purposes of this study, the sphere of teacher education.

In summing up these early years of post-apartheid policy intervention and responsiveness, Sayed (2004, p.254) observes that what they reveal is a new state coping with multiple and contradictory demands. First, it was expected to deliver a more just and humane society in a climate of rising expectations and hopeful promise. Second, it was simultaneously expected

to provide the conditions for economic growth and development. ... Third, it was expected to be responsive to the will of the people and to guarantee increased participation while extending democracy in society. In particular, the state was expected to establish a sound and vibrant relationship with organisations in and of civil society.

An awesome task indeed, and one assured of the challenges, conflicts and compromises that have confronted all sectors of South African society for more than a decade and which will no doubt continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

1.3 Higher and Teacher Education in South Africa post 1994

The dominant features of the higher education system immediately after the first democratic elections were clearly its fragmentation, its inefficiency and, by implication, its cost. The fragmentation (along race, language, roles and pedagogical lines), as Sayed (2004, p.247) notes, “determined whether individuals were trained, how they were trained, and where they were posted”, thus teacher supply and demand was dictated by the need to retain racial segregation, not meet the country’s real educational needs, and escalated unnecessary expenditure and racialised inequality. The consequences of these past practices are “that white students were served better than their black counterparts in a myriad ways. By the time the democratic elections were held in 1994, therefore, generations of black students had been denied or had experienced restricted access to quality higher education” (Boughey, 2004, p.2).

When considering the events immediately after 1994 in relation to teacher education, Parker (2003) draws attention to the role of ‘political pawn’ that this domain has played in earlier South African history, and it is useful to look at this in the light of what changed in 1994, and hence where responsibility for teacher education is now located. A very brief history of early South Africa is, therefore, first necessary, to clarify points made in this regard. Complete acknowledgement is made of the superficiality of this history. Only a highly selected number of dates and historical events are identified, but since its purpose is simply to contextualise reference to ‘Union’ later, it is deemed sufficient.

After serving as an important supply station from the late 1400s until the arrival of the Dutch East India Company in 1652, the south western part of South Africa (the Cape Colony) was annexed by the British in 1806. Increasing numbers of British immigrants settled in the Cape over the next thirty years or so, motivating the ‘*boers*’ (Dutch speaking, farming immigrants from which present-day Afrikaners derive) to escape British domination by travelling inland and establishing the provinces of Natal, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State (OFS). Britain recognised the independence of the latter two provinces, but annexed Natal as a

British colony in 1843. Since Natal had a very viable port option, it was a strategic asset to acquire, and resulted in Natal becoming, like the Cape Colony, a largely British, and hence English speaking colony. The dominance of English first language speakers today in the Western Cape and what is now KwaZulu-Natal, and the enduring influence of British (English) culture in these two provinces (particularly), can be directly attributed to this period of British rule.

After Britain attempted to summarily annex a section of the OFS in which diamonds were found in 1867, and later, in 1877, in the Transvaal too, the first Boer War broke out (1880-1881), in which Britain was defeated. After the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand (1886), the subsequent influx of immigrants (which the Dutch called *Uitlanders*), and Paul Kruger's (president of the Transvaal) refusal to grant these immigrants the franchise, the *second* Boer War (1899-1902) broke out. This time Britain was triumphant. With this British victory, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State became British colonies, and together with the Cape Colony and Natal, formed the *Union of South Africa* in 1910.

In terms of the relevance of this short history to the thrust of Parker's argument, it is important to note that Natal only agreed to join the Union once the new national government conceded responsibility for primary teacher education to the provinces. Parker notes that (unsurprisingly) "the English speaking Natalians regarded the schooling system as a key element in the preservation of their culture as distinct from those of the other three" (*ibid*, p.19). Secondary school teacher training, on the other hand, was considered a 'national competence' at Union, and thus carried out by technikons and universities only.

Similarly, in the 1994 Interim Constitution, responsibility for teacher education was again contested ground, with some parties preferring to devolve responsibility for it to provincial level, and others wanting to retain it as a national competence. According to Parker, "agreement was only secured 'at the last minute' by an important compromise: colleges became a national competence in exchange for permitting private-sector provision of higher education provision" (2003, p.20). The consequence of this important concession in the policy negotiations of the early 90s, was a rapid mushrooming of the number of higher education institutions (of often questionable pedigree), offering a range of programmes and qualifications, ultimately forcing further legislation into being to control and order this sector of education provision e.g. the Higher Education Act of 1997, and the Registrar for Private Higher Education (1997). Making colleges a national competence in 1994 was a direct response to the uneven histories of the more than 100 colleges previously governed at a provincial level (according to the concession made at Union). Parker (*ibid*, p.21) contends

that in 1994, “teacher education involved about 150 public institutions with about 200,000 students, 80,000 of whom were in 104 colleges of education”.

In summary then, a plethora of institutions, programmes and qualifications, with no mechanisms to establish or ensure ideological and/or curricula alignment, served as the professional training platform for South Africa’s teachers by 1994. Between 1994 and 2000, the provinces were forced to move quickly to rationalise the number of teacher training colleges in each region, reducing the original 150 to a mere 25 full time, contact, residential colleges. 100,000 students and 1000 staff were attached to these colleges. It is worth recording that the full impact of this rationalisation is still being felt, and has been highly detrimental to the teacher training needs of the country. That is, present Faculties of Education are now too few in number and lacking expertise in critical areas e.g. Foundation Phase and mother tongue teacher education, to train and/or upgrade the number of teachers the country needs. This issue will not, however, be pursued in this study.

Of special relevance to this study, was the finding of the first National Teacher Education Audit begun in 1994, that of the 129,614 teachers in the system, one third was engaged in distance teacher education – mostly in-service (Adler and Reed, 2002). By 2000, in terms of state controlled distance teacher education provision, The South African College of Open Learning (SACOL), the South African College of Teacher Education (SACTE), Vista University and the University of South Africa (UNISA) combined, registered a total of 20,000 students in teacher education programmes. In addition, 40,000 students were registered in public-private teacher education partnerships, or private-only institutions, but with no stringent controls in place to prevent poor quality programmes and qualifications from being offered, the proliferation of fly-by-night and unscrupulous providers, and exorbitant fees being charged, the quality of distance teacher education during this period was often compromised. This aspect of distance education is addressed in more detail towards the end of this chapter. This mention serves only to remind the reader of its place in this study.

1.4 Teachers in the context of policy changes

While not disputing the critical need to reconfigure the educational landscape post 1994, the pace and complexity of the changes introduced continue, in many instances, to undermine teacher confidence, competence and commitment. The contemporary education landscape is still characterised by disruptions, policy overload, over-regulation and fragmented loci of authority (see Jansen and Christie, 1999; Parker, 2003; Chisholm, 2004). It is my view, however, that from a curriculum and *classroom practice* perspective (and thus within the context that dominates a teacher’s day to day life), it has been the introduction of Outcomes-

based Education (OBE), Curriculum 2005 (C2005), and the Language in Education Policy (all in 1997), that have impacted most on teachers over the past decade, as they have struggled to come to terms with the new liberal/ progressive ideology of these policies, the reality of their implementation, and the cultural, social and linguistic tensions they have evoked. This is not to say that other policies relating to school leadership, management and governance, funding, post provisioning norms, professional codes of conduct etc. have not also impacted, often violently, on the everyday lives of teachers, learners and principals, but the overarching, classroom-based-felt 'assault' has been via new curriculum and language policy.

In 1999, Jansen expressed the opinion that "OBE has triggered the single most important curriculum controversy in the history of South African education" and he marks the mid-1990s as "a critical turning point in the curriculum debates inside South Africa" (1999, p.4). He identifies the 1995 White Paper on Education and Training, as the most seminal of the series of White Papers produced by the Ministry of Education at that time, since it "reflected the key ideas of integration and competency as elements of a system-wide education restructuring ambition" (*ibid*, p.7). Significantly, however, this paper held no references to OBE, yet unexpectedly and 'without warning' towards the end of 1996, "a key document emerged spelling out the proposal for outcomes-based education" (*ibid*). It was not only the suddenness of the introduction of OBE discourse into policy documents that Jansen foregrounds, but the fact that teachers – as the primary recipients of the impact of any new curriculum discourse – played no role in the conceptualisation of OBE, or how it should be adopted or integrated into any existing or new curriculum plan. Though selected teachers did have later input on special committees looking at actual programme design, no teachers were at the birth of the OBE in education and training discussions.

Of course, the primary reason for the non-reference to, and non-inclusion of teachers in these early educational debates, is that the initial push for an OBE system emanated from the training sector, not the schooling sector. The way in which OBE began to be spoken of in terms of schooling, thus emerged as different from the way in which OBE was spoken of in terms of workplace application ('equivalencies and outcome assessments at different NQF levels'), and different again from how it was spoken of in relation to higher education - here, in terms of unit standards (see Ensor, 2003). In short, GET teachers and the GET schooling sector (initially) were abruptly faced with an intimidating and entirely unfamiliar discourse which had to be immediately implemented in pre-determined grades and classes. Even those teachers who were not subject to the first phase of OBE and C2005 implementation, could not stand separate from it as the schools in which they taught had no alternative but to

re-educate themselves as an entirety, to the full import of an outcomes-based, new curriculum.

A range of studies on the impact of new curriculum policy post 1994 on teacher identities and performance (for example, Harley and Parker, 1999; Mattson and Harley, 2003; Harley and Wedekind, 2004), show how great the disjunction is between the identities, knowledges, attitudes and values teachers are expected to exemplify in the context of new education policy, and those which apartheid education legislation constructed. Conditioned by a long history of conservative, authoritarian and oppressive rule, many teachers were not (and still are not) well placed to embrace or internalise the tenets of the liberal and 'critical' paradigm implicit in current educational thinking and policy. Thus, though writing about South African education in 2002, Prinsloo and Janks' observation that "the history of disadvantage is not yet history" (2002, p.20), still holds true.

Harley and Wedekind (2004, p.196) argue very persuasively that C2005, despite its laudable goals, "contributes to social reproduction in unintended ways". Thus, far from severing the legacies of apartheid education, new curriculum policy has, in extensive ways, entrenched practices and difference along lines similar to those of the apartheid era i.e. race, language, and class.

Drawing on their own research into five very different schools in 'unequal contexts', research undertaken by their masters students, and a text analysis of 20 higher degree dissertations, Harley and Wedekind endorse Christie's view that "the sophistication of [new] policies brings the unintended effect that they are likely to be of most benefit to those communities and schools that have the resources to take advantage of the opportunities they offer" (1999, p.282). The view that new policies widen rather than narrow the gap between historically advantaged and disadvantaged schools, is supported by numerous other studies, for example, Harber, 2001; Singh and Manser, 2000; Vally and Spreen, 1998. The point of Harley and Wedekind's study, however, is that despite the difficulties of implementing C2005, the turgid language related to the curriculum in the documents supplied to schools and teachers, the inadequate OBE training teachers received, and the subsequent destabilising effect on their identities and practices, "research has consistently pointed to the favourable reception of 2005" (2004, p.207) by the majority of South African teachers and particularly those in previously disadvantaged contexts (see Kgobe & Mbele, 2001 and Vally, 1999).

In attempting to unravel this curiosity, Harley and Wedekind come to the conclusion that it is the *political project* implicit in the new curriculum which solicits support and allegiance from

the majority of teachers, rather than any pedagogical aspect of it. Harley and Wedekind employ the concept of 'meliorism' to try and explain what can be construed as the 'misguided support' for C2005 and OBE by teachers, who, by virtue of its implementation, are in a worse position in terms of classroom effectiveness than they were during apartheid. Meliorism is "the belief that the world tends to become better, and that humans can aid its betterment" (2004, p.211), and finds expression in people being infused with an idealism about what should be, rather than what is. Harley and Wedekind thus conclude that, "in its guise of social vision and idealised practice that overlooks the reality of schools, meliorism helps us understand how social commitment to a vision has had deleterious consequences for the C2005 curriculum plan" (*ibid*, p.212) – for all stakeholders – implementation administrators, teachers, policy makers. They offer a final, somewhat ominous comment, which of course, is open to wide debate:

Ironically and unintentionally, the intensity and single-mindedness of the very pursuit of the social vision has undermined itself. ... The prospects of turning this situation around are muted by C2005 having become an article of faith by virtue of its political values. It has become synonymous with transformation (*ibid*, p.213).

To consolidate thus far. Essentially, three points have emerged with regard to the impact of OBE and C2005, on teachers and the higher education teacher training sector. They are 1) that the often conflicting and disconcerting, but always demanding nature of the new curriculum framework for the majority of South African teachers has become the unavoidable and inescapable warp and weft of teachers' lives; 2) that this framework has constituted a primary motivation for the pursuit of further, higher educational studies; and 3) that this pursuit has, in turn, led directly to the massification of numerous education programmes, such as the one that forms the context of this study. In addition, the concept of meliorism as applied by Harley and Wedekind to responses to the new curriculum can be usefully applied to the academic literacy curriculum developments discussed in this thesis, and students' responses to it. The points of relevance raised here will continue to manifest themselves in the pages ahead.

1.5 Language, education and change

With regard to changes in South African language-in-education policies, present policies (post 1994) represent a very enabling environment and stand in direct opposition to those experienced by South Africans during apartheid rule. New language policy (and the national Constitution) accords all languages (English, Afrikaans and the nine dominant indigenous languages) equal status and promote bilingualism and bilingual education. Given that

“Language policy in education and curriculum were vehicles for the intellectual dispossession [of the majority of South Africans] that characterised apartheid” (Chisholm, 2004, p.18), there was a critical imperative to reconfigure the language landscape of South Africa to which the newly elected democratic government promptly responded. However, given the intimate relationship between language and identity, the effects of the disabling policies of the apartheid government continue to impact on teachers’ (and learners’) language attitudes and practices today. And though, as indicated earlier, ‘the history of disadvantage is not yet history’, what is fast emerging as South Africa enters its second decade of democratic rule is that, despite the enabling policy context for the development and appropriation of indigenous languages for educational and socio-economic purposes, and all the research that supports mother tongue instruction, the demand for English as a medium of instruction in schools by indigenous language speakers, is growing at a very rapid rate. In Heugh’s (2001) view, as expressed in de Klerk (2002, p.16), “it would be irresponsible to give into parents’ demands for a ‘straight for English’ curriculum, when such demands are ill-informed”, but it is not possible to control this emerging trend as learners’ rights to be educated in the language of their choice are enshrined in the South African Constitution.

In KwaZulu-Natal, for example (the province in which this study is situated), where, out of a population of 9.4 million (21% of the national total), 7.6 million (80.9%) have isiZulu as their mother tongue, while only 13.6% have English as their mother tongue, 2.3% have Xhosa as a mother tongue, and 1.5% have Afrikaans as their mother tongue², English is now the preferred medium of instruction in virtually all schools, even at the Foundation Phase level. This is regardless of the percentage of isiZulu speaking teachers *and* learners, and in most cases, the lack of relevant English language learning resources, or the limited access to English outside school hours. The socio-political and linguistic-educational context of this study can, therefore, be seen to be complex and multilayered.

Thus, when responding to the tensions surrounding the roles played by English and African indigenous languages in learning and teaching, this apparent ‘heart of the pedagogical matter’ is simultaneously locked into a matrix of other tensions (and optimisms) related to teacher identity, educational change, and the socio-political dynamics which characterise South Africa as an emerging democracy. In summary, the majority of South African teachers (who are largely placed in under-resourced rural or township schools) continue to struggle to

² These figures are taken from the National Census conducted in 2001. Although another national census was conducted in 2005, these figures are not available yet. Despite this, the above figures can be regarded as a reliable reflection of language distribution and usage even in 2007 as the proportional representation of languages has remained steady for more than a decade.

make sense of, and meet the demands of an entirely new 'way of being' as professional educators, despite being more than ten years into a new educational dispensation. As indicated earlier, the new national curriculum and its ideological thrust do indeed stand in sharp contrast to apartheid ideology. Its neo-liberal discourse infers an emancipatory and enlightened pedagogy from which all will benefit. However, the reality of praxis (Sobantu Project, 2006; Taylor and Vinjevd,1999) shows that it also embodies a complex and daunting teaching and learning project for which only the minority of mainly white, middle class, previously advantaged, English speaking teachers and schools are truly prepared. From historically strong disciplinary-based pedagogical training and practice, these teachers do not find it difficult to shift their practice to meet new curriculum requirements. Their schools are generally well resourced, and with the dramatic push to English as the medium of instruction, the majority of these teachers do not suffer the same nightmares of inadequacy and identity erosion as their African, English second language speaking colleagues do. But it is the experiences which the majority student population has that concerns this project, hence its specific focus on academic literacy acquisition experiences of African, isiZulu, first language speaking students.

1.6 Curriculum delivery and 'distance'

Another element of 'context' impinging on the phenomenon of the *Reading and Writing Academic Texts (RWAT)* module as 'lived', is that of the mode of delivery to which the Honours programme has subscribed over the past decade, and the changes it has undergone. To facilitate an understanding of these changes, some general comment on 'distance education' and 'open learning' is first necessary. This is followed by a short historical review of the adoption of these concepts (and implementation) in the South African context.

Distinctions are mostly drawn in the literature between 'distance', 'open' and 'mixed mode' learning, although the last is a more recent term than the previous two. Terms such as 'distributed' and 'flexible' learning also occur, but tend to be used interchangeably with 'distance' and 'open' respectively. 'Lifelong learning' and 'resource-based learning' can also be found, with subtle distinctions often governing their differentiation. 'Mixed-mode learning' is now commonly understood to represent a mix of contact and self-study and is the term applied in this study to the model of delivery of the Honours programme in which the RWAT module is lodged. This programme took as its point of departure (in terms of labelling the form of delivery to which it subscribed), the 1996 National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) Report and its reference to emerging international trends in distance education delivery. The Report notes that:

the sharp distinction between contact and distance education institutions is becoming increasingly blurred as both types of institutions move towards a primary focus on designing learning programmes. Different institutions, and different programmes within them, will draw on different technologies appropriate for particular education purposes, student needs and contexts. The emergence of 'dual mode' (a mix of contact and distance students) and 'mixed mode' (individual students mixing distance and contact learning) institutions reflect this blurring, and is an important indication of the move towards open and lifelong learning opportunities (1996, p.120).

It more explicitly acknowledges the necessary distinction between the kind of programme that centralises student support through integrating tutor/ lecturer contact, and those such as pure correspondence courses which offer no additional face-to-face assistance. A precise description of the mixed-mode model adopted by the Honours programme is given further on in this chapter.

Robinson and Latchem (2003, pp.28/9) define distance education "as an educational process in which teachers and learners are separated in space and/or time for some or all of the time of study and in which the learning materials take over some of the traditional role of the teacher ... [and play] a central role." Robinson and Latchem also include the possibility of some face-to-face contact, usually through tutors, in their understanding of 'distance' education.

By contrast, these authors define 'open' learning as "an organised educational activity where learners also study by themselves for some or all of the time." (*ibid*). But what appears to distinguish 'distance' from 'open' learning in Robinson and Latchem's work, relates to a 'set of values' in which "constraints on study are minimized in terms of access, time, pace and method of study" (*ibid*). They observe that it is quite possible to offer a form of 'distance' education that does not subscribe to the values of 'open' learning.

In late 1993, a special international commission was set up under the auspices of the ANC Education Department to evaluate the state of distance education in South Africa at the time. The South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) undertook this work. Out of this commission, a report entitled 'Open Learning and Distance Education in South Africa' (1995) was published. The report states that for the purposes of the commission, "open learning is treated as the generic policy for the national and provincial education systems and distance education is essential to achieving it" (1995, p.xx). Though not explicitly stated, one can infer from this that the distinction between the terms 'open learning' and 'distance education' is

one similar to that adopted by Robinson and Latchem viz. it inherently relates to values, such that 'openness' is about equity and access, not models of delivery or pedagogy.

Hellman quotes Carty's (1999) definition of 'distance education' as:

All education that delivers training and information between two or more places regardless of whether that education is:

- Synchronous – using same-time communications; usually interactive, as in Internet chats or interactive video conferencing.
- Asynchronous – communications that do not require participants to exchange information at the same time, such as email or mail correspondence.
- One-way – information delivered from one point to another or many other points with no response capability, such as television broadcasting.
- Two-way – any communication in which the flow is bi-directional, implying but not limited to synchronous, interactive communication.
- Multi-point – information delivered simultaneously from one place to many other places, as in videoconferencing from one classroom to several other remote classrooms.
- Multi-cast – usually consisting of transmission of a video or audio 'clip' to the computers of many users (Hellman, 2003, p.3).

Carty's definition provides a very detailed and comprehensive analysis of the variety of forms 'distance delivery' can take, and this could prove useful to potential providers of distance education. To be truly effective, however, most of these forms requires some advanced form of technology (internet/ TV/ video conferencing facilities), which can never be assumed to be in place in many developing contexts, including South Africa. In fact, because of the total absence of any IT component in the Honours programme or RWAT module, from their inception to the present moment, and as critical as it is in discussions around distance education provision, the 'digital divide' debate will not be entered into in this thesis. It should be noted, however, that this is a critical area of teacher development that is receiving increasing funding and development at an institutional, provincial, national and international level.

But back to terminology. In the South African context, 'distance education' as a term, at least since 2002, has begun to be used much more cautiously by, particularly, residential/ contact

higher education institutions. This is primarily because of the funding formula now rigorously applied to 'distance' students viz. only 50% of Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) in full time contact programmes. When the Council on Higher Education (CHE) began its investigation into the role of distance education in higher education in 2002, residential/ contact universities which participated in the research, were thus often loathe to describe their 'distance' students as 'distance students'. The report notes that in several instances, institutions were reluctant to "declare a programme as 'distance'", a move which "may have arisen from a desire to avoid lower subsidy rates granted for distance education delivery" (Council on Higher Education, 2004, p.24). However, what is important to note, is that "the vast majority of submissions argued vehemently against any degree of differentiation in funding distance and face-to-face programmes" (*ibid*, p.34), including those submitted by the University of South Africa (UNISA) and Technikon South Africa (TSA), the two largest dedicated distance education providers in the country. The main argument to support this was "that maintaining the input subsidy at 50% will force traditionally distance institutions to limit themselves to correspondence with limited support, and will prevent predominantly face-to-face institutions from innovating and providing flexible delivery" (*ibid*).

What is clearly emerging, therefore, is a more precise understanding of what 'good' distance education actually entails, and the role higher education institutions should and/or could be playing in this field. This is a very encouraging sign as it suggest that the issue of accountability is slowly (albeit often painfully) gaining ground, and that being 'named and shamed' for poor quality programmes is not in anyone's interests.

Perhaps too, what is finally being understood by even those historically associated with 'off campus' students, and those institutions now entering the market, is that 'distance' teaching and learning programmes that authentically aim at redress and equity, require more funding than ever before. There is no longer room for the exclusive 'cash cow' mentality of the 90s. Quality programmes, with significant student support (in a range of areas), must produce quality results and strong throughput rates. For unless institutions, including ones such as UNISA and Technikon SA, can provide hard evidence of 'value added' learning experiences for students, 'distance education' could prove to be a key player in matters of social reproduction, and the majority of South African citizens will be no better off than they were under the apartheid regime.

To conclude this discussion on ways to interpret 'distance education', the CHE report referred to above, also noted that for most institutions, 'distance education' "implied that there was a distance between the learner and the institution/ teacher – a distance that was often physical (spatial), but could also be temporal" (*ibid*). The necessity to be so broad and

'baseline' would seem to stem from the need to claim some form of consensus in a field of education fraught with ideological and pedagogical difference and diversity. In the context of this thesis, the values underlying the notion of 'open learning' as defined above, should be understood to prevail, but the term 'mixed-mode learning' rather than 'distance education' will mostly be applied, simply to reflect, as indicated earlier, the way in which the Honours programme has always been described in marketing and Faculty documentation. Having said that, the term 'distributed learning' probably also suffices well as an umbrella term in the context of discussions on 'distance education'.

1.7 A short review of distance education in South Africa: 1993 - 2006

Part of the brief of the 1993 international commission referred to earlier (under 1.6), in terms of evaluating the state of distance education provision in South Africa, was "to propose ways in which distance education can contribute to the realisation of an open learning approach" (Report of International Commission on Open and Distance Education in South Africa, 1994, p. iv). Out of this commission came the draft *Policy Framework for Education and Training* (1994). Professor G. Ram Reddy, Chairperson of the University Grants Commission of India, on completion of the report and in the Foreword to it, says of the timing of submission of the report that it was "when South Africa is poised for revolutionary changes in its history. The trauma of apartheid and political authoritarianism are about to make room for democratic institutions providing for free and equal participation. This changing South African society makes it essential to promote knowledgeable participation in democracy" (*ibid*, p.vi).

But the task of developing a more effective and equitable distance education system as recommended in this early report, had to begin with the then status quo. In the chapter in the report headed *Review and Assessment*, the picture looked bleak, as the following extract shows:

Distance education as it is now provided is a poor alternative to what is provided in residential institutions. It both gives expression to and is impregnated with the racial ideology and the educational doctrines of apartheid. Access to education and training is unequal, the inequalities are based on ethnic and gender differences. There are vast disparities between historically black and white forms of provision. ... And in the ethos, management and staffing of public distance institutions, the same ethnic and gender patterns are clearly evident. Those at the top are committed to change, but with only a few exceptions the major decisions are being made by a small number of white males who have shared a common experience (*ibid*, p.75).

The recommendations of the commission were thus for a radical revision of all spheres of distance education provision. One particularly significant recommendation, and significant because of the way in which it has played itself out since 1994, was that responsibility for provision of 'distance' education should not be limited to historically distance-only institutions e.g. UNISA, Vista University and Technikon SA. In other words, if the ANC's goals of education for all were to be achieved, residential/ contact universities would also have to enter the 'discourse of distance', and policies of open learning and distance education would then have to "have a central place in all policy deliberations and decisions concerning education and training for a democratic South Africa" (*ibid*, p.82). The sheer volume of need, in the commission's view, could only be addressed through historically residential/ contact institutions joining the circle of existent providers. And the 1995 *White Paper on Education and Training* (i.e. the first policy statement on education from the newly elected government) effectively endorsed this view by saying:

The dimensions of South Africa' learning deficit are so vast in relation to the needs of the people, the constitutional guarantee of the right to basic education, and the severe financial constraints on infrastructural development on a large scale, that a completely fresh approach is required to the provision of learning opportunities (DoE, 1995, p.28).

And again in 1995, through a presidential proclamation which established the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) to advise the government about reform in the higher education sector, this body "advocated substantially increased participation rates in higher education, and cited the role that distance education and resource-based learning would play in such an expansion" (CHE Report: Enhancing the contribution of Distance Higher Education in South Africa, 2004, p.16).

In its 1996 report too, the NCHE highlighted cost-effectiveness as a major motivation to expand access to higher education through distance education, citing the need for increased staffing and infrastructure at residential/ contact institutions if all access to higher education was to be through the latter institutions only. In addition, they noted that the organisation of the academic calendar did not suit students/ adult learners who wanted to study consistently throughout a year and/or through part-time study.

The 1997 *White Paper* also reiterated support for both residential/ contact and distance education institutions to provide "effective and flexible learning environments on a continuum of education provision, in which educators will be able to select from an increasing range of educational methods and technologies those that are most appropriate to the context in which they operate" (CHE report, 2004, p.19).

But in tandem with this proactive position on higher education provision in the years 1994 - 2002, and an expanded view of who could contribute to it, a thread of concern was emerging about the quality of that provision. It was quite apparent that the fluid and unrefined distance education policy context that characterised this period had opened the gap for numerous institutions to suddenly augment their existing programmes with 'distance' programmes, and for new, often fly-by-night outfits to get a foot in the market. The seduction of increased financial prosperity through massification (disguised, in many cases, as an apparent genuine response to the need for access and equity), was an irresistible lure to many, and seriously compromised the educational quality and efficacy of a substantial number of the programmes offered.

In 1997, the *White Paper on Higher Education* drew specific attention to the government's growing concern about the unregulated growth of distance education provision, and the consequences of this for the quality of the learning experiences offered to students. The CHE report of 2004 notes that "Quality of distance education provision at predominantly face-to-face institutions first came under the spotlight through an audit of Teacher Education at a distance conducted for the Department of Education [DoE]" (2004, p.21) by SAIDE. The ultimate result of this audit was that it "led the DoE to place a blanket moratorium on all new distance education programmes at face-to-face institutions in 1999/ 2000" (*ibid*). However, under advisement from the CHE in 2000 that the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) prioritise quality assurance of all large-scale distance education programmes, the HEQC began this process but extended it to include all programmes, whether large or small. And in 2003, in a circular from the DoE on Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), it was made clear that funding for distance education programmes would be dependent on empirical evidence that students had enjoyed a quality learning experience throughout the duration of a programme. All the above, as the CHE report of 2004 notes, shows that there was an "ongoing concern about the quality of distance education at both the dedicated distance education and predominantly face-to-face institutions" (*ibid*, p.21). Although this thesis is being written in 2007, the same concerns pertain.

1.8 Teacher education through 'distance' education

Statistics cited by Dhanarajan (in Robinson and Latchem, 2003, p.xv) show that there are approximately 60 million practising teachers worldwide, and that approximately a further 15 million will be needed by the year 2010. Dhanarajan draws attention to the fact that this latter figure does not even take into account the impact of HIV/ AIDS, and the natural attrition of the teaching force through retirement and migration into other spheres of employment.

Traditional paths to teacher training will, of course, need to be continued, but much the same

as the sentiment expressed by the *Policy Framework for Education and Training* of 1994 referred to earlier, Dhanarajan says that “governments and all other parties interested in the health of global education need to explore other methods of teacher education and training. One option is the application of distance education in order to deliver teacher training much more aggressively” (*ibid*).

The World Review of Distance Education and Open Learning (Vol 3) is dedicated to a review of the strengths, weaknesses, successes and failures of teacher education initiatives and programmes through distance education across the world, and as such has been an invaluable source for this thesis. However, since the teacher education context that dominates this study is that of continuing education at post-graduate level, discussion will be limited to this area, despite the fact that in principle, both pre-service and in-service teacher training, and under- and post-graduate study are recognised as educational constructs that work along a continuum, and not in isolation.

In the discussion that ensues, it will be quite obvious to the reader that much of what is said about distance education could just as equally apply to residential/ contact type teacher education. This is acknowledged, but no attempt will be made to consistently signal this relationship. To do so would be to render the intended thrust of the discussion, turgid and tedious. The reader is asked, therefore, to make her/ his own associations between these quite differently contextualised forms of teacher education provision, but to foreground the relevance of what is said about teacher education through distance education, to this study.

Speaking from within a distance teacher education context, Craig and Perraton (2003) make the distinction between ‘structured’ and ‘unstructured’ forms of in-service/ continuing teacher education, and argue for the relevance of both forms, depending on teacher demand and supply. Essentially, the difference between these two forms lies in the nature of the ‘product’ viz. a formal qualification in respect of the former, and resources made available to teachers who then voluntarily engage with further professional development, in respect of the latter. In a review of teacher education through ‘distance’ learning in, for example, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico and Nigeria, Craig and Perraton report evidence of a wide range of ‘resources’ being utilized in distance programmes in these countries e.g. broadcast material (radio and TV), video conferencing, e-learning (where appropriate technology is available), peer networks and local discussion forums/ seminars, besides the conventional text-based, self-study materials usually associated with distance education. What becomes clear here, is that there is every effort being made by these countries (and in many cases, the same can be said about South Africa) to reduce the impact of ‘distance’ on students’ learning experiences.

Perhaps one of the most central aspects with regard to teacher education through distance education that Craig and Perraton draw attention to is that of teachers' motivation to continue with professional development once they are qualified – especially through 'structured' forms. In Craig and Perraton's view, "the motivation of teachers to participate in continuing education is likely to be the function of support, relevance and credibility, and reward" (2003, p.108). So simply making it possible for teachers to engage in continuing professional development, does not, therefore, mean they will. There have to be substantial incentives and substantial rewards, and usually, this can only be effectively accomplished through state/ policy intervention. In China, for example, it is apparently very difficult to get teachers to voluntarily participate in continuing professional development because teachers have what has become known as 'the iron rice bowl' i.e. they have secure employment from the government for life, "with little chance of dismissal in a country where, overall, there is a shortage of qualified teachers" (Craig and Perraton, 2003, p.109). To counter this prevailing inertia, Chinese national education policy now dictates that "continuing education is the right and duty of all teachers" (*ibid*), and makes it compulsory for at least all kindergarten and primary school teachers to accept 72 hours of continuing education every year.

In the South African context, similarities exist, but difference too. The argument that teacher education provision should be augmented by distance programmes is implicit in the discussion around general expansion of higher education opportunities made earlier (when the *Policy Framework* of 1994 was raised), so that is no different from the shift to this position in other parts of the world. What is unique to South Africa, however, is that there has been a simultaneous expansion of teacher education through distance models, with the implementation of the new national curricula, and OBE, thus plunging new and existing teacher education providers who want to enter the 'distance market', into a maelstrom of previously unknown and hence, unpredictable, curriculum demands and expectations. Nevertheless, 'distance' forms of teaching and learning are increasingly dominating the Higher Education landscape in South Africa ('distance' provision accounted for 43% of all headcount students in 2001³), particularly with regard to teacher education provision (a 25% increase between 1999 and 2001). Motivating teachers to participate in their own professional development does not, therefore, seem to be as big a problem as it might be in countries such as China, for example. Statistics offered in the next section, give some indication of this self-motivated entry into post graduate Honours level programmes when the institutional context of this study is presented. However, the fact that the Department of

³ Source: Council on Higher Education (CHE) Enhancing the contribution of Distance Higher Education in South Africa: Report of an Investigation led by the South African Institute for Distance Education (2004) Pretoria

Education has proposed the introduction of a mandatory 80 hours of professional development per year per teacher, does suggest an ongoing concern to implement and sustain teacher professional development.

1.9 Institutional context

The relevance of the above short historical review of the role of distance education in South Africa, and its role in teacher education more specifically, is that it was exactly during this period that the School of Education, Training and Development in the Faculty of Education at the University of Natal (UN) established its own 'distance' programme in 1998 viz. the Honours programme which contextualises this study. It also entered into a partnership with an already existing distance education college, namely, the South African College of Teacher Education (SACTE) in Pretoria in 1999. Thus, the University of Natal (for that is what University of KwaZulu-Natal was known as before its merger with the University of Durban-Westville at the end of 2004), was one of those institutions mentioned earlier that 'took the gap' during this period.

For the next two year, tutorials were offered at 27 regional learning centres in Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), with a total student enrolment of 1900. By doing this, the programme was instantly massified, and as a consequence soon became a proverbial 'cash cow'. Even though the partnership with SACTE dissolved in 2000 (as a result of SACTE being incorporated into UNISA), and the programme thereafter only offered in KZN, numbers remained high (approximately 525 per enrolment) until 2004.

Thus it was that, partly in response to the National Committee on Higher Education Report of 1996, in which 'growth' in the Higher Education sector in South Africa was identified as a key element of the new framework for transformation, but also in keeping with world wide shifts in perceptions concerning the role of Higher Education institutions, and the University's Mission Statement which committed the University to "grow so that it satisfies both national and community needs for high quality academic and professional tertiary education", the School of Education, Training and Development (SETD) in 1998, changed its admission policy to the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) Honours programme. The call in the NCHE Report for "an expansion of student enrolments, feeder constituencies and programme offerings" in order to address the "principles of equity and redress, as well as the imperatives of demography and development", prompted the SETD to open access to the B.Ed Honours programme to any teacher with an appropriate, four year education qualification, acquired through degree/ university studies *or* through a teacher training college diploma. This

change in admission requirements, as indicated earlier, impacted immediately on the size and shape of the programme (See Figure 1 below), and reflected the egalitarian motivation to massify identified by Kraak earlier.

Year	Entrance requirement	No. of students	Lecturers (full time academic staff) and/ or tutors (part-time)	No. of Regional Learning Centres
1995	Degree only	60	Lecturers only	1
1996	Degree only	163	Lecturers only	2
1997	Degree only	312	Lecturers only	2
1998	Degree OR 4 year diploma	750	Lecturers and tutors	2
1999	Degree OR 4 year diploma	1900	Tutors only (with academics as co-ordinators of modules)	27

Figure 1.1 B.Ed Honours enrolment figures for the period 1995 - 1999

The consequences of opening access to the Honours programme to diplomates (as opposed to degressed students) were far reaching. Prior to 1998, all students on the B.Ed Honours programme had already completed an undergraduate degree. By definition, all were secondary school teachers, since the structure of teacher training in those days (as mentioned earlier) dictated that universities prepare students for secondary school teaching, and teacher training colleges prepare students for primary and junior school teaching. Furthermore, the majority of these students were English first language speakers.

These factors, a university experience of tertiary training, instruction in the primary language, and a secondary school teaching context, were critical 'influences for success' for many of these students, in subtle but powerful ways. Having come through a university degree programme already, these graduates were familiar with the discourses associated with a university context, and had to a large extent, already 'proved' themselves in a number of areas, one of the most significant being 'able to write' what was so unproblematically labelled, in those days, 'the academic essay'. Since, as indicated earlier, the majority of the students on the programme prior to 1998 were English first language speakers, they had had the privilege of having all their reading and writing, and social and pedagogical interactions conducted in their primary language. Even those students who were not English

first language speakers, had had sufficient exposure to it through their degree, and their secondary school teaching context, to achieve more than a minimal or mediocre pass.

All of these students therefore, can be said to have entered the B.Ed Honours programme armed with a critical measure of 'embodied capital' which gave them enough, and relevant, 'social' and 'literacy' capital' (Bourdieu, 1972 [1977], 1991, 1992) to manage - and *match* - the discourse demands and expectations of the programme. They had experienced, in other words, extensive exposure to the 'Situated Practice' (Gee, 1996, The New London Group, 1996, 2000) of 'The Academy'. They knew, albeit very often incompletely, what was meant by 'critique' and 'analysis', and how to articulate conceptual understandings in writing. In short, they knew enough not to feel alienated by the academic 'discourse community' (Fairclough, 1995).

The majority of students who entered the B.Ed Honours programme in 1998, however, and in 2007 this remains the case, did not have the educational (schooling and tertiary) backgrounds described above. Almost without exception (92%), the primary language of the 'new' students was not English. In addition, having come through teacher training colleges, many of which were the 'bush colleges' of the apartheid era, they were the products of Fundamental Pedagogics, the dominant educational philosophy of the apartheid government. This philosophy "claimed to arrive at a set of immutable truths about education – divorced from the socio-political context of education. ... It positioned both teacher and learner as passive subjects, and the child as a product of original sin, needing to be led into adulthood by the wiser adult teachers, who in turn were led to enlightenment by the wiser pedagogicians" (Adler & Reed, 2002, p.20). Thus, when these students entered an Historically White University (HWU) such as the University of Natal, for the first time, where a very different philosophy and pedagogy pertained, they were very confronted with a completely unfamiliar set of discourses and practices.

These teacher-students were also predominantly *primary school teachers* (83%), a crucial factor in issues of English language use, and women (71%). In the dominant primary school context, the mother tongue quite rightly dominates classroom practice and parent/ school interaction. This is not only good pedagogic practice but also reflects National Language in Education Policy. If English is used at all, it is generally in the form of key words, or short, simple sentences. Learners and teachers also have no real cause to read beyond the immediate needs of classroom teaching and learning, again short and/or one word flash cards and sentences. Outside of the school grounds, it is likely, particularly in the rural areas, that English usage is kept to an absolute minimum. All these factors impact

considerably on these teachers' capacity to cope with the demands made on them once they embark on post-graduate university study, through the medium of English.

Finding ways to scaffold in-service teachers' engagement with the demands of new professional and curriculum policies, whilst at the same time, establishing their theoretical and conceptual understanding of critical educational issues, *and* inducting them into academic specialist varieties of language (after Gee, 2004), has thus been an ongoing challenge. The fact that the majority of these students experienced very different early literacy socialisation processes from those of their white, English speaking, middle class counterparts, and that this same majority suffered the ill-effects of inadequate literacy teaching during their school and teacher training years (highlighted above), means that they encounter enormous difficulties engaging with the texts they are expected to read at post graduate level, or the writing tasks they are expected to complete. The 'People's mark' (Hewlett, 1996:94), that is, 'just a pass' (50%-55%) dominates the assessment profile of those students who pass. As issues related to 'literacy', and 'academic literacy' in particular, are the central concern of Chapter 2, nothing more will be said here in relation to them. Nevertheless, it is important to note for the purposes of this chapter, that the issue of developing students' Academic Discourse competence is not just a 'literacy' issue but a contextual one too. It is imperative, therefore, that more studies such as this one be done in order to gain greater insight into the matrix constituted by context, Discourse and literacy practices.

1.10 Curriculum response

In order to manage the sudden burgeoning of student numbers, a fixed curriculum was developed for the Honours programme offered by the School of Education, Training and Development in 1998. Initially known simply as 'the B.Ed', it then became the 'B.Ed Honours' (once an undergraduate Bachelor of Education was introduced). More recently, since 2002, it has been slightly reconceptualised to reflect a more 'specialist' orientation, and is now known as the *Professional Development Studies* (PDS) programme.

Since its inception, the PDS programme has been conceptualised as a 'specialisation for the generalist', that is, the focus is on a range of key educational/ pedagogical foci e.g. assessment, curriculum, language and learning and so on, rather than on one particular specialist area/ discipline, for example, management and leadership studies, curriculum, assessment etc. The motivation for this 'smorgasbord' type of curriculum was to provide students who had previously had no experience of an intellectualised and theoretical

engagement with practice, the opportunity to do so in as many aspects of classroom-based pedagogy as possible.

To deliver this curriculum, a mixed-mode model of delivery (as defined earlier) was adopted. Despite the centrality of contact sessions i.e. face-to-face tutor teaching and support for 27 hours (out of a total of 160 notional study hours) in this model, it nevertheless clearly requires that students engage in substantial self-directed study, an important consideration to bear in mind, given the background of the majority of the students who then, and now, sign up for a B.Ed Honours programme.

At the time of writing this thesis, the *Professional Development Studies* programme still exists but only for pipeline students. In 2007, it was replaced by a *Teacher Education and Professional Development* specialisation. This new specialisation foregrounds research and scholarship in the field of teacher education and professional development, rather than practice as the PDS programme tended to do. Though the RWAT module was renamed *Understanding Academic Literacy* in 2006, to accommodate the slight modifications resulting from the merger of two academic literacy campus site offerings into one common, Faculty-owned module, it remains essentially the same and continues to be a core, compulsory module in the Honours curriculum. However, for reasons explained in the final chapter, it is likely that from 2009, no stand-alone 'academic literacy' module will form part of the Honours programme. 'Academic literacy' development will be addressed through an alternate model.

1.11 A contextual history of Reading and Writing Academic Texts (RWAT)

The forerunner to what became the RWAT module, was a module called *Language in Learning and Teaching* (LILT). Some reflection on this earlier history of 'language modules' in the Honours programme is justified in terms of a) underscoring the action research cycle that has governed these modules for the past decade, and b) making it easier for the reader to evaluate the changes that were made when the version of RWAT that concerns this study, were introduced, and perhaps encourage contemplation on how the academic literacy needs (and wants) of staff and students in teacher education programmes should continue to be developed, if at all.

The LILT module was originally developed in 1996, by members of staff in the then Department of Applied Language Studies, which fell under the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, not Education. The purpose of LILT was to raise awareness of issues related to the role of language in the learning process, and how teachers can facilitate the development of communicative skills in talking, listening, reading and writing. It also had the

additional agenda of conscientising students to issues of identity and power in relation to language use (particularly when the medium of instruction was not the mother tongue), although the extent to which these latter issues were addressed was relatively limited. The following learning outcomes, taken directly from the LILT Learning Guide (Inglis, Thomson and MacDonald, 2000, p.3), indicate the range of issues addressed in the module, and what was hoped that students would be able to demonstrate by the end of the course. They also reflect the emphases and theoretical underpinnings of the pre-RWAT years:

- Explain key concepts from applied language research, orally and in writing;
- Recognise opportunities to apply these concepts in your classroom;
- Use a range of techniques to assess your learners' language development;
- Understand different theories of reading;
- Develop effective reading programmes in your classrooms based on the theoretical understandings acquired in the module;
- Explain the link between writing and learning, orally and in writing;
- Develop effective writing programmes based on the theoretical understandings covered in this module;
- Use a theme-based, whole language approach to address language development.

Having been integral to the development of the LILT module from its inception until 1999 when I became co-ordinator of it, I was well positioned to make decisions about why and how it might be reconfigured when suggestions were first made towards the end of 2001 that perhaps students on the Honours programme now needed a module that would rigorously and explicitly focus on their academic discourse development. This suggestion, it must be noted, had never in the history of post graduate programmes in the Faculty of Education (PMB) been made before. It constituted, therefore, another critical moment in the transformation of the Honours programme, but one which came five years into its distance mode of delivery. Over a period of two years, 2002-2003, extended curriculum discussions were held with colleagues who taught on the Honours module. All 'non' language staff wanted was for 'someone' – anyone – to assume responsibility for teaching students how "to construct more coherent and logically structured written texts", so that the chief characteristics of student writing viz. 'unordered', largely descriptive, unreferenced, lacking in analysis and abstraction, and tied too intractably to 'local' and 'own' experience, could take

on a new 'academic' guise. With hindsight, it is clear that one of the real problems that dogged the discussions held at this time, was the very small pool of literacy expertise in the School of Education, Training and Development viz. Mr Mike Hart and I. However, we did the best we could under the circumstances, and drew on the work of people such as Rose (2003), Pretorius (1998, 2002), Hart (1995), Martin (1989), Halliday (1975, 1985, 1989) and others, to develop a new module which we called *Reading and Writing Academic Texts (RWAT)*.

The learning outcomes for this module were as follows:

- Read and understand a range of non-scientific academic texts, such as journal articles, chapters from books, conference papers, and research reports;
- Analyse and synthesise a range of text sources in order to construct an argument;
- Construct an academic argument, in writing, according to acceptable academic scheme and style conventions;
- Analyse and debate, orally and in writing, key issues related to literacy education, from national and international perspectives.

There were only four compulsory 'core' reading texts included in the RWAT Learning Guide Part Two, and one 'additional' reading. The decision to limit the amount of reading students were expected to do was based on the premise that a module that foregrounded practice and process, would of necessity, have to compromise on 'quantity'. These readings were chosen for their focus on either Genre Theory and/or the application of the Genre Approach in classroom-based contexts. They were:

- Hyland, K. (1992). Genre Analysis: Just Another Fad? *English Teaching Forum*, 30 (2), 14-17.
- Johnson, D. (1994). Language and Education in South Africa: The Value of a Genre-based Pedagogy for Access and Inclusion. In *The Quest for Identity in a Multicultural Society: South Africa*. Feral, C. (Ed.). (1994). Conference Proceedings from the International Seminar, France, 31-40.
- Reppen, R. (1994). A Genre-Based Approach to Content Writing Instruction. *TESOL Journal*, Winter 1994/1995, 32-35.

- Hart, M. (1995). *What students have to tell us about writing*. Paper presented at the 15th Annual Conference of the South African Applied Linguistics Association, University of Stellenbosch, July 1995.

The 'additional' reading was:

- Macken-Horarik, M. (1996). Literacy and learning across the curriculum: Towards a model of register for secondary school teachers. In Hasan, R. and Williams, G. (Eds). (1996). *Literacy in Society*. London & New York: Longman.

To scaffold students' engagement with these prescribed texts, reading strategies developed by Rose (2003) were adapted and included, and two key texts viz. those by Hyland (1992) and Johnson (1994) were translated into isiZulu. The decision to translate these two texts into isiZulu, was based on the fact that, from the module developer's perspective, Hyland provides a very accessible account of the Genre Approach, and Johnson engages with Genre Theory and the Genre Approach as a 'political and pedagogical project'. This latter construct so crucially underpins the way in which the RWAT module *aimed* to portray both its own work and the Genre Approach, that it was deemed relevant to translate this text into isiZulu too. The introduction of isiZulu texts into the Honours programme in 2004, was a first for the Honours programme and so constituted a ground-breaking moment. Further comment around the introduction of these translated texts will, however, be held over to the next chapter.

The module was, thus, both modelled on, and taught the Genre Approach, as value was seen (and still is) in this approach for school-based literacy development in South African classrooms. The reading and learning interventions just described are given full coverage in Chapter 2 so nothing more will be said about them here. Suffice to indicate that efforts were made to support students in ways that other modules had not, and still to date have not, attempted.

The motivation for this study, however, came from my own increasing concern (as one of two designers and implementers of the curriculum) with the way in which 'academic literacy' was being understood and taught within the module, and was coupled with my unease that students were exiting the module with little or no 'critical' perspective on any aspect of literacy as social practice. In addition, two important reading and learning interventions had been introduced into the module in 2003, and I was very interested to evaluate their contribution to students' pedagogic experiences. Furthermore, though many students appeared to have internalised elements of 'academic writing', it was clear that academic

literacy still eluded them. I believed too, that the implications of studying the B.Ed Honours through a 'mixed-mode' ('distanced') model of delivery were also important to explore. Finally, although large scale evaluations of the RWAT module had been conducted on an annual basis since its inception, and always received high praise from students, I was anxious, in a climate of increasing de-personalisation, to reinstate the personal, the individual in 'mass' education. Thus, I wanted to foreground *individual lives*, and through an exploration of a small group of participants' 'lived' experiences of the RWAT module, ascertain what it is like to acquire an academic literacy.

However, what I can now recognise is just how theoretically and ideologically immature and naive I was during those early years of the RWAT module. Chapter 4 gives extensive attention to the problematics provoked by this earlier naïveté, but in order for the reader to be alert to the central, tripartite one, because it is important to how the reader engages with the study as a whole, this must be shared now.

Essentially, there are three important distinctions to be made with regard to how the RWAT module is spoken of in this thesis. The first of these distinctions relates to the ideological and theoretical positions (to which I was party) which are *claimed to inform* the RWAT module evident, we (the module developers) would say, in various explicit statements to this effect in the learning materials, implicit in the choice of readings, explicit within the readings themselves etc. The second distinction that must be made relates to the *students' 'lived' experience of these positions*; and the last, to the ideological and theoretical position *I have now taken in this study* in order, through a phenomenological hermeneutic response, to describe and interpret participants' experiences of the RWAT module. It was sometimes not easy to hold these distinctions clearly in focus while writing up the thesis, though it is hoped that the clarity is there for the reader.

1.12 Concluding comments

The overriding purpose of the contextual journey just completed in this chapter, has not only been to give a brief, selective, historical account of a particular period of South African history, but also to constantly provoke the reader to make the effort to enter the complex realm in which the central phenomenon of this study, that is, the RWAT module as 'lived', can be found. This chapter shows that 'context' (in a range of guises and forms) comes at one from every possible angle, and is both historically embedded, in a present state of constant flux and unpredictability, and always future orientated. Thus while historical/ factual accuracy (of dates, chronology of events, legislation, names of role players etc) matter, the central concerns of this study are the participants' perceptions and experiences of these

'events', of 'lived' legislation and so on, in so far as they can be said to have helped give life to the RWAT module, and in so doing, assist in formulating answers to the main and secondary research questions, namely:

- (1) What is it like to acquire an academic literacy?
- (2) How is this experience influenced by the mode of delivery in which it occurs?

1.13 Overview and structure of remaining chapters

As this study is primarily a literacy study, the next chapter provides the theoretical framework for the 'language' and 'literacy' issues which it addresses. Thus, 'literacy theory' takes precedence in Chapter 2. This chapter, entitled: 'Theoretical language and literacy matters', foregrounds theories that have developed within the context of first and second language pedagogy, and include those which take the larger picture of the role of 'the social', formal education, and an increasingly globalizing economic environment into account. Such is the growth in, and expansion of this field, and its relevance to the 'lived' phenomenon of this study, that this chapter is unavoidably extensive. However, it does offer a carefully guided journey that begins at a broad level of theoretical engagement, and ends with an application of 'literacy theory' specifically to the 'lived' phenomenon in this study i.e. the module, *Reading and Writing Academic Texts*.

As phenomenology-as-philosophy constituted the theoretical and conceptual 'birthplace' of the study, and gave rise to a unique engagement with phenomenology-as-methodology, I have placed the two chapters that reflect my commitment to these areas of scholarship and application immediately after Chapters 1 and 2. Although Chapter 3 is entitled, 'Philosophical Phenomenology: A point of departure', and Chapter 4 is entitled: 'Phenomenology-as-methodology', it is important to signal that making the distinction between phenomenology-as-philosophy and phenomenology-as-methodology, is in many respects artificial, as they are deeply informing of each other. For the purposes of this study, however, I have tried to separate certain key issues out as I came to understand, and experience, the shift from phenomenology as a philosophy to phenomenology as a methodology, as problematic. I was of the opinion that anyone reading about the tensions I identified, would engage more easily with them if they were given prominence in separate chapters.

So, in Chapter 3, I trace key developments in, and contributors to, phenomenology-as-philosophy, as well as identify and explore key concepts and processes that have come to be associated with the philosophical tradition. In addition, the role of phenomenology in 'the

social world' is discussed, with particular reference to the work of Alfred Schutz. The chapter closes by establishing the link between phenomenology and education.

In Chapter 4, I foreground phenomenology-as-methodology and put certain features of conventional ways of 'doing phenomenology' in the human and social sciences 'on trial'. By engaging with the many issues that confound phenomenologists attempting studies within these fields, I argue that a different approach is warranted. While acknowledging that the one that I have generated for the purposes of this study is only one possibility, I argue that it is better suited than conventional approaches to 'doing' phenomenology in the human and social sciences.

Chapter 5, 'Research Design and Method', describes the research design and methods used in this study. That is to say, it reiterates the research questions; goes into some detail on who the participants were and how they came to be selected; provides a rationale for a multiple interview approach; offers some further comment on the interviews more generally; describes the data analysis process I designed specifically for this study again briefly; and discusses matters of trustworthiness and ethics.

Data is first presented in Chapter 6. Here, 'Nodes of Individual Experience of the Phenomenon' have been identified i.e. Step 2 in my data analysis process. When organising the presentation of my data, I developed a short, biographical sketch of each participant in order to give a reader some insight into the personhood and lives of each one, beyond their 'lived' experience of the *Reading and Writing Academic Texts* module. Ideally, all six sketches and nodes of individual experience of all six participants should have appeared in this chapter, but for reasons of length, only *two* complete 'profiles' appear in full. The remainder are included as **Appendix D**. To facilitate some engagement with each participant, however, I have included the short, biographical sketch of each participant, a 'Synthesis of Experience' (of the phenomenon) for each, and an indication of where she or he now stands in relation to their participation in the Honours programme which contextualises the module in this study. Since so much of the richness and depth of this study is nested in the data, I would urge a reader to read all six complete profiles if possible.

My interpretive response to the nodes of individual experience is to be found in Chapter 7. As established in Chapters 3 and 4, full advantage has been taken in this study of the scope within the phenomenological movement for innovative and hermeneutic responses to data. In Chapter 7, I have drawn most particularly on Discourse Theory (Gee 1996, 1997, 2004), but other theory too, to interpret participants' experiences. Thus, shared experiences have

been constellated in this chapter, and responded to in the discourse of Discourse Theory. In doing so, answers to the research questions begin to emerge.

In Chapter 8, the final chapter, the research questions are addressed more directly than in any previous chapter, and suggestions made with regard to the model of literacy experienced by the participants in the *Reading and Writing Academic Texts* module. In addition, and based on the findings, the 'academic literacy' debate is pursued a little further. Finally, comment is offered in relation to the value of phenomenology in the South African research context today, and recommendations for further research are made.

Chapter 2

Theoretical language and literacy matters

2.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1 a contextual justification was offered for the research questions governing this project. In this chapter, selected literature on 'language' and 'literacy' is reviewed in order to provide a theoretical framework related to this aspect of the study. Of necessity, the chapter foregrounds those theories that have developed within the context of first and second language pedagogy, and include those which take the larger picture of the role of 'the social', formal education, and an increasingly globalizing economic environment into account. In this way, the pedagogical focus of the *Reading and Writing Academic Texts (RWAT)* module is sustained, as is the phenomenon under study.

Through an exploration of the theories on language that inform 'autonomous' and 'ideological' models of literacy (after Street, 1984), and the field of New Literacy Studies (NLS), this chapter makes clear the extent to which the RWAT module can be said to have been influenced by these areas of theory and scholarship. Furthermore, as the RWAT module has also been developed in accordance with Genre Theory, itself embedded in the field of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), some discussion on SFL will be provided, as will the relationship between the interests of the NLS and SFL.

However, what must be borne in mind, are the critical distinctions (identified in Chapter 1) between: (a) the ideological and theoretical positions (to which I was party) which are *claimed to inform* the RWAT module (evident, we would say, in various explicit statements to this effect in the learning materials, implicit in the choice of readings, explicit within the readings themselves etc); (b) the *students' 'lived' experience of these positions*; and (c) the ideological and theoretical position *I have now taken in this study* in order to describe and interpret participants' experiences of the RWAT module. The point was made in Chapter 1 that holding these three areas of ideological positioning clearly in focus while conducting this research and writing up this thesis has not been easy, and has highlighted my own earlier collusion in (a) and (b). In this chapter the same point applies, though every effort has been made to keep these distinctions clear.

2.2 The New Literacy Studies (NLS) and the 'social turn'

The role that the New Literacy Studies movement has played in my own development as an applied linguist and literacy practitioner, the RWAT module and this study, is pivotal, and thus the discussion which follows is of central importance, and constitutes the first focus of

theoretical engagement in this chapter. According to Gee (no date), the term *New Literacy Studies* refers to “one movement among many that took part in a larger ‘social turn’ away from a focus on individuals and their ‘private’ minds and towards interaction and social practice” (Gee, 2003, no page), and, as such, is “based on the view that reading and writing only make sense when studied in the context of social and cultural (and we can add historical, political and economic) practices of which they are a part” (*ibid*, no page). Though the NLS will be engaged with in far greater depth shortly, a brief word must be said about the ‘social turn’ to which Gee refers here in order to make sense of much of what follows in this chapter.

Alongside the NLS as one of the many ‘language’ movements participating in the ‘social turn’, beginning in the 60s and 70s, but gaining particular momentum in the 80s, there were others emerging equally strongly. These ranged from studies on the ethnography of speaking, situated cognition, cultural models theory, modern composition theory to “a good deal of so-called ‘post-structuralist’ and ‘post-modernist’ work centering around the notion of ‘discourses’ (see Gee, 2003, for a full list). Gee is very candid about his own response at this time (the 80s) saying that when he began his own ‘social turn’ (in his case, epitomized by a turn away from generative linguistics), “I saw the social turn in entirely progressive terms” (Gee, 2003, no page). In other words, there was a political naiveté about his response (and that of others) in assuming that “focusing on the social would unmask the workings of hierarchy, power and social injustice, as well as create more humane, less elitist and individualistic, institutions (e.g. schools) and communities” (*ibid*). Gee and others assumed that their work at this time would challenge the forces of capitalism and the ‘profit motive’ and instill a new social order recognizably different from the ‘old’. The shock of course, was to discover that a ‘new’ form of capitalism had taken up the ‘social turn’ as readily as a range of other movements and viewed it very positively, making it ultimately work for its own ends.

The characteristics of the new economic and new work order are common knowledge and do not need to be engaged with in great depth here. Suffice to say, however, that the consequences of new capitalism e.g. the emergence of discourses of managerialism, consumerism and globalization, the emphasis on individualism and the resulting tensions and paradoxes in grappling with communitarianism, have all served to build a social environment characterised, on the one hand by uncertainty, often debilitating competition, alienation, increased class-based and racial division, and on the other by endless opportunities, endless choices and hitherto unknown levels of personal freedom. In short, an environment fraught with tensions, contradictions and wild pendulum swings between success and failure, freedom and fear, hope and despair, an environment in which it is

extremely difficult to live 'evenly'. Thus, when sociocultural perspectives of literacy are raised, it must be borne in mind that *this* is the nature of the macro sociocultural context in which all literacy practices are located and which the NLS and related movements attempt to address.

According to Street (2003), the NLS represents a 'new tradition' where, when considering 'the nature of literacy', the focus is no longer so much on the acquisition of 'language' skills but "rather what it means to think of literacy as social practice" (*ibid*). However, as Gee acknowledges, the danger of calling anything 'new' is that a) it soon becomes 'old', and b) that it tends to unhelpfully polarize thinking between that which was 'old' and that which is 'new'. "Were it not so cumbersome," Gee says, "it would be better to call the field something like integrated-social cultural-political-historical literacy studies" (1996, p. 122) in order to authentically name the viewpoint it takes on literacy. "To avoid this awful rubric" (*ibid*), however, he uses the term 'socioliteracy studies'.

To work within the framework of the NLS is to constantly ask questions about 'whose literacy counts?', and why, and to take nothing for granted. The NLS should be conceptualised as a network "of inter-related theoretical interests, differently emphasised and inflected" (Baynham and Prinsloo, 2001, p.84), but nevertheless situated within "a discursive politics of knowledge production, asking what counts as knowledge, who is allowed to author it, whose interests does it serve, how and by whom is it contested?" (*ibid*, p.85). Baynham and Prinsloo cite Barton and Hamilton's (2000, pp.1-15) characteristics of an NLS perspective on literacy as follows:

- Literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these are observable in events which are mediated by texts;
- There are different literacies associated with different domains of life;
- Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relations and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influential than others;
- Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices;
- Literacy is historically situated;
- Literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making as well as formal education and training.

What emerges from these varying descriptions of the characteristics of the NLS, is that critical literacy education is the most appropriate pedagogic response to the theoretical principles the movement embodies. Thus, instead of fixating on what it means to learn a language along morphemic, syntactic and rule-bound lines, 'critical literacy education' or pedagogy aims to "broaden this understanding ... to include negotiating a multiplicity of discourses' (the New London Group, 2000, p.9), and the role of the school, and other educational contexts e.g. higher education, in using literacy pedagogy to either produce, reproduce or transform the existing social order.

Street's early work on multiple literacies made a distinction between what he termed 'autonomous' and 'ideological' models of literacy (1985). Those holding an 'autonomous' view of language believe language to be a fixed body of knowledge that can be learnt – memorized – and taught through drill and repetition. It is a de-contextualised, de-socialised view of language, one that assumes that language is neutral and that having learnt to 'read and write' one is on one's way, so to speak. Such views are rooted in printed-based language and do not subscribe to a plural view of 'literacy'. The 'autonomous' nature of this view of language is reflected in the assumption that "literacy itself – autonomously – will have effects on other social and cognitive practices" (Street, 2003, no page). In other words, there is the sense that simply by teaching the poor and disaffected, the 'illiterate', to read and write, their cognitive skills and social and economic conditions will improve. If they don't, it must surely be through lack of interest or effort on the part of the 'illiterates' themselves.

The New London Group (2000, p.9) say of traditional views of literacy pedagogy, which can be seen to reflect an autonomous view of language, that it has meant teaching reading and writing in "page-bound, official, standard forms of the national language. Literacy pedagogy, in other words, has been a carefully restricted project – restricted to formalized, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language". Thus, to become 'literate' in the 'old' dispensation, was in essence to master the printed word.

Underpinning this restrictive environment in which language teaching has historically taken place, has been the so-called 'literacy thesis' i.e. the historically-derived thesis, issuing from the west, that mastery of the printed word results in cognitively and culturally different development trajectories. Sourced in a view that the technology of printing ushered in a 'technology of the intellect' that set it apart from those intellects not moulded or influenced by print, the 'literacy thesis' reflects a particular form of 'Great Divide' thinking first mooted by Goody and Watt (1963), and supported by the likes of Olson (1977), and Ong (1982). Thus, when 'Great Divide' thinking is spoken of in the context of this chapter, it refers to "differences in human cognition and human cultural conditions [that] were attributed not to

differences in human nature or stages of civilization but rather to literacy, conceived as a 'technology of the intellect'" (Collins, 1995, p.77). Using the term 'literacy' as synonymous with 'writing', Scribner and Cole also emphasise the "deep-seated popular notions" that equate 'literate' with intellectual ability" (1981, p.4).

Collins and Blot (2003), citing the work done by Goody and Watt (1963) thus note of this view that there is an assumed direct relationship between literacy and 'civilisation' and the 'modern mind', that it sought "in the consequences of reading and writing a motor of history that would explain some of the differences of the West vis a vis the rest of humankind without recourse to racial hierarchies" (Collins and Blot, 2003, p.23). In Goody and Watt's study, they proposed that there were key features of a 'literate mentality' that set people with this 'mentality' apart from those who were 'illiterate'. These features included: "1) the capability of thinking historically, that is, being able to construct synthetic historical accounts, and 2) the capability of distinguishing truth from opinion, which involved formalizing modes of reasoning about evidence and justification" (Collins and Blot, 2003, pp.23/4). What thinking like this efficiently demonstrates is an autonomous view of literacy in action. In other words, the kind of mental 'getting' that Goody and Watt supposed led to qualitatively different cognitive functioning, was embedded in 'language as product', as 'goods' to be acquired, as goods quite distinctly recognizable as at first 'out there' and now 'in here' (the mind), and autonomously making a difference. However, when debating the contribution to 'Great Divide' thinking made by those cited by Collins and Blot (2003), for example, Ong (1967, 1982); Goody and Watt (1963) and Olson (1977, 1988), it must be noted that while they made certain general claims about the efficacy of 'literacy', it was specifically *alphabetic* literacy to which they referred. In effect, therefore, they disregarded *non*-alphabetic, *non*-Western, forms of 'literacy', regarding them instead as 'restricted' forms of 'literacy' that could not do for human cognition and cultural evolution what autonomous alphabetic 'literacy' could do.

A seminal study which set out to question the literacy thesis implicit in Great Divide thinking, and which confirms an ideological 'take' on literacy, was that conducted by Scribner and Cole (1981) amongst the Vai people in Liberia. While it is impossible to do justice to this study in the context of this thesis, salient points will be discussed in support of the current discussion. Briefly, these researchers engaged with three types of literacy: the Vai script, which is used for personal and 'village' public needs, Arabic, manifested mostly through the learning of the Qur'an in special schools and heavily reliant on memorization, and English, learnt in European-styled schools away from the village. Each of these written forms of

language are thus learned and used differently. What I will foreground here, is an aspect related to the Vai script.

The uniqueness of the Vai study was that it allowed Scribner and Cole to study the acquisition of literacy (defined as 'writing' by them), and its effects, *outside of a schooling context*, since the Vai script (one in which 'graphic symbols represent syllables') is unique to the Vai people and not taught in schools but only in the home. However, not all Vais can read or write the Vai script, thus in the study it was possible to consider the literacy thesis in the context of Vai 'non-literates' too. In terms of what the Vai script was used for, Scribner and Cole observed in their study that letters were written in Vai, that the names of donors and gifts were recorded in Vai at funerals (which were many and often as the infant mortality rate at that time exceeded 50%), that some "religious and fraternal organisations maintain records in Vai script" (Scribner and Cole, 1981, p.34), that farmers and craftsmen would use the script in business ledgers and for technical plans, and that some "who would qualify as Vai scholars" (*ibid*) would use the script for diaries, clan histories, folktales and so on. In short, the script mediated a wide variety of *socially embedded practices*.

In discussing their findings, Scribner and Cole set them against the concept of 'practice', which they link with the concept of 'cognitive skill'. By 'practice', they mean "a recurrent, goal-directed sequence of activities using a particular technology and particular systems of knowledge", and by 'skills', "the coordinated sets of actions involved in applying this knowledge in particular settings" (*ibid*, p.236) e.g. sensory-motor, linguistic, *and* cognitive skills. A 'practice', therefore, is made up of three components, viz. a technology, knowledge and skills. They give the example of a 'sphere of activity' that is predominantly 'conceptual' e.g. practicing law, or one that is predominantly 'sensory-motor' e.g. basket weaving. Both these 'practices' require all three components just listed, but in different ways. Building on this notion of 'practice', Scribner and Cole say that this notion of practice "guides the way we seek to understand literacy" (*ibid*). And so they come to an ideological, and not autonomous, understanding of what constitutes 'literacy' as they are forced to "approach literacy as a set of socially organised practices which make use of a symbol system and technology for producing and disseminating it. ... The nature of these practices, including of course, their technological aspects, will determine the kinds of skills ("consequences") associated with literacy" (*ibid*). So Scribner and Cole note that letter writing amongst the Vai must be considered as a literacy practice but different from, for example, keeping a personal diary, or a ledger, since each of these requires different measures and weightings of a technology, knowledge and skills.

Scribner and Cole's results showed, in the case of Vai literates, a very 'spotty' effect of literacy i.e. there was no hard evidence to suggest that being literate in the Vai script yielded general cognitive superiority, and that in the case of 'non-literates', "on no task – logic, abstraction, memory, communication – did we find all nonliterates performing at lower levels than all literates" (*ibid*, p.251). As a result, Scribner and Cole concluded that "we can and do claim that literacy promotes skills among the Vai but we cannot and do not claim that literacy is a necessary and sufficient condition for any of the skills we assessed" (*ibid*). But if one cannot attribute a lack of low performance (on specified tasks related to reading and writing) to a lack of reading and writing ability, then what factors do influence this performance? Scribner and Cole suggest that 'urban residency', jobs 'in the modern sector' and multilingualism are three variables that make a significant difference to 'nonliterates' performance on such tasks. Based on this, they make the salient point that, at least in the context of their study, they needed to be very cautious about assuming that literacy (reading and writing) and schooling "are the only vehicles for the promotion of the cognitive skills we have studied" (*ibid*, p.252).

Another early study which underscores the force of socialization processes i.e. the ideological thrust, in determining what 'counts' as 'literacy', and whether simplistic associations can be made between 'literacy' and 'cognition', is that conducted by Scollon and Scollon (1981). Grounded in a research project focused on inter-ethnic miscommunication "between members of the dominant English-speaking, western American and Canadian society and members of native groups" (1981, p.11), Scollon and Scollon worked most particularly with the Athabaskans in Alaska. Out of their work, Scollon and Scollon came to identify what they call the 'modern consciousness' (characterised by rationality, componentiality and plurality) as one underpinned by 'essayist literacy' (Western oriented, decontextualised writing), and set this against a 'bush consciousness' underpinned (in the case of the Athabaskans) by an oral narrative discourse, where the knowledge that one needs in order to live, is accrued through being 'present in practice'. They assert that both these 'consciousnesses' reflect 'reality sets', but of such different natures that when they are forced into close proximity and must engage with each other, conflict and tension must inevitably arise. However, what one cannot claim is that one 'reality set' is inherently superior to the other. Though their study was primarily to do with face-to-face inter-ethnic communication, one of the most crucial points that they make with regard to *this* study, is that the 'modern consciousness', and its expression in 'essayist literacy' are in fact directly attributable to western-type schooling, and that 'school' has come to be understood as 'a gloss for literacy' (*ibid*, p.61). The whole notion of 'essayist literacy' will be pursued again later in this thesis.

The idea of 'school' being seen as 'a gloss for literacy' needs to be taken very seriously. In most cases, schools themselves and the majority of teachers in them, collude in a literacy project underpinned by a very powerful ideology, though most, I am sure, would not be aware of this. Teachers tend to teach in the way they were taught, and given the predominance of autonomous models of literacy still prevalent in schools across the world, the conflation of 'school' with 'literacy' has probably been an inevitable development. However, it does mean that schools are very dangerous sites indeed. Street is extremely uneasy about the autonomous model of literacy (as am I), suggesting that the model "disguises the cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin it so that it can then be presented as though they are neutral and universal and that literacy as such will have these benign effects" (2003, no page). The very real danger of autonomous views of literacy is that western conceptions of literacy get to be imposed on cultures and classes essentially profoundly different in 'ways of being'. However, as Street observes, at least the majority of contemporary literacy *researchers* (if not teachers) have come to realize that the autonomous model of literacy is not "an appropriate intellectual tool, either for understanding the diversity of reading and writing around the world or for designing the practical programmes this required" (2001, p.8). However, as indicated above, schools have not. From my own experience in countless English language classes in schools across contexts in South Africa, the UK government's 'back to basics' campaign, and the US 'English only' movement, it would seem that the autonomous model of literacy, in classrooms and the public mind, is alive and well.

Countering the autonomous model of literacy, however, Street proposed the ideological model i.e. as suggested earlier, models that take as their point of departure, the embeddedness of literacy practices in the socio-cultural and hence only meaningful when analysed from this perspective. It offers, in his view, "a more culturally sensitive view of literacy" and, drawing on Gee (1990), he says that it works from the premise that

literacy is a social practice, not simply a technical and neutral skill; that it is always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles. It is about knowledge: the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, being. Literacy, in this sense, is always contested, both its meanings and its practices, hence particular versions of it are always 'ideological', they are always rooted in a particular world-view and a desire for a view of literacy to dominate and marginalize others (Street, 2001, p.7).

To demonstrate the importance of holding an ideological rather than an autonomous view of literacy, Street cites a study conducted by Kulick and Stroud (1993). Though these two began their anthropological research in Papua New Guinea villages with the question, 'What

is the impact of missionary literacy on the villagers?', they soon had to acknowledge that what the missionaries brought with them and 'imposed' on the villagers did not flow unidirectionally and untouched. Instead, the villagers adapted and manipulated what they had learnt to read and write into their existing oral discourse practices such that a "variety of clever political discourses and conventions emerged" (Street, 2001, p.8). Thus, instead of talking about the *impact* of literacy, Kulick and Stroud began to ask how people *take hold* of literacy, thereby setting the stage for more penetrative questions to be posed around power relationships, ownership and cultural shifts.

In another study closer to home, that underscores the ideological view of literacy, Prinsloo and Breier investigated the social uses of literacy, defined as "the practices of reading and writing, or print literacy" (1996, p.24), by adult South Africans in "those social environments from which people are most likely to be recruited onto adult literacy programmes" (*ibid*, p.25). The study was motivated by a concern to understand why it was that, despite an enabling adult education policy environment post 1994, which had as its goal 'mass-scale' provision of adult education, adult education agencies were having great difficulty recruiting students. Suspecting that the assumptions about literacy and its social uses on which policy was based did not mesh with the reality of how millions of adult South Africans made use of literacy in social contexts, Prinsloo and Breier established their SoUL (Social Uses of Literacy) Research Project.

This study highlights, among other things, the importance of de-linking 'literacy' from 'schooling'. 'Levels' of literacy in Adult Basic Education programmes are commonly set against numbers of years of formal schooling. Prinsloo and Breier are adamant, on the basis of their research findings, that the concept of adult education classes "requires a reconceptualisation of literacy that takes it out of the academy and the school, and into the context of social practices" (*ibid*, p. 27). What they found was that literacy skills among so-called 'illiterates' are acquired informally through everyday activities, something they called 'apprenticeship learning', and that mediation, by peers or 'within social networks', allows literacy tasks to be achieved even when an individual is not fully versed in a particular way of reading and/or writing. Thus, if adult literacy is truly a concern of government, it must be embedded within, and take its direction from, the authentic social contexts in which it is not only required, but in which it is already used.

A seminal ethnographic study by Heath (1983) can also be seen as a good example of an ideological approach to literacy. Motivation for the nine year study came from the consequences of the social and pedagogical upheaval occasioned by the legislative mandate, in the 1960s in the southern United States, that all schools should be

desegregated. Heath was a part-time instructor in anthropology and linguistics at a state university in the Piedmont Carolinas at the time. She got caught up in the social and academic fall-out of the sudden integration of black and white children in schools where there was no previous experience of class and racial mixes. Her research focused on two particular communities which she named Roadville (white working class) and Trackton (black working class). What became very quickly apparent to all concerned i.e. teachers, parents and children, of both black and white communities, was that “students and teachers often could not understand each other”, “questions were sometimes not answered”, and “habitual ways of talking and listening did not always seem to work” (Heath, 1983, p.2). In other words, what was obvious was that language socialization was taking place differently within the different communities and this was impacting on school learning and performance. The central question of Heath’s research became: “For each of these groups, what were the effects of the preschool home and community environments on the learning of those language structures and uses which were needed in classrooms and job settings?” (*ibid*, p.4). Though the study as a whole is immensely interesting, it is not my intention to go into it any more detail here, since to do so would be to distract from the main thrust of the discussion at this point. However, it is worth noting the key findings of Heath’s study as they have been subsequently critical to literacy research and pedagogy in general. Though relatively long, I quote them in full, mostly because Heath articulates them so succinctly and deftly, but also to underscore what can be said to aptly reflect an ideological approach to literacy. Furthermore, these findings resonate with the findings and interpretive responses related to this study too.

First, patterns of language use in any community are in accord with and mutually reinforce other cultural patterns, such as space and time orderings, problem-solving techniques, group loyalties, and preferred patterns of recreation. In each of these communities, space and time usage and the role of the individual in the community condition the interactional rules for occasions of language use. The boundaries of the physical and social communities, and the extent and density of interactions within these influence such seemingly culturally remote language habits as the relative extent to which babies are talked to or about.

Second, factors involved in preparing children for school-oriented, mainstream success are deeper than differences in formal structures of language, amount of parent-child interaction, and the like. The language socialization process in all its complexity is more powerful than such single-factor explanations in accounting for academic success.

Third, the patterns of interactions between oral and written uses of language are varied and complex, and the traditional oral-literate dichotomy does not capture the ways other cultural patterns in each community affect the uses of oral and written language. In the communities described here, occasions for

writing and reading of extended prose occur far less frequently than occasions for extended oral discourse around written materials (1983, p.344).

When hooking into an 'ideological' orientation to literacy research and pedagogy, however, there is always the danger that one loses sight of the fact that whatever position one chooses, it too is inherently ideological. And though this might be stating the obvious, it is my contention that, particularly amongst literacy researchers and practitioners, and activists standing left of centre, it is often forgotten. Along these lines, Stuckey (1991) provides a particularly fierce attack on the way in which 'literacy' has been taken up in the US, describing the 'real literacy crisis' being the 'reductive and dangerous' way in which literacy is thought about in the US. Though more than 15 years have passed since she made this observation, recent research suggests nothing much has changed (see Crawford, 2000; Collins and Blot, 2003). Before engaging with 'literacy', Stuckey problematises 'the idea of ideology' as the necessary precursor to debates around the 'ideology of literacy'. To conclude this section, I would like to stress certain points she makes as I see them as highly relevant for academics, researchers and school-based practitioners to bear in mind. I like to think that, in conducting this study, they did not escape my notice.

The first of these is that there are different ways to interpret the term 'ideology' so we need to be absolutely clear on how we use it. In Stuckey's view the term "brings with it a lot of baggage, arguably more baggage than many specialized terms" (1991, p.21). Thus, it maybe that the term is used in its most 'neutral' form i.e. to simply represent a 'system of ideas' (after Poulantzas, 1978). In this sense, "ideas in an ideology conform to one another" (Stuckey, 1991, p.22). This doesn't always mean that ideas relate harmoniously to one another but, in the general scheme of things, according to some 'big picture', they cohere. Then, of course, there is the more politicized use of the term, which is the way in which it is most commonly applied if not acknowledged. Drawing on Eagleton (1984), a Marxist literary theorist, Stuckey (*ibid*) cites him as saying that ideology is

a relatively coherent set of 'discourses' of values, representations and beliefs which [are] realized in certain material apparatuses and related to the structures of material production so to reflect the experiential relations of individual subjects to their social conditions as to guarantee those misperceptions of the 'real' which contribute to the reproduction of the dominant social relations (Stuckey, 1991, p.22).

The most significant point that Eagleton makes about ideologies is, however, that "they tend to subsume ideas according to powerful interests. They tend to make people with limited power feel powerful" (Stuckey, 1991, p.22). Applied to efforts within the Honours programme to 'improve student writing', a vast range of 'ideas' – belonging to students i.e. disempowered people – *have* been subsumed according to powerful interests of others i.e.

academics. Whether 'we' i.e. academic staff, have done this because of a general sense of a lack of power, is a very interesting thought and one worthy of further contemplation. However, that cannot be done here. Neither is whether in doing what we have done in the RWAT module, for example, made the module developers feel more powerful. But being aware of the overriding ideological framework governing one's literacy research and practices, *is* part of the critical work with which one must constantly engage if one is to remain in touch with the impact of one's efforts.

2.3 A pedagogy of multiliteracies

The discussion so far demonstrates that the moment one moves to link literacy practices with social dynamics, seeks explanations for the nature of practices in the social, and speaks of *multiliteracies* or uses the term 'literacies', it can be assumed that it is to an ideological model of literacy that one is subscribing. Thus, while the ensuing discussion foregrounds the work of the New London Group on multiliteracies, its affinity with the principles informing the NLS are quite apparent and should be understood within this wider context.

The development of a *pedagogy of multiliteracies* emerged directly out of a meeting of language professionals in New London, New Hampshire, US in 1994. They met to consider the question: 'What constitutes appropriate literacy teaching in the context of ever more critical factors of local diversity and global connectedness?' What was becoming such a certain reality for so many people by the mid to late 80s, particularly immigrants from non-English speaking countries making their homes now in English speaking countries, was that the social outcomes of existing language teaching practices were seriously undermining their social and economic aspirations. While what students needed to learn was changing, generally speaking, attitudes to language teaching and learning, and classroom practices were not, clinging as so many English teaching practitioners were to the notion of a singular, canonical English and particular ways of doing things.

The New London Group, as they chose to name themselves (taken from the place they first met), decided that the term 'multiliteracies' encapsulated two important arguments they wanted to mount in the face of the changing global order. The first "engages with the multiplicity of communication channels and media; the second with the increasing salience of cultural and linguistic diversity" (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000, p.5). Out of these two arguments, two critical positions were established. The first is that the term 'literacy' could no longer only be applied to language as the primary mode of communication – and by implication the written text as the primary focus of teaching, learning and assessment. In other words, "a pedagogy of multiliteracies ... focuses on modes of representation much broader than

language alone. These differ according to culture and context, and have specific cognitive, cultural and social effects. ... Multiliteracies also creates a different kind of pedagogy: one in which language and other modes of meaning are dynamic representational resources, constantly being remade by their users as they work to achieve their cultural purposes” (*ibid*).

The critical element of multiliteracies thinking as just described is clearly the shift from a conceptualization of ‘literacy’ as to do with reading and writing to the linguistic mode as just *one* form of communication in a ‘semiotic landscape’ (Kress, 2000, p.154). Responding to such a shift requires a radical ideological adjustment which may not be easy for the average ‘literacy’ or ‘language’ educator to make. But Kress and others are in no doubt that the shift must take place if a desired social and economic goal is sustained inter-cultural communication and harmonious co-existence. Though this study concerns itself, in multiliteracies terms, only with the linguistic mode, it does theoretically subscribe to a multiliteracies definition of ‘literacy’. That a multimodal transcription of theory into practice never took place with regard to the RWAT module itself is obviously significant but will be foregrounded in a review of the module for 2008. For now, though, the multiliteracies discussion begun above must be pursued.

Stein (2004) usefully identifies six assumptions upon which multimodal *pedagogies* rest. These are:

1. Pedagogy is semiotic activity within relations of culture, history and power.
2. Meaning making is bodily, sensory and semiotic.
3. Meaning making is multimodal.
4. Meaning making is interested action.
5. Language is limited.
6. Meaning making is transformation, creativity and design.

When unpacking the full import of the first assumption, Stein identifies classrooms as ‘semiotic spaces’ in which “multimodal texts are constantly being produced and transformed by human beings who are agents of their own making” (*ibid*, p.98). Each multimodal text, is a “complex sign in response to, in resistance to, and in transformation of other signs” (*ibid*). And as all signs have ‘roots’, they have a history, a *social* history which means they cannot be read off as isolates or separate from systems of interconnectivity and ideologies.

Furthermore, as in the discourse of multimodality and semiotics, 'text' is not limited to written text but to anything from which meaning can be read, the gestural, the visual and the sensory must all be taken into account, a point made more specifically shortly. All classrooms, therefore, are loaded with the interplay of signs which no teacher can afford to ignore.

Stein's second assumption, that meaning making is bodily, sensory and semiotic is of particular relevance to this study since it offers a critical correspondence with one of the theoretical phenomenological precepts adopted in it viz. the centrality of the embodied subject. She makes the point that:

meaning cannot occur outside of or without the body. Bodies hold history, memory, thought, feeling, and desires. Bodies hold language and silence. Our bodies are repositories of knowledge, but these knowledges are not always knowable in and through language – they can be felt, imagined, imaged or dreamed. ... Modes are produced in and by the body. The body articulates meaning. Multimodal pedagogies conceptualize human beings as embodied subjects, which posits an integrated relation, rather than dualism, between the body and the mind" (2004, p.99).

Thus, that which is biological is understood as indivisible from that which is 'mental', not such that the former 'causes' the latter, or the latter the former, but that without the former (which itself can be 'socialised') no latter can exist. In many cases of course, the biological make-up of individuals does critically determine the nature of their mental functions, but such a category of individuals does not feature in this study and so no further comment will be made in this regard.

Phipps (2007) also endorses multimodal pedagogies and phenomenology in taking up the theme of the embodied nature of experience to explore a new angle on higher education viz. that of perceptions gained through the senses, particularly the auditory sense. Playing deftly with the word 'sound' and variations of it – 'soundness', 'soundings', 'soundscape' – she explores the changing nature of higher education and the ways knowledge has been understood, in order to pose new thoughts on the 'how' of higher education for the future. She draws on Law (2004, p.1) who asks the rhetorical question, 'what happens when social science tries to describe things that are complex, diffuse and messy? The answer ... is that it tends to make a mess of it', and Law's belief that in order to know 'something of the complexity of social life – of which higher education is of course a part', we need to work in different ways, 'give up on simplicities' and expect things to get messy. Phipps says, "we will need to teach ourselves to know some of the realities of the world using methods unusual to or unknown in social science. We should attend to the hungers, tastes, pains of our bodies.

We need to listen to our sensibilities, private emotions, passions, intuitions, fears, griefs or betrayals. We need to find other ways of knowing the world” (2007, p.7).

And Peseta, when writing about her own Ph.D journey, reflects on the ways in which “the pedagogical positioning of my identity within the Ph.D. has occurred primarily through taking notice of the body” (2001, p.83), despite coming to recognise the extent to which the Ph.D. itself is constructed as a ‘disembodied project’ by the higher education institution at which she was registered. That this was not in reality the case was rendered painfully obvious to her when it became clear that the presiding view was that she, as a part-time, Samoan woman student, could only speak legitimately in relation to these ‘locations’. She says of this phenomenon, “I am expected to only speak of them, to be expert about them, and then to consume them as unproblematic and stable. ... If I refuse to perform to the way I am seen, then the extent of my ‘real’ connection to those sites is subject to distrust” (*ibid*, p.86). What these three examples of attention being given to the ‘embodied subject’ in pedagogical contexts emphasise, is the very real need to give this ‘mode’ more attention than has historically been the case in traditional classrooms – be they at school or higher education level. To do so, however, requires a conscious effort to reorientate one’s mind to the inherent scope and possibilities for learning and teaching that the body offers. In other words, in order to tap into the deepest knowledges of students, pedagogical practices that invite ‘bodily participation’ must be included alongside those of the written and spoken modes.

The third assumption on which theories of multimodality and semiotics build i.e. that meaning making is multimodal, is, in my view, more reiterative of the point above than one entirely separate from it, so not too much more focus will be placed on it. In other words, that in order to *enact* a pedagogy of multiliteracies, attention must be given to *all* modes of meaning: the body (as a vehicle of meaning), the spoken and the visual modes, and not just the written/ linguistic mode, most especially in English, which has historically dominated formal education in South Africa.

When reading into Stein’s fourth assumption viz. that ‘meaning making is interested action’, it is worth pondering on how close the relationship between this action as ‘interested’ could be to the ‘action’ of *intentionality* as it is defined in phenomenological terms. If “every sign produced is a representation of the sign maker’s interest ... [and] interests are personal, cultural, aesthetic, psychological and political” (Stein, 2004, p.106), then what we have to do here in order for the language of description of phenomenology not to conflict with the language of description of multimodalities i.e. to ensure theoretical alignment, is to be able to read off a dialectical relationship between the ‘interested action’ of multimodality theory and

the intentionality of phenomenology such that both can be seen as inherent to the body-mind-social trilogy. In the light of the phenomenological position I have adopted in this thesis, this is not only an easy reading to undertake, it is an inevitable one and thus, in my view, usefully underscores the conceptual coherence of the study as a whole.

Perhaps one of the most significant – and sobering - assumptions on which multimodal pedagogies are built is the fifth one Stein identifies i.e. that language is limited. Other theories of literacy, because they foreground the written word so fulsomely, tend to ignore the silences that rest between texts – be they written or spoken, yet in a country such as South Africa, where our history has been characterised by the violent social, economic and linguistic oppression of the majority of the people, there have been innumerable instances where it is to the silences that we should have listened rather than to the voices that spoke. And this remains the case. Stein, citing Ross (2000), and Henderson (1999) as examples, identifies the silences surrounding women’s experiences at the Truth and Reconciliation hearings, and the silences surrounding boys’ and girls’ sexuality in *New Crossroads* in Cape Town, respectively. The notion of silence and silences, and asking questions such as: Who has the right to be silent? Should silences always be filled? Whose voice must be heard? have been relevant to this study too. In interviews, for example, the issue of the silence that filled pauses and hesitations, that reflected a reluctance to engage, were not regarded as trivial and nor were they easy to negotiate.

Stein makes the point, borrowing from Jaworski and Sachdev (1998) that “in language and literacy classrooms where talk and words are the focus of study Articulatness, volubility, and general eagerness to talk are perceived as positive and desirable qualities in learners. Silence and reticence are constructed as detrimental to learning” (Stein, 2004, p.109). But managing silence in classrooms is a matter requiring sensitivity and nuance, for it is as easy to reinforce marginalization by leaving alone students who do not offer to speak, as it is to insist they speak. “In multimodal pedagogies, silence as a mode of communication has the materiality of sound without volume; it has rhythm and variation. It is a mode that is participatory, affirmative and productive rather than oppositional and resistant” (*ibid*). Thus, by signalling the *limitations* of language, as multimodal pedagogies do, rather than taking a position on its limitless potential, one is well placed to adopt a critically reflexive pose in order to identify the limitations of one’s own pedagogy, thus shifting the ‘blame’ for ineffective learning to the teacher rather than is most commonly the case, onto the learner.

The final assumption that Stein identifies as integral to a pedagogy of multimodality is that ‘meaning making is transformation, creativity and design’. Foregrounding these features of meaning making and not, for example, that it is perhaps also coercive, reproductive and/ or

predetermined, represents the optimistic engine that drives multimodal pedagogy. In accounting for change, multimodal pedagogies seek to tap into the creative, rather than destructive character of it, such that change becomes ‘an activity of redesigning’ in which “the sign maker changes the available design and this action is transformative: it transforms both the object that is the focus of the redesigning *and the designer*” (*ibid*) [emphasis in original]. When engaging in an act of redesigning, a designer draws on an extensive representational history. From a pedagogical perspective, a teacher’s responsibility is to create circumstances in which learners are given the opportunity to explore and draw on these representational histories as they journey towards increasingly higher levels of communication competence.

Thesen also argues for a multimodal pedagogical position. She makes the point, in relation to the written mode in higher education, that it is “privileged, mediated and policed as the dominant mode in the institution” (2001, p.133). She identifies ‘the essay’ as an entrenched form of assessment, but a ‘mixed sign’, that is, “simultaneously inviting personal engagement and requiring a rational, distancing language with which to express this, within discourses with strong yet subtle rules for what constitutes evidence” (*ibid*). Unravelling and mastering the exact nature of the essay-as-mixed-sign is notoriously difficult for students (and much more will be said about this later), and when this stands as the only form of assessment, can jeopardise their progress substantively. In the light of this, Thesen argues for a multimodal approach to assessment such that a “range of meaning potential systems (particularly in the visual mode) in addition to the verbal” (*ibid*), should be foregrounded. Essentially then, multimodal pedagogues argue against logocentrism and for an understanding of communication (not literacy) as multimodal in nature.

2.4 James Paul Gee and Discourse Theory

From the above discussion it is clear that the NLS field has grown vigorously over the past 40 years and continues to do so. While it is impossible to give a comprehensive account of all the seminal contributors to the field within the constraints of this thesis, Gee (1996, 1997, 2004) has played a central role in this study, particularly with regard to a response to the data, and so before moving to critiques and rebuttals of critiques of the NLS movement, and by way of closing this section of the chapter, specific focus is given to key features of his thinking.

Underpinning Gee’s specific theory of language and literacy is the notion of Discourses (with a capital D), and within this theory “language makes no sense outside of Discourses, and the same is true for literacy” (1996, p.viii). Use of the term ‘discourse’ (with a lower case ‘d’) by

Gee, refers to “connected stretches of language that make sense, like conversations, stories, reports, arguments, essays and so forth” (*ibid*, p.127), and for the purposes of understanding Gee’s Discourse Theory, it is important to hold these distinctions in mind. While it is likely that the concept of Discourses (as conceptualized by Gee) is well understood by readers of this thesis, for the overall theoretical coherence of it, I will, nevertheless, continue to elucidate his theory.

Embedded as Gee’s Discourse Theory is in a view of literacy as social practice, its point of departure is a lived reality of which everyone of us has had experience viz. social contexts, in which, on the one hand, we experience discomfort and/or a sense of having miscommunicated and/or evoke overt hostile reaction – some response that indicates that in some way something is ‘wrong’ with the interaction, or on the other, in which we experience a ‘successful’ communication. With regard to the former, Gee suggests we cannot automatically assume that ‘language’ *per se* is the problem, that it is ‘wrong’, and that it was “surely not grammar” that caused the miscommunication or tension, but rather that the “saying (writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing *combinations*” (*ibid*) employed in the interaction were inappropriately constellated. It is these *combinations* that Gee refers to as Discourses. Thus,

Discourses are ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes. A Discourse is a sort of identity kit which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognise (*ibid*).

From this it is possible to see that the relationship of Discourses to identity construction is critical to Gee’s Discourse Theory. So the way in which one enacts the combinations of saying (writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing, which implicitly involve ‘language’, renders us *who* we are, and as such, recognizable to others.

To illustrate this point, Gee gives the example of what it means to be a ‘real [American] Indian’, and draws on a study by Wieder and Pratt (1990) to do so. What emerges is that “the problem of recognition and of being recognised is very consequential and problematic for Indians” (Gee, 1996, p.129). In other words, one is not simply a ‘real Indian’ (to another Indian) because one has blood/ biological ties or speaks an ‘Indian’ language. Though it is essential to have some kind of ‘kinship ties’, “to get in the ‘game’” (*ibid*), “there is no being (once and for all) a real Indian, rather there is only *doing being-or-becoming-a-real-Indian*” (*ibid*) [Emphasis in original.] So the matter of identity here is one that is constantly under negotiation and requires active, sustained participation in practices for ‘recognition’ to be

assured. What one has to enter, in other words, is the Discourse of 'being an Indian' if one is to make any claims to being a 'real Indian'.

Thus, what also becomes apparent, besides the way in which Discourses construct identities, is that they also have a gate-keeping function, acting something like a club which reserves the right of admission. 'Membership' of a Discourse, as can be ascertained from the 'Indian' example, is dependent on being able to fathom 'the deep rules of practice' (which include how language is used) that govern a particular practice, but this is an extremely difficult thing to do. Only when one is an 'insider', does one ever get to be completely familiar with these 'deep rules'. Thus, Discourses are intimately related to issues of social power and those Discourses which have certain elements of 'ways of being' in common with, or similar to, other Discourses, yet retain a distinctive identity, constantly jostle for superiority and dominance. What is certain, is that when one is a member of a Discourse, one intuitively knows it even if one does not have the vocabulary to articulate it in this way, and hence being a member of a Discourse that dominates in a particular context, is particularly advantageous. We are also all members of many Discourses and hence take on multiple, socially situated identities. Discourses are thus, "inherently and irredeemably 'political' and so is the process of acquiring them" (Gee, 2004, p.26).

Having established the concept of Discourses, Gee makes the important distinction between Primary and Secondary Discourses. Primary Discourses, he says,

are those to which people are apprenticed early in life during their primary socialization as members of a particular family within their sociocultural settings. [They] constitute our first social identity, and something of a base within which we acquire or resist later Discourses. They form our initial taken-for-granted understandings of *who* we are and *who* people 'like us' are, as well as what sorts of things we ('people like us') do, value, believe when we are not 'in public' [emphasis in original] (Gee, 1996, p.137).

Secondary Discourses are all those Discourses to which people are 'apprenticed' "outside early home and peer-group socialization" (*ibid*, p.138). It is crucial to register that Gee does not see the boundaries between Primary and Secondary Discourses as "airtight and unproblematic" (*ibid*). As he points out, many social groups, 'filter' elements of Secondary Discourses they value into the socialization processes they utilize for their children. So, in South Africa, for example, one could say that many emerging middle class African language speaking families and communities are 'filtering' a Western, English-language based, capitalist Discourse into Primary Discourses that historically showed no or little evidence of these elements. Conversely, "people strategically use aspects of their primary Discourses in pulling off performances in some of their secondary Discourses" (*ibid*). The dialectical

relationship between Primary and Secondary Discourses is important to note since it both accounts for, and allows for, agency and changes in Discourses over periods of time. But recognizing the deep seated dominance and influence of a Primary Discourse, is, I would suggest, fundamental to understanding how Discourses are lived or enacted.

In terms of how we come by the Discourses we 'own', Gee invokes a further conceptual distinction to explain this process, namely that between 'acquisition' and 'learning', along the same lines as Krashen (1982) in the latter's consideration of adult second language learning. Thus, 'acquisition' refers to the mastery of something through a 'natural' process i.e. without conscious attention to formal learning, and without formal teaching. Simply through trial and error, modelling and unselfconscious practice, something – a second language, 'the deep rules of practice' of a Secondary Discourse – are 'acquired'. 'Learning', on the other hand, involves "conscious knowledge gained through teaching ... or through life-experiences that trigger conscious reflection. ... It involves explanation and analysis ... [and] inherently ... attaining, along with the matter being taught, some degree of meta-knowledge about the matter" (Gee, 1996, p.138). Though 'acquisition' and 'learning' appear here to be quite easily separated processes, in reality the matter is seldom so clear, and should rather be seen along a continuum. In addition, both processes have a positive and negative spin to them. In explaining this, Gee says that "we are better at performing what we acquire, but we consciously know more about what we have learned" (*ibid*, p.139). In a formal pedagogical context, therefore, to maximize the potential for 'performance' and 'knowing', an environment which facilitates both acquisition and learning needs to be established.

The notions of 'situated meanings' and 'situated activities' are also integral to Gee's Discourse Theory. In short, they speak to the issue of 'meaning' and where this resides. Given that Gee's theory, as firmly established already, is one that is socially-embedded, 'meaning' within this framework is understood to be something that is "negotiated between people in and through communicative social interaction" (Gee, 2004, p.19). In other words, "at the level of social languages, *there is no such thing as meaning*" (*ibid*) [emphasis in original]. Gee argues that "words do not have general meanings. Rather, they are associated with different 'situated' or 'customized' meanings in different contexts" (*ibid*). Thus, when Gee speaks of *situated meaning*, he is referring to

an image or pattern of elements from our embodied experience of the world, including our experience of texts and conversations, that we assemble 'on the spot', in context, as we communicate, based both on the way we construe that context and on our past experiences (*ibid*).

Closely connected, in Gee's theory, to the way in which 'meaning' is instantiated by situations and related activities, is the notion of 'cultural models', which are very like what we might ordinarily understand as schemata. However, Gee's 'cultural models' are not individually owned or "ever completely stored in any one person's head" (*ibid*, p.20), but are the 'storylines' or 'theories', shared by people belonging to a particular social group, that "explain', relative to the standards of the group (though often at a fairly taken-for-granted and unconscious level), the sorts of situated meanings that people tend to assemble for their words and phrases" (*ibid*). 'Cultural models', thus, constitute representational resources on which a range of different people might draw, yet in doing so, exhibit solidarity. What happens, in other words, when people understand things similarly, is that the 'situated meanings' attributed to a particular 'situated activity' has been achieved through recourse to sufficiently common elements of shared 'cultural models', including the 'social languages' to articulate these meanings. However, when people draw on the 'wrong' cultural model to instantiate meaning in a particular situation, it is generally speaking, much more than just the 'language bits' that emerge as inappropriate. Since cultural models are integral to Discourses (and vice versa), 'situating' meaning 'incorrectly' can impact on the full combination of saying (writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing. This is a heavy burden to shoulder, but is one that is more often felt than intellectualized and understood. In the case of the participants in this study, for example, the stress of trying to access the RWAT learning materials and readings was attributed to the poor organisation of the learning materials and difficult 'language', whereas I suggest, in Chapter 7, that what was really happening was that they were encountering a Secondary Discourse with few points of similarity with any of the other Secondary Discourses they already owned.

To conclude, I would argue that Gee's theory of Discourse is a very useful explanatory tool when it comes to making sense of 'what goes on' in social practices, and the role 'literacy' plays within these, since it takes into account the critical issues of identity, power relations, agency and social reproduction. The particular relevance of Gee's work to this study will become more apparent when the reader gets to Chapter 7.

2.5 The NLS: Critiques and Rebuttals

The NLS movement has not been without its critics, however. One of the major criticisms emerging over the past few years (Brandt and Clinton, 2002; Collins, 1995, Collins and Blot, 2003) of the NLS is what is seen as their overemphasis on the 'local'. These critics argue that in studying 'local' literacy practices the influence of 'distant decisions' aka 'distant literacies' might be overlooked or, worse still, that these 'distant' literacies take on an 'autonomous' guise as per an autonomous model of literacy. Street (2003) is adamant,

however, that no confusion should arise between recognizing that 'distant' literacies (particularly global technologies) are 'out there' and impacting significantly on local literacies (even if those participating in local literacy events and practices are unaware of this impact), and labeling them 'autonomous' as per an autonomous model of literacy. As he says, "the features of distant literacies are actually no more autonomous than those of local literacies, or indeed than any literacy practices: their distantness, their relative power over local literacies and their 'non-invented character as far as local users are concerned, do not make them 'autonomous', only 'distant', 'new', or hegemonic'" (2003, no page). In short, there is no form of literacy, from an NLS–sociocultural perspective that is not ideological.

In the Preface to Prinsloo and Breier's (1996) study, Street had already taken on criticisms of the NLS. Given the strong contextualization of this study, and the RWAT module, within the NLS movement, it is worth engaging with Street's earlier rebuttal of these criticisms. He identifies three main criticisms of ideological approaches to literacy which he terms 'the three Rs' viz. Relativism, Romanticism and Relevance. Thus, critics concerned about NLS studies that foreground the social, 'local' uses of literacy, see a danger in these 'local literacies' "relativising literacy in potentially dangerous ways" (Street, 1996, p.4). Thus, these critics, instead of seeing the *value* of an understanding of these literacies, see NLS-type studies and approaches to 'literacy' as "celebrating local practices that are no longer appropriate in a modern, indeed 'post modern' condition where high communicative skills are required, including formal literacy" (*ibid*). They see these approaches as entrenching marginalized literacy practices while those "with access to dominant discourses and power continue to reproduce the literacy sources of their own dominance" (*ibid*), giving the impression that education practices serve only the interests of the elite and the already powerful. Street offers strong arguments against this relativism charge.

In the first instance, he makes the critical point that the ideological model of literacy only relativises literacy practices at the analytic level "enabling researchers and activists to recognise and describe variation where the autonomous model sees only uniformity" (*ibid*, p.5). In other words, the concepts of 'autonomous' and 'ideological' models of literacy serve as tools of analysis, not as pedagogical approaches, though as can be seen from the experience of the RWAT module, engaging learners/ students more explicitly and thoughtfully in how 'literacy' can be constructed, can form part of a pedagogical experience. Secondly, assuming that only those with 'access to dominant discourses' have the scope to 'be powerful', itself assumes that these discourses (and genres) are "fixed, universal and given" (*ibid*, p.4), whereas they are not. The 'rules of 'dominant discourses' or 'dominant literacy genres', as Street notes, are in fact often quite arbitrary, and in principle can be

changed, since anything socially and historically constructed is open to change. By foregrounding 'change' rather than 'access', Street argues that ideological models of literacy, because they work from the premise that all literacy practices are inherently to do with power relations, penetrate the dynamics of social practices in ways that autonomous models cannot. Street maintains that there "are no 'genres of power' as such, only culturally based ways of knowing and communicating that have been privileged in relation to others" (1996, p.5). Explicating these 'culturally based ways of knowing and communicating' does not mean judging each to be of equal social power, as the relativism charge implies. Rather, it means being able to 'elicit and analyse precisely' the power dimensions implicit in each, and each in relation to the other.

Against the charge of 'romanticizing' local literacies, Street contends that NLS studies cannot be accused of this, provided of course that they work within the 'social practices' NLS framework with integrity. Because NLS research is committed to change and transformation, not the retention of the status quo, there is no place or need to romanticize anything. In fact, were one to romanticize literacy practices, this would completely undermine the work of the NLS and render it null and void. What NLS studies do attempt to do, in order to respond to the transformation agenda, is set the 'local' against the 'central' and search for ways in which there can be a reciprocal relationship between the two. As Street says, "the resultant mix of local/central is quite different from the romantic vision of rural paradise left pure and unsullied by urban or modern interference, as the critique of 'romanticism' would have it" (*ibid*, p.6).

At the present moment, despite the points of criticism identified above, it is probably safe to say that the broad framework of the New Literacy Studies movement continues to dominate literacy research, though as will become evident below, contributions from other areas of linguistics, particularly, Systemic Functional Linguistics, are also increasingly making an impact.

2.6 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

In as much as the NLS movement can now be seen to have influenced the development of the RWAT module, so too has its development been influenced by the field of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Genre Theory. SFL is described by Halliday (1994, p.6) as a linguistic model "that is functional from two points of view: the external, that of the function of language in society, and the internal, that of the way a particular language is organised to fulfill the functions it has to: to represent the world, to create relations between those communicating and to signal the structure of text". Its origins lie in work done by

Halliday and associates in the 1960s when they, as members of the University of College London, were asked to submit a proposal to the Nuffield Foundation for a project that would develop language education in the UK. Though Halliday now says that he has no record of that document, he recalls that it said something like “that it seemed that the time had come to take up some of the achievements of modern linguistics and bring these together with the experience of teachers and see to what extent this could be incorporated in some way or other into classroom practice” (2006, p. 18). Very significantly, the development Halliday and his colleagues would propose concerned English mother tongue classrooms and not English as a foreign or second language as might be assumed given the scale of the ESL and EFL industries today, and Halliday’s influence on EFL and ESL pedagogy. Three year funding was provided on the strength of this group’s proposal and extended for another three years (under the auspices now of the Schools Council). Out of this project, which directed its attention to the foundation phase, middle school and 16+ year groups, came three final outputs: *Breakthrough to Literacy* (foundation phase), which continues to be implemented in schools in many African countries, *Language and Communication* (middle school) and *Language in Use* (+16).

The historical importance of this early work of Halliday and his colleagues cannot be underestimated. In his own words, “it was particularly during this 1960s period that what we now know as SFL came into being” (*ibid*, p. 26). The work done then combined language and linguistic expertise from a range of sources besides that which the group itself owned, especially that from the tradition of European linguistics, in order to “develop a comprehensive overview of language, one which was rich in perspectives, or dimensions if you like; language as a variable system; that of realization and linguistic strata” (*ibid*, p. 27). Halliday continues to acknowledge the critical role that teachers played in this early development work, and the value of the interactive process followed by the project team as a whole, two elements of theory and curriculum evolution which are sometimes easily forgotten in education.

Ruqaiya Hasan (another of the founding members of the SFL movement) joined Halliday’s team in 1965, choosing to focus on the area of connectivity in text. Some of her earliest memories of this period were having lots of ideas from linguistics that she felt could be contributed to the project but which she found very difficult to translate into terms that classroom-based English language teachers could understand and internalize, a situation which still confronts even applied linguists when working on school-based projects today. It was at this time too, that she met Basil Bernstein who subsequently became a colleague and personal friend. His influence on Hasan was profound and sowed the seeds of important

later SFL developments (see Rose, 2004, 2006). She says of her thinking in these early days that “it became quite clear to me that along with connectivity of discourse, it is very important to think of language in terms of its different sorts of varieties and to figure out what underlies variation of different kinds” (2006, p. 35), thus signalling early engagements with the relationship between ‘language’ and ‘meaning’, particularly in written texts. Given that ‘grammar as a resource for meaning’ is such a commonly used phrase now, it is interesting to reflect on a time when it did not exist. When Hasan *et al.* began their work on trying to integrate Bernstein’s idea of codes into a more thoughtful linguistic framework, though the ‘grammar as a resource for meaning’ phrase didn’t exist, she says that “the systematicity of the word-meaning relation was drawing our conscious attention to itself as a result of the work for example on transitivity and cohesion” (*ibid*, p.36).

Hasan, when recalling these earlier times, notes that “everything I did by way of linguistics pushed me more and more to the recognition of the centrality of meaning and social context – it has seemed to me that language is important to us only because it is a resource for meaning” (*ibid*, p.37). Hasan draws a subtle distinction between this focus and that of Halliday’s. Halliday, she says, will always say, “*look at grammar, think grammatically*”, while her “impulse has been to ask *what is the meaning and how did this meaning manifest itself to me?*” (*ibid*) [emphasis in original]. Where language learning and ‘meaning’ is concerned, Hasan has this to say, “Language learning is not about manipulating structures – the main issue is cultivating the ability to mean appropriately, which require relating grammar to meaning, not ignoring it” (Hasan, 2006, p.32).

The issue of where meaning resides is of course the nub of sociocultural perspectives on literacy. Hasan sums up her views on ‘meaning’ by saying,

To me, the entry into any situation is by attending to its meaning. To my mind, this does not exclude wording: it is just a different way of getting to the semiotic power of language. There is no competition between meaning and wording, no reason to privilege one or the other: they are both sides of the same coin, you simply do not have to treat both sides in every respect as if they were identical” (*ibid*).

In these words, lie the roots of Hasan’s orientation to semiotics. It simultaneously accords the linguistic mode of meaning-making as much prominence as any other mode.

But it is the identification of the relationship between text and ‘context’, the in-depth analysis of the *metafunctions* that texts serve (Halliday and Hasan, 1989), and the realisation of these functions in the ‘grammar’ of texts, that perhaps most distinguishes SFL approaches from most other literacy approaches currently promoted. Thus SFL approaches are as concerned

about teaching and learning language as they are about teaching and learning *about* language, which means a return to knowledge about how language works i.e. the 'grammar' of a language, but from a *functional* perspective. If we follow Halliday, for example, the metafunctions text serve will be either *experiential*, that is the language we use will function to represent our experience of the world, *interpersonal*, that is the language we use will function to represent the way we interact with each other, or *textual*, that is, the way we use language will function to create logically organised, coherent spoken or written stretches of language. However, there is the danger too, in the way SFL is applied to approaches to literacy development in some contexts, that so much attention is given to teaching 'about language', that growth in proficiency of 'the language itself' is jeopardised. Maintaining some kind of balance, therefore, is critical.

Thus, if one is looking for the overlap between the NLS and SFL movements, one finds it in the basic assumptions informing both movements i.e. that literacy must be understood as social practice, that language both constitutes and is constituted by the social, and that implicit within ideologies of language-as-social practice are issues of identity and power. Perhaps the difference between the two movements is more about emphasis than anything else. Thus SFL approaches give a primary emphasis to 'grammar as a resource' as indicated earlier, in terms of realizing meaning, which most NLS approaches do not. And, though SFL literature does not seem to address itself directly to the notion of 'multiliteracies', there is not, in my view, any inherent contradiction in positing a multiliteracies position within an SFL framework. Boughey (in press), in fact, presents a useful study which draws on both an SFL and a multiliteracies perspective to show that these two theoretical positions are not mutually exclusive but can in fact complement one another. In an attempt to explain better why some students fare so much better than others when they enter university and are faced with 'the texts of a university', she suggests that "many of these students will draw on understandings of the purposes and status of a text which have been derived from their home or school communities. These understandings will then lead them into specific ways of engaging with those texts" (*ibid*, no page). By taking this position with regard to what students are doing, Boughey is clearly subscribing to a multiliteracies perspective.

What Boughey then does, is draw on the SFL constructs of field, tenor and mode, but most particularly, tenor, to show that it is the way in which students express themselves, as one of the two parties in the interlocution i.e. that communication flowing between reader and writer, that renders the text a student is writing as 'appropriate' or 'inappropriate' to the context in which s/he is writing. The main point Boughey aims to make through this study is that the language choices students make when they write in the university are based on

“understandings of a context which differs to the context of the university” (*ibid*) and not because they do not know ‘how to learn’ or have not mastered effective study skills. This point is taken up later with reference to a study by Lea and Street (2000).

In summary thus far then, the NLS movement has been described and its link to the RWAT module established. In addition, a broad framing for Systemic Functional Linguistics has been offered and an example of how it might relate to the NLS in practice discussed. Further on in this chapter, SFL will be returned to in the context of the work of David Rose and its impact on the RWAT module. For now, however, it is necessary to move onto Genre theory and pedagogy as the RWAT module is overridingly a manifestation of the Genre Approach, itself one of the pedagogical realisations of the SFL field, hence the sustained relationship with this area of scholarship.

2.7 Genre theory and pedagogy

Johns (2002) offers a useful overview of the field of genre theory and pedagogy, identifying as she does so the ‘various intellectual camps’ within it. The way in which each of these ‘camps’ discusses the term *genre* exposes the tensions that rest between them and Johns highlights three main areas for our attention. These are: (1) those arising from ‘divergent theoretical foci’. For example, whether a theory *primarily* emphasises the text as ‘language and structure’, or whether a theory “stems primarily from social theories of context and community” (2002, p.4); (2) those arising from a view of genres as ‘fixed’ entities which can be taught and learnt with relative ease, or a view that genres are so “slippery and evolving – and thus thoroughly contextualized – that building a curriculum around them is virtually impossible” (*ibid*); and (3) those related to actual pedagogic practice i.e. which genres should be taught – ‘macro’ genres such as narrative and exposition (as suggested by Grabe, 2002), or discipline-specific genres, or the ‘everyday’, ‘specialised’ and ‘reflexive’ domains of genre identified by, for example, Macken-Horarik (1996). For the purposes of her review, Johns selects the work of the Sydney School, work done in the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and that of the New Rhetoric, as three distinct ‘camps’ within the field of Genre studies. In the context of this study, the work of the Sydney School in Australia is foregrounded since it underpins the content and approach of the RWAT module.

The emergence of the genre approach to literacy teaching in Australia was strongly contextualized by the socio-political framework of Australian education during the 70s. The traditional curriculum had been abandoned and in its place, a ‘progressivist’ curriculum had been installed. However, by the 1980s, “it was clear that the new progressivist curriculum was not producing the goods. It was not producing any noticeable improvement in patterns

of educational attainment. In fact, all it seemed to do was make teachers' jobs harder" (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993, p.1), the latter largely a consequence of the shift in the role of the teacher from the 'sage on the stage' to the 'guide on the side', as student-centred pedagogy took hold.

Progressivist literacy teachers focused on the individual's development within a 'whole child' development paradigm. Here, each child is valued for her/his uniqueness, and the expression of this uniqueness is what matters most. Hart (1995, p.19) says of progressive literacy teachers that they are "non-judgemental and do not adopt roles of overt or blatant authority. Instead they take on the role of guide, counsellor or friend as the most effective means of empowering the individual through developing their confidence in their own voices". 'Process' in writing teaching in progressivist approaches was the primary emphasis, with the greatest amount of attention given to those genres that depended on individual experience and creativity e.g. narrative, rather than factual genres, the latter now recognised as of equal, if not greater importance to teach through formalized instruction (at least by those oriented to SFL approaches).

But the issue of 'educational attainment' lay at the centre of emerging resistance to progressivist approaches. What became increasingly apparent was that middle-class children from homes that most closely reflected the norms and expectations of the schools, were outperforming working class children. Walsh, speaking of the UK context at this time, says of it that "We were beginning to conclude that the power of voice, in fact, matched the moral temper and cultural aspirations of middle class children from child-centred households" (2006, p.164). Thus while the progressivist curriculum purported to be more open than the traditional curriculum, it was also "founded on a set of cultural and linguistic presuppositions more inclined to favour a middle class culture and discourse" (Johnson, 1994, p.38). What both traditional and progressivist approaches had failed to do, therefore, was challenge the existing social order through literacy curricula that foregrounded issues of access and equity.

In a sense, therefore, in varying contexts, many teachers were ready for something different. This is not to say the genre approach was met with unreserved praise and acceptance, only that by the late 80s and early 90s, the time was ripe for an innovative approach to literacy teaching to be introduced, and large scale projects such as the *Write it Right* project in Australia did much to advance genre pedagogy's cause. Though this project ended more than 10 years ago, I have chosen to give it a limited amount of specific attention. This has been done for two reasons: firstly, because in explaining how it came about and tackled the issues it was called upon to tackle, certain key principles of genre theory and pedagogy are

made evident, and secondly, because the impact of this project has continued to influence Australian education policy today, suggesting that genre pedagogy can be considered a dynamic force in national literacy strategies.

The *Write it Right* project (WIR) was a large scale 'school and industry based language education project' run in New South Wales between 1991 and 1995. The object of the WIR was to "research the nature of literacy demands within and across industrial sectors and to relate these findings to literacy in the secondary school Key Learning Areas" (Veel, 2006, p.67). Funded by the Education and Training Foundation, through the Disadvantaged Schools Programme (DSP), a team consisting of "an industry research team of three, a school research and training team of up to six, and an academic consultant" (*ibid*), was set up. The whole political point of the project was to find a way to make secondary schooling more relevant to workplace needs.

Though in some circles questions were raised as to the integrity of a programme that could claim to be working in the interests of social equity when the curriculum concerned was based on an outcomes model (as by then Australia's educational system was working within an outcomes-based framework), Veel reiterates the goal of the Sydney School's approach to genre teaching, namely that it seeks "to address issues of systemic social inequity through detailed descriptions of text and context developed from broader sociolinguistic theories" (Veel, 2006, p.69), and that anyone familiar with Bernstein's sociology and the SF model of language would not dispute this. Thus the members of the WIR team themselves, were not in any conflict with regard to what they were planning to do.

The WIR project, grounded as it was in Halliday's early work on SFL (1975, 1985, 1989), addressed itself to the relationship between the 'language and institutional contexts' of the junior secondary school (the point at which discipline-specific knowledge is introduced to students), and industry. The primary aim was not to work out whether 'school language' was relevant to industry or not, "but rather in what ways it was relevant" (*ibid*, p.71). Thus the project drew, for instance, on Halliday's early work on the relationship between context and text. What he observed was that:

The context of situation, the context in which the text unfolds, is encapsulated in the text, not in a kind of piecemeal fashion, not at the other extreme in any mechanical way, but through a systematic relationship between the social environment on the one hand, and the functional organisation on the other. If we treat both text and context as semiotic phenomena, as modes of meaning, so to speak, we can get from one to the other in a revealing way (Halliday and Hasan, 1985, pp.11/12).

This seminal observation i.e. that “the internal organisation of language itself corresponded to the external organisation of social context” (Macken-Horarik, 2002, p.9), gave rise to the ‘tripartite construct’ of *field*, *tenor* and *mode* referred to earlier in this chapter, and taken together, constitute the *register* of a text. To remind the reader, ‘field’ refers to ‘what is going on’, the ‘field’ of social activity “in terms of some overall social institution” (Macken and Slade, 1993, p.212). As these writers note, within a secondary school curriculum there are numerous disciplinary ‘fields’, each of which engages in a set of different activities differently organised. The same would apply in industry. To reiterate the meaning of tenor and mode: ‘tenor’ references the ‘who’ of a text i.e. the relationship between the interlocutors. Depending on who is being addressed, language choice will vary, and ‘mode’ refers to the medium, the channel-type of communication e.g. written or spoken. It goes without saying that the written mode demands a quite different orientation to conveying context and meaning, than does the spoken mode – for all the reasons exemplified at various stages in this thesis.

In addition to Halliday’s context of situation, however, Martin’s (1985) ‘context of cultures’ – a layer of ‘context’ superimposed on, or above that of ‘situation’ also came into play when working on detailed descriptions of the language used in both school and workplace contexts. The fact that the WIR project was located in junior secondary schools was important for theoretical and practical developments in the genre approach. Prior to this, genre pedagogy had been almost exclusively trialled and implemented in primary schools where strong subject/ discipline boundaries do not feature much. Given the heavy emphasis on subject content in secondary schools, it soon became clear to the WIR team, however, that teachers were only interested in the new approach, where explicit teaching about text structure and grammar featured, *if they could see that learners learnt their content better as a result of the approach*. Veel acknowledges that the “long term aim, to encourage teachers to understand the fundamental role played by language in constructing knowledge in their discipline, was achieved by only a handful of teachers who trialled the materials” (2006, p.86) that were developed by the WIR team. This is a sobering comment but perhaps does not come as any great surprise, since effecting real change in classroom practices is known to be the most difficult element of any macro transformative educational agenda.

It is in the detail, however, of the WIR work, that the window on the genre approach is opened. The first mammoth task that the team was called upon to do was to develop languages of description used in the different institutional contexts with which they were working so that these descriptions were meaningful for the participants in these contexts i.e. that however they were described, they would be recognised and owned by the participants.

In getting started on this level of the project, it became apparent that the WIR project team “needed to develop more elaborate models of the relationship between text and context at the stratum of Context of Culture. The elaboration needed to occur in two directions: vertically, in terms of hierarchical relationships between written genres, and horizontally, in terms of relationships between written genres types within contexts” (Veel, 2006, p.73). In other words, though Halliday’s model of ‘text’ embedded in ‘context’ i.e. the Context of Situation, was necessary, as was Martin’s additional overarching ‘Context of Culture’, as a whole the model was not sufficiently nuanced to capture all the layers that needed to be considered within and across the various institutional contexts. So the investment in this particular aspect of their work was enormous and in Veel’s view: “The various descriptions and models of a range of institutional contexts in the workplace and school remain perhaps the most distinctive contribution of WIR” (*ibid*, p.74).

An example taken from a chapter of the WIR report by Veel and Coffin (1996, pp.194/5) which focuses on the language of school history, shows a ‘four-stage protocol’. These four stages move “from the stratum of genre to that of register and finally to grammar” (*ibid*: 74). For anyone not familiar with the *how* of working with the genre approach, the following stages might prove illuminating. From a reading of these four stages, it should be quite easy to see that they can be mapped onto any curriculum planning process at any education level, including higher education. In fact, if this kind of detailed linguistic investment was made by all academics before commencing a teaching programme, I would argue that the majority would be far better placed to own the impact their pedagogic practices have on students than is currently the case.

1. Analyse the range of written genres encountered by students in their reading practices and demanded of students in their writing requirements etc.
2. Locate the genres in relation to the syllabus, outcome statements, public examinations, school programmes, school assessment and classroom practice etc.
3. Analyse register shifts (field, tenor and mode) in genres across subject areas. Link these to broad aims and rationales in syllabuses.
4. Analyse lexicogrammatical shifts in genres across subject areas. Link these to specific learning outcomes. (Veel, 2006, p.74).

But doing a genre analysis of say, a Grade 8 History syllabus (and this is where the four-stage protocol above is applied), does not give any indication of History in the institutional setting of the school, and/ or its relationship to industry. The same goes for Science, Media

studies etc. Thus, the second stage of the WIR project was, therefore, having analysed the literacy demands of a school syllabus, to understand the different syllabi demands in a hierarchical sense, and then relate these to industry's needs and existing processes. And vice versa. Thus, the team worked consistently within school and workplace contexts to try and provide 'detailed and delicate' descriptions of genres in order to demonstrate the clear relationship between mastery of the various genres and learning outcomes in school syllabi, and 'workplace competency/ qualifications frameworks'. As their work progressed, they found it increasingly necessary to define genres ever more finely as the way in which a genre was used within a particular syllabus/ workplace context gained specificity or nuance. One example they give of this experience is that of the 'foundational' genre of *explanation*. In the school Geography syllabus, as students moved up the secondary school grades, 'explanation' on its own was inadequate to describe certain geographic phenomena they were called upon to 'explain'. Thus, distinctions were then drawn between 'sequential explanations', 'causal explanations', 'factorial explanations' and 'consequential explanations'. The same went for the genre of the report. In describing geographic features, 'descriptive reports', 'comparative reports', and 'macro-reports' emerged, in the view of the WIR team, as quite distinctly different from one another in terms of register, hence the need to name them differently.

Veel notes that the way in which genres were described in the WIR project followed the same pattern as earlier genre-based work. By this is meant that "descriptions were of written texts only, and schematic structures were linear, showing texts moving from stage to stage" (*ibid*, p.81). It was only in the later stages of the project that "new parameters and techniques were developed for describing written genres. Among them were the inclusion of elements other than written text in the analysis (multimedia analysis) and the development of non-linear techniques for modeling generic structure" (*ibid*). I include this last point only because in the later discussion on how the genre approach was applied in the RWAT module, it will be seen that the module reflects the early WIR project approach to genre description, not any later developments that occurred.

Notwithstanding the small scale success of changing teachers' approaches to their discipline-based teaching, the pedagogic methodology used in the genre approach in the WIR project continues to be used today. It makes use of, in essence, a three-stage model viz. Deconstruction, Joint Reconstruction, and Independent Reconstruction. When working with the teachers who participated in the WIR project, the first stage, 'Deconstruction' (of a text), was based on a genre selected by the teachers themselves after they had decided what and how they would like to order the content of their subject for teaching.

'Deconstructing' the text included "translating texts into tables and diagrams and summarizing texts, as well as examination of the structure and generic stages of texts" (*ibid*, p.87). While deconstruction of a text takes place, the relevant field is built up. Deconstruction was followed by the second stage viz. 'Joint Reconstruction', where under guided tutelage, students (in this case, the teachers) *together* wrote a new text in the same genre on the same topic. This was followed by the final stage viz. Independent Reconstruction, which more or less speaks for itself. Below is the diagrammatic representation of the teaching-learning cycle that was developed by the end of the WIR project.

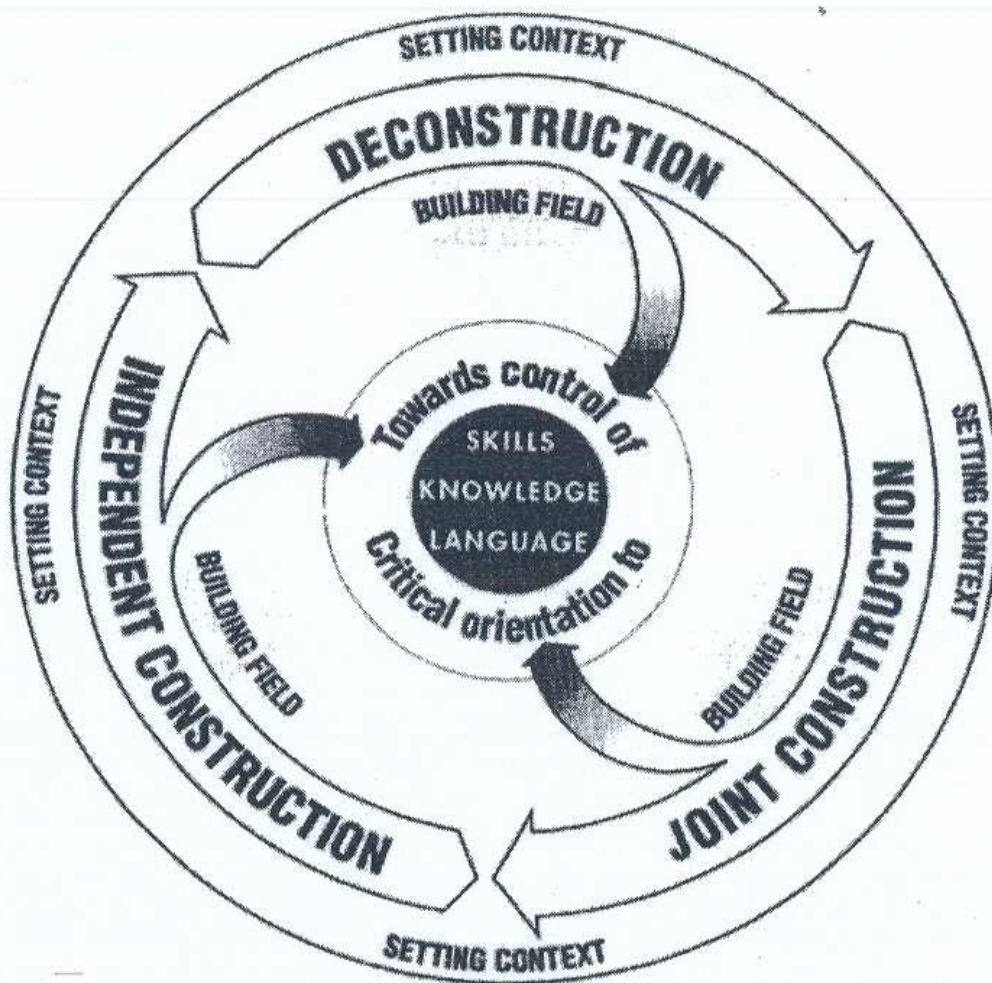


Figure 2.1 WIR teaching-learning cycle (from Coffin et al., 1996, p.vii) in Veel, 2006, p.87.

As indicated earlier, the impact of genre pedagogy on the Australian schooling system (and in fact now, on South Africa's new curriculum too) has been significant. Polias and Dare, for example, note that, in Australia, "despite its controversial beginnings (see Reid, 1987), genre-based pedagogy is now a widely accepted part of many teachers' practice, as

reflected in curriculum documents and in the kinds of resources produced for teachers” (2006, p.123).

2.8 Reading and Writing Academic Texts (RWAT) and the Genre Approach (GA)

The Genre Approach is introduced and applied in the RWAT module in a relatively simple way and reflects early genre-based work (such as that which the WIR project used in the early to mid 90s) rather than more recent developments. In other words, and to repeat what was said of the WIR project’s use of it, “Descriptions [of genre] were of written texts only, and schematic structures were linear, showing texts moving from stage to stage” (Veel, 2006, p.81). The RWAT Learning Guide Part Two entitled: *Writing with Power: The Genre Approach* (Hart, 2003), contains all the genre ‘content’ material the students engage with in the module. The list of ‘core’, compulsory readings, and the one ‘additional’ (optional) reading was provided in the previous chapter and so won’t be repeated here. This guide draws on the work of Christie (1989), Kress (1993), Callaghan, Knapp and Noble (1993), Cope and Kalantzis (1993a, 1993b), Martin (1985, 1993), Macken and Slade (1993), Bhatia (1993), Derewianka (1998), Butt *et al.* (2000), Droga and Humphrey (2002). In this guide students are first introduced to the term ‘genre’ (and how to pronounce it) and told that it refers to ‘different types of writing’. Various examples of different genres are given e.g. a job application letter, instructions on how to operate a computer, a scientific experiment. The point is then made in the Learning Guide that each of these can be recognised as a different genre because

they all have different purposes and therefore are structured (organised) differently, and use language differently, to achieve those purposes. This means that there are conventions (generally accepted ‘rules’) about structure and language use in different genres – they are patterned in reasonably predictable ways. A consequence of this is, that if you know how these genres are patterned (their linguistic and structural conventions), then you are in a better position to write effectively and successfully in those genres. On the other hand, if you do not have this knowledge you could be excluded from achieving different communicative purposes in society, and this could limit your possibilities of participating in it (Hart, 2003, p.1).

Thus the relationship between communicative purpose and structure of a text is introduced, as is the notion of grammar-as-resource, and the socio-political underpinning of the approach. Students also engage with the differences between written and spoken texts (through short, in-text tasks) and ways in which genres can be classified e.g. according to Martin’s (1985) ‘factual’ and ‘non-factual’ classification, and the range of subsets of genres within these over-arching frames. For the purposes of the RWAT module, only five genres - and each in their most basic, ‘foundational’ form only – are given attention: the narrative, the

newspaper genres of news reports and editorials, explanation and the academic argument. From one year to another, depending on feedback from the previous year's students and tutors, the emphasis given to the first four genres through in-text activities, assessment tasks and contact session activities, varies. The greatest emphasis, however, always remains on the academic argument i.e. three out of the five contact sessions foreground work in this genre, as do two out of the three formal essay assessment tasks, and the examination.

Although it maybe easy to grasp the idea that language use changes depending on our communicative purpose, there are many aspects of the RWAT module that are essentially alien to students – *and tutors*, almost all of which relate to their embeddedness in Systemic Functional Linguistics. And as one grapples more steadfastly with SF grammar, and I speak here as a language practitioner trained many years ago in traditional approaches to language teaching, more and more of the familiar is made strange. In holding fast to the experiential, interpersonal and textual functions, or metafunctions, of language as explained earlier, it has perhaps been inevitable that a new metalanguage has evolved, for how else can we be made to speak differently about what is now seen more clearly to be the work that language does? However, learning advanced SF grammar 'speak' when one has been steeped in traditional language teaching approaches is difficult. The clause, for example, becomes a critical focus, and the notions of 'theme' and 'rheme' integral to the function of a clause. Halliday describes 'theme' as "the point of departure for what the speaker is going to say" (1994, p.38). In English, a theme usually occurs as the starting point of a speaker's/ writer's message so is generally fairly easy to identify. But then, the notion of 'theme' must also be understood in terms of being either an interpersonal theme, a topical theme or a textual theme, depending on the function it serves. And, when speaking of verbs, one must now also be able to speak of *processes*, when speaking of nouns, *participants*, of adverbs, *circumstances*. In addition, one must get comfortable, for example, with terms such as 'determiner' and 'evaluative vocabulary' when coming to grips with the interpersonal function of language, and understand that the latter can be divided into three categories: Affect, Judgement and Appreciation. It is very much more complicated than this but this will give some idea of just how different the discourse of SF grammar is from that with which the vast majority of South African teachers are familiar.

In the RWAT module (Learning Guide Part Two), although we did not take students very far into SF grammar, we did introduce them to the notion of the 'theme' and theme development in a text, and the role of the clause in this process – all under the banner of ways to achieve coherence and cohesion in texts. *Theme* was described as "the point of departure for what the speaker is going to say" (Halliday,1994, p.38 in Hart, 2003, p.53), and students were told

that “in English this point of departure is what comes first in the clause and it functions as the starting point that a speaker/ writer has chosen for a message” (Hart, 2003, p.53). Topical, Textual and Interpersonal themes were introduced, as was the concept of theme and rheme. In addition, other linguistic means of achieving coherence were highlighted viz. logical connectors, reference items, repetition and synonymy. Finally, modality and nominalization were addressed. Once again, however, given the model of delivery, it must be said that none of these elements just described were allocated sufficient time for an extended engagement, on the part of students, with them.

2.9 Learning to Read: Reading to Learn

Earlier in this chapter I said that I would return to SFL in the context of a discussion of the work of David Rose because of the impact of his work on the RWAT module. It is now the appropriate moment to do this. While at first glance one might wonder at the link between the preceding section and this one, it will soon become apparent, as the research which this section foregrounds also comes out of Australia, and additionally has contributed to further growth in genre-based pedagogy, and reading and writing teaching in general.

The Learning to Read: Reading to Learn (LRRL) programme was established in 2003, as part of the Middle Years Literacy Project set up by the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) in Australia. Research in Australia cited by Rose and Acevedo (2006) i.e. that done by the Australian Curriculum Studies Association in 1996, Barrat (1998), and the Department of Education in Melbourne (2001) identified the ‘middle years’ i.e. Grades 5- 9 as the ‘critical phase of development in students’ lives’. As youngsters grapple with the demands and desires of what it means to be adolescent, it is common knowledge that school performance often deteriorates. This ‘finding’ is of course not particular to Australia, but prevalent throughout the world. What was especially noticeable, however, (and this again would be mirrored in many western countries), was that students “with low levels of achievement in literacy ... have been shown to be those most ‘at risk’ of not completing school’ (Rose and Acevedo, 2006, no page). Thus, what this research indicated was that more needed to be known about the link between literacy and learning during these ‘middle years’, the implications of the greater focus on factual texts that characterised these years, and the concomitant impact of students engaging with more factual texts vis a vis the way knowledge is constructed in the various subject disciplines. Thus the Middle Years Literacy Project had as its broad aim, “to create new learning communities to support schools in improving literacy teaching and learning in the Middle Years (5-9) and to promote continuity of literacy education in the transition from primary to secondary schooling” (*ibid*). Within this context, the LRRL project took shape.

Rose and Acevedo say of the LRRL that it was “specifically designed to improve the outcomes of ‘at risk’ learners (Years 5-9) by using an intensive approach to scaffolding student literacy. The distinctive features of this approach are that it uses high quality, challenging, age-appropriate texts, articulates strongly to mainstream curriculum and assessment practices and redesigns classroom teaching patterns to enable success for all learners” (*ibid*). Importantly perhaps for those with elitist-only orientations, the LRRL programme is marketed as being able to extend the learning capabilities of *all* learners i.e. those ‘at risk’ and the high flyers in any class or group.

As a theoretical framework for his LRRL programme, Rose (and SF linguists more generally now as indicated earlier) has drawn substantively on Bernstein’s sociology, particularly his notion of ‘pedagogic discourse’ in which are embedded ‘regulative’ and ‘instructional’ discourses where “instructional discourse is concerned with the classification of what is taught and regulative discourse with the framing of how this is transmitted” (Martin, 2006, p.97). Importantly, however, it is within the regulative discourse that power relations are embedded. In other words, the way in which the boundaries of a discipline are framed, that is, whether they are weakly or strongly classified (where ‘strong’ denotes very clear, often unpermeable boundaries such as are found in science subjects), and the way in which this knowledge is transmitted from teacher to learner/ institution to learner, *together* constitute the mechanism whereby class stratifications are maintained, and the role and function of schooling can be explained.

Thus Rose identifies the ‘pacing’ and ‘sequencing’ of the school curriculum, drawing on Bernstein’s model of schooling, to theorise for the purposes of his LRRL work, the persistent inequality in outcomes experienced by Indigenous Australian students. This aspect of Rose’s thinking is central to his current work on literacy development and so must be explained in some detail as it will be brought into the RWAT equation in later discussions.

One of the key findings of the LRRL project is that “each stage in the literacy development sequence of schooling assumes and evaluates orientations to meaning acquired in previous stages” (2004, no page). In Rose’s view, there are three general stages in this development sequence that need to be addressed: 1) that which occurs before formal schooling begins; 2) that which runs from junior to upper primary school; and 3) that which runs through secondary school. However, and herein lies the crux of the matter, “the sequencing is more or less hidden from teachers, administrators and teacher educators because of a focus on subject content. As a result, inadequate provision is made for students who have not gained the required orientations to reading at the different stages of schooling” (*ibid*).

What Rose has identified as particularly critical, is that *primary* school teaching practices build on and assume to be in place, the 'orientations to written ways of meaning' that characterise the way in which highly literate middle class families scaffold their children into literacy *before these children even enter the formal school system*. Where these pre-school literacy practices do not feed into those of the middle class formal schooling system, or simply do not happen, as is the case with the vast majority of Indigenous Australian children, the latter are disadvantaged, fall behind and remain in the social class from which they originate. One of the main points Rose makes in this regard is that primary school teachers (in South Africa we would probably narrow this down to Foundation Phase teachers) are not taught how to provide all learners with the type of grounding middle class children bring to school with them and so from the day they enter school, disadvantaged children's paths are more or less set. However, those who have had the benefit of rich parent-child literacy experiences before school even begins "are in a position to benefit most from the next stage of the underlying curriculum – the literacy practices of junior primary schooling, and rapidly learn to become independent readers" (*ibid*).

Drawing on Bergin (1999), Rose maintains that the 1000 hours or more of 'reading' that literate middle class parents share with/ give to their children before they enter school, constitutes "the first stage in a curriculum or reading skills that underlies the content and processes of teaching and learning in each stage of schooling" (Rose, 2004, no page). Since it is crucial that by the end of Year 2 or 3 children are able to read for pleasure independently, in order to be able to take on the next step i.e. learning from reading (in upper primary school), which in turn must be fully exploited in secondary school, Rose contends that any child who missed out on the first stage of reading is doomed to struggle indefinitely since the sequencing and pacing of the curriculum never allows for any form of 'catch up' or consolidation of any prior stage to take place.

If Rose's views of the effects of the sequencing and pacing of the school curriculum are taken seriously, and having been an English first language school teacher myself for twelve years I would endorse his thinking, then he does offer significant insights into how we might account for the differences in school (and university) performance between different groups of students. It is quite true to say, certainly of the primary and secondary schools in which I have worked, and clearly of the schools in which Rose has conducted his research, that reading skills are not taught explicitly past the Foundation Phase and even there, build on assumptions about what experiences learners have already had around literacy. As he says, "learners are evaluated on skills they were supposed to have acquired in the stage before. That is, junior primary evaluates children on reading orientations they have acquired in the

home, upper primary practices evaluates them on independent reading skills acquired in junior primary, and so on" (*ibid*). And in as much as the sequencing of the curriculum undermines the chances of success of learners whose life and literacy experiences stand outside those of the mainstream culture, the pacing of the school curriculum does likewise, for as Rose notes, the "pacing of the school curricula accelerates through upper and primary and secondary schooling, ensuring that the gap between the most and least successful student widens" (*ibid*). And to cap it all, most teacher training does not adequately or openly address this aspect of the 'hidden' curriculum, which continues to leave teachers un- and underprepared to either recognise or respond to what is happening.

Now the link between class and schooling is not new as various examples in this chapter have already illustrated. Thus, this particular aspect of Rose's work, while also extending previous studies, affirms them rather than breaks entirely new ground. However, it has been in response to the inequities of reading experiences and development, analysed within the framework just described, that makes Rose important for this study as aspects of the methodology he has developed for teaching reading were adapted for use in the RWAT module. The methodology he has developed goes by the same name as the project viz. Learning to Read: Reading to Learn

2.10 Learning to Read: Reading to Learn – the methodology

The LRRL methodology is motivated, as by now should be clear about all SFL work, by a desire to democratize social spaces, in this instance, formal teaching and learning spaces. In Rose's view, at the core of teaching and learning lies reading (before writing) and so it is to reading pedagogy that he has given his full attention. As a teaching methodology, besides drawing on Bernstein's pedagogic discourse and Halliday's functional model of language (Halliday 1975, 1989, 1994) as indicated earlier, Rose's method also draws on Vygotsky's (1978) work on learning as a social process, and his notions of 'scaffolding', the role of the 'expert other', and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Adopting a Vygotskian view of learning inserts into the teaching process practices very different from those promoted by progressivist pedagogies. The LRRL method, therefore, calls on teachers to engage in new pedagogic behaviours, the most significant of which centres on the need for teachers to reclaim an active and 'expert' role in order to scaffold *all* learners' learning of new knowledge. Rose vehemently counters traditional teaching practices which foreground reading texts chosen because they match the reading level of the learners. Instead, he argues that the LRRL method's principle of working with texts that are age/ level appropriate, brings *all* learners up to the appropriate level regardless of where they began. In this way, classrooms become democratized spaces rather than spaces which simply reproduce

existing structures. Success in these democratized classrooms, however, depends crucially on providing teachers with the means to teach learners knowledge about the relationship between texts and context, which is why learning to read and reading to learn occupy such a central place in the process.

But reading is a very complex process that requires an individual to engage with a range of systems of meaning making. Rose articulates this complexity very well when he says:

... it is not through processing letter patterns alone that we recognise written words; while the spelling system is complex, the systems of meaning that wordings realize are immeasurably more so, and it is equally our experience of these systems that enables us to read. Again there are intermediate layers of structure in the discourse semantic stratum, between the sentence and the text, in particular the stages that different genres go through to achieve their purposes, as well as shorter phases of meaning within each stage that are more variable. ... And aside from stages and phases, there are other kinds of structure in written discourse, including links between people, things and places from sentence to sentence, varieties of logical relations between their activities, and swelling and diminishing attitudes all packaged within waves of information (2004, p.11).

In fact, from this analysis of what is involved, one might be forgiven for marvelling at the fact that anyone learns to read at all! Be that as it may, it is also true to say that some learn to read more easily than others and that we know that a range of socially constructed forces and patterns impact on the action of engaging with written texts, and that there are serious social and economic consequences for the unevenness of how these forces and patterns are experienced. And so the question “How can we support *all* learners to manage such complexity when reading and writing?” is the one that guided Rose in his development of the LRRL method. In his view, “the Hallidayan language model, complemented by genre and register theory, and observations of child-parent reading at home, enables us to decomplexify the reading task systematically” (In *Designing Literacy Pedagogy: Scaffolding democracy in the classroom*, no date, no page).

Out of the LRRL research, a six stage curriculum cycle has emerged. The following figure is taken from the teacher resource booklet that now accompanies Book 1 (Preparing for reading and writing) of the published LRRL materials (2006). If one thinks back to the WIR project discussed earlier, it is possible to see the seeds of the LRRL model in it.

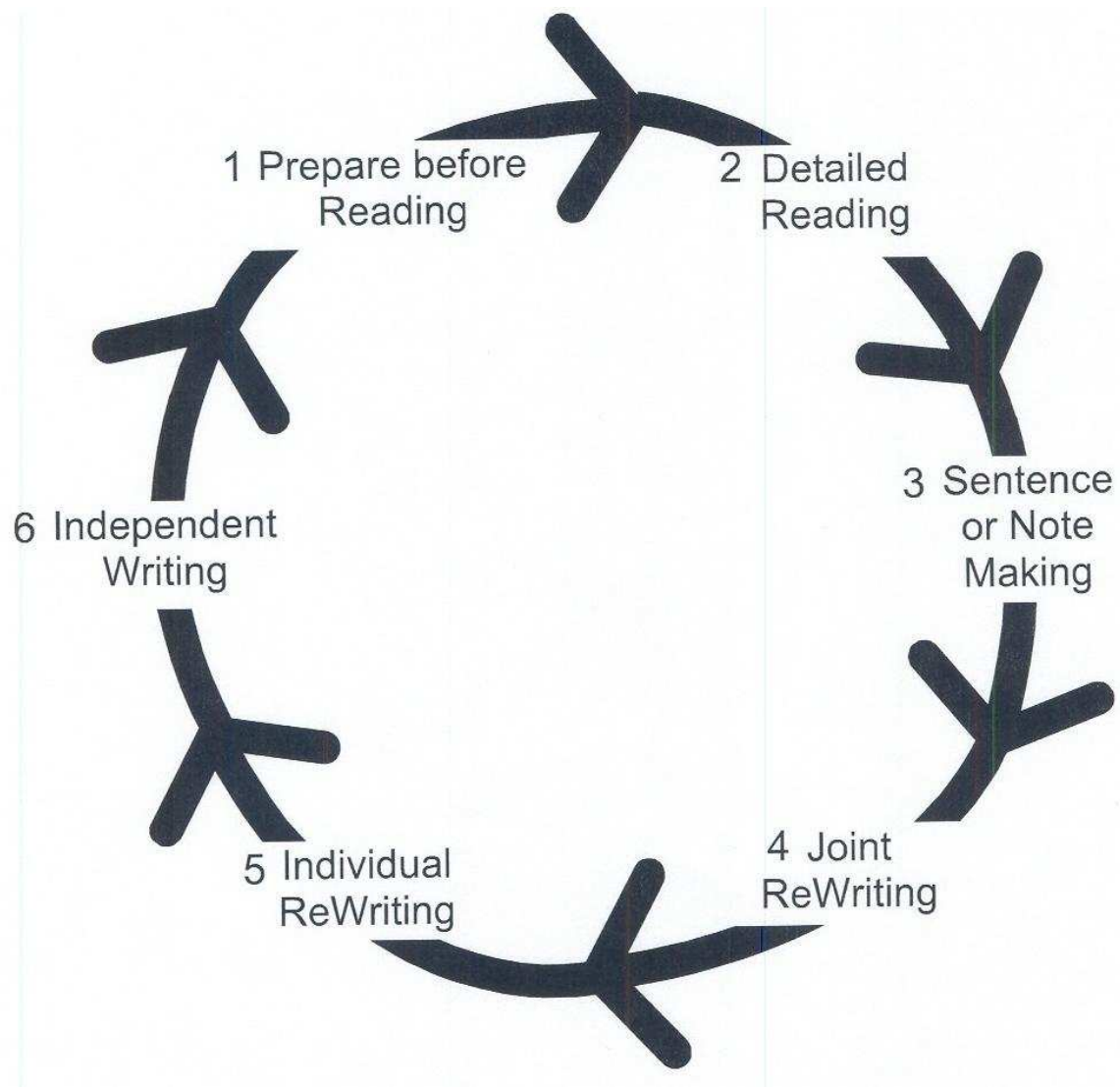


Figure 2.2 From: *Learning to Read Reading to Learn (2006) Book 1*. Copyright: David Rose

However, underpinning all tasks carried out within each stage of the curriculum cycle is Rose's *scaffolded learning cycle* which is constituted by three steps: Prepare, Task, Elaborate. The intention of this scaffolded learning cycle is to support students throughout the learning process at a depth traditionally not offered them. It stands, therefore, in direct contrast to that most pervasive of classroom discourse patterns, namely, the IRF cycle i.e. Initiate-Respond-Feedback cycle. The IRF cycle is intensely reflective of a teacher-dominated pedagogy where the question-answer routine, initiated by the teacher, is the primary method of 'teaching'. Translated into Bernsteinian terms, the IRF cycle reflects a particularly overt manifestation of regulative discourse being embedded in instructional discourse. Rose gives two effective examples of this in Book 1 of the LRRL materials which are worth reading but are too lengthy to include here. Suffice to say the IRF cycle largely serves to entrench class and cultural stratifications since the types of responses that

teachers get when asking questions that require a specific, predetermined response, are usually rejected or accepted in accordance with existing, mainstream social and cultural discourse patterns. Thus those who answer 'correctly' succeed, while those who might, for example, delay, guess, sit in silence, tend not to.

The Prepare, Task, Elaborate cycle – the scaffolded interaction cycle – on the other hand, models itself closely on the type of interaction seen in parent-child reading (as experienced in highly literate families). Thus, a parent spends a lot of time preparing a child for what it is they are going to read – choosing the story, looking at words and pictures, before actually doing the reading. And while they are reading, they are usually constantly elaborating. Rose maintains that elaborations in parent-child reading contexts focus mainly on language patterns, “such as repeating words in a whole sentence”, and the context, such as “what to expect in a story, or its moral judgements” (Book 1, 2006, p.12). Thus, while in the primary school the purpose of reading begins to change i.e. reading activities in school “are framed by the regulative discourse of schooling, so their purpose is always both instruction and assessment” (*ibid*), Rose contends that children would benefit enormously if the type of preparation and elaboration afforded them in preschool reading interactions, continued throughout school. And it is difficult to dispute this, or argue that it is only at school level that this kind of attention should be paid to reading development.

In summary then, the scaffolded interaction cycle can be understood as applicable to all learning tasks. In the case of its application to the six stage curriculum model mentioned earlier, it should be clear that it would be up to the individual teacher to determine how much preparation and elaboration is appropriate to the various tasks embedded in the different stages of the model. But now, I refer back to the curriculum model and how it plays itself out in practice.

In his own words, Rose says that the first stage, Prepare before Reading, “reduces complexity [of the reading process] by providing support at the levels of discourse and graphology” (2004, p.11). In this stage, the teacher reads the text as it stands and summarises as she goes along, ‘its overall sequence of meaning’, but in ordinary, everyday language that the learners understand. “As a result they need not struggle to work out what is going on in the text, nor to decode unfamiliar words, as they listen to the words read aloud” (*ibid*).

The second stage, Detailed Reading, requires that the learners now read the actual words of the text. By ‘text’ here is meant a paragraph selected by the teacher, from the greater/ macro ‘text context’ of the lesson e.g. In History, the section on the Soweto Uprising. This single

paragraph is then focused on in-depth by the teacher and learners. The learners read the paragraph sentence by sentence, but supported by the teacher who provides 'meaning cues' and 'position cues' to ensure that each phrase has been understood. These cues "enable learners to actively identify wordings from their meanings, and so to apply what they learn to other texts" (*ibid*). It is more effective to give examples of these cues within the context of a whole paragraph, but if one looks at the opening exchanges of a lesson David Rose gave a Grade 11 South African History class in 2003, the reader will get some idea of how these terms should be understood.

[Position cue ->] We'll start off with the heading. [Meaning cue ->] The heading's called Revolutionary Days.

[Position cue ->] And then it tells us [meaning cue] when the uprising started.

As the learners work through the text with the teacher in this stage, they also identify and highlight key wordings (these can be single words, phrases etc). Also critical at this point is the inclusion of learners' own experiences as they relate to the topic under study. According to Rose, "Detailed Reading enables all learners to read the passage with full comprehension and accuracy" (*ibid*). It also prepares them for the third stage, Note Making or Sentence Making.

This third stage will vary depending on the age/ level of the learners and the types of texts they are expected to master. Movement through the first three stages is understood by Rose as generally being 'top down' i.e. "from overall meanings in text, through wordings in sentences, to letter patterns in words" (*ibid*). In practice, the Note Taking stage involves a) a scribe highlighting wordings as a 'dot-point list' on the board; b) students taking it in turns to scribe on the board; c) the class dictating wordings and spellings to the scribe (an indication that students are in control according to Rose); and d) practicing spelling key words (Rose, 2004).

The remaining three stages of Rose's curriculum model facilitate "the move back to construct patterns of meaning in new texts" (*ibid*). In other words, in terms of the WIR model, the first three stages constituted the process of 'deconstruction' and contributed to building up the 'field' of the genre, while stages 4-6 do something very similar to the 'joint construction' and 'independent construction' work of the WIR model. In Rose's present model, learners continue to play as active a role in the Joint ReWriting stage as they did in stage 3, as now together with the teacher, the class creates a new text. Importantly, learners take it in turns to literally scribe individual sentences on the chalkboard and use the same 'literate language

patterns' as the original text, but with new content. When writing in the narrative genre, 'new content' is not difficult to generate as clearly aspects such as character, events, settings etc. can be easily changed. When reconstructing factual texts, however, there can be no 'new content' as such – certainly not at school level – since learners are still acquiring a discipline base. 'Newness' in this case, Rose says, relates to the new text being written "in wordings that are closer to what the learners might use themselves in assignments" (*ibid*, p.12). I find this particular step with regard to factual texts quite problematic, since it is very possible to imagine classroom contexts where learners simply do not have a set of 'parallel' linguistic resources to draw on in order to 're write' an original text. Be that as it may, though the same principle could apply to the next stage, let me move on. In Individual ReWriting, learners proceed to write another new text on their own, and finally, in the Independent Writing task stage, they write a piece that will be assessed. Rose acknowledges that "these writing activities flowing from detailed reading extend and intensify the approach of genre-based writing pedagogies" (*ibid*) already developed. He cites work done by Cope and Kalantzis, 1993; Macken-Horarik, 2002; Martin, 1993, 1999; Martin and Painter, 1986; and Rothery 1989, 1996, as examples.

For a full appreciation of Rose's current work one would have to engage with the materials that the LRRL project has developed for teachers in Australia and read the evaluation reports and reviews of the project. For the purposes of this thesis, I believe I have offered sufficient detail to give the reader a clear idea of the work that Rose is doing and how it has been theoretically developed. It remains, as I see it, to say something of how this work has influenced the RWAT module directly and to offer some comment on that process.

2.11 Rose-based reading interventions in the RWAT module

Although *writing* was initially construed as 'the problem' with regard to student performance within the Honours programme, and the RWAT module established in response to this 'problem', in 2003, Hart and I began to pay greater attention to issues of *reading*. This shift in focus was influenced by our early connections with David Rose (in 2001), through research into reading conducted by Pretorius (1998, 2002) with which we had become familiar, and our own growing concerns about students 'simply not reading' There is an implicit irony, of course, in the way we approached our concerns at this point, and the solutions we found, given our supposed NLS orientation. Somehow, at the time, however, we clearly lost our grasp on this avowed orientation. Thus, we began to focus on building explicit reading strategies into the learning materials (drawing on Rose, 2003). Students had always been taught how to preview a text and skim and scan for information, but we had never previously foregrounded reading strategies in the learning materials. This does not mean time was not

allocated in contact tutorial sessions to discussing readings, only that sustained strategies for independent, self-motivated reading development had never been inserted into learning materials before. However, now that the reader has some idea of not only the complexity of the reading process itself, but also the nature and demands inherent in Rose's reading model, it should be apparent that transferring the model to a self-directed, text-based learning programme such as that which governs the distance B.Ed Honours programme, is not really possible. Firstly, the range of prescribed texts that the students encounter in the programme as a whole is extensive in terms of genre, level of difficulty, length, perceived relevance (on the part of students), and field. Secondly, though a number of our tutors on the Honours programme in 2004 were school-based language teachers, all were steeped in traditional and progressivist pedagogies which meant that substantial retraining of tutors was required. Thirdly, no-one other than Mike Hart and I on the academic staff was familiar with genre pedagogy or any aspects of SFL, which truly minimized the possibilities for introducing significant change into the Honours programme via innovative reading interventions such as those developed by Rose.

So what of Rose and the work of the Sydney School found its way into the RWAT module? As far as reading is concerned, a form of scaffolding was introduced. In the RWAT Learning Guide Part One, students were told a little about Vygotsky in order to introduce the concept of scaffolding, before having it explained to them that the degree of scaffolding they would encounter in the first two readings would be reduced by the third and fourth readings so as to move them completely towards independent reading by the last (voluntary) reading. Five steps were designed which incorporated an adapted form of Rose's 'Preparing before Reading'/ Preparation i.e. students were given a synopsis of a reading in ordinary everyday language before encountering the original text, use was made of linguistic cues ('position' and 'meaning') in these synopses, and attention was drawn to the function of these through in-text tasks, where 'elaboration' was also addressed – all of which of course was in addition to the activities which focused on the readings in contact sessions themselves. Furthermore, the established reading strategies of working with pre-reading questions and previewing the text were integrated into these steps.

Thus, in the Learning Guide Part One, students were introduced to an adapted version of Rose's method in the following way:

For each of the four core readings, you will find examples of the following steps which have been designed for you. *You will carry them out in this order.* You will also be asked to do certain tasks which we have set at different points along the way, in your workbook. The steps and support we are giving you here, are based on sound reading research and can be used by you in

your classrooms as well. They draw on genre based approaches to reading as well as strategies developed by the Australian school of systemic functional linguistics. You have an important responsibility to engage with these steps in a highly interactive and self-directed way. The steps are:

1. You examine the title of the text, and any information there might be about the author, the publisher etc., and decide what it means to you and what expectations it raises in you.
2. You will then read a synopsis (or summary) – written in ‘everyday’ or non academic’ language – of the text. This will give you a good idea of what the text is about.
3. You will then *preview* the text. This is a special technique for quickly working out what a reading is about. For the first two ‘core’ texts, this has been modeled in full for you. That is, not only have we explained what we mean by previewing, we have actually done it for you. For the second two ‘core’ texts, you will do this on your own.
4. Then, and only then, will you read the whole text! At this point, you will be given a short set of pre-reading questions to bear in mind as you read.
5. Once you have read the whole text, you will then work in greater depth with the contents of the reading to identify those points/ sections which deepen your understanding of genre theory and which could be relevant/ useful to your essay writing (Thomson, 2003, p.5) [emphasis in original].

Instead of ‘note making’ being a discrete stage in our reading strategies, a point was made following the above, to the effect that “of course note making is one of the most important activities you must do in all the steps we have given you if you wish to become an active reader” (*ibid*).

Despite all the efforts to assist students with accessing the readings through the intervention just described, however, my data shows that no assumptions should be made about the relationship between the *provision* of strategies for scaffolding reading to learn, and their use by students. Working now within the position signalled by the third distinction necessary to have made in relation to my role in the RWAT module narrative i.e. as a *researcher*, and thus from a more clearly defined ideological view of literacy, it seems feasible to suggest that many students did not engage with the reading strategies for the same reasons they did not engage with the readings viz. that they represented social practices with which they were completely unfamiliar. If we go back to the Heath study and draw on her findings to explain student ‘non-reading’ behaviours in the RWAT module, then it is possible to see that early childhood language socialization processes play a critical role in the ‘take up’ of literacy practices as adults, and that these practices are culturally determined and transmitted by adult members of a group. The data from this study shows, with the exception of one participant, that ‘reading’ did not feature as a socialization process in childhood homes, and

with the exception of one other participant, no reading outside of obligatory professional/school contexts is done now as adults. Thus, what we in the RWAT module did not take into account, was just how deeply the literacy practices of students *countered* those we expected to be in place and on which 'success' in the module depended.

2.12 Critiques of Genre and SFL pedagogy

Criticisms of genre-based pedagogies are not new. Ever since their emergence as an alternative to progressivist and traditional approaches to, particularly, school-based literacy development, there have been pockets of resistance to them. Walsh (2006, p.165) observes that as early as the 80s, "progressivists saw [in genre pedagogies] a transmission pedagogy in the mould of the traditional curriculum" and "Traditionalists distrusted the way genre theorists lean towards cultural inclusivity". Like all innovations in pedagogy, therefore, some took to genre-based literacy teaching, and some did not. In North America and Australia, for example, the approach has made a distinctive impact on school-based pedagogy (see Johns, 2002, Whittaker *et al.*, 2006), and as indicated earlier, the Revised National Curriculum Statements in South Africa (First and Additional Languages) also reflect, though do not explicitly state, a genre-based orientation. In the UK too, though no formal acknowledgement is made of the Sydney School's influence, the National Literacy Strategy in Primary schools (1998) reflects a genre-based approach (see Walsh, 2006). What needs to be discerned, however, is what forms genre pedagogy can take, and under what circumstances, distrust of the approach is justified or not.

In essence, those forms that, notwithstanding their ideological claims, reflect *in practice* an a-social, a-cultural, a-historical reality, are those of which one should be most cautious. What inevitably emerges in genre-based pedagogies that neglect to foreground the social-cultural-historical embeddedness of texts, their origins and their purposes, is that genres are taught, and learnt, formulaically, as one might learn a recipe. These approaches can give the impression to learners that genres are fixed and self-contained – 'autonomous' as it were – and can be learnt and applied as such. The data from this study suggests that participants internalized the concept of 'genre' in this way through their experience of the RWAT module, clearly exposing another of its short comings, a point that will be taken up more vigorously in the final chapter of this thesis.

Bleich (1998) suggests that the concept of genre remains static and 'externalized' as just described, when we neglect to make our *unconscious*, everyday use of genres sufficiently explicit aspects of a literacy curriculum. He takes an interesting position on writing pedagogy which places genre at the centre (which is not an uncommon practice), but buoyed up by the

active engagement of students with the notions of 'disclosure' and 'membership' as being integral to a full understanding of genre. Thus he sees genre as providing "a clear structure through which students can detect their own orientations in history, society, and politics" (*ibid*, p.24), and advocates, as a key task of writing teachers, the identification "of which genres in the language use repertoires of students show the mixture, for example, of received values and emerging values of society" (*ibid*). In other words, by engaging with students in close inspection of their *own* language use in genres which they regularly and readily make use of, they will come to understand how the language they use 'discloses' their 'received and emerging values' and reveals their 'membership' of different discourse communities. What this says, of course, is that genre approaches which do *not* foreground students' own existing literacies, certainly as a starting point, cannot claim a social practices orientation to literacy pedagogy, though of course many of them do. Regrettably, RWAT 2004 turned out to be one of these. Thus, though we took students through several 'everyday' genres i.e. the narrative, editorials, the news report, our point of departure was neither *students'* experience of these, nor any others of which they might have regularly made use. Building on Bleich's views, by not doing this, we denied students the opportunity to 'detect their own orientations in history, society and politics', and instead, imposed our own. It is little wonder that there was virtually no 'critical' edge to students' engagement with the RWAT module.

Another criticism of genre-based pedagogy is simply the plethora of genres, and ways to categorise them, that can be found in the numerous textbooks and reference books available. For the average classroom-based literacy practitioner, this makes it very difficult to know which of these is the 'right' or the 'best' one to teach. Even a brief survey of texts will demonstrate this point. Martin (1985) proposes that a distinction be made between 'non-factual' and 'factual' genres. Under 'non-factual' he places 'narratives', while under 'factual', he places recounts, procedures, descriptions, information reports, explanation and exposition. Exposition is further divided into 'hortatory exposition', which Hart (2003, p.17) defines as "texts that persuade people to **do** something (political speeches, sermons, editorials, letters to the editor)", and 'analytical exposition' which Hart defines as "texts that persuade people that some **judgement is correct** (academic writing)" (*ibid*) [Bold in original]. Macken-Horarik (1996), on the other hand, categorises genres according to three domains, the 'everyday', the specialised' and the 'reflexive'. Later, she further categorises genres in terms of teaching writing across the curriculum. This time, she identifies 8 key genres, viz. recount, information report, explanation, exposition, discussion, procedure, narrative and news story (see Macken-Horarik, 2002). Callaghan *et al.* (1993), adapted by Hart for the RWAT module, categorises genres according to five functions they identify as

serving key social processes viz. describe, explain, instruct, argue, narrate, while Grabe (2002) posits ‘the notions of narrative and expository forms’ as ‘macro-genres’. Rose (2006) identifies 6 ‘main types of genre’ found in “the kinds of texts that our students have to read and write to succeed in school” viz. stories, text responses, arguments, reports, explanations and procedures. However, each of these ‘main types’ is broken down further, for example, there is the ‘descriptive report’, the ‘classifying report’ and the ‘compositional report; there are ‘sequential explanations’, ‘factorial explanations’ and ‘consequential explanations’, and so on. All in all, across the ‘English’ and ‘Society and environment’ subject groupings, Rose identifies 22 different genres, each with its own distinguishing purpose, and each characterised by ‘stages’, though in some cases, the ‘sub-genres’ of the explanation and report, for example, each shares the same stages; ‘phenomenon’ and ‘explanation’ in the former, and ‘classification’ and ‘description’ in the latter. Though there are more examples of genres being named and categorised differently, the above should suffice to support the initial point made. In the case of the RWAT module, as indicated earlier in this thesis, the Academic Argument, as an example of the genre of ‘hortatory exposition’, as proposed by Martin (1985) was foregrounded.

In terms of the very much more recent work done by Rose on reading teaching according to SFL principles, critiques are emerging here though as yet they are not prolific. Although Rose works deliberately to avoid introducing a ‘foreign’ discourse to teachers, in his current reading teaching programme i.e. he uses words and terms that are non-specialised, the method is, nevertheless, sufficiently unfamiliar and different that it requires a great deal of commitment from teachers if they are to be successful in it. Martin, in defence of Rose’s methods says that, “As far as I can see there is nothing here to outrage the presumptuous premiers, meddling talk-back radio shock jocks, overburdened teachers, concerned parents or struggling students who have expressed concern about the introduction of knowledge about language into various Australian language education curricula” (Martin, 2006, p.111). Nevertheless, Martin does concede there is a price to pay. He says,

At first blush, a pedagogy that doesn’t depend on SFL metalanguage seems an attractive option, since training in linguistics is expensive and can provoke resistance of various orders (traditional grammar vs. functional grammar, humanities vs. science, ‘creativity’ vs ‘technicality’ – the list goes on). At the same time we have to remember that Rose’s pedagogy involves both global and local design. He’s not just changing the macro-genre deployed for teaching reading and writing; he’s changing the micro-interactions between teachers and students at every stage as well. And teaching teachers to teach differently from the ways they were taught is also costly, and provokes resistance of a comparable order (teaching vs. learning, authority vs. facilitation, democracy vs. elitism and so on (*ibid*, p.113).

When implementing the genre approach and/or more explicitly informed SFL approaches such as Rose's reading programme, perhaps the most decisive factor in terms of 'take up' by classroom based practitioners and students (at school and tertiary level), is the degree of 'distance' between such new approaches (and their discourse) and 'old' and more familiar approaches, and where, ideologically, one is consciously placed (signalled by Martin above). Speaking from my own experience in the RWAT module (now over a period of four years), it is possible to say that the *concept* of 'genre', usually understood as 'different ways of writing for different purposes' by students, is internalized quickly by students (and tutors) because it reflects their lived reality. In other words, they grasp this broad macro feature of the genre approach but, as this study shows, little that can be seen as ideologically embedded and/or transferable to other teaching contexts.

At the *entry* point of Rose's reading programme, the same thing happens. That is, both teachers and students, heartened by 'a pedagogy that doesn't depend on SFL metalanguage' i.e. an alien discourse, are receptive to his ideas. The prepare-task-elaborate cycle makes sense, as do the principles underpinning 'preparing before reading', 'detailed reading' and 'sentence making'. However, executing these processes is not easy in the same way as unpacking the grammatical resources and structures of genres is not easy. So when Martin acknowledges that Rose is 'not just changing the macro-genre deployed for teaching reading and writing' but the 'micro-interactions between teachers and students at every stages as well', he is actually identifying the greatest hurdle of all, belied by the mere words expressing it viz. the resistance to teaching differently to the way one was taught oneself. And, depending on how far one wants to take either genre pedagogy and/or Rose's reading approach, the scope for taking teachers and students into extremely unfamiliar territory is very great indeed. In the South African context, so dire is the state of literacy in our schools (and as many would have it, at tertiary level too), that to engage with pedagogical practices that demand too much radical repositioning too soon on the part of teachers, and students, is in my view to court further disaster. New approaches that teachers cannot internalize as immediately accessible, relevant and 'time-cost' effective will simply not be taken up. What is worse to anticipate, is that those teachers who already have the literacy and pedagogical capital to entertain demanding approaches such as that which Rose promotes, will also be the ones whose schools have the time and the resources to invest in developing teachers in them. At this point in South Africa's history, these will be the already well established, well resourced, historically advantaged schools. Under-resourced, less advantaged schools, which will also be largely rural, will again be left out of the loop, and the 'literacy crisis' will remain unresolved.

Badger and MacDonald (2007) provide a closing critique of SFL approaches. The following models of language which “reflect what words do in their social context” are identified by them as possibilities for the modern language classroom: systemic-functional linguistics, conversational analysis and contrastive rhetoric. For the purposes of this discussion, their critique of SFL is foregrounded. In their view, systemic functional descriptions “are almost entirely syntactic and they cover choices about meaning at a very general level” (*ibid*, p.218). They make the point that although Halliday regards lexis as the “most ‘delicate’ form of grammar”, they maintain that there “is not yet an adequate description of how culture and ‘social context’ is reflected in lexis and lexical variation” (*ibid*). Secondly, Badger and MacDonald believe that the extensive analytical skills which an SFL approach requires (highlighted above), often leave little time for “work on cultural and linguistic variation” (*ibid*). Lastly, they point out that few textbooks in current use in classrooms make use of SFL terminology or concepts. Teaching SFL approaches in teacher education contexts, therefore, could in reality hamper student teachers’ capacity to teach effectively once they hit the real world of the language classroom.

2.13 Engaging with bilingualism: the isiZulu translations

As indicated in Chapter 1, the decision to include isiZulu translations of two key reading texts in the RWAT module was a ground-breaking move in the Honours programme. The macro language policy environment provided a very enabling context in which to pioneer initiatives such as this, informed as it was by the National Constitution (1996), the South African Schools Act (1996), and the Language-in-Education Policy (1997). More recently (2007), the Language Plan for the University of KwaZulu-Natal not only endorses bilingual pedagogy (isiZulu and English) but sets out implementation goals, standards of quality and ways to measure the progress of this plan which is designed to run in two phases, from 2008-2018, and 2019-2029. Thus, the move to include isiZulu translations was fully in keeping with a macro and institutional policy thrust.

However, when engaging in the discussion that follows, the reader must again see it in terms of the thinking that is claimed to have informed the development of the RWAT module, and not the position informing this study. Thus, the rationale governing the inclusion of the translations as they were articulated *at the time of development* were: a) that reading/ learning (isiZulu has only one word for both these) in one’s own language facilitates ‘meaning making’ more effectively than when having to read/ learn in one’s second or third language; b) that unless students are reading at the ‘independent’ level i.e. ‘with 98% decoding accuracy and at least a 95% comprehension level’ (Pretorius 2002, p.92), it is unlikely that they are accessing the information in the texts sufficiently effectively to

internalise and transform this information into knowledge; c) that the 'act' of inclusion (of an indigenous language) would resonate positively at an affective level, if not for all students, then at least for isiZulu speaking students, and d) that there is a direct correlation between being a 'good reader' and being a 'good writer'. If, however, one examines these assumptions from a more informed *social practices* position (as is being done now), then (b) and (d) are immediately problematic for the following reasons. Though Pretorius's research has provided tertiary level educators with new insights into student performance on aspects of the reading process which academic text reading is seen to particularly require i.e. the 'what', 'why' and 'how' of anaphoric referencing, achieving cohesion and coherence, identifying main and secondary ideas and so on, the tests themselves are not grounded in an ideological, social practices view of literacy. That is, they are located within the subject disciplines and set according to academic discourse demands exclusively. Students are assessed against their performance in these tests alone. Secondly, it is painfully obvious now that to say that there is a 'direct correlation between being a 'good' reader and a 'good' writer' is to expose an unhealthy orientation to an autonomous view of literacy in the midst of rhetoric claiming an ideological one.

From a theoretical perspective, however, the move to include texts in isiZulu articulated in (a) above, did draw on well established research findings, particularly from South Africa, on the role of the mother tongue in learning (see, for example, E.G. Malherbe, 1946, 1977; Macdonald, 1990, 2002; Cummins, 1991; Heugh, 2000, 2002; 2006 de Klerk, 2002, and numerous others). Heugh (2002, p.178), however, makes a very salient point when she points out that, despite "a huge body of research which has been conducted in South Africa and which points conclusively to the disastrous effects of attempting to teach mainly through English when the conditions do not and cannot make this possible", this situation continues. One of the motivations to include isiZulu translations in the RWAT module, therefore, was to make some kind of response to research that pointed to the overwhelming value of bilingual learning and teaching.

But penetrating why it is that 'meaning making' is more efficient and effective in one's mother tongue/ 'first' language, touches not only issues of pedagogy and inclusive education but on the relationship between language, culture and identity too. Assumptions are often made, for example, that the increasing tendency for indigenous language speaking parents to place their children in English medium of instruction schools in South Africa, reflects a dismissal and/or denial of cultural and linguistic identities and practices. Research (see Heugh, 2002, de Klerk, 2002) disputes this assumption and indicates how much more complex the matter is than at first is imagined. What emerges is that what the majority of indigenous language

speaking parents would opt for, given the choice, *would* be English as a medium of instruction *but* not at the expense of their own mother tongue. In other words, the ideal for indigenous language speaking parents would be additive bilingualism in its fullest sense where children leave school proficient in both English and their mother tongue, and their cultural identity intact.

De Klerk's research shows too, the conflicting experiences of those children who live 'between two worlds'. Often ostracized by their township peers and/ or alienated within their own families when, for example, "when we pray for food, she prays in English – only her, the rest of the family prays in Xhosa" (2002, p.8), not all children make the transition to English medium schools without some element of their 'birthed' i.e. cultural identity undergoing change and reconfiguration. In an article published in the Sunday Times (10 October, 2002), journalist, Thokozani Mthshali also draws attention to this divided world that young black South Africans are increasingly inhabiting, and the tensions associated with it. Thus, some parents of children from townships such as Soweto, Tembisa, Katlehong and Mhlakeng (on the outskirts of Johannesburg) have opted for private schools in the city centre, or former Model C schools, rather than the local township schools. As Mthshali notes, "Fees of R3000 and upward [and this would be per month] and a 100km round trip were preferable to the R100-a-year school down the road". She also focuses on the language issue, saying that "the language of the new order mirrors a growing hostility between those who travel to the suburbs for their schooling and those who have remained behind". Where 'comrade' was the term used to indicate friendship and camaraderie, this has now been replaced by terms such as 'cheese boys' and 'cheese girls' (because they not only have the money to buy and eat cheese but to travel to the city for their education), '*amabhujwa*' (isiZulu for bourgeoisie), and 'coconuts' ('brown' on the outside but 'white' inside). And Nozipho Masabalala, another young journalist, records the consequences for her own life of never fully mastering her home language, Xhosa, having been taught solely in English since she was nine. Now she has difficulty expressing her thoughts in either English or Xhosa and ponders on her responsibility to her own children with regard to Xhosa – "my heritage" – and English. She sums up the tension so many indigenous language speakers now live with, namely, "While we may want our children to be proud Africans and speak their home language, there is immense pressure to have them schooled in English from a very young age, in the interests of broadening their world view" (Natal Witness, 6 August 2007).

The experiences just described raise yet another issue viz. the change in parent-child relationships resulting from the escalating trend, particularly amongst urban black families, to send their children to English medium schools. Of course, the phenomenon of a younger

generation throwing the cultural practices and norms of their elders aside is not unique to South Africa and is, in fact, a key feature of the emerging globalised environment. However, since the issue is of relevance to this study, for the moment the focus will remain on South Africa, where I would argue that large numbers of black South African families are facing generational differences, as a direct result of post-apartheid social and linguistic integration, of a kind they have not experienced before. The data from this study, and my own interactions with black, indigenous language speaking colleagues in the same position, for example, suggests that black parents of children who have now become immersed in 'white', western values and attitudes through being sent to private or ex-model C schools (and compounded by American influences on TV), show less and less interest in their mother tongue, cultural traditions and heritage. The link between language, culture and identity is taken to be axiomatic by many adult indigenous language speakers. However, for increasing numbers of young black people, the same cannot be said as they confront a smorgasbord of alternative identities and opportunities resisted and/or denied their parents' generation.

Moving to the context of higher education, Leibowitz (2005) highlights the link between identity, teaching and learning. In a study conducted at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, in 2004, established to investigate this triad explicitly, findings showed that language was a key marker of identity for 61% of lecturers, slightly ahead of academic discipline (57%), gender (53%), race (51%) and religion (47%). However, language also "tended to be mentioned in combination with race, culture or gender, as well as nationhood" (*ibid*, p.29), as did language and culture when providing descriptions of 'the other'. The point Leibowitz makes about the way in which language is inter-related with other markers of identity, is that one "cannot adopt change interventions based on isolated phenomena or factors, without considering how embedded these factors are in a myriad of interweaving elements" (*ibid*, p.30). Leibowitz's study also endorses Norton's (2000) view that when one stands out as a member of a minority group, or what I would describe more generally as a historically marginalized group, there is a tendency to define oneself as 'ethnic', which happens less when one is a member of a dominant group.

The English-only movement that is sweeping the United States presently can also be seen to illustrate the link between language, 'culture', identity and power, but offers a strikingly differently situation from that currently facing South Africans. Crawford (2000, p.2), through asking a series of questions about the movement that has emerged "for the legal protection of English and the legal restriction of other languages", pinpoints this link very well. He asks, for example, "Why have politicians encouraged this campaign and the attitude it conveys? What does Official English legislation portend for minority rights and opportunities? What are

its implications for efforts to save Native American languages from extinction? How will political assaults on bilingual education affect children who come to school speaking limited English?”, thus illustrating that power and politics are the driving force behind language issues. However, and what Crawford describes as ‘extraordinary thing’, is that the English ‘activism’ currently manifesting itself, appears to have “come out of nowhere in the 1980s” and been “a phenomenon that few living Americans had ever witnessed” (*ibid*, p.4). To say this is not to say that there has never been language conflict in the US. What drives this particular movement, however, is the sudden dramatic urgency to address what is perceived to be the erosion of English as a common language. The targets of this campaign are inevitably the likes of “linguistic minority groups, bilingual educators, civil libertarians, Indian tribes and others” (*ibid*), signalling as always when the hegemony of a particular language is politically endorsed, that prejudice, stereotyping, and the need for social and economic exclusion, are at the heart of the matter.

As part of his analysis of what he calls ‘being at war with diversity’, Crawford takes the Native American languages and their endangered position as a particular example of the possible consequences of the English-only movement. He asks the critical question, as pertinent to the US as South Africa, namely, ‘Why should we care?’ – about minority languages in the case of the US, and obviously, about indigenous languages in South Africa. Answering this question depends crucially on one’s attitude to linguistic and cultural diversity. If these are seen as liabilities, as has been the case in South Africa in the past (and no doubt this is still the case in many circles), rather than a nation’s assets, then investing in their revitalization and development is not self-evident. Crawford describes four main reasons for caring, each vocalized from a different position. Briefly, the first reason, which as Crawford says, appeals largely only to linguists, is that “the death of any natural language represents an incalculable loss to their science” (2000, p.62). For the general public, however, this reason does not hold much interest or justification. Secondly, and again this reason has limited appeal, a loss of linguistic diversity deprives the world of intellectual diversity. Thirdly, and this time taking a cultural pluralist position, the disappearance of languages reflects ‘a more general loss’ being experienced by the world, but since no-one has any scientific evidence to suggest that this is globally catastrophic, this reason too “while politically potent ... is scientifically dubious” (*ibid*, p.63). It is only the last reason to which Crawford gives his full support, and which I would endorse in the context of this study and the work that I do, namely, that in the interests of social justice, we should care. He cites Fishman (1991, p.4) as saying that “the destruction of a language is the destruction of a rooted identity”. Speaking particularly in the context of the potential loss of Native American Indian languages, but of relevance to South Africa, Crawford asserts that, “Along with the

accompanying loss of culture, language loss can destroy a sense of self-worth, limiting human potential and complicating efforts to solve other problems, such as poverty, family break-down, school failure, and substance abuse. After all, language death does not happen in privileged communities. It happens to the dispossessed and the disempowered, peoples who most need their cultural resources to survive” (*ibid*, p.63).

The extent to which ‘language’ is ‘implicated’ in matters of culture, identity and power is a field of study all of its own. Were there the space and time to extend the present discussion, it would of necessity, engage further with debates around identity construction, race as a marker of identity, and notions of the ‘colonizer’ and the ‘colonized’ in a more intensive and detailed manner, and map salient aspects of these debates onto relevant contextual and pedagogical elements of this study. But this is not possible within the constraints of this thesis. Suffice to recognise that while historically, the colonizer always sought to subdue the colonized and impose an ideological world view that invariably stood in stark contrast to that of the colonized, it is also true to say that “indigenes were never completely quiescent” in all cases. (Collins and Blot, 2003, p.122). Though schooling in the colonies (wherever they were) were intended to produce a select class who would “act to interpret dominant ways”, Collins and Blott make the point that the processes of education also “opened a space for the creation of a ‘counter subject’” (*ibid*). Thus they can say that, “In such spaces those selected for schooling might construct an identity which incorporated native meanings into the colonial discourse in ways contra the colonial order. It is here where the subalterns’ struggle for voice is located. Thus, the ‘new’ identity of the colonial subjects is no mere amalgam of indigenous ways and colonizer manners, but is a true hybrid, an identity born of struggle with and against imperial powers” (*ibid*). While this study does not engage in depth with the type of debates signalled here, the data does show that in as much as the participants find themselves straddling two worlds, the concept of a hybrid identity emerging as a result of the struggle to stay whole and productive within such a context, is pertinent to consider, as is the possibility of constructing a curriculum which creates the kind of space that facilitates the development of ‘counter subjects’ as part of an explicit pedagogical process.

2.14 Defining ‘academic literacy’

From the discussions that have gone before, it should be quite clear now that the RWAT module, conceptually, *aimed* to be theoretically informed by theories of literacy as social practice, the concept of ‘multiliteracies’, and from a critical perspective. It has also been shown, that the consistency of this theoretical position is questionable and that students’ experiences of this position may not have reflected it much at all. It is important to sustain

these tensions as I turn to the problematic of defining 'academic literacy' more generally from an NLS perspective, before a more explicit engagement with how the RWAT module chose to define it. In Chapters 6, 7 and 8, students' experience of this model of 'academic literacy' development will emerge.

Writing in response to Brian Street's paper on 'Academic Literacies', David Russell sums up his findings on what constitutes academic literacy by pulling out common themes around the topic. These are:

that 'academic writing' is not a single thing but an aggregation of literacy practices that make and are made by the epistemologies and practices (including the use of power) of specific disciplines and other institutional formations; that it mediates identity struggles; that it is largely transparent to instructors socialised in a discipline, assumed; that technical solutions such as 'study skills' do not get at the problem. (In Baker *et al.*, 1996, p.118)

Bourdieu endorses this kind of view but makes specific observations about how it is *deviation* from the 'common', the 'ordinary' that gives certain literacy practices, especially those associated with the Academy, value. Thus, whether deliberate or not,

Language that is ... 'well chosen', 'elevated', 'lofty', 'dignified' or 'distinguished' contains a negative reference to 'common', 'everyday', ... 'colloquial', 'familiar' language'... It follows that the legitimate language is a semi-artificial language which has to be sustained by a permanent effort of correction, a task which falls both to institutions specifically designed for this purpose and to individual speakers. Through its grammarians, who codify and fix legitimate usage, and its teachers who impose and inculcate it through innumerable acts of correction, the educational system tends, in this area as elsewhere, to produce the need for its own services and products i.e. the labour and instruments of correction. (1991, pp.60/1)

In other words, the manner in which universities, academics, facilitate their own power bases is through 'legitimizing' their own 'language' or Discourse (after Gee, 1996).

Approaching the issue of 'academic language' from a slightly different angle, Gee engages with the notion of 'language ability'. On the basis of a study on children's ability to 'read' and respond to the very complex demands of the Pokemon games⁴, he makes the very important observation that "the vast majority of children enter school with vocabularies fully fit for everyday life, with complex grammar and with deep understandings of experiences and stories" (Gee, 2004, p.16). In other words, the majority of rich *and* poor children enter school with 'language ability'. Now, if children enter school with 'language ability', why do some succeed where others do not? If one thinks back to Heath's study mentioned earlier in this

⁴ 'Pocket monsters' – "odd-looking little creatures that humans can care for. They can fight each other, but losers don't die, they just fall asleep. Pokemon appear on cards, as plastic figures, in video games, and in television shows and movies" (Gee, 2004: 8)

chapter, some of the answers are already provided. What she noted there was that children are socialized into language in different ways such that children whose homes share a good 'fit' with mainstream schooling literacy demands, do well, and those whose home literacy practices differ from mainstream schooling demands, tend to perform more poorly. Gee, out of his Pokemon study, goes into the matter further, focusing this time on 'varieties' of language. He categorises these 'varieties' initially, according to two broad categories: *vernacular* and *specialist* (or non-vernacular). Specialist varieties are then categorised further into *academic varieties* and *non-academic varieties*. To illustrate his point, he takes 'English' as an example, noting how, because it is so commonly perceived as a language, it is also seen as 'one thing'. He argues, and so do I, that it is not one thing at all. There are many 'Englishes' i.e. varieties of English. Some of these are "dialects spoken in different regions of a country or by different sociocultural groups. Some of them are different varieties of language used by different occupations or for different specific purposes: for example, the language of bookies, lawyers, or video games" (*ibid*, p.16)

In his Pokemon study, Gee says of vernacular varieties that "Every human being, early in life, acquires a vernacular variety of his or her native language. This form is used for face-to-face conversation for everyday purposes ... and is closely connected to his or her initial sense of self and belonging in life" (*ibid*, pp.16/17), thus suggesting the 'Primary Discourses' and 'vernacular varieties' share an intimate relationship. Similarly with 'Secondary Discourses' and 'specialist varieties'. Both the latter are acquired after the initial Discourse/variety, are numerous, and used for 'special purposes and activities', and thus differ at the discourse (small 'd') level. In essence, it is mastery of the grammatical resources of specialist varieties of language, and recognizing that though some of them might be shared with vernacular varieties, it is the way they are combined and their regularity of use within the specialist variety that gives them their specialist flavour. Implicit in certain specialist varieties, for example, 'academic varieties of language', which are the varieties "connected to learning and using information from academic or school-based content areas" (*ibid*), is their status and the power they wield as sociocultural practice. However, from a *learning* perspective, what makes specialist varieties of language difficult to acquire, is that there are both written and spoken forms of these varieties. So, for example, a physicist or computer scientist not only makes use of a written form of specialist language but can also engage in a conversation/ lecture where this 'language' is the means by which his/her 'content' message is conveyed. Thus, as Gee points out, "the two – content and language – are married" (*ibid*, p.18).

In analyzing further, the difference between specialist varieties and vernacular varieties of language, Gee identifies, besides differences in vocabulary, differences in syntax and discourse features. Thus nominalization can be seen to characterise academic varieties of language, and, drawing on SFL theory, it is tenor which determines much at the discourse level. What makes it so difficult for students moving from vernacular varieties of language into specialist academic varieties of language is that academic varieties make use of many of the same grammatical resources as do vernacular varieties, only according to different patterns of use. In the case of many of our English second language students, this phenomenon constitutes a profound problematic for them as the English grammatical resources on which they regularly draw are not as extensive as those of English first language speakers. When entering the academy, therefore, the former group of students have a very much smaller pool of grammatical resources generally to draw on, which reduces considerably, the odds of 'pattern' compatibility with the way in which grammatical resources are employed in academic varieties. But of course, being inducted into academic varieties of language, or 'academic language' as Gee begins to prefer as 'shorthand' for the longer term, begins, in western, middle class dominated societies, before formal schooling even starts, a point made earlier in this chapter. It is in the home, in other words, that "early prototypes of academic varieties of language" must be experienced if children are to succeed according to school norms, and go on to become adults who can join an academic community of practice with ease and confidence.

Gee makes a further very important contribution to a discussion on the 'what' of academic language (used now as Gee uses it i.e. instead of 'academic varieties of language'). After making the point that all language is dialogic "in the sense that it is designed to communicate with an 'assumed other'" (*ibid*, p.92), he reminds us that the 'assumed other' in academic language "is a person who backgrounds his or her distinctive individual, social, ethnic, economic and cultural properties, and in that sense fictionalizes him or herself" (*ibid*). This 'backgrounding' is done so that the person "can take on the persona of a rational, generalizing, deductive, 'generic', 'disinterested', asocial and acultural pursuer of fact and truth" (*ibid*). Even more convoluted is the fact that this 'persona' is also the 'author' (or 'voice') of the written or spoken academic language, which means that academic language "both creates an 'other' and then insists that the 'other' be pretty much like the 'author'" (*ibid*). When one unpacks the properties and function of academic language in this way, it is not surprising that students do not acquire this specialist variety of language very easily or quickly, even if they are motivated to try.

The question of *why* anyone would want to give their all to leaving a vernacular variety of language behind and learning a specialist variety also enjoys Gee's attention.

Notwithstanding that many learners (and tertiary students) have little choice but to *try* and access a specialist variety of language, what would motivate them *intrinsically* to do so? Gee tackles this issue in terms of 'loss' and 'gain'. Working with the school science curriculum context and quite specifically on the topic of the 'hornworm', he demonstrates that the kinds of everyday, vernacular things one would have to leave behind in order to enter the specialist variety of language of science, would be "concrete things like hornworms and empathy for them; changes and transformations as dynamic ongoing processes; telos and appreciation". However, what would be gained would be "abstract things and relations among them; traits and quantification and categorization of traits; evaluation from within a specialized discipline" (*ibid*, p.93). He then asks the critical question, "*Why would anyone – most especially a child in school – accept this loss?*" (*ibid*) [emphasis in original]. In the context of this study, and the drive within the Faculty of Education and UKZN as an institution, to address 'issues of academic literacy', I think Gee offers an astute and critical insight into how we might think into the 'issue' from a different perspective viz. in terms of 'loss' and 'gain'. The data from this study already shows that 'loss' is a key feature of participants' experience of studying in the RWAT module and the Honours programme in general, as is 'gain', but neither 'loss' nor 'gain' has ever been used as a conceptual organizer to think into curriculum matters before, except perhaps, in a 'dominant' way i.e. from the implicit assumption that the acquisition of academic literacy will be a 'gain' for students.

Gee stresses that "specialist languages are tied to socially situated identities and activities (i.e. people use them to do things while acting as certain kinds of people with characteristic viewpoints, values, ways of acting, talking and believing)" (*ibid*). As a consequence, people will only construct a new specialist variety of language as 'gain' if: "(a) they recognise and understand the sorts of socially situated identities and activities that recruit the specialist language; (b) they value these identities and activities, or at least understand why they are valued; and (c) they believe they (will) have real access to these identities and activities, or at least (will) have access to meaningful (perhaps simulated) versions of them" (*ibid*). In my tertiary experience to date, and I would argue that this is the currently the case across modules in the Honours programme, no attention has been given to the notion of 'situated social identities and activities' – as they might already be embodied within students' lived experiences or the lived experiences of academics, let alone how to create a bridge that is sturdy and safe enough for students and staff to cross from one set of situated social identities and activities to the other, without fear of loss, and with gain. To sum up, Gee

provides a simple yet forceful description of how specialist varieties of language can wrench an individual from 'being' in a space that is familiar and characterised by 'gain', and thrust them into another space where the primary experience is that of 'loss'. He forces one too, to consider the full implications of an authentic social practices approach to teaching academic varieties of language.

Lea and Street (2000) also offer useful insights into the whole problematic of engaging with 'academic literacy', and position themselves within a social practice framework. They note that higher education research into student writing falls into three main 'models' which they term the 'study skills' model, the 'academic socialisation' model, and the 'academic literacies' model. Though these models can be found to discretely inform writing teaching in HE institutions, the more common experience is a mix of two or three with emphasis being placed on one more than another. Importantly in the context of this study, Lea and Street do see each model as successively encapsulating those above it, and "take a hierarchical view of the relationship between the three models, privileging the 'academic literacies' approach" (2000, p.33). Thus, there is a different ideological 'representation' in each of these models, such that the first understands student writing as a 'technical and instrumental skill', the second (academic socialization) as a 'transparent medium of representation', and the last (the academic literacies approach) as 'meaning making and contested' (*ibid*). Clearly, what the RWAT module aimed at, conceptually, was an 'academic literacies' approach, though what students experienced suggests that the module reflected an 'academic socialisation' approach much more than was realized at the time of its development. In essence, however, Lea and Street are keen to establish that their own practices endorse a social practices view of literacy acquisition.

So far from this discussion we know that 'academic literacy' is understood to be different from (and often taken to be implicitly superior to) everyday language, which makes it a specialist variety of language rather than a vernacular variety, that it is an amalgam of *practices*, and that the *content* of what we teach cannot be separated from the 'variety' of language in which we teach it. We also know that acquiring a specialist variety of language involves both loss and gain, but that losses can outweigh gains if one is not sensitive to the possibility of this happening. Also, depending on one's ideological stance on 'language', ways to teach students how to write in the academy can vary from a skills-based approach to a social practices approach, with the latter being posited as, ideologically most closely aligned to education as a human rights project. But details remain unclear. What needs to be clarified is where the difference lies, between academics and students, in perceptions of how

'academic discourse'/ 'specialist varieties of academic language'/ 'academic literacies' are realized in practice.

Research conducted by Lea and Street, from 1995 to 1996, in two UK universities showed that staff had very clear ideas of what constituted 'good' student writing. Significantly in my view, these tended to "refer to form in a more generic sense, including attention to syntax, punctuation and layout and to such apparently evident components of rational essay writing as 'structure', 'argument' and 'clarity'" (2000, p.38). In other words, they were broad and vague. In addition, what staff could not articulate clearly, but which was evident in their responses to student writing, was the extent to which their responses were sourced in the specific discourses of their own disciplines, even though they were teaching on multidisciplinary courses which required that *students* integrate disciplinary approaches. And when, in interviews, staff were probed to describe what 'underlay' a well-argued or well-structured piece of writing, they had great difficulty doing so. What they *could* do was recognise an unstructured and poorly argued essay, but not describe a good one. This leads Lea and Street to suggest that "in practice, what makes a piece of student writing 'appropriate' has more to do with issues of epistemology than with the surface features of form to which staff often have recourse when describing their students' writing" (*ibid*). This is a very pertinent point and links, as I see it, to the distinction Morrow (2007) makes in a paper he wrote in 1992, between 'formal' access (to university) and 'epistemological' access. Having 'epistemological' access is synonymous with the type of 'gain' Gee spoke of earlier, and is that 'capital' which the staff in Lea and Street's study took so for granted that they were incapable of analyzing it into its component parts. However, the type of student in Lea and Street's study, and the majority in the Honours programme (including the participants in this study), were granted 'formal' access to the university but did not enjoy 'epistemological' access in a context where, in practice, epistemological ownership ultimately became the implicit criterion by which they were measured. The fact that one of Lea and Street's staff 'subjects' could say "I know a good essay when I see it but I cannot describe how to write it" (*ibid*, p.40), "lends credence to the idea that elements of successful student writing are in essence related to particular ways of constructing the world, and not to a set of study skills" (*ibid*).

From the *students'* perspective in Lea and Street's study, as many difficulties were faced. They described how they took what they learnt in one course and transferred it to another only to be told that it was inappropriate, and to be given negative feedback. They indicated too, that they knew that "their task was to unpack what kind of writing any particular assignment might require" but that this was "at a more complex level than genre, such as the

'essay' or 'report', lying more deeply at the level of writing particular knowledge in a specific academic setting" (*ibid*). Lea and Street's study is of enormous relevance to this study since their students' experiences echo many of those of the participants in this study, and many other students to whom I have taught the RWAT module over the past four years. Thus the following are shared experiences: that "they knew they had to present an argument and they knew that structure played an important part but had difficulties in understanding when they had achieved this successfully in a piece of writing" (*ibid*); students often described how they would complete a piece of work and feel that they had done exactly what was asked of them only to get a poor mark and negative feedback; they often felt "unsure and confused about what they had done wrong" (*ibid*); they found guidelines and criteria in documents unhelpful; and conflicting advice from staff in different courses. Lea and Street draw attention to just how much emphasis is placed in guidelines in documents, on technical aspects of writing viz. grammar, punctuation and spelling. They note too, that they dealt "fully with referencing ... and supplied warnings about plagiarism" (*ibid*).

From the above study, it is clear that there is a great discrepancy between what staff and student perceptions of what 'academic writing' entails, yet what the study reveals feels all too familiar. Students were provided with few recognizable 'hooks' on which to hang their existing, mostly 'vernacular' varieties of language. Most, as a result, had only their previous experiences, outside higher education on which to draw, and in the main, these were inadequate to the tasks to which they were applied. Some more mature students, as in those perhaps in their second or third year of study, treated the whole exercise as a game, "trying to work out the rules, not only for a field of study, a particular course or particular assignment, but frequently for an individual tutor" (*ibid*, p.42). At the same time, other mature students, now defined as those who had gone back into the university after a period of working in other contexts, were frustrated and felt 'severely constrained' by being unable to incorporate expertise acquired in those contexts, into the courses they studied at the university. And all the while, staff sat within an entirely different 'discourse space', but experienced as much frustration as students. If ever there was a lose-lose situation, this study has captured it perfectly.

Numerous other studies over a number of years (see, for example, Baudelot, 1965; Ballard and Clanchy, 1988; Hewlett, 1996; Johns, 1997; Clark and Ivanic, 1997; Thomson, 2001), have also attempted to make some contribution to the conundrum faced by both staff and students when it comes to writing in and for the academy. The point is made by Baudelot for example, that no matter how much staff try and disguise the 'audience' of a piece of student writing, no-one is fooled that it is anyone other than the lecturer. So even when one

attempts, as Clark and Ivanic urge one should, to set 'real' writing tasks, tasks that have an authentic communicative purpose, all 'players' recognise the game. Ballard and Clanchy looked at the type of comments lecturers made on student assignments in order to try and discern what staff took to be key elements of academic writing. What they discovered was that although (aside from 'basic accuracy') relevance and adequacy to the topic, evidence of wide and critical reading and competent presentation were noted, it was 'demonstration of a reasoned argument' that lecturers gave most credit for. Thus, what Ballard and Clanchy (1988, p.14) deduced was that it is only by understanding the 'distinctive modes of analysis' of a discipline, that is, the different ways of questioning (knowledge, assumptions) within it, that discipline-appropriate 'academic literacy' is developed" (Thomson, 2001, pp.36/7). This of course, resonates with Lea and Street's views above, and Morrow's, Gee's, and others. In other words, while one can sensitise students to features of 'efficient' texts i.e. that there is an implicit logic to the ordering and structuring of information in them, that different types of linguistic resources are employed to achieve different forms of cohesion and coherence, and that communicative purpose governs the tenor and mode of a text etc., these are effectively 'surface' features, and even these are often too difficult to master. It is the way in which language use realizes the epistemology underpinning a text, and how, that is really what 'academic literacy' is all about.

2.15 From 'academic literacy' to the 'academic argument' in the RWAT module

It must be clear by now that at the time when the RWAT module was first planned the notion of 'epistemological access' was not used as a conceptual organiser. Perhaps if it had been, a language-as-social-practice framework would have formed a more naturally intrinsic part of its design and the module would have looked very different from the way it finally did, points which will be taken up more thoroughly in the final chapter. Instead, as the reader now knows, a particular form of the genre approach was adopted, heavily influenced by SFL, and 'academic literacy' (in terms of the above discussion) metamorphosed into 'reading and writing academic texts' and 'the academic argument', in a what now clearly stands as a very un-nuanced way. However, the decision to foreground the genre of 'the argument' was not made vacuously. We drew on Ballard and Clanchy (1988), Hart (1995) and others, and our own analysis of the primary thrust of different types of assignments that students were being asked to do in different modules in the Honours programme and came to the conclusion that the majority in reality called for some kind of argument. So while no assignments at that time asked students explicitly to 'present an argument', the implicit requirement was that they do so. The word 'discuss', for example, often concealed the demand for an argument. When the rest of the staff on the Honours programme were consulted on the prevalence of this trend

in assignments and whether they would agree that this is where the emphasis in the RWAT module should lie, they agreed. Targeting 'the argument' for special attention was not, therefore, done without broader consensus. However, the purpose of this final section of this chapter is not once again to defend what we did, but simply to describe how the notion of the 'academic argument' was operationalised in practice, through use of the 'Scheme for the Academic Argument' (presented below) as proposed by Martin (1985).

Scheme for the Academic Argument	
Stage 1:	Introductory or Thesis Stage
Moves	
<i>Optional</i>	Making a controversial statement
	AND/ OR
<i>Optional</i>	Giving background information
Compulsory	Stating the writer's point of view (Thesis Statement) and setting boundaries to the topic.
<i>Optional</i>	Providing brief support for the writer's point of view
	AND/ OR
<i>Optional</i>	Introducing a list of content to follow.
Stage 2:	Development of Argument Stage
Moves	
Compulsory	Signalling the claim (idea in support of thesis) and relating it to the thesis. Usually the first sentence of a paragraph.
<i>Optional</i>	Restating or rephrasing the writer's thesis statement
Compulsory	Providing support/ explanation for the claim. This entails supporting the claim that develops the writer's thesis.
Stage 3:	Conclusion Stage
Moves	
<i>Optional</i>	Providing a signal/ marker to indicate the start of a conclusion
<i>Optional</i>	Restating the writer's thesis
Compulsory	Relating the whole argument to the writer's thesis. This would mean summing up briefly all the major points of the argument.
<i>Optional</i>	Relating the author's thesis to wider issues

Figure 2.3 Scheme for the Academic Argument

For the purposes of RWAT instruction, students are told that in Stage 1, in addition to the established compulsory move of 'stating the writer's point of view (Thesis statement) and

setting the boundaries to the topic', 'Giving background information' and 'Introducing a list of the content to follow' are also compulsory. No amendments are made to moves in Stage 2, but in Stage 3, the 'optional' move of 'Providing a signal/ marker to indicate the start of a conclusion' is made compulsory in addition to the one other compulsory move already in place.

In the brief analysis of how students respond to the 'Scheme' that follows, I am speaking from my position as researcher i.e. with the critical edge that is not evident in the RWAT materials themselves. This point is made simply to signal that the earlier distinctions made with regard to my role in the entire RWAT project, is still being sustained. Thus, I can report that students tend to grasp the idea *behind* the 'Scheme for the Academic Argument' quite quickly i.e. that it represents the 'structure' of the type of academic argument they are expected to write, definitely in the RWAT module, but in all likelihood in other Honours modules too. I would argue that the broad three-stage structure is internalized so easily because it maps onto existing schema related to the way students have always been taught to write 'the essay' i.e. it has 'an introduction', a 'body' and a 'conclusion'. However, in *practice*, the 'stage' that comes to be mastered the quickest and most 'competently' is the Introductory stage, and only, as I see it, because we have reduced this critical component of a discursive piece of writing, to three formulaic features. So 'competent' here is defined very narrowly i.e. only in terms of being able to include these three compulsory features in an opening paragraph, in the order in which they appear in the diagram.

In terms of 'hierarchies of competence', the Conclusion Stage takes second place, again I would say because there are only two moves which this stage *must* exhibit i.e. the original compulsory move, and providing a 'signal' to indicate a conclusion. The majority of students grapple the most with the Development of Argument stage, because it is here that they must confront the 'content' of their argument i.e. the epistemological underpinnings of the debates with which they must engage. Resourced primarily with only vernacular varieties and patterns of language, they simply do not have – in their first semester of their first year of the Honours programme – access to the specialist academic varieties the Scheme actually assumes to be in place, on the grounds that students have 'done the readings'. In many respects then, it is now possible to see that, much like Lea and Street's study, the RWAT module could also be described as a lose-lose situation. In the final chapter of this thesis, further attention will be given to the way in which students in this study experienced the Scheme for the Academic Argument. This discussion will be held against the backdrop of the various forms of data analysis that constitute the final section of this work.

2.16 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to tap into all areas of theory and research that hold particular relevance for this study. It has not been an easy task as each area is so vast and well established in its own right that it is impossible to give each the full recognition it deserves. What has been included has, therefore, been of a highly selected nature and so it is recognised that there is as much still waiting to be spoken of as there is that which is included. The 'what' of the New Literacy Studies movement, Systemic Functional Linguistics and Genre Theory were given extensive coverage because they have contributed to the conceptual and theoretical framework of this study, and informed the pedagogical design of the RWAT module. Without a thorough grasp of these, it would be difficult to make sense of the project as a whole, or understand the rationale for it.

In the next chapter, the reader will engage with phenomenology for the first time. In the first instance (Chapter 3), the emphasis will be on phenomenology-as-philosophy and in the second (Chapter 4) on phenomenology-as-methodology. To separate 'philosophy' from 'methodology' in the context of phenomenological studies in the human and social studies is a somewhat artificial exercise as they are deeply informing of one another. However, through my engagement with the field of phenomenology for the purposes of this study, I found that certain concepts, debates and issues were more easily grappled with within a philosophical frame of mind, while others impacted directly on methodological issues related to 'doing' phenomenology. Thus, when it came to writing about this vast and stimulating field of enquiry, I decided that, from an organisational point of view, a two-chapter approach would best facilitate an engagement with it.

Chapter 3

Philosophical phenomenological: A point of departure

The purpose of this chapter is to give an account of those features of the phenomenology-as-philosophy tradition which have contributed to the theoretical, conceptual and methodological framing of this study. As indicated in the previous chapter, phenomenology-as-methodology, will form the primary focus of the next chapter. However, what will soon become evident, is that any attempt to separate these two dimensions of phenomenology entirely would be an artificial representation of their relationship and the complexities attendant on it. Choosing to foreground one dimension ahead of the other, is thus done because, in my view, phenomenology-as-philosophy provides the broad conceptual framework within an understanding of phenomenology-as-methodology is best facilitated.

The 'evolution' of phenomenology – both as a philosophy and a methodology – has, like Bourdieu's 'fields', been "the result of the historical evolution of its specific properties and the agentive activities of the individuals operating within in it" (Carrington and Luke, 1997, p.100). Thus, what constitutes 'phenomenology' has undergone remarkable mutation and development since it was first 'announced' by Edmund Husserl in the early 1900s. Such is the diversity to found in responses to phenomenology that it cannot be understood as a single 'approach' and/or philosophical orientation, but rather as a movement. Spiegelberg (1975, p.3), for example, acknowledges Edmund Husserl as the 'fountainhead' of philosophical phenomenology, but asserts that phenomenology was 'not founded' but 'grew' and that "there is not just one way [into phenomenology] but many of them". Stewart and Mikunas (1990) note that there is "great diversity in the points of view of thinkers who could be classified under the general rubric of phenomenology" (in Walters, 1995, p.791), Bernasconi (2000, p.2) remarks that it is more accurate to "say that there is no phenomenology, only phenomenologists", and Heidegger (1954, no page) that "admittedly, within phenomenological inquiry there are again differing definitions of its nature and task". Van Maanen (2002) identifies six different orientations to phenomenology and key figures associated with these positions, viz. Transcendental (e.g. Husserl), Existential (e.g. Heidegger, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Merleau-Ponty, Marcel), Hermeneutical (e.g. Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur), Linguistical (Blanchot, Derrida, Foucault – "even though the latter denied that he was a phenomenologist" (2002, no page), Ethical (e.g. Scheler, Levinas), and the Phenomenology of Practice (e.g. Van den Berg, Buytendijk, Langeveld, Bollnow, Giorgi, Benner – and van Maanen himself).

The many different responses to phenomenology as exemplified above, reflect the multiplicity of contexts and disciplines within which phenomenology – as a philosophy and/or

a research method – can be applied. Thus, it is that references to phenomenology are found in philosophy (its discipline of origin), psychology, education, feminist, narrative and queer studies, nursing and anthropology - to name a few, endorsing Willis's (2004, no page) point that phenomenology "has mutated to meet various research needs in different disciplines".

But as Giorgi (2000, p.11) notes:

The amorphousness of phenomenology is both a boon and a bane. It is the former because it offers possibilities for resolving all kinds of issues in human affairs within its broad, inviting context; it is the latter because precise guidelines are lacking as to which level of phenomenological praxis to adopt and precisely what to do once the phenomenological invitation has been taken up.

Despite the many forms of phenomenology that have arisen over the years – and no doubt because of its 'broad, inviting context', it can be broadly described as the study of "the essential features of experience taken as a whole ... an investigation into the structures of experience which precede connected expression in language" (Ricouer, 1978, p. 121 cited in Willis, 2004, no page), and in many schools, by implication, of consciousness and how the functioning of consciousness evokes and gives meaning to human experience.

Phenomenologists are generally, therefore, intensely interested in 'Being' and what it means to 'be a being' and how one might access a particular experience (or emotion) and identify that which uniquely constitutes that experience, the 'essence' as it were – for the individual and the Other. The rallying call for phenomenologists across time and orientations is, thus, 'to the things', a phrase originally coined by Heidegger in the 1930s but also closely referred to earlier by Husserl in *Logical Investigations* (1900, Vol.1, p.252 of English translation) where he asked for "not mere words but the things themselves". As Spiegelberg observes of the slogan 'to the things', "the peculiar thrust was to get away from the primacy of theories, of concepts and symbols, to immediate contact with the intuited data of experience" (1975, p.13).

It would be wrong, however, to assume that by foregrounding, for example, intuition, description and individual human experience, phenomenology does not attach significance to 'the social world'. On the contrary Merleau-Ponty (1962, p.454), for example, says "we are involved in the world and with others in an inextricable tangle". And in Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, "individuals are 'thrown' into the social world which is not always transparent to them (as their own psychological states are not always transparent to them) ... and a different mode of being is the only means of piercing what Heidegger terms inauthenticity" (Paley, 1998, p.822). Piercey (2002, p.63) even argues that Husserl, who is

often regarded as a 'foundationalist', reveals 'more than just a hint of hermeneutics', all of which illustrate attempts to account for the impact of the social.

In broad terms, the phenomenological position taken in this study reflects the power within 'the movement' to foreground both 'description' (of the I- and We- perspective), and 'hermeneutics'. Overall, it hopes to show that by sharpening a philosophically derived phenomenological lens, the insights into the research process and the data that emerges reveal a unique clarity which few other approaches to social science research elicit.

Since the main purpose of this study, however, is not to 'do philosophy', it has not been appropriate or possible, to acquire a complete understanding of the full works of all the phenomenologists discussed in this chapter and in other sections of this thesis. For this reason, what is presented here is a process that has been guided simply by adherence to a 'relevance criteria' in terms of how this study has been framed and constructed, and the extent of my present ownership of the field. This chapter, therefore, begins with a fairly extensive discussion on Husserl, since from my reading, it soon became quite apparent that he played an indisputably central role in establishing phenomenology as a philosophical force with which to be reckoned, and coined numerous terms and concepts which continue to be used in various ways. Following this discussion on Husserl, I focus briefly on Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty: Heidegger because of the foregrounding of his '*Dasein*' and the rejection of Husserl's notion of the transcendental ego, and Merleau-Ponty for his engagement with perception, the body and language as the constitutive matrix of human experience.

Having established the contribution of the philosophical phenomenologists above, the discussion moves to the emergence of phenomenology within the human and social science, with particular reference to the work of Alfred Schultz, and then, more specifically, to its role in educational research. The chapter concludes with establishing exactly which concepts apply to this study and how they should be understood.

3.1 Problems with translations

Before proceeding, it is pertinent to draw attention to the problems implicit in working with translated texts. These are not new problems but given that translated texts constitute a core element of students' experience of the RWAT module, they are important to highlight in this study. In the preface to Husserl's *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy* (1965), Quentin Lauer (the English translator) notes the "conspicuous lack of translations" of the works of early phenomenologists, and especially that of Husserl. Significantly, Lauer makes the point that while Husserl's thoughts are not impossible to understand, particularly for

anyone well read in modern philosophy, it is that “the words in which this thought is expressed resist translation” (1965, p.1), and it is perhaps this reality, alluded to earlier, that has given rise to so many (mis)interpretations of Husserl’s thinking since it was disseminated outside of his native Germany.

Spiegelberg (1975) draws attention to the fact that for almost all Anglo-American students of phenomenology – and more than thirty years later this still holds true – access to original ‘first-hand’ texts, such as those written by Husserl, other philosophical phenomenologists and the early phenomenological psychologists, is not possible given that they were all written in German, French or Dutch. Any engagement with these founding texts, therefore, is done ‘through the filter of translation’ (*ibid*, p.17), which, as Spiegelberg goes on to note are “at best ... substitutes, or better perspectival appearances, of the one original through the medium of a different language made up of words with different denotations and especially connotations” (*ibid*). He concludes, somewhat pessimistically, that “most English translations of the classic texts seriously interfere with an adequate understanding of the originals” (*ibid*). Bearing in mind the whole issue of the fallibility of translations to convey original thought, there is nevertheless no alternative but to engage with translations – as is the case in this study. What one has to assume is that “enough of the original texts shine through” (*ibid*) to allow for an authentic engagement with the ideas contained within them. To counter some of the influence of ‘loss’ in translations, original German terms are included wherever possible to allow the reader (if competent in this language) to make their own assessment of the interpretations offered.

3.2 Husserlian phenomenology: a point of departure

To underscore the centrality and lasting influence of Husserl on the phenomenological tradition, Paley (2006), for example, notes that “there is an increasing interest in Husserl, at the moment, in philosophical circles. This is in connection with the fact that one of philosophy’s (and cognitive science’s) big topics is currently (and for the last twenty years) consciousness” (Personal correspondence). Paley does add, however, that “everyone agrees that Husserl wouldn’t have liked it – there is much talk of ‘naturalising’ Husserl, for example – but lots of people think that you need some sort of account of consciousness, in phenomenological terms, to anchor neuroscientific developments” (*ibid*). And in numerous nursing, psychology and education research studies (for example, Walters, 1995; Lemon and Taylor, 1997; Mallinson, 1999; Groenewald, 2004; van der Mescht, 2004), Husserl is consistently a central point of reference in terms of justifying conceptual positions and methodological processes, admittedly sometimes erroneously and misguidedly, but nevertheless there.

Perhaps a useful starting point is to consider the word 'phenomenology' itself and Husserl's use of it since the way in which the word is used now, particularly in the human and social sciences, no longer carries quite the same deeply philosophical overtones it carried when he made use of it in relation to the new science of philosophy he was so concerned to develop.

In 1917, at his inaugural lecture at Freiburg im Breisgau, Husserl opened his address with these words:

A new fundamental science, pure phenomenology, has developed within philosophy. This is a science of a thoroughly new type and endless scope. It is inferior in methodological rigour to none of the modern sciences. All philosophical disciplines are rooted in pure phenomenology, through whose development, and through it alone, they obtain their proper force. Philosophy is possible as a rigorous science at all only through pure phenomenology. It is of pure phenomenology that I wish to speak: the intrinsic nature of its method and its subject matter that is invisible to naturally oriented points of view (Husserl, 1917, no page).

Several important indicators of Husserlian phenomenology (and the source of subsequent 'distortions' of his thinking) can be found in this short extract. There is in the first instance, the announcement of phenomenology as 'new', 'a science', and of 'endless scope'. There is also the total embeddedness of phenomenology within the discipline of philosophy – and no other. This is important to note since much of the contestation that has emerged around phenomenology, especially once it took on 'applied forms' in the late 1960s and 1970s, is exactly because it has been transposed from a philosophy to a methodology applied to social science research. But the 'method' to which Husserl refers here is only loosely reflected in the 'phenomenological method' which characteristically dominates applied research today, a point which will be expanded upon in further detail shortly.

In this short extract too, is evidence of Husserl's passionate drive to establish phenomenology as the kind of science that would meet the need for philosophy (as Husserl believed) to "radically [clarify] the sense and the motifs of philosophical problems to penetrate to that primal ground on whose basis those problems must find whatever solution is genuinely scientific." (*ibid*). So his goal was to make philosophy as rigorous a science as any of the natural or 'factual' sciences of the day in terms of methodology, and the status accorded the knowledge that emerged from such investigations. His focus was, as it is for all philosophers, the problem of existence. Thus, Husserl was searching for "a grounding of philosophy as strenge Wissenschaft i.e. a philosophy that actually deals with reality" (Ijsseling, 1979, cited in Sallis, 1979, p.23). And as Ijsseling notes, "this grounding, according to Husserl, can only be found in the things themselves – hence his dictum: *zuruck zu den Sachen selbst*" (*ibid*). Importantly, however, one must note that Husserl's 'things' were the 'data of consciousness' – not what we might call 'experiences' or 'objects' – in the everyday sense of these terms. The type of inquiry that he was concerned to undertake,

“must concern itself with pure ‘seeing’. ... it is inquiry within the sphere of pure evidence, inquiry into essences ... its field is the a priori within absolute self-givenness” (Husserl, 1907, p. 9, translated by Alston & Nakhnikian, 1965). The type of inquiry he, therefore, wanted to pursue, was so highly abstracted, so remote from what he called “the lowest level of reflection, the naive level” (*ibid*), where what one sees in front of one, one assumes to be truly representative of that ‘object’, that it required a very particular and exacting methodology to reach viz. phenomenology. The difference between what we see and take to be ‘real’, and the ‘pure essence’ of the ‘object’ of our reflection is thus firmly established in Husserl’s phenomenology.

A point worth noting, however, before continuing, is that Husserl himself changed and refined his thinking over and over during his life. In the literature, there is, for example, repeated reference to the ‘early Husserl’, ‘Husserl’s middle years’ and ‘the late Husserl’, although this study does not give overly strong emphasis to these distinctions. Owens (1970, p. 3) comments, for example, that “The longer he [Husserl] worked to establish the absolute rigour of the phenomenological method, the more problems he encountered, and the more changes he introduced into his own thinking”. Often to his chagrin, and before he himself could modify and develop lines of thought, others – sometimes even his students, Heidegger for example – had taken his ideas and run with them into new and diverse directions.

In a letter to his friend and colleague, Alexander Pfander, in 1931, Husserl admits to profound disillusionment and sadness at the turn his relationship took with Heidegger. As Heidegger increasingly displayed his “extraordinary natural talent, [and] his absolute devotion to philosophy”, Husserl felt completely assured of Heidegger’s respect for his work and so closely did they collaborate and associate as friends, that they discussed how Heidegger would “would take charge of my manuscripts when I passed away, publishing the ones that were fully developed, and in general of how he would carry on my philosophy as a framework for all future work” (<http://www.stanford.edu/dept>). Thus the schism that developed between Husserl and Heidegger as a result of Heidegger’s later abandonment of Husserl’s concept of the transcendental ego, affected Husserl deeply and they saw nothing of each other thereafter. Despite this kind of setback, however, Husserl remained tirelessly devoted to confronting the problems he encountered in his phenomenology. As MacDonald (2001, no page) says of Husserl, his “thought on core phenomenological notions never stood still; he was, in his own memorable image, ‘an endless beginner’”. Thus, the development of new ideas, redefinition and reinterpretation have characterised phenomenology since its insertion into modern philosophical thought, in every discipline in which it has emerged. That

this study selectively applies diverse interpretations of phenomenology can thus be seen to be entirely in keeping with the history of the movement.

3.3 The ‘natural attitude’ vs the ‘philosophic attitude’

Husserl drew a clear distinction between the ‘attitude’ one had to adopt in order to engage methodologically with his form of phenomenology, and the attitude one unavoidably adopted when one was not explicitly seeking to access phenomenological data, that is, the ‘primordial data of consciousness’. The former he termed the ‘philosophic’ attitude and the latter, the ‘natural attitude’. What distinguished these two attitudes from each other was a) the ‘subject’ of inquiry, and b) the method of inquiry.

In grappling with difficulties encountered in “science of the natural sort”, we are “turned to the objects as they are given to us each time, as a matter of course ... according to the source and level of our cognition” (Husserl, 1907, p.17, translated by Alston & Nakhnikian, 1964, p.15). The method we adopt to solve the problems experienced when doing this form of science, is one that is characterised by an appeal to “pure logic or by appeal to facts, on the basis of motives or reasons which lie in the things themselves” (*ibid*, p.18). In other words, in ‘science of the natural sort’, cognition is taken for granted. In contrast, the ‘subject’ of ‘philosophic science’ is cognition itself, and the method of inquiry, phenomenology.

The ‘natural attitude’ “describes the relationship consciousness has to our everyday experiences and encompasses the basic web of human relationships” (Walters, 1995, p.793), while the ‘philosophical attitude’ consciously brackets out the natural attitude in order to apprehend more clearly the ‘essence’ or the ‘thing itself’. The ‘natural’ attitude is only such because we believe it to be so, that is, it is the usually unquestioning/ unquestioned manifestation of our individual, biologically embedded but socially constructed world views, the source of the taken-for-granted assumptions upon which most ordinary lives turn. Husserl understood the “natural attitude of mind” being “unconcerned with the critique of cognition” (Husserl, 1907). The ‘world’ we occupy in the natural attitude is the one about which

we make judgements about things, their relations, their changes, about the conditions which functionally determine their changes and about the laws of their variations. We find an expression for what immediate experience presents. In line with our experiential motives we draw inferences from the directly experienced (perceived and remembered) to what is not experienced. We generalize ... Isolated cognitions do not simply follow each other in the manner of mere succession. They enter into logical relations with each other, ... they ‘cohere’ with one another, ... thereby strengthening their logical power (*ibid*).

Husserl is quoted at some length here because the extract represents a succinct description of his conceptualization of that sphere of existence which probably all of us recognize as that of the social-political-historical 'everyday'. In fact, for the vast proportions of all populations, this world that the 'natural attitude of mind' accesses, would seem to be the only one that exists since it appears to encompass all that there is and all that can be known. It is the world of 'hard' evidence, facts, empirically defined 'objects', reason, logic – in short, 'lived experience'. The seat, some would say, of Marx's 'false consciousness'. For Husserl, however, this 'natural world' (or 'external' world) stands quite separate from that which is not part of it, and that which is not part of it – the realm of transcendental consciousness - can only be 'known' through philosophical reflection on the problem of cognition – the central problematic of Husserl's phenomenological project. "Pure phenomenology," he says, "draws upon pure reflection exclusively, and pure reflection excludes, as such, every type of external experience" (*ibid*), and 'external experience' here includes 'internal, psychological experience' since Psychology (the discipline) in Husserl's view, "is a science of psychic Nature and, therefore, of consciousness of Nature or as real event in the spatiotemporal world" (*ibid*). In other words, it is only through adopting a philosophic attitude that the essence of a phenomenon could be determined.

What should be coming clearer here, is that virtually all human and social science 'phenomenological' research, and certainly this would hold true for this study, is fundamentally lodged within the 'natural world' – as defined by Husserl. That is, they are phenomenological studies of the natural attitude, and studies where cognition is taken for granted rather than the subject of investigation. This latter point is very significant within the context of studies claiming an Husserlian orientation. Overlooking such an important distinction i.e. between Husserl's philosophic and natural attitude, has led to numerous misinterpretations (in human and social science research) of a range of other concepts, identified and named by Husserl, as crucial to the project of establishing philosophy as a rigorous science. The reason for this, and compounding the problem according to Paley (1997, p.188), is that when Husserl's terminology is translated into English, it makes considerable use of ordinary words that have had unusual meanings conferred upon them, for example 'object', 'intuition', 'real' and 'act', none of which mean what a casual reader would expect them to mean. It is these terms, rather than Husserl's more specialised vocabulary ... which cause the biggest problem, since it is all too easy to imagine, in the absence of fairly detailed explanation, that they have more or less their normal sense.

In addition to the words identified by Paley above (which of course, as already shown, embody a conceptual depth belied by their apparent ordinariness), three others in particular

viz. 'essence', 'bracketing' and 'reduction' have emerged as perhaps the ones most regularly mis- or re-interpreted to accommodate their application to research conducted in the human and social sciences. It is, thus, to an explanation of Husserl's use of the terms *epoche* or phenomenological reduction, 'bracketing' and 'essences', that the discussion now turns. An integration of Paley's selection of terms will emerge quite naturally through this discussion.

3.4 The *epoche* or phenomenological reduction

The method, i.e. phenomenology, which Husserl devised to see and describe the essence of 'pure consciousness', hinged on two critical processes, intimately related to each other. The first of these was the *epoche* or phenomenological reduction, the second was *bracketing*. The concept of 'bracketing' and the method of *epoche*, developed by Husserl around 1906, was linked directly to the notion of *intentionality*, another core concept of his philosophy. Intentionality is that fundamental property or 'structure' of consciousness that makes it possible for us to 'know' what we know. That is to say, "that there is no such thing as consciousness closed in upon itself. Consciousness is always directed towards an object" (Stewart and Mickunas 1974, p.37). The purpose of bracketing, for Husserl, was to effect reduction, that "moment of withdrawal from the natural attitude" (van Maanen, 2002, no page). Husserl worked from the premise that "to each psychic lived process there corresponds through the device of phenomenological reduction a pure phenomenon, which exhibits its intrinsic (immanent) essence (taken individually) as an absolute datum" (Husserl, 1907, translated by Alston & Nakhnikian, 1964, p.45). Having effected the reduction successfully, "we have dropped anchor on the shore of phenomenology, the existence of the objects of which is assured, as the objects of a scientific investigation should be; not, however, in the manner of components of the ego or of the temporal world, but rather as absolute data grasped in purely immanent 'seeing'" (*ibid*).

Paley (1997, p.188) describes the process of Husserlian reduction as "putting on hold every assumption that is normally made in the 'natural attitude' – the habits of mind which are characteristic of everyday understanding, but which are also the basis of scientific activity". He cites Husserl (1913) as saying, "we put out of action the entire ontological commitment that belongs to the essence of the natural attitude, we place in brackets whatever it includes with respect to being". Paley notes the 'radical' nature of this suggestion. He also takes a strong stand on how the *epoche* must be understood i.e. "as a philosophical device which simply cancels the natural attitude, as a preliminary to phenomenological enquiry. It is not a 'research method' which can be adopted within the natural attitude" (*ibid*) [emphasis in original].

Paley points out that grasping the import of Husserl's *epoche* – as Husserl defined it - has significant implications for an uncritical use of the concept and term, as is the case in many social science studies, particularly in the field of nursing. To endorse this view of his, Paley published two articles (in 1997 and 1998) in which he provocatively criticised the methodology employed in numerous phenomenological nursing studies, labelling them 'incoherent' and 'unintelligible' with regard to their claims to being grounded in Husserlian and Heideggerian thinking. This point is taken further in the next chapter where, as indicated earlier, methodological issues become the primary focus of the discussion. Thus, if one is to remain loyal to Husserl's understanding of the term *epoche*, then one could never mutate this 'device' into a research method – the rules of play simply don't allow it, since performing the phenomenological reduction removes one from the social world, thus making it inaccessible, and any 'data' supposedly derived from it, inadmissible as evidence. Logically then, if one even speaks of 'bracketing' in the context of applied research, one cannot legitimately claim an Husserlian position.

3.5 'Essence'

The concept of 'essence' is central to phenomenological thinking too, and, therefore, important to explore, especially as the search for essences, as formulated by the philosophical phenomenological tradition differs from that which tends to govern the search for essences in social science research today.

In discussing the notion of 'essences', van Manen notes that at the most minimalist level, it is difficult to argue the absence of any kind of 'essence' in 'things' or human experiences, if 'essence' is taken to be that property, or those properties, which, if taken away, render the 'thing' or experience no longer recognisable as itself. He says, in order to illustrate this point, that "we can ask what properties belong to flowers such that a flower would no longer be a flower if one were to take these properties away" (1997, p.xv), underscoring the fact that when we are talking about 'essences', we are essentially focusing on 'difference' and 'sameness'.

However, if one is attempting to engage with the notion of 'essences' from a phenomenological perspective, the matter becomes infinitely more complex. Here, "essence is not a single, fixed property by which we know something; rather it is meaning constituted by a complex array of aspects, properties and qualities – some of which are incidental and some of which are critical to the being of things" (1997, p.xv).

The complexity of the 'phenomenological perspective' identified by van Manen above, can be seen in the logic that informed Husserl's phenomenological method i.e. the reduction, and

its relationship to the discernment of the 'essence' of cognition that resulted from it. He says, for example:

If we restrict ourselves to the pure phenomenology of cognition, then we will be concerned with the essence of cognition as revealed in direct 'seeing', i.e. with a demonstration of it which is carried out by way of 'seeing' in the sphere of phenomenological reduction and self-givenness, and with an analytical distinction between the various sorts of phenomena which are embraced by the very broad term 'cognition'. Then the question is as to what is essentially contained and grounded in them ... can be found while remaining purely within their essential natures, and what general interrelations flow from their essences (1907, translated by Alston & Nakhnikian, 1964, p. 55).

Thus Husserl's conceptualisation of essences is linked to his search for universals – descriptions of the phenomena related to cognition that could be said to hold true across time and space. And 'seeing' them is an intuited process – not a reasoned one - possible only when we have withdrawn fully from the 'natural attitude' into the 'philosophic attitude'. Since this study is located within the 'natural attitude', and takes a Heideggerian rather than an Husserlian position, the role of 'seeing' and 'intuiting' cannot simply be mapped onto Husserl's use of these concepts, or match the goals he aimed to achieve using them.

3.6 Solipsism and intersubjectivity in Husserl

Another relevant aspect of Husserl's thinking in relation to executing the *epoche* is what is often taken to be its essentially solipsistic nature, for after all, who else but 'I' can access the 'primordial data' of my consciousness? Paley (1997, p.191) is adamant that the *epoche* "is something I can do, and indeed am obliged to do, alone. ... The procedure is a solo effort: I carry it out qua philosopher, but also qua solipsist". From this perspective, if I am to speak on behalf of others, it means I have re-entered the natural world in order to encounter them, and by implication, as discussed above, this nullifies the philosophic attitude and the purpose of adopting it. Furthermore, that which is 'given to consciousness' in this way i.e. through the *epoche*, assumes an inviolable mantle of authority, and as such, can only be described, not judged.

Suggesting that Husserl's phenomenology has solipsistic tendencies, immediately raises the issue of intersubjectivity, and whether Husserl did indeed neglect 'the Other' in the development of his philosophy. Since the notion of intersubjectivity is of great relevance to this study, and we are presently dealing with Husserl quite specifically, it is pertinent to consider other views on his position on this concept. Crossley (1996) provides a thorough and insightful engagement with the notion of intersubjectivity, with particular reference to the works of Husserl, Buber, Merleau-Ponty and Schutz. At this point, however, the focus of the

discussion will remain on Husserl, though Crossley is an important point of reference in the extended discussion on intersubjectivity that takes place later in this chapter.

According to Crossley, Husserl anticipated 'solipsistic criticism' and was at pains to refute it – on 'ethical, epistemological and socio-ontological grounds' (Crossley, 1996, p.3). At the ethical level, Crossley maintains that a solipsistic position denies the very substance of ethics viz. the 'recognition of other (autonomous) subjectivities or consciousnesses' (*ibid*). And if one assumes the position that the Other is nothing more than my consciousness of them, then there is no call for any ethical stance in relation to them and the project of consideration is rendered null and void. And nowhere in Husserl is there any hint of a repudiation of this kind of (un)ethical stance.

Epistemologically, for Husserl, an acknowledgement of 'other' perspectives on the world is critical to establishing the 'objectivity' of the world. As Crossley notes here, "objectivity, in this sense, is intersubjective. It is a view of the world arrived at through mutual confirmation and negotiation between different and independent perspectives" (*ibid*). And finally, given the later Husserl's interest in providing a philosophical comment on such human manifestations as 'culture' and 'community', his philosophy resists a solipsistic labelling at the socio-ontological level as well. However, having established Husserl's arguments supporting a non-solipsistic form of phenomenology, Crossley nevertheless identifies "major problems" with it, and each of these speaks to the issues with which this project has had to engage, and are hence important to insert into this discussion. The first of the problems, and inherently that to which Heidegger (and others) reacted, was the fundamentally mutually exclusive relationship between Husserl's transcendental idealism, and the possibility of intersubjectivity. As Crossley puts it,

transcendental phenomenology will always have a solipsistic element because it begins and ends with an analysis of the constitutive operations of a solitary consciousness. It focuses exclusively upon an individual flow of experience, and, as such, otherness will always be reduced in it to the experience of otherness which is constituted in that flow. ... [Husserl's] 'other' is always necessarily created by him, through an imaginative, analogical process. It can only ever be what he makes it. Thus a full transcendence of solipsism requires a break with transcendental and idealist phenomenology and with the focus on consciousness which this entails (*ibid*).

Now clearly, this study does not and cannot concern itself with a 'solitary consciousness' in the Husserlian sense, nor this very particular way of constituting 'the other' i.e. as the pure result of my own/ individual perception and imagining. This study too, foregrounds the role of thought, speech and language in constituting the 'other' (in much the same way as, for example, Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur, Gadamer and Schutz did), a dimension of establishing

the relationship between Self and Other which Husserl overlooked – Crossley’s second ‘major problem’.

The last problem Crossley identifies in Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology, specifically in relation to the solipsism/ intersubjectivity debate, “also concerns language and speech but this time in relation to ‘meaning’” (*ibid*, p.8). ‘Meaning’, from an Husserlian perspective, “is reducible to a constituting act of consciousness” (*ibid*). It is not difficult to see that this is a very problematic viewpoint in the context of any attempt to grapple with intersubjectivity vis a vis the notions of, for example, ‘culture’ or ‘community’ or ‘communication’. If ‘meaning’ resides privately within each individual then there is no possibility of shared understandings, which in turn makes theorising the ‘social’ out of the question. In Crossley’s opinion, Husserl’s characterisation of ‘the subject’ or ‘consciousness’ necessarily renders “the world of experience ... monadic and incommunicable” (*ibid*).

Schutz (1970) found an additional anomaly in Husserl’s work (particularly the Cartesian Meditations) in relation to the way in which ‘consciousness’ is defined by him. Though more will be said of Schutz later, suffice at this point to say that as Schutz points out, if consciousness is reduced to ‘the sphere of ownness’, as it is for Husserl, simply formulating this construction implies the ‘other’. This reduction to ‘ownness’, as Crossley notes, “seems necessarily to entail a consciousness of alterity” (1996, p.9). Thus, to even speak of knowing the Self is simultaneously to speak of the ‘other’. As I see it, if the notion of a ‘solitary consciousness’ is played out fully, then humankind would in all likelihood never have evolved ‘We’/‘Thou’/ ‘social’ forms of language (and related ‘practices’), a scenario so impossible to imagine that it must of necessity be dismissed as a foundation for understanding human consciousness. This is not the same as saying such a scenario is not possible (for anything can be contemplated as a possibility), only that humankind seems ill-equipped to imagine, or effect, such a scenario, and no historical evidence appears to exist for a time when it did. Thus, for the purposes of a phenomenology of the social, the concept of a ‘solitary consciousness’ is inadequate to the task of accounting for intersubjectivity.

Spiegelberg (1975, p.44), offers a fairly blunt comment on Husserl’s response to the problem of intersubjectivity in a chapter entitled, ‘Phenomenology through vicarious experience’, saying that:

Husserl never fully made up his mind about the question whether phenomenology has direct access to the other and his world or whether they are only indirectly presented by what is directly given. To put it bluntly: he wanted to stick ascetically to pure and absolute certainty, represented here by the primordial world, and yet to enjoy the forbidden fruit of real access to the transcendent other.

The theoretical/ philosophical problematic posed by what seems to be an irrefutable reality i.e. that we are able to 'know' the 'other, was thus never completely resolved in Husserl's project. However, what must be borne in mind is that Husserl's "studies of consciousness also led him to pursue investigations into our awareness of time, and history, which led him to his development of the concept of the life-world" (Moran, 2000, p.xiii). In other words, while we may not agree with his thinking into 'consciousness' and his conceptions of , for example, the 'philosophic attitude', the 'natural attitude' and the transcendental ego, his philosophy was nevertheless a 'situated' philosophy i.e. sourced from within a 'real', social world.

Thus far I have attempted to present some of the complexities and richness associated with the phenomenological tradition, and foregrounded those key concepts and terms created by Husserl which have been, and continue to be, the most frequently debated and disputed – across disciplines. In summary they are: consciousness or cognition; the 'natural attitude' vs the 'philosophic attitude'; the phenomenological reduction or *epoche*; 'bracketing'; 'essences'; 'intuition'; the primacy of description; and the solipsistic and/or intersubjective nature of the reduction. I have intentionally done this at some length in order to impel the readers into a phenomenological 'domain' that is sufficiently textured to allow them to begin to formulate their own responses to some of the theoretical and philosophical issues that have contributed to the substance of this study.

3.7 The influence of Martin Heidegger

As mentioned earlier, there have been abundant responses to the work of Husserl. The most immediate came from Heidegger, and as indicated above, ultimately resulted in the severing of his relationship with Husserl. Heidegger's contribution to the phenomenological tradition, however, establishing as he did, an entirely new direction viz. hermeneutic phenomenology, has been as momentous as Husserl's. Instead of constructing the individual consciousness as one which gazes upon the world, Heidegger's 'Dasein' – "the being that we are ourselves" (Heidegger, 1954) engages directly in the world. Heidegger gives emphasis to 'philosophy as world-view', as opposed to 'world-view' being a 'by-product of philosophy'. Rather, he contends, 'in its very concept, philosophy is world-view philosophy'. In his own words, Heidegger says that:

... it is above all important to see that the world-view, in its meaning, always arises out of the particular factual existence of the human being in accordance with his factual possibilities of thoughtful reflection and attitude formation, and it arises thus for this factual Dasein. The world-view is something that in each case exists historically from, with, and for the factual Dasein (1954, p.52).

Heidegger's 'Dasein' thus lives 'in the world' – Husserl's 'natural world' – and from this world engages in transcendent thought. Thus, unlike Husserl who needed to bracket out the external, 'natural' world in order to access the truly transcendent and universal, 'transcendence' is already part of the Dasein's 'essential constitution'. Burch (no date), working from this Heideggerian perspective says that "we are able to have ontological knowledge of this transcendence only because its realization is at the same time our self-realisation" (no page). What this meant for Heidegger was that the notion of a 'natural attitude' vis a vis his project of 'disclosedness' is rendered empty since the factual Dasein is in the world, and concomitantly, that the Husserlian concept of the transcendental ego cannot hold.

Paley points out that while Heidegger certainly gives primacy to the experience of the Dasein, this does not mean that individual experience is always 'right' i.e. "that their interpretations of the world, as lived in, cannot be wrong, misguided, distorted or lop-sided" (1998, p.821). This raises two important issues. Firstly, while it concedes that a "person's experience is inalienably hers, and must therefore be what she says it is", it secondly, does not automatically follow that this experience, and the perceptions that give rise to it, are unassailable. In other words, individual experience does not "guarantee that 'how the world works' is immediately self-evident" (*ibid*).

This perspective on Heidegger's thinking has significant implications for the social sciences. It suggests that the very common emphasis on 'lived experience' in research studies in these sciences, as being in accordance with the 'principle of incorrigibility' which so many of them evidence, is open to question. It means too, that if one espouses an Heideggerian position on the 'incorrigibility' of individual experience, that one could be misinterpreting Heidegger's view that we do have an understanding of the world that is already in place, and which has always been, but that this understanding is not necessarily 'sacrosanct'. Taking this to be what Heidegger intended to mean, reflects the start of the 'hermeneutic circle' viz. that in order to interpret what we know, we must already have knowledge of it. By this is meant, that there is no such thing as 'external meaning' to apply meaning to 'internal' (personal) experience, for nothing outside of the Dasein exists.

In this regard, Paley draws attention to what is often seen as an intractable conundrum in Heidegger's thinking in relation to the possibilities of a social science viz. that if science is about describing the world "independently of the ways in which we make things our business" but "'society' (as must be evident) can only be conceived in terms of the familiar world in which people do make things their business" (1998, p.819), then a 'scientific' response to the 'social' is impossible. But this is a misreading of Heidegger, according to

Paley. He points out that “the business of science is to describe the world *independently of concern* because it is independent of practical knowledge” (Paley’s emphasis, *ibid*). Defining the purpose of science in this way, and articulating in such a way as to foreground the ‘human’ dimension in it, is a skilful way of demonstrating that a “a form of enquiry which studies this dimension can be both social, since it is intrinsic to Being-in-the-world, and a science, since it is not within the Dasein’s concerned horizon” (*ibid*). Such an interpretation of Heidegger also upholds the non-Cartesian nature of Heidegger’s thinking, a central characteristic of his philosophy that is often overlooked, particularly, again, in social science research.

To preserve the special unity that exists between Heidegger’s Dasein and the ‘world’, Heidegger made distinctions between the different levels or ways through which being-in-the-world i.e. consciousness, can be understood. Three ‘modes of engagement’ or interaction with our world can be identified, in Heidegger’s view. These are the ‘ready-to-hand’, the ‘unready-to-hand’ and the ‘present-at-hand’. The first of these, the ‘ready-to-hand’, Heidegger argues, is “one of our fundamental ways of being-in-the-world” (Walters, 1995, p.793). It is the “starting point for hermeneutic investigations”. It reflects our everyday, taken-for-granted way of being-in-the-world. In research contexts, the ‘ready-to-hand’ expression of existence is the starting point of investigations. The second, ‘unready-to-hand’ refers to things going wrong, the problematics that emerge as a result of our ‘ready-to-hand’ engagement and which would be considered in conjunction with them. The last level, the ‘present-at-hand’, is the mode of engagement characterized by “detachment and objectivity” (*ibid*). In short, what Heidegger did was to give ‘ontological priority’ to ‘everydayness’ – which Husserl did not, and constituted hermeneutics as the phenomenological method appropriate to an analysis of being-in-the-world.

However, while Heidegger’s contribution to the development of hermeneutic phenomenology was critical and enduring, he did not give his whole life to the development of this train of thought. Moran (2000, p.208), for example, notes that “sometime around 1930 Heidegger’s thought underwent what he himself styled in his Letter on Humanism as a ‘turning’ (die Kehre)”. Where previously, as indicated above, Heidegger’s primary concern was with developing his notion of Dasein, “he now claimed that he had placed too much emphasis on the relation of Dasein to Being, and that in reality Being itself without Dasein must be at the centre of thinking. Ontology was no longer the right way of approaching this Being; indeed the very term ‘Being’ needed to be elided, put in quotation marks, crossed out” (*ibid*). Instead, he began to explore other ways of understanding Being which lay “outside technical philosophical discourse” (*ibid*), and which drew on the works of, for example, Nietzsche and

Holderlin. It might be useful to note here that it is the period (approximately) 1916 – late 1920s, that the majority of applied phenomenological studies draw on when they locate themselves within a Heideggarian frame.

There are other reasons for being clear about which period of Heidegger's life with which one wishes to align oneself. Although as Moran says "it would be entirely wrong to assess his entire philosophical contribution" (2000, p.192) in the light of his political involvements i.e. his overt and active participation in the National Socialist programme in Nazi Germany in the 1930s, knowing that he did so should give one pause for reflection. Not only was Heidegger an active figure in calling for universities to support the 'new revolution', but also organised youth camps which were 'quite militarist'. He was also "among the first in Freiburg University to introduce the Nazi greeting" (Moran, 2000, p.210). In addition, when Husserl had his official title of emeritus professor taken away from him in 1933, on account of being 'non-Aryan', it was Heidegger in his capacity as Rektor of Freiburg University, who signed the letter informing Husserl of his 'retirement'. And despite their long, though often troubled relationship, Heidegger did not attend Husserl's funeral in 1938. Much later he said that illness had prevented him from being there.

Klemens von Klemperer (cited in Moran, 2000) offers the following comment on Heidegger. It reflects the 'widespread antipathy' to Heidegger in Germany during and following his Nazi involvement.

I must admit I found him [Heidegger] an unappealing person, however self-possessed and dedicated to his task – humourless, unfaithful to his friends such as Karl Jaspers or Karl Lowith and like all too many Germans during the Nazi era utterly devoid of Zivilcourage. I should add that I am unimpressed by his beady eyes and moustache, suspicious of his dress – a cross between a Black Forest peasant's jacket and a military blouse complete with swastika, together with the breeches of a cross-country skier – and last but not least, I am impatient with his metalanguage (Moran, 2000, p.212).

Thus, while Heidegger's contribution to hermeneutic phenomenology has played, and still plays, a commanding role in philosophical and applied research, it would be blinkered not to take note of the man himself and his political affiliations and activities, and consider to what degree the way he led his own life 'in the natural attitude' both shaped, and were shaped by, his philosophical ruminations.

3.8 Considering Merleau-Ponty

Merleau-Ponty is generally recognized to have based his particular form of phenomenology on "a repudiation of what Husserl would regard as two of its central tenets ... the *epoche* and the transcendental ego" (Priest, 1998, p.2), and instead foregrounded the 'embodied' nature

of experience i.e. that all experience is first mediated by the body. Priest (1998, p.56) says that “if there is a concept that gives unity to the whole of Merleau-Ponty’s work it is that of the body qua subject: the idea that I am my body”. Thus far from splitting off the body, or espousing a view that understands, for example, perception and cognition, as “occupying inherently different spheres within human experience (Talero, 2005, p.444), as Husserl would have it, Merleau-Ponty worked from the premise that “my body is the pivot of the world” (1962, p.82). I am, in other words, the ‘incarnate subject’, and speech is my thought. They are one and the same and both are sourced in ‘true physiognomy’. Thus “the body’s intentionality is linked to the body’s expressiveness ... and bodily gestures [are] the primary form of language” (Vasterling (2003, p.211). Our own body,” Merleau-Ponty says, “is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms systems” (1962, p.203). It is the body that enables us to give expression to the emotional essence of experience, through ‘words, vowels and phonemes’. We possess within ourselves ready-made meanings which we use to make sense of ‘commonplace utterances’ but such is our removal from the a priori role of our body in constituting ourselves as ‘speaking subjects’, that we have lost connection with it and forgotten that it provides us with “so many ways of ‘singing’ the world” (*ibid*, p.187).

The relevance of Merleau-Ponty’s theory of the body is that it “is already a theory of perception” (Talero, 2005, p.203), and language. Talero hence describes perception as ‘inherently normative’, and that this normative dimension “is not a secondary subjective imposition upon an indifferent, objective matrix outside of us; it is built into and inseparable from what it is to perceive” (*ibid*, p.443). Thus, whatever perceptions I have of an ‘object’, those perceptions cannot exist separate from the body, and are experienced, in the first instance, by the body. Nevertheless, the distinction between the experience of perception, and the object perceived is the most critical to sustain, since collapsing this distinction can lead to dramatic distortions of what might be considered ‘real’. This point is of particular significance to research studies that use self-reported data, such as this one, and is one already made earlier in the references to Paley’s work.

Merleau-Ponty says of *language* that it “is a witness to Being”. In the context of this study, this construction of language is a central thesis. While I concede the socially discursive power of language to construct individual and group identities, effect relations of power, manipulate minds and so on, I argue that there is still a point before which all this happens, that we are first and foremost embodied subjects, and thus it is to my participants as ‘embodied subjects’ that I have addressed myself.

When engaging with the concepts of 'speech', 'thought' and 'language' and the way they are 'intervolved', Merleau-Ponty says, "We must recognise first of all that thought, in the speaking subject, is not a representation, that is, that it does not expressly posit objects or relations. ... his speech is his thought" (1962, p.180). He contends that "Thought is no 'internal' thing, and does not exist independently of the world and of words" (*ibid*, p.183), but what misleads us into thinking this is the case is that we consider only already expressed thoughts, which we can easily recall to ourselves. This deludes us into imagining that we have an 'inner life' of thoughts independent of the 'world and of words'.

In explaining how communicating with 'the Other' occurs, Merleau-Ponty builds on the principle of the hermeneutic circle i.e. "in order that I may understand the words of another person, it is clear that his vocabulary and syntax must 'already' be known to me. However, his main point is that what is communicated is *not* "representations of thought, but a speaking subject" (*ibid*).

Since Merleau-Ponty's views of language, speech and thought have so decisively governed this study, most particularly when it comes to the way in which the data in this project has been analysed i.e. from a position that attempts to get closer to Being, I would like to close this section with the following quotation. It picks up on the consequences of living in a world where 'speech is an institution', where all our 'commonplace utterances' have transformed into ready-made meanings within ourselves to such an extent that 'they arouse in us only second-order thoughts'. As a consequence "the Linguistic and intersubjective world no longer surprises us, we no longer distinguish it from the world itself, and it is within a world already spoken and speaking that we think" (*ibid*, p.184). And so Merleau-Ponty warns us that:

Our view of man will remain superficial so long as we fail to go back to that origin, so long as we fail to find, beneath the chatter of words, the primordial silence, and as long as we do not describe the action which breaks the silence. The spoken word is a gesture, and its meaning, a world (*ibid*).

3.9 A Phenomenology of the Social World

It stands to reason that 'phenomenological considerations' would not remain the preserve of philosophers but would begin to engage the minds of thinkers in other disciplines. Of the earliest (in so far as the period overlapped with work Husserl was doing in philosophy) and most significant of these thinkers for phenomenological studies grounded in sociology, which I would argue education is, was Alfred Schutz. His life long efforts focused on an attempt to synthesise phenomenology and sociology, not to develop a 'philosophical sociology' but a 'phenomenological sociology'. As a student of Husserl's, he had a profound grasp of

Husserlian phenomenology and found in Husserl's work a "consistent theory of meaning" (Walsh, 1967, p.xvii), and by "applying Husserl's concept of meaning to action he was able to recast the foundations of interpretive sociology, in other words, to give the latter a phenomenological grounding" (*ibid*). Husserl was, in fact, so taken by Schutz's thinking that he invited him to be his personal assistant once he (Husserl) had retired. For personal reasons Schutz declined but corresponded with Husserl until his death. Integral to Schutz's phenomenology of the social world too, was the work of Max Weber (1864-1920), particularly his subjective theory of action. This sphere of influence, however, is not addressed in this thesis. What must be noted, however, is that the body of work produced by Schutz is extensive, and within the constraints of a doctorate, impossible to cover comprehensively. What follows is intended to give the reader some idea of what it means to consider a phenomenology of the social world – as opposed to 'doing phenomenology in the social sciences'.

Despite being so close to Husserl, Schutz made a critical break with his thinking in relation to the thesis of the transcendental ego vis a vis intersubjectivity. In a critique of *Cartesian Meditations* (1970), Schutz suggested that a transcendental theory of intersubjectivity was simply impossible, and as a result, effectively abandoned the theory. In its place, he proposed a theory of 'mundane intersubjectivity', that is, "of relations and interactions between concrete psycho-physical egos" (Crossley, 1996, p.77), in other words, one that was located solely within the 'natural attitude'. Thus, Schutz's phenomenology of the social world begins and ends within the 'mundane', common-sense world of everyday living. However, "We ... who live naively in this life-world, encounter it as already constituted. We are, so to speak, born into it. We live in and endure it, and the living intentionality of our stream of consciousness supports our thinking, by which we orient ourselves practically in this life-world, and our action, by which intervene in it" (Schutz, 1962, p.133). Our everyday world is "from the outset, an intersubjective world of culture" and a "universe of significations to us ... which we have to interpret, and of interrelations of meaning which institute only through our action in this life-world" (*ibid*).

In Crossley's words, Schutz thus "conceptualises the human subject as an embodied being whose actions draw upon a stock of shared social resources and know-how or 'common-sense knowledge' and who is always already situated amongst other similarly embodied and situated beings" (*ibid*). Importantly, for the purposes of this thesis particularly, this 'common-sense knowledge', much of which, as suggested earlier, a Marxian view might term 'false consciousness', "is in part derived from accidental experience, but it is also stored and

transmitted institutionally within the lifeworld, by (amongst others) the family unit and the education system” (*ibid*).

It can be seen, therefore, that a central component of Schutz’s thinking was that of understanding ‘meaningful lived experience’ (within the mundane life world) and the role that *action*, rather than perception, plays in constituting this. After what Schutz himself described as “a detailed and exhaustive analysis of its constituting process” (1967, p.215), and which I consider too long to incorporate here, he concluded that action is, “(1) a lived experience that is (2) guided by a plan or project arising from the subject’s spontaneous activity and (3) distinguished from all other lived experiences by a peculiar Act of attention” (*ibid*). As ordinary as these features might sound, Schutz makes some interesting points about them. The first of these is that we need to reconsider what we mean when we say that ‘the actor attaches a meaning to his action’, for what now emerges is that it is the “special way in which the subject attends to his lived experience” that “elevates the experience into action” (*ibid*). The second is that we have to be more careful about how we describe an action, that is, is it an action *in process*, a *completed* act, or a *projected* act. Furthermore, the *specific meaning* which an actor attaches to an experience is only such because the actor has lifted out of her/his ‘stream of consciousness’ an ‘already lapsed experience’ for special attention, and done this within a particular ‘context of meaning’. The act of reflection, for example, is one which can only be done on a past experience, not on a Now or Future one.

From an intensive exploration of individual experience and how the individual comes to attach meaning to it, Schutz moved to the critical issue of intersubjectivity, obviously a core element of any sociology. Accepting the existence of the ego, the Self, Schutz noted that the ego “lights upon the alter ego, a being which, like itself, has consciousness and duration and which, also like itself, interprets its own lived experiences” (*ibid*, p.217). However, an important distinction must be made between my perception of the Other, arrived at through the ‘ordering and classifying’ of my own perceptions, and knowledge of the Other, for they are not, in Schutz’s view, the same thing. It is only when “I begin to grasp the other person’s point of view as such, ... only when I make the leap from the objective to the subjective context of meaning, that I am entitled to say that I understand him” (*ibid*).

But there are also different types of social relationships which the alter ego might experience in its ‘Other-orientation’ and for each of these, the way in which the Other is ‘given’ to it, is different. So, for example, the face-to-face relationship is the most direct relationship the ego can have with an alter ego. But if the “spectrum of decreasing vividness” (1967, p.177) is followed, then social relationships with predecessors, contemporaries and successors must also be understood, as for each one, the exact nature of the We-relationship will alter.

In terms of applicability of Schutz's types of relationships to this study, his analysis of the face-to-face interaction holds the greatest relevance, if the interview context is taken as a prime example of the manifestation of this type of relationship. Before one can speak of the face-to-face situation, however, the Thou-orientation must be grasped. Of this Schutz says

I speak of another person as within reach of my direct experience when he [sic] shares with me a community of space and a community of time. He shares a community of space with me when he is present in person and I am aware of him as such, and moreover, when I am aware of him as this person *himself*, this *particular* individual, and of his body as the field upon which play the symptoms of his inner consciousness. He shares a community of time with me when his experience is flowing side by side with mine, when I can at any moment look over and grasp his thought as they come into being, in other words, when we are growing old together (1970, p.185) [emphasis in original].

But, if one reads further, what emerges is that the Thou-orientation does not facilitate a knowledge of what is going on in either person's mind, but is rather simply being "intentionally directed toward the pure being-there of another alive and conscious human being" (*ibid*, p.186). In effect then, the Thou-orientation is a 'formal concept, an intellectual construct' and not descriptive of anything other than this. Schutz then states that "in real life we never experience the 'pure' existence of others. Instead we meet real people with their own personal characteristics and traits. The Thou-orientation as it occurs in everyday life is therefore, not the 'pure' Thou-orientation but the latter, *actualized* and *rendered determinate* to some degree or other" (*ibid*).

When the Thou-orientation is actualised, what emerges is the We-relationship, the kind of relationship which does allow 'me' to 'know' 'you'. Schutz defines the We-relationship as "the face-to-face relationship in which the partners are aware of each other and sympathetically participate in each other's lives for however short a time" (*ibid*). In the context of this study, therefore, the interviews I held reflected Schutz's concept of the We-relationship. Other conceptual distinctions to which Schutz gave attention included that between 'action' and 'behaviour', the former being distinguished by 'prior projection or planning', the latter by 'spontaneity'; that between two types of motives, 1) the in-order-to motive, and 2) the because motive; 'other orientation' and 'affecting the other', and that between 'social relationship' and 'social interaction', the former in this case refers to "other-oriented actions which are reciprocated" (Crossley, 1996, p.79), within the ambit of the mode of 'affecting the other', the latter when, still within this mode, "the actions of each elicit other-oriented reactions".

In terms of a critique of Schutz's work, Crossley is particularly useful. Focusing specifically on the actualization of Schutz's intersubjectivity, Crossley asserts that, in the first instance,

Schutz “fails to consider actual concrete empirical communities” (*ibid*, p.95), and remains too much at a higher level of abstraction. Secondly, Schutz’s communities are too small and his view on “social integration (i.e. that is achieved by way of shared schemata of understanding) is more appropriate to such a [small] world than to the ‘big’ worlds of industrial and post-industrial nations” (*ibid*). Then there is, in Crossley’s view, the matter of failure on Schutz’s part to consider the full range of ‘dependencies’ (emotional, physical, financial etc) that have been shown to be “central to the construction of solidarity and dynamism of social life” (*ibid*, p. 96). The fourth ‘omission’ from Schutz’s theory of the social concerns questions of ‘power, control, state and law’, and finally, there is, “with the exception of an occasional elliptical reference to ‘hierarchies’, little consideration by Schutz of the “place of inequality and exchange in social relations” (*ibid*, p.97). Though clearly there is an extensive analysis and discussion offered by Crossley of each of these ‘problems’ with Schutz’s work, I believe the broad sketches of some of the latter’s thinking offered here is sufficient for the context in which it has been raised viz. as a key contribution to the phenomenological movement pertinent to this study.

3.10 Phenomenology and Education

In tracing the history of phenomenology in education, Vandenberg (1997) draws attention to the irony implicit in the fact that while Husserl’s ‘new science’ was intended to “formulate the ultimate theory of knowledge”, he concluded his book ‘Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology’ (published in 1913) with a call for ‘regional ontologies’ i.e. domain-specific ontologies. According to Vandenberg, Husserl’s notion of intentionality i.e. that consciousness is always consciousness of something, led inevitably to recognising that each ‘something’ has its own unique properties, characteristics etc. and so can, and should be examined in different ways and for different reasons. Establishing the ‘regional ontology of education’ has emerged inevitably and directly from this response to the concept of intentionality, and determined the phenomenological methods that, since the 1950s, have widely come to be employed in phenomenological studies in education.

The use of phenomenological methods in education began, understandably, in Europe, most noticeably in the Netherlands and Germany. In the former, the “Utrecht School” emerged, post the Second World War. According to Lippitz, it “presented itself to the public as a scholarly and ideological pressure group” (1997, p.80), which foregrounded the ‘lived-world concept’, and was constituted by a group of ‘functional elite’ scholars from a range of ‘specialisations’ in addition to ‘pedagogy’ viz. psychology, psychiatry and jurisprudence. It thus became the centre of a scholarly drive to create a “new political and moral self-confidence in the Dutch nation” (*ibid*). M.J. Langeveld, arguably phenomenology’s

“internationally best known representative since the second world war” (Lippitz, 1997, p.70) in terms of its application to *educational theory*, was a founding member of the Utrecht School. In all Langeveld’s work, the primacy of the child’s existence is emphasised. He saw education as “simply an extended weaning process” (Vandenberg, 1997, p. 14) and the role of the teacher as offering ‘pedagogic help’ to the child in disclosing possibilities in the world. In Germany, Otto Bollnow (1959, cited in Vandenberg, 1997, p.14) too, foregrounded the child’s existence in the educational enterprise, though he was concerned to ‘waken’ the child from an unaware consciousness or ‘inauthentic’ existence (after Heidegger) so that the child (and later ‘youth’) could recognise the need to take responsibility for its own being.

Vandenberg notes that “the concern for the unique ontological region of the child’s being and becoming” (1997, p.15) as evidenced in Europe in the 1950s, was mirrored in the United States at the same time. He makes the important point, however, that this concern was not manifesting itself overtly through phenomenological studies but rather through those drawing on existentialists such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Buber and others, making them quasi-phenomenological in nature. A more explicit use of phenomenology in education became apparent in the US only in the 1960s, and in Canada in the late 70s and 80s, particularly by Max van Manen, a student of Langeveld, who had been born in the Netherlands but emigrated to Canada. More will be said of Van Manen later.

In the South African context, students of Langeveld returned to or emigrated here too, and brought their experience of phenomenology to our shores. Unfortunately, early uses of phenomenology in education in South Africa fell under the shadow of Fundamental Pedagogics, the philosophy of education underpinning apartheid ideology and Christian National Education (see Chapter 1). Vandenberg (1997, p.18) cites Yonge (1991b) as saying that a “phenomenological (fundamental pedagogic) investigation of the occurrence of education is possible for anyone to pursue irrespective of political and religious beliefs or country of origin. Fundamental pedagogics as an approach to the study of education knows no citizenship”. From an anti-apartheid, and now post-apartheid perspective, it is impossible to reconcile Yonge’s views here, since Fundamental Pedagogics as it was taught in South Africa under apartheid rule, furthered the ideological agenda of the Nationalist Government and hence the dominance of a very specific citizenship i.e. that of the white Afrikaner.

If one goes back to the work and influence of, for example, Professor W.A.Landman (from the University of South Africa), particularly between 1969 and 1987, it is possible to trace the development of ‘phenomenology-as-fundamental pedagogics’ in South Africa without much difficulty. In a publication entitled ‘The Development of Fundamental Pedagogics at Pretoria from 1969 to 1987’, Landman describes the phenomenological steps (drawing on both

Husserl and Heidegger) taken by him and his colleagues over almost a twenty year period, to gradually uncover “more essences and structures of the pedagogic situation ... by repeatedly asking relevant questions and seeking relevant answers” (Landman, no date). However, implicit in what can be seen to be a method that attempted to be very faithful to Husserl, particularly, was the assumption that the goal of education is to “work towards the child’s proper adulthood” (*ibid*), and that the ‘ontological categories’ with which ‘Pretoria phenomenologists’ should work included “among others, becoming, freedom, person, existence, ethnicity, self-consciousness, awareness of propriety, responsibility, temporality, and world” (*ibid*). It is not difficult, therefore, to see how phenomenology came to be treated with great suspicion during the apartheid era, given its appropriation by Fundamental Pedagogues such as Landman and his Pretoria colleagues.

Having said this, in more recent years, particularly post 1994 and the establishment of a democratic government, there have been many phenomenological studies conducted within the human and social sciences in South Africa that are in no way underpinned by Fundamental Pedagogics or Christian National Education ideology. In a survey of phenomenological research which I conducted through the Nexus Database System in November 2006, 58 records were retrieved for the period 1990 – 2006. None of these bore any relation or reference to Fundamental Pedagogics or Christian National Education. Of these, 12 were conducted between 1990 and 1993, the rest since 1994 which does suggest a growing interest in phenomenology. However, only a small number of these studies, seven to be exact, were educational studies.

Notwithstanding the risks just alluded to that relate specifically to our South African context, phenomenology has a role to play in education, with van Manen (1994, 1997, 1999, 2002), (referred to earlier), being one of the most engaged proponents of it in recent times. Van Manen, a recently retired professor from the University of Alberta, US, gives particular focus to the role of writing in phenomenological studies, identifying human science research as “essentially a linguistic project: to make some aspect of our lived world, of our lived experience, reflectively understandable and intelligible” (1997, p.129), and like Merleau-Ponty, he sees writing as “action in the sense of a corporeal practice. The writer practises his or her body in order to make, to ‘author’ something” (*ibid*).

Van Manen makes the pertinent point that in ‘phenomenological human science’, writing isn’t something that we simply bring into the research project at a particular point – in most people’s view, when we are ready to ‘write it up’. Rather, he claims, “human science research *is* a form of writing” (*ibid*, p.110) [emphasis in original]. So van Manen gives considerable attention to what it is that research and writing aim to achieve. Bearing in mind

that all van Manen's work is conducted within a pedagogical context i.e. he as a teacher in interaction with his students as learners, the point of creating a phenomenological text for him, and a similar task is required of this study, is to "bring pedagogic experience into a symbolic form that creates by its very discursive nature a conversational relation" (*ibid*). Language of course, is the 'symbolic form' of which he speaks here. And so he asks the question, "What form of writing is needed to do justice to the fullness of the pedagogy and pedagogic experience?" (*ibid*).

The phenomenological method, in van Manen's view, through 'the art of being sensitive', must hear the "subtle undertones of language, to the way language speaks when it allows the things themselves to speak" (*ibid*). Included in these 'subtle undertones' are silences, recognised as being as voluble as speech itself. Van Manen identifies three forms of silence, each of equal importance. Firstly, there is *literal* silence – when no-one speaks. He gives as an example in this case, the interview. As he says about this, and I would agree with him, "it is often more effective to remain silent when the conversation haltingly gropes forward. Out of this space of silence a more reflective response often may ensue than if we try and fill the awkwardness of the silence with comments or questions that amount to little more than chatter" (*ibid*, p.111).

Secondly, there is *epistemological* silence. This, van Manen describes as "the kind of silence we are confronted with when we face the unspeakable" (*ibid*, p.112), but this is not the 'unspeakable' as the word is commonly used i.e. that something is perhaps too terrible, too offensive, too terrifying to talk about. Rather, it refers to that 'rich domain' of knowledge that we have but which "is not available to our linguistic competence" (*ibid*). Here he gives the example of someone who is not able to give police a description of a witness yet can help them draw up an identikit of the person. An example from my own experience of the doctorate might be the early period during which I was able to 'visualize' my 'knowledge' of phenomenology, but could not speak about it in any coherent way. Though at the time I described myself as stupidly mute, perhaps it was just an epistemological silence?

The final kind of silence of which van Manen speaks is *ontological* silence, "the silence of Being or Life itself", the silence in which we "meet the realization of our fundamental predicament of always returning to silence" (*ibid*, p.113). Van Manen suggests that we experience this kind of silence most often at the end of an especially enlightening event, one that is deeply meaningful and insightful, one that leaves us 'dumb-founded'. The role of phenomenological writing is to capture all these forms of silence despite their silent formulations. Thus this kind of writing requires a "high level of reflectivity, an attunement to lived experience, and a certain patience or time commitment" (*ibid*).

In his driving quest to see the integration of educator and research roles *in* the writing of scholarly texts on pedagogy, van Manen makes the following extremely pertinent point.

... as we speak or write (produce text), we need to see that the textuality of our text is also a demonstration of the way we stand pedagogically in life. It is a sign of our preoccupation with a certain question or notion, a demonstration of the strength of our exclusive commitment to the pedagogy that animates our interest in text (speaking and writing) in the first place. We tend to live the half-life, unresponsive to pedagogy, when our scholarly activities are cut off from the pedagogic reason for this scholarship. ... And so, there seems to exist much theory in education that lacks education (1997, p.138).

Thus, from van Manen's perspective there is a particular goal to be achieved by writing 'phenomenologically'. It is to have the reader experience 'addressive' moments i.e. "when a text suddenly 'speaks' to us in a manner that validates our experience, when it conveys a life understanding that stirs our sensibilities, when it pulls the strings of our unity of being" (2002, p.237). Phenomenological texts should, therefore, make us think and feel 'life's meaning' "at the level of sensory and prereflective awareness as well as at the level of reflective meaning that concerns our place in life" (*ibid*, p.238).

Finally, when it comes to 'working with the text', van Manen offers some suggestions. Recognising that often a researcher is uncertain of what route to take, as certainly this researcher was initially, because "no research design or blueprint" is available, he advises "keeping the evolving part-whole relation of one's study in mind" (1997, p.167). In terms of how one can write, he thus posits five possibilities: 1) thematically; (2) analytically; (3) exemplificatively; (4) exegetically; and (5) existentially. This study reflects facets of all these ways to write, underscoring van Manen's view they are "neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive" (*ibid*, p.173).

Besides van Manen, however, Pinar *et al.* (1995), identify numerous others who have made use of phenomenology in educational research. He cites Aoki (1974 -1993), Jardine (1987), Huebner (1975), Smith (1988) and Hunsberger (1988), as particularly having engaged in phenomenological curriculum research. According to Pinar *et al.*, there is a 'thematic distinctiveness' to much of this research, stemming from the exploration of topics that are not commonly the focus of mainstream educational research. As examples of these topics, they cite the work done on reading as an embodied experience by Grumet (1976), the 'secret place' by Langeveld (1983a, 1983b), the child prodigy by Allen, Bonner and Moore (1984), and, 'On the Humility of Mathematical Language' by Jardine (1990), to name just a few.

One strand of curriculum research that Pinar *et al.* highlight in their survey of 'phenomenologically-related' approaches that offer critiques of mainstream educational

research is that of *currere*. *Currere* “focuses on the educational experience of the individual, as reported by the individual. Rather than working to quantify behaviours to describe their surface interaction or to establish causality, *currere* seeks to describe what the individual subject him or herself makes of these behaviours” (Pinar *et al.*, 1995, p. 414). The closest that this study came to engaging with a form of *currere* was through the interview I, as researcher, had with a colleague, prior to starting the research process, where the express purpose was to try and ‘slide beneath and behind’ my motivation for the study, my attitudes to the RWAT module etc. in order to ‘slacken’ “the intentional threads which attach us to the world and thus bring them to our notice” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.xiii). Because *currere* “shares phenomenology’s interest in describing immediate, preconceptual experience, and then makes use of the phenomenological process of ‘distancing’ and ‘bracketing’ required to do so” (Pinar *et al.*, *ibid*), its links to Husserlian phenomenology are clear.

Of the various contributors to our understanding of ‘curriculum as phenomenological text’ (after Pinar, 1995), Huebner (1923-) struck me as offering not necessarily new, but relevant insights into curriculum issues related to this study viz. his attention to ‘language’, politics, hermeneutics and relationships, and I would thus like to focus briefly on him. Pinar, a student of Huebner’s, has championed the latter’s contribution to curriculum theory for many years, saying that “Efforts in the late 1970’s and 1980’s to understand curriculum politically, phenomenologically, aesthetically, and theologically can be directly traced to Huebner’s groundbreaking scholarship in the 1960’s and early 1970’s” (Pinar, 1999, p.xx,) and that he was “the first to introduce phenomenology to curriculum studies at the 1967 Curriculum Theory Conference held at Ohio State University” (Pinar, 1995, p.417). It seems worthwhile, therefore, to consider him.

In the first instance, Huebner argued that “curriculum language was constrained by two myths embedded within it: that of learning and purpose” (*ibid*). He linked ‘learning’ with educational psychology and the empirical-analytic tradition, and “as such it becomes a technical term of control” (*ibid*). Why he wanted ‘learning’ and ‘purpose’ to be replaced (based on their implicit control function’) was that the terms did not serve to identify “the phenomenological distinction between learning and reality” (*ibid*). What he preferred was that ‘curricular workers’ identify ‘valued educational activity’. He then went on to describe five ‘value frameworks’ against which curricular workers could assess the value of any educational activity which they designed and implemented viz. the technical, the political, the scientific, the aesthetic and the ethical. Interestingly, in Pinar *et al.* (1995) it is only the last two which are considered to reflect “a rudimentary phenomenology of curriculum” (*ibid*, p.418). Nevertheless, what Huebner highlights is an aspect of curriculum theory and practice

which needs to be re-foregrounded in contemporary contexts i.e. the way in which language directs and controls the enactment of curricula intentions. In addition, by identifying his five 'value frameworks', he reminds us of the multiple influences underpinning curricula formation, where each in their own right, and each in relation to the other, exert forces that, in one way or another, transform or preserve the socio-political status quo.

Huebner also linked hermeneutics (or interpretation), as a fundamental educational activity, with what he called the 'three presences' – the individual, society, and culture or tradition. In other words, in his view, and my personal experience and the experience of this research endorses Huebner's view, we cannot, when thinking about education,

effectively start our thinking with the individual and then make the past and the community secondary. Rather, our thinking must start with all three: the individual, the past, and the community. Then we can ask how the three are interrelated. We need not relate them by the language of teaching and learning, or by goals and objectives. I suggest they can be interrelated by hermeneutical or interpretive activity, by political activity, and by work activity" (Huebner, 1974a [1999], p.188).

Though most higher education practitioners would in all likelihood claim to have this 'three-presence' orientation, I would argue that it is a new kind of challenge to centralise this kind of thinking in curriculum planning and development such that it is easily recognisable where it is taking place i.e. within or outside of the actual teaching and learning context, and how it is experienced by students/ learners as a lived reality.

Lastly, in terms of relationship, Huebner draws attention to the inter-relational nature of our existence, and that within the educational context this is of particular importance. This maybe stating the obvious, but it is the *kind* of relating that is so critical to Huebner's thinking in this regard. Because the educational relationship i.e. the one between teacher and learner, is implicitly one characterised by unequal power relations, it is easy to slip into routinised and 'accepted' hierarchical behaviours which work, intentionally and effectively, to sustain these uneven power relations. In Huebner's view, "those who claim to be educators must care for, indeed love, those whom they would presume to educate" (*ibid*), which posits an altogether different position on how to respond, as an educator, to those traditionally and hierarchically understood to be 'less' or 'other' than oneself.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has, in the first instance, foregrounded phenomenology as a philosophy and explicated, through references to Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty in particular, key concepts and terms associated with this tradition. 'Intersubjectivity', with special reference to

the work of Schutz, was recognised as a core concept in any phenomenology of the social world, though here too, critiques of Schutz's work are to be found. In conclusion, the educational relevance of phenomenology was highlighted through a more specific consideration of the contributions to the field made by the Utrecht School, van Manen's work on writing phenomenologically within a pedagogical context, and Huebner's on curriculum. In the following chapter, phenomenology-as-methodology constitutes the primary focus of discussion.

Chapter 4

Phenomenology-as-methodology

4.1 Introduction

As indicated in the previous chapter, it is quite apparent from the literature that there are significant tensions surrounding the use and interpretation of phenomenology-as-methodology in human and social science research. This is particularly noticeable with regard to the way in which the work of Husserl and Heidegger is employed in nursing and psychology research (see Paley 1997, 1998, 2001, 2005; Giorgi 2000, Crotty 1996, 1998) to inform the methodology of these studies, but also to phenomenological 'methods' in general. My own experience of the methodology has been problematic and raised many questions for me around exactly how one should construe the 'phenomenological approach', and most especially, its relevance for human and social science research in South Africa today. Hence, rather than begin this chapter with the methodology and 'methods' employed in this study, I have chosen to start by presenting some of the tensions associated with phenomenological methodology, with the point of departure being the work of John Paley (and responses to him), as the critiques and comments he offers are simultaneously provocative and insightful. It is then, in the light of these first discussions, that the methodological procedures taken in this study will be presented.

4.2 On trial: 'Phenomenology' in the human and social sciences

Though reference to Paley's views on the use of phenomenology in nursing studies were introduced in the previous chapter, it is important to re-establish their contribution to this more focused discussion on phenomenology-as-methodology, and to reiterate some of the central tenets of Husserlian and Heideggarian phenomenological orientations. Engaging with Paley's thinking, in the first instance through journal articles he has written (see references above), and subsequently through email conversations in which he generously gave of his time to raise certain methodological issues with me, constituted a critical moment in the research process. Until then, despite an extensive review of phenomenological research studies in journals such as *the Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, *Advanced Journal of Nursing*, *International Journal of Qualitative Method*, *Nursing Inquiry*, *The Qualitative Report*, *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDs care*, i.e. journals dedicated to research in the human and social sciences, I found few explicit debates or direct challenges to methodological procedures and theoretical claims in these studies. So while one researcher would adopt one particular approach, and another something different, I did not find many 'conversations' around the differences or strong critiques of existing studies. What was

certainly common, were the constant references to Husserl and/or Heidegger and confident claims to studies being 'phenomenological' when, perhaps, nothing more than an orientation to 'lived experience' was declared. Although Paley focuses exclusively on nursing studies, it will become apparent that the issues he raises are as relevant to educational studies. They also assist one in recognizing that adopting an Husserlian perspective demands a different orientation from a perspective that owes its lineage to Heidegger. Paley, therefore, was a crucial find.

Through an analysis of numerous nursing studies making use of either Husserl and/or Heidegger (see Paley 1997, 1998), Paley, in my view, persuasively demonstrates the inadequacy of these studies, concluding with regard to the use of Husserl, "that there is no connection between Husserl's philosophy and the procedures described by nurse researchers who claim to be practicing phenomenology of a Husserlian kind, and that attempts to justify this type of research – with its talk of 'bracketing' and 'essences' – by appealing to his authority should be abandoned"(1997, p.817). And of those drawing on Heidegger, he suggests that "hermeneutic studies of 'lived experience' are incompatible with Heidegger's ontology, since they are thoroughly Cartesian in spirit" (*ibid*), though they claim not to be so.

To understand the very non-Cartesian nature of Heidegger's philosophy, it is important to remember the intimate unity between the Dasein and 'the world' as described in Chapter 3. In Heidegger's words, "Dasein itself, ultimately the beings which we call men, are possible in their being only because there is a world ... Dasein exhibits itself as a being *which is in its world but at the same time is by virtue of the world in which it is*. Here we find a peculiar union of being in the world with the being of Dasein" (1985, p.202). [Emphasis in original]. This does not mean that it is not possible to study the world 'scientifically' or 'theoretically' (Paley uses these words interchangeably, itself problematic but not taken further here), only that the attitude necessary to do so is derived from the Dasein's experience of the 'everyday'. Thus, in order to define theory we must begin with practice, not the other way around. Heidegger says of this that "the sense of worldliness *cannot* be read off from mere nature Nature as a reality can only be understood on the basis of worldliness." (Heidegger 1985, p.199) [Emphasis in original].

Having said this, it is useful to ask, within the context of what is claimed to be a phenomenological study, what the methodological implications of an inadvertent Cartesian reading of Heidegger are for an applied research context. Most commonly, it results in research that justifies a sole focus on the 'lived experiences' of people, without reference to the influence and impact of 'the world'. Thus, without realizing it, and presumably

unintentionally, research studies of this nature, reinstate the Cartesian subject, which as illustrated, cannot be reconciled with Heidegger's philosophy. In addition, and underscoring the misrepresentation of Heidegger identified earlier, there is an implicit assumption that the accounts of 'own experience' given by research participants, cannot be refuted i.e. 'the principle of incorrigibility' (Paley, 1997) is consistently applied.

Another spin-off of this 'experience-as-Truth' perspective, is that there is usually in studies that attribute a position to Heidegger's influence, no concomitant response to *practices* 'in the world'. If Heidegger was being correctly applied, then research claiming an Heideggarian premise should be able to recognise that "one cannot separate the world from Daseining (sic) [and] if this right, and if science can disengage from everyday concern and treat the world theoretically, then a similar move is possible with 'Daseining'" (Paley, 1998, p.820). What this implies (in Paley's view), is that the social scientist "becomes committed to a study of social *practices* ... In other words, the aim of social science is to study the way in which everyday practices both reproduce the social structure and *ipso facto*, create the conditions for individual self-understanding, as expressed in subsequent practice" (*ibid*). [Emphasis in original]. In short, what social scientists claiming an Heideggarian orientation should not do is give exclusive attention to the 'Cartesian subject' as the only legitimate subject of social research.

Paley (2001) takes a further swipe at nursing research, this time focusing on "the presuppositions about what knowledge is" that are commonly incorporated in the literature on caring (specifically). Now although 'caring' is not the topic of my study, the sketches of what Paley thinks is presupposed by nursing research in relation to how knowledge is constituted in that field, has relevance for this study and many other phenomenological studies in the human and social sciences. He outlines five presuppositions about knowledge, all of which routinely characterise knowledge claims about 'what caring is' (as opposed to 'nursing care') in many phenomenological nursing studies. These presuppositions are: Knowledge as description; Knowledge of things said; Knowledge of association; Knowledge of attributes; and Knowledge as aggregation. Using Foucault's (1970) analysis of the nature of the construction of knowledge in Western culture up to the end of the 16th century, Paley deconstructs the way in which 'knowledge' is built in phenomenological studies on caring, to support his argument that "this way of knowing is approximately 350 years out of date" (2001, p.188) and hence in his view, of little use today.

This 'ancient' knowledge, according to Foucault, was constituted predominantly by "*lists of things said* about various phenomena" (Paley, 2001, p.194). [Emphasis in original]. It put emphasis on description and made no clear distinction between "knowledge of the object

and things said about the object”, and indulged in an “extravagant proliferation of associations” and ‘resemblances’. Knowledge then, was thus constituted by “constant accumulation, constant confirmation and constant repetition - a ceaselessly expanding domain of ‘things said’ and a perpetual commentary serving only to fuel further accounts of the same kind” (*ibid*), in effect rendering it uncontestable and untestable. Responding to this criticism of Paley’s will be reserved for a summative comment towards the end of this chapter.

In an article entitled ‘*Phenomenology as Rhetoric*’, published in 2005, Paley is also critical of what he perceives to be the yawning gap between what nurses say about phenomenological research – the ‘rhetoric’ – and what they actually *do* in practice. In this 2005 paper, Paley works from the assumption that nurses engaging in phenomenological research do so as an alternative to the ‘scientific method’. This would be a fair assumption to make given that phenomenological research is undoubtedly oriented towards an interpretive/ naturalistic paradigm. Thus, he describes the former as “a genre of research that renounces certain concepts associated with science – reality, objectivity, abstraction and generalisability – and which instead embraces experience, meaning, subjectivity and understanding” (2005, p.107). Paley’s stance here is clearly quite extreme and does suggest that he is not completely familiar with some of the more philosophically conceptualized interpretations of, for example, ‘reality’ and ‘objectivity’ in phenomenology. Thus to set ‘reality, objectivity, abstraction and generalisability’ (as one ‘set’ of seemingly unassailable scientific precepts) in stark opposition to ‘experience, meaning, subjectivity and understanding’ (as another ‘set’ of seemingly dubious ‘interpretive’ precepts) is not particularly helpful since it works to foreclose a promising debate. Nevertheless, Paley’s analysis of the serious flaws inherent in phenomenological nursing studies, categorizing them as he does in this article, under the subheadings of ‘Experience and Reality’; ‘Meaning and Abstraction’; ‘Subjectivity and Objectivity’ and ‘Understanding and Generalisation’, do add substance to the debates which the use of phenomenology in the applied social sciences evoke and are thus important to consider. To facilitate the discussion around these categories, I have retained Paley’s labels for them. However, while this way of categorizing his criticisms is useful, it will become apparent that they are clearly and inevitably interrelated.

4.2.1 Experience and Reality

Although there are examples of written responses being used as raw data (see, for example, Pietersen, 2002, Moustakas, 1994), the accepted primary sources of data in phenomenological studies are the interview transcripts. This is unsurprising given the approach’s emphasis on self-declared ‘lived experience’. Those who make use of

phenomenology in research have an openly acknowledged desire to penetrate the bubble-wrap of self-conscious self-reporting of personal experiences, in order to see beyond that which participants selectively articulate, to what they also inadvertently tell us. 'Subjective experience', therefore, occupies an undisputed centrality in the research process. From Paley's perspective, "This is fine. There are some situations in which it is useful to know how people interpret what has happened to them, irrespective of other accounts, and irrespective of what more 'objective' observers might regard as 'true' or 'accurate' (2005, p.107). So, *gathering* 'subjective' accounts of experience is not Paley's main objection here. What does disturb him and raise his ire *in the context of nursing research* – and holding this quite specific context in mind is important in this discussion since it (wisely, strategically) de-limits the criticisms he makes – is what nurses do thereafter. From far leaving subjective experience to speak for itself, he says that:

the commitment to 'subjective truth' in nursing phenomenology is rhetorical only. The self-denying ordinance, disclaiming interest in causes or the 'objective' world, and typically announced at the beginning of the research report, hardly ever survives to the finish. The self-imposed division between experience/ meaning and reality/ causation usually collapses at some point during the conclusion (*ibid*).

By way of supporting this claim, Paley then goes onto cite five nursing research studies that in his view do just this (see Paley, 2005, pp.107/108). From my reading of these studies I would agree with him. They do "slide from accounts of subjective experience to implicitly objective claims about reality" (*ibid*), and suggest that whatever a participant says of an experience is the Truth, and that a collation of subjectively reported experiences constitutes more of the Truth of a particular phenomenon. As Paley says, "it entails that there is no distinction between 'how it seems' and 'how it really is'. In other words, if I *experience* the world in a certain way, then that is what the world *is really like*. So there can be no illusions, no mistakes, no fallacies, no misconceptions, and no errors. This is not so much an ontology as a psychosis" (*ibid*) [Emphasis in original].

From my own reading of phenomenological studies done by, for example, Lemon and Taylor (1997), Mallinson (1999), Kovista, Janhonen and Vaisanen, (2002), Alderson (2004), this point of Paley's is borne out.

4.2.2 Meaning and Abstraction

The main charge leveled here is at the way phenomenological nursing studies abstract from 'meaning, uniqueness and lived experience' to generalizations. Despite the usually stated assurance in nursing studies that individual experience cannot be abstracted from or generalized, Paley contends that "of course, they don't really mean it. The end product of a

phenomenological study is as abstract as the findings in any positivist enquiry” (2005, p.108). He attributes this ‘flawed’ response to “the liturgy of ‘common themes’, [the] analytical procedure that is ritually adopted, irrespective of the specific question or topic” (*ibid*) in phenomenology. And certainly this is how phenomenological data analysis generally proceeds. The search for ‘common themes’ constitutes, in most studies, a critical step in the data analysis, and it is out of these ‘common themes’ that the ‘structure’ of a phenomenon is determined. But what Paley takes issue with is not the fact that classification of data has taken place – that is a process common to most data analysis procedures – but rather that the classifications, the ‘common themes’ are derived from such tenuous sources i.e. uniquely individual responses to a phenomenon. He acknowledges that such a pursuit arises from a theoretical orientation concerned with universals or ‘invariant features’ – arrived at through the methodological step of ‘imaginative variation’, but seriously questions its relevance to the kinds of nursing studies with which he is familiar.

To illustrate his point, Paley takes the ‘meaning of childbirth’. What I perceive to be with great skill, he identifies at least 7 possible ‘categories of meaning’ that could emerge from a phenomenological study interested in accessing lived experiences of childbirth, and each one differs, of course, because the context and frames of reference for each individual differ. He concludes by asking how it is possible to find ‘common themes’ if there is “such an astonishing diversity in the ‘meaning of childbirth’? “Try it as an exercise,” he says. “Look for something singular in this prodigious plurality. Search for a common theme. Seek an essence. The only thing you will locate, I would imagine, is this: a woman having a baby. And that is a ‘meaning of childbirth’ which you can identify, any time, in any dictionary. Without recourse to phenomenology” (*ibid*, p.110).

4.2.3 Subjectivity and Objectivity

Paley describes nursing literature as ‘schizoid’ about objectivity, that is, of the type that characterizes the ‘scientific method’. ‘Schizoid’ is a strong word to use – uncomplimentary in the extreme – but perhaps signals the depth of Paley’s frustration in this context. As has already been discussed, the notion of ‘bracketing’, which originated in Husserlian phenomenology, is understood to be the necessary suspension of subjective opinions, biases and prejudices, in order to ‘see’ the phenomenon under investigation ‘clearly’. It was the ‘procedure’ Husserl identified as essential to the identification of ‘essences’, and followed the *epoche* or eidetic reduction – that moment of withdrawal from the natural attitude. ‘Bracketing’, however, has come to be a very contentious concept in ‘applied’ phenomenology, especially when those who use it attempt to infuse it with Husserlian overtones. And Paley is one of those who has great difficulty with studies that speak glibly

and naively of 'bracketing' as automatically giving rise to 'objectivity'. Thus here, where Paley tackles 'subjectivity and objectivity', it is to the notion of 'bracketing' that he gives his full attention, and asks the question everybody wants an answer to, namely, "how, exactly, is it supposed to work?" (*ibid*, p.110).

It must be said that Husserl's conception of bracketing has been contested, dismissed and reconceptualised over and over in various research contexts in the decades following his development of it. So Paley is by no means the first. The point he makes, however, is even though mainstream phenomenologists continue to doubt and contest the process of 'bracketing', "nurses (by all accounts) go on doing it" (Paley, 2005, p.110). From my reading of phenomenological studies, however, it is by no means only nurses who 'go on doing it'. Many other phenomenologists in the 'applied' tradition (see, for example, Giorgi, 1985,1994; Holroyd, 2001; Fourtounas, 2003) continue to use the term 'bracketing' and employ an Husserlian version of the concept in practice.

So when Paley asks "how does one 'put out of play one's assumptions about the phenomenon under investigation?" (Drew, 2001, p. 23), he is asking the most critical phenomenological methodological question of all. He concludes that "the matter is desperately unclear. Presumably, 'setting aside' your assumptions is not like emptying your pockets, or taking your shoes and socks off." (Paley, 2005, p.110). What he problematises, therefore, is how, in a phenomenological study, one can ever say that one has 'put aside' one's assumptions, prejudices etc. with any degree of certainty, since in order to do this, one has first to 'know' all one's assumptions, which of course is unlikely to ever be the case. In fact, it is precisely those assumptions and beliefs of which we are *unaware* that could exert the most influence over our perceptions of, and responses to, circumstances, since being unknown they cannot be controlled. But in so many phenomenological studies (not only in nursing) it is as if simply by *saying* that bracketing was carried out, *de facto* this happened, and what remains is a 'cleansed' mind, empty of all mental and emotional associations with the phenomenon under study, ready to receive – as one might a gift – the articulated experiences of 'the Other'. In my view, in these studies, 'bracketing' takes on a speech-act demeanour i.e. that in the *saying* is the *doing*. Dealey (2004), for example says (in the context of a multinational research project employing phenomenology to investigate living with a pressure ulcer), that "reduction is the process of isolating the essences of a phenomenon from any preconceived ideas. The researcher must bracket any existing knowledge, that is, put it to one side, in order to remain neutral with respect of beliefs about a phenomenon. *As a result, the essential truths of a phenomenon, and not someone's beliefs about it can be presented* (no page)". [My emphasis]. The simplistic leap Dealey

makes from 'bracketing' to 'essential truths' is astonishing, given that she, on more than one occasion, before and after the statement just quoted, emphasises the active, subjective, non-neutral role of the researcher in phenomenological studies.

So it's not so much that nursing researchers engage in a process of reducing their impact on the study – and call this 'bracketing' – that Paley takes issue with, but how nursing researchers speak about it, assume its unproblematic accomplishment, and the fact that the *consequences* of this bracketing are given infinitely more status and power in terms of findings than can ever realistically or legitimately be the case. Out of these processes of 'bracketing' come 'objective' findings of a kind that can, according to nursing phenomenologists, take their place as equals alongside findings derived from 'scientific' methods - and *that* is where the real problem for Paley lies. 'Objectivity claims' made in scientific investigations ('authentic' ones, that is), he asserts, are only done so once "prior commitments, values, hunches and obsessions" are "put to the test by canonical methods, which ... are recognized by all scientists, independently of their personal predilections" (*ibid*, p. 111). To conclude his response to the 'subjectivity and objectivity' debate he raises, Paley reminds phenomenologists that there is "the most obvious and plausible alternative" (to striving for an 'interpretation-free' mental environment), and that is "that objectivity has nothing to do with laying aside one's prejudices and preconceptions and everything to do with the introduction of universally agreed protocols" (*ibid*).

4.2.4 Understanding and Generalisation

Participant numbers in phenomenological studies in the social sciences, and this includes nursing, are almost without exception small – most commonly between 4 and 10. I have encountered a study which claimed to be phenomenological (*A Phenomenological Investigation of Same-Sex Marriage*: Alderson, 2004), with 22 couples as participants, in several early Duquesne studies (1971) numbers of up to 30 are recorded, and Paley cites a study where there was only one participant (Fleming, 2003), but these extremes are rare. Nevertheless the *size* of phenomenological samples is another contentious issue – for obvious reasons, that sample size impacts on the scope of a study (of any kind) to generalize from its findings. Bearing in mind that the main critique in this section revolves around the content of Paley's (2005) article called '*Phenomenology as Rhetoric*', his criticism is directed not so much at the sizes of the samples (although that does seriously bother him), but the contradiction between what nurses *say* and what they *do* with regard to their findings. Thus here, it is the case of nursing phenomenological studies declaring the *non-generalisability* of their findings upfront – usually in the abstract or opening discussion – and then drawing generalizations anyway, or generalizing without any reference to the scale of

the study, that captures Paley's attention, and he cites studies done by Dunneice and Slevin (2000); Staden (1998); Lindahl, Sandman and Rasmussen (2003); Rhodes and Bowles (2002), to support this claim. My own reading of a range of phenomenological studies confirms Paley's claims (see, for example, Fischer (1971); Collins (no date); Sadala and Adorno (2002); Dealey, (2004)). And it doesn't matter in their studies, if a term such as 'transferability' is used (instead of 'generalisability') i.e. they assume that if respondents are 'similar enough', generalisable credence can be given to what they say about the phenomenon under study. In Paley's view, "the strategy attempts to justify generalizing from a non-representative sample by calling it something else. I wasn't generalizing, your honour, I was transferring" (2005, p.112).

In addition to the problem of generalisation, Paley identifies 'arriving at essences' as yet another issue unsatisfactorily managed (in his view) in nursing studies. He finds the all too common practice of taking what is 'unique', that is, an *individual's* experience of a phenomenon, and transforming it unabashedly into what is 'common'. The difference between 'essence-as-uniqueness' and 'essence-as-what-is-common' is thus regularly fudged in order to allow researchers to declare 'universals' – in the interests of being recognised as having conducted worthwhile phenomenological research.

In summing up Paley's critiques as he presents them in the papers drawn on in the above discussion, it would be fair to say that they potentially thrust phenomenology-as-methodology in nursing studies, in particular, into critical disarray, since they call into question the very procedures, conceptual frameworks and 'outputs' which govern its application. He makes serious, provocative charges that implicitly undermine the academic worth of the studies in question, and hence their claims to be providing new knowledge in the field of nursing, and poses thorny challenges to established 'ways of doing and being' in applied phenomenology contexts – this study being no exception. He is, of course, ultimately disparaging of most phenomenological studies in the social sciences, finding Giddens' structuration theory far more suited to the stated goals of most nursing (in particular) research. He cites Giddens (1984) as saying:

The basic domain of study of the social sciences, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of social totality, but social practices ordered across space and time ... An ontology of time-space as constitutive of social practices is basic to the concept of structuration, which begins from temporality and thus, in one sense, 'history' (Paley, 1998, p.819).

Be that as it may, and as said earlier, Paley's criticisms of phenomenological nursing studies, and the questions he raises, cannot go unanswered, especially as they do generally

reflect the major criticisms made of phenomenology – only not often so caustically and, simultaneously, eloquently. I believe that there is an imperative on my part, to respond to Paley, in the context of this study. This is done, as the reader will discover, in various ways throughout this thesis.

Before taking on Paley, however, and to delay narrowing the debates to this single study, I would like to pursue other threads of responses to these criticisms, beginning with one that answers certain of Paley's 'Husserlian charges' directly, namely that made by Amadeo Giorgi, a leading proponent of applied phenomenology in North America since the early 70s.

A relationship between philosophical phenomenology and psychology was established very early in the history of the phenomenological movement – even Husserl spoke of 'phenomenological psychology' (which Giorgi contends is "really philosophical phenomenology" (1985, p. 24; Footnote 1). Consequently a substantial quantity of the literature on 'applied' phenomenology is contextualized within psychology research – with Giorgi perhaps being one of the most prolific, consistent and influential contemporary disciples of it. However, although Giorgi *is* located firmly within the discipline of psychology and the bulk of his work has been directed at the application of phenomenology to psychological research, he was mindful of the potential relevance of phenomenology to other human and social science disciplines.

4.3 Responses, derivations and reconfigurations

In 2000, Giorgi published two articles, one whose explicit purpose was "to demonstrate that Paley is wrong [in his recommendation] that all reference to Husserl be dropped by nurses" (2000, p.3), and the other to defend 'scientific phenomenology', the name and form of phenomenology developed by him for specific application to phenomenological psychology research. In the first of these articles, Giorgi argues fiercely that 'scientific' phenomenologists (constituted largely by members of the Psychology Department at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, US) are as indebted to Husserl and Heidegger as the philosophical phenomenologists are, but claims that what Paley fails to realize is that "nurses ... want to operate at the level of the human *sciences*" (his emphasis), and adds that "[i]f one were truly limited to literal interpretations of Husserl on practices, one would either have to become a philosopher or else dismiss Husserlian phenomenology as irrelevant to for the human sciences". Thus reconfiguring 'pure' Husserl was an imperative, in Giorgi's view, if Husserlian phenomenology was to resonate with, and have relevance for, psychology in particular, but the human sciences in general. That he directs his arguments in both these articles to nursing research alone, should not, therefore, obscure the relevance of his

arguments to phenomenological research across the human and social science disciplinary perspective.

However, in order to discern more clearly exactly how one should understand Giorgi's stance on phenomenology, a return to some of his earlier work is recommended. In doing so, a return to Merleau-Ponty is also effected as Giorgi explicitly 'situates' himself "within the perspective of one philosopher, Merleau-Ponty" (1985, p.42), choosing the latter "as the representative of phenomenological philosophy ... [because he] ...knew psychology as well as any phenomenological philosopher with whom I am acquainted, and hence I am in no way biasing the case of the inadequacy of philosophical phenomenology for direct relevance for psychology. Indeed, once could argue the opposite" (*ibid*, p.43). Drawing substantially on Merleau-Ponty's writing in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), particularly, Giorgi extrapolated Merleau-Ponty's 'celebrated phenomenological themes' which as the reader knows by now, are concepts that originated with Husserl, namely, the demand for 'pure description', the 'reduction', the notion and identification of 'essences', the problematic of 'self-evidence', and 'intentionality', and developed a methodology which he believed could still be considered loyal to Husserl.

Merleau-Ponty's critical contribution to the phenomenological movement was introduced in Chapter 3 of this thesis, so something of this philosopher's ideas is already known to the reader. To re-establish his relevance, however, it is worth remembering that his unique contribution lay in his notion of the 'embodied' consciousness, such that 'to be' (a body) is to perceive, that "the theory of the body ... is, implicitly, a theory of perception". So, to 'know' arises from a unique, integrated unity of 'sense experience' without which, we would neither 'be' nor 'know'. Thus he can say that:

I am the absolute source, my existence does not stem from my antecedents, from my physical and social environment; instead it moves out towards them and sustains them, for I alone bring into being for myself (and therefore into being in the only sense that the word can have for me) the tradition which I elect to carry on, or the horizon whose distance from me would be abolished – since that distance is not one of its properties – if I were not there to scan it with my gaze (1962, p.ix).

Merleau-Ponty distinguishes between what it means to 'exist', to simply Be, and that 'place' which has evolved through 'scientific activity', and legitimated (inexplicably, in his view) a separate kind of world in which 'scientific points of view' are taken as representing their own form of objective knowledge. When establishing why contemporary phenomenologists in the human and social sciences, such as Giorgi, attribute such significance to Merleau-Ponty's thinking, and find justification for the type of research that has as its central thesis, 'a return

to the things themselves', it is also partly, I suspect, because Merleau-Ponty so articulately undermines the inherently superior attitude of traditional science. In his Preface to *Phenomenology of Perception*, for example, he says:

I cannot shut myself up within the realm of science. All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is gained from my own particular point of view, or from some experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless. The whole universe of science is built upon the world as directly experienced, and if we want to subject science itself to rigorous scrutiny and arrive at a precise assessment of its meaning and scope, we must begin by reawakening the basic experience of the world of which science is the second-order experience. Science has not and never will have, by its nature, the same significance qua form of being as the world which we perceive, for the simple reason that is a rationale or explanation of that world (1962, p.viii).

4.4 Giorgi: Towards a methodology

In the early 1970s, Giorgi began to work on a research method “for psychology conceived as a human *science*” [emphasis in original], mediating the philosophical insights of phenomenology “so that scientific practices can be performed” (2000, p.4). Like Spiegelberg, he saw the inclusion of the experiences of others as “an opening for an enlarged phenomenology which need not be a diluted phenomenology” and who saw no good reason “for being a phenomenological purist and for barring the road to a genuine phenomenology with a wider and richer scope” (1985, p.53). However, the difficulties of integrating (at best), or simply meliorating the resistance to conceiving of psychology as science, were profound in the 70s.

To overcome the great disparity between these two domains, Giorgi’s first recommendation was that, “since the understanding of phenomenology is so heavily weighted by the articulation of philosophical phenomenology and since the meaning of science is so dominated by the natural scientific understanding of science, these understandings must be bracketed so that the differences that psychological phenomenology and human scientific psychology introduces can be given room to appear” (1985, pp.25/26). Mindful of the demands to be ‘scientific’ and ‘phenomenological’ simultaneously, he began to reconfigure the conceptual playing field of ‘science’ and ‘phenomenology’ to serve the interests of psychology. To do this he took, as indicated earlier, what it means “to be phenomenological, in general”. That is, in terms of *doing* phenomenology, it entailed a “return to the phenomena themselves, to obtain a description of those phenomena, to submit them to imaginative variation, and then obtain an eidetic intuition of their structures” (*ibid*, p.26). What differed from philosophical phenomenology, however - and this is a critical difference – “the phenomena are selected for their relevance to psychology, the initial description is naïve and

does not imply the reduction (although the analysis of it does, and the descriptions of structures do), and the structures (or essences) sought are psychological and may be typical or general rather than universal” (*ibid*).

Despite highlighting the explicit psychological orientation of this early stance, Giorgi was confident that “the everyday world is richer and more complex than the psychological perspective (however complex it maybe itself) and thus this description could just as easily lend itself to a sociological or anthropological analysis depending on the interests of the researcher and the perspective toward the concrete description that is adopted” (*ibid*). And this is exactly what has happened, as suggested throughout this thesis i.e. that applied phenomenology studies can be found across disciplines in the human and social sciences.

In 1994, in an article entitled *A Phenomenological Perspective on Certain Qualitative Research Methods*, Giorgi set certain ‘axioms’ related to a positivist and naturalist paradigm (originally identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985), and presented in a table format) against the ‘phenomenological paradigm’. It is worth drawing attention to Giorgi’s very forthright statements about these axioms here as, in my view, they present as unequivocal positions, and certainly in regard to the axioms about ‘the possibility of generalisation’ and ‘the role of values’, are thus inherently problematic. To allow the reader to internalize Giorgi’s take on these axioms, they are presented verbatim (1994, p.202). Please note: Lincoln and Guba’s complete table has been modified to reflect only Giorgi’s responses.

Axioms about	Phenomenological paradigm
The nature of reality	Reality statements are not made. Precisely how phenomena present themselves is described.
The relationship of knower to known	Understood via intentionality as a principle of openness of acts of consciousness to other than the acts themselves.
The possibility of generalization	Context unique and transcontextual generalizations possible via eidetic intuitions.
The possibility of causal linkages	All types of relations can emerge; causal, intentional, meaningful etc.
The role of values	Neutrality of phenomenological reduction used to discover values.

Figure 4.1 Giorgi's axioms about 'the phenomenological paradigm

In the same article, Giorgi identifies description, the reduction and the search for essences as the three 'interrelated steps' which 'essentially' constitute the phenomenological method. He does acknowledge, however, that these three steps are 'abstract and somewhat idealistic', and that when one goes on to actually implement these steps in *practice*, "many additional contextual and other research factors have to be taken into account" (*ibid*, p.207). He highlights only four of these factors, and makes links to phenomenology but, unexpectedly, subsumes them in a discussion on qualitative research in general. The four factors are: 1) Fidelity to the phenomenon; 2) the demanding nature of *the method* (this is a reference to *qualitative research in general*, not phenomenology specifically); 3) the issue of meaning or linguistic transformation i.e. "the expression of findings" in terms of an emic (participant) and etic (disciplinary) perspective (*ibid*, p.208), and 4) the question of qualitative research as exploratory, rather than substantive.

In marshalling his arguments to refute Paley's main criticisms of use of Husserl in nursing studies, Giorgi (2000: no page) starts by providing Paley with a "brief 'internal history' of the development of the [his] method in order to show its fidelity to phenomenological logic". He explains how his method employs the key Husserlian 'steps' of description, reduction and bracketing, and 'free imaginative variation' – this last, in order to arrive at the 'essence' or 'higher level invariant meanings' or 'essential structures' of the phenomenon. He acknowledges that Paley is right in saying that the type of 'reduction' most nurses report on, does not lead to Husserl's 'transcendental subjectivity' (the 'state' of consciousness when in the philosophic attitude – see the previous chapter to recapture this concept if necessary) because "the transcendental move considers individual subjectivity not to be part of the world" (*ibid*, no page). However, Giorgi argues that Husserl "was not doing scientific work" and that if we are to 'awaken' the 'basic experience of the world' of which Merleau-Ponty speaks, then "a scientist may use this distinction [between individual and transcendental subjectivity] in a way Husserl never spoke about" (*ibid*) and that if one was to do this, it would not be synonymous with a non-phenomenological position. At no point does Giorgi surrender an allegiance to Husserl in terms of his 'scientific phenomenology'.

4.5 Giorgi in practice

So what did Giorgi actually say needs to happen in phenomenological psychology research? What methods did he employ? What steps did he recommend? How did he articulate the 'how' of 'scientific phenomenology' – having established that "the primary emphasis is on the phenomenon itself exactly as it reveals itself to the experiencing subject in all its concreteness and particularity"? (1971, p.9) And, most particularly, how faithfully should one

map his ideas, and those like his, onto education phenomenological research studies such as this one?

In 1971, Giorgi and his associates launched 'scientific phenomenology' and put it into the public domain through the publication of the *Duquesne Studies in Phenomenological Psychology: Volume 1* (1971). The articles in this collection reflect "a utilization of the philosophical tenets of existential phenomenology ... to found a psychology as a human science" (*ibid*: p.xi). There is what I would consider an appropriate mood of tentativeness in the articles but also a strong sense that "the human scientific manner of conceiving psychology based upon phenomenology is a viable one, eminently worth pursuing for those who are so inclined" (*ibid*). The goal of these pioneering 'applied' phenomenologists was, therefore, "to find research methods and procedures that will answer their own specific questions, and that imitating the natural sciences is not the correct way. Thus, the intention of [the articles in this volume] is to discover a *parallel paradigm* to the natural sciences, and not one that imitates them" (*ibid*, p.27) [emphasis in original]. Central to this 'new' paradigm was the role played by *descriptions-as-raw data*.

As Giorgi said at the time, and in many research circles this remains the case, that when "descriptions are brought to the fore and explicitly acknowledged as raw data, or especially as the primary findings, objections abound" (1985, p.3). Though convinced of the relevance and validity of self-reported data as raw data, and regarding the notion of 'description' as endemic to 'science' as to the human sciences, Giorgi nevertheless acknowledged that his work spoke primarily to "those who already are convinced that there is some value in descriptions" (*ibid*, p.2). The important issue, however, was what to do, methodologically, once descriptions had been obtained, since *gathering* descriptions was never really seen as problematic by Giorgi at the outset. He says about this that,

on the pragmatic level, this does not seem very difficult. When subjects, after a brief introduction concerning my interest in the psychology of learning, are confronted with the statement: 'Please describe for me a situation in which you have learned', there inevitably follows a concrete description of learning (*ibid*).

However, as the process of *gathering* raw data for this project *did* pose many problematics, this 'data dimension' will be returned to in the next chapter, as clearly it is as critical to making 'phenomenological' claims to the research process as data analysis. It is only because I wish to retain the focus on Giorgi right now, that a data gathering discussion is being postponed.

Remembering to bear in mind that Giorgi's original methods were contextualized within a dominant scientific paradigm, one of the critical questions he posed at the time was, 'Does it ever make sense in psychology to pose a qualitative question? For example, is it meaningful to ask why a person is anxious as well as how often or how intensely? Is it meaningful to ask why learning took place and how as well as how much more quickly?' (Giorgi, 1985, p.5). In his view, it did indeed make sense to ask these questions since what he felt would benefit psychology, was a 'discipline' that could "account for the presence of meanings in the stream of consciousness" (*ibid*, p.6). But Giorgi's goals at this point were not grandiose, but replete with self-imposed limits. He and his colleagues were not, for example, attempting to develop a method that would integrate "all that one could possibly do with a description from within a phenomenological frame of reference" (*ibid*). Rather, they were simply interested in developing "an explicitly qualitative method in order to see just what would come out of it and how far one could go. It was to see what kinds of findings that method could yield and whether or not they were worth pursuing" (*ibid*). So they were very mindful of the degree of caution with which they had to proceed.

Governed by his commitment to phenomenology-as-method as consisting of the three 'inter-related steps' mentioned earlier i.e. description, the reduction and the search for essences, "and the recognition of operative intentionality", Giorgi described his method as containing

four essential steps; expressed most generally, they are as follows: (1) One reads the entire description in order to get a general sense of the whole statement; (2) Once the sense of the whole has been grasped, the researcher goes back to the beginning and reads through the text once more with the specific aim of discriminating "meaning units" from within a psychological perspective and with a focus on the phenomenon being researched. (3) Once "meaning units" have been delineated, the researcher then goes through all of the meaning units and expresses the psychological insights contained in them more directly. This is especially true of the "meaning units" most revelatory of the phenomenon under consideration. (4) Finally, the researcher synthesises all of the transformed meaning units into a consistent statement regarding the subject's experience. This is usually referred to as the structure of the experience and can be expressed at a number of levels (1985, p.10).

In a phenomenological study conducted by Fischer and Wertz (1979) on the experience of being criminally victimized, and grounded in Giorgi's work, they identified and applied the following steps in their data analysis stage: 1) Familiarization with the transcripts by re-readings; 2) Demarcating transcriptions into numbered *natural meaning units* (NMUs) [emphasis in original]; 3) Casting these units into temporal order; 4) Organising clusters of units into scenes; and 5) Condensing these organized units into non-repetitive narrative form with non-essential facts dropped. Having read Giorgi's 'steps' in phenomenological data analysis above, it is clear that what Fischer and Wertz present here is not substantially

different. However, what caught my attention was the way in which they described natural meaning units, and the purpose of engaging in this procedure.

Natural meaning units, they said, represent “distinguishable moment[s] in the overall experience of the phenomenon” (Fischer and Wertz, 1979, p.144). ‘Distinguishable moments’ suddenly made sense to me. No-one I had read previously, or with whom I had worked had described the concept of ‘meaning units’ in this way. There was, for me, a linguistic nuance to describing experiences in terms of ‘moments’ rather than ‘units’ – although Fischer and Wertz themselves did not make anything of this distinction. The word ‘moments’, in my view, reflects the Discourse of Life – fluid, varied, connected; ‘units’, the Discourse of scientific measurement – sharply delineated, discrete, final. The metaphor of a tightly beaded necklace was suddenly evoked by the words ‘distinguishable moments’. Together, as I saw it, they would constitute a whole but between each would be a necessary but possibly minuscule distinguishable ‘space’ – and recognising these spaces would be as important to appreciating the whole, as seeing each bead for what it is – as without both space and bead there would be no necklace.

However, aside from being struck by Fischer and Wertz’s description of NMUs, it was the way in which they explained the *purpose* of the process of ‘demarcating’ NMUs (or however one might describe this process of ‘identification’ of meaning), that made an immediate impression on me, one that has stayed with me ever since as being critical to all forms of interpretive inquiry. The purpose of identifying NMUs they said, “is not for technical reliability, but rather for the disciplined thoroughness and accountability it requires of the researcher – *disallowing the rush to conceptual closure*” (*ibid*). [My emphasis]. And though, as will be seen shortly, I have proposed quite different ways of *speaking* about ‘NMUs’, my whole data analysis has been framed by this last imperative viz. to constantly engage in processes characterised by ‘disciplined thoroughness and accountability’ in order to prevent a headlong ‘rush to conceptual closure’.

To sum up so far, this chapter has problematised phenomenology-as-methodology along two fault lines. One is at a more macro level i.e. it dealt with the conundrum evoked by what one encounters when one desires to retain a strong philosophical phenomenological orientation in the methodology of phenomenological studies in the applied human and social sciences. The second is at the level of *doing*, of naming and framing what it is one is seeking in order to make some kind of statement about the particular phenomenon under study.

In terms of the first ‘fault line’, we thus have Paley on the one hand, staunchly against the transference of philosophical phenomenological precepts and concepts to applied

phenomenological research contexts, since in his view, it distorts and renders meaningless the authenticity of them, and by implication the studies in the human and social sciences which reflect them. And on the other, we have Giorgi (and many others) fiercely determined to defend the relevance of the philosophical tradition to applied phenomenology and the reconfiguration of its fundamental concepts to allow for a method appropriate to human and social science contexts. And depending on one's own motivation to push theoretical, conceptual, epistemological and methodological limits, or conform, it is likely that one will lean towards one or other end of the continuum on which both Paley and Giorgi stand, though neither should be assumed to be on the extreme ends of either side.

From my experiences of not only attempting to 'do' phenomenology in an educational context, but also from immersing myself extensively and in as full a body of phenomenological literature as possible (within the constraints of completing a doctorate), I found myself steadily identifying more and more strongly with Paley's arguments, and the critiques he offers of 'scientific'/ applied phenomenological methods. I also came to a place where, though I knew I could not possibly make claims to having surveyed the *entire* corpus of applied phenomenological research studies in the human and social sciences, that the substantial number I had reviewed reflected sufficient similarities and differences to persuade me that I was under no obligation to slavishly follow the methodological procedures and/or employ the terminology of any one of them. The phenomenological 'field' is far too disparate, in my view, to make these kinds of demands on anyone.

As a result of months spent reading and pondering on the diversity of opinion, position and method as indicated above, and setting my own *lived experience* of Being, and that of the research process, against these, I came to the conclusion that what was deeply at issue here was a) the *forced fit* in too many applied phenomenological studies, of concepts and terminology that largely only make sense if one is philosophizing – as opposed to engaging in praxis; b) that this *forced fit* has resulted in a plethora of re-definitions of philosophical terms in order to 'methodise' them, and that this process has obfuscated rather than clarified or simplified the 'phenomenological project' in the human and social sciences; c) that, nevertheless, a thorough understanding of the phenomenological tradition is vital to a thoughtful, informed applied response; and that d) a greater nuanced use of language would help to more accurately and authentically describe the praxis of applied phenomenological research into the 'lived world', and that one could do this without cutting all philosophical ties.

In the light of all the above, I made the decision to formulate my own methodological position and develop my own terms and procedures such that they more accurately captured the 'actual' of *my* phenomenology-related experiences. Mindful of the possible risks involved in

diverging from the accepted, conventional methodological procedures and conceptual frameworks, I nevertheless felt compelled to proceed differently, particularly with regard to data analysis, an aspect of the study which I said earlier had proved problematic for me – but which Giorgi gave virtually no attention to in the literature. In short, it was at the point at which data analysis begins, that I perceived the greatest ‘forced fit’ of concepts and associated vocabulary.

As I proceeded to accrue greater insight into the way in which phenomenological methods were applied, I began to share Paley’s grave doubts about the way in which, for example, the processes of bracketing and ‘imaginative variation’ were understood and accepted in most human and social science phenomenological studies. Of course it is critical to be alert to the possible influence of the researcher at key moments in the research process, and to take steps to minimize this influence. And yes, the centrality of the role played by imagination and intuition in qualitative research is also difficult to dismiss, but the *terms* ‘bracketing’ and ‘imaginative variation’ and ‘essences’ (and their associated philosophical connotations) I regarded as problematic. It also began to bother me that it seemed to be accepted practice to impose ‘units of meaning’ on experiences articulated by others, and that these ‘units of meaning’ were then, without much further debate, assumed to be sufficiently ‘true’ and substantive to allow general ‘statements of structure’ about a phenomenon to be made. The lack of hesitancy, tentativeness and humility in reported studies thus registered strongly with me, as did the fact that very few studies presented examples of raw data as evidence to support ‘unit of meaning’ and ‘statements of structure’ analysis.

But what is one to do if one has committed to ‘engaging with phenomenology’ as I have in this study, and drawn so much inspiration from it? As said earlier, there is so much diversity already in the field that adding another perspective should not be a problem – and certainly this is why phenomenology is characterised as a ‘movement’ rather than a single approach. But at what point does an applied phenomenological study cease to be phenomenological? So long as one sustains the primacy of ‘lived experience’ over abstracted theorizing and/or a ‘hard’ sciences approach, is one still doing phenomenology? Does one *have* to speak of – and execute – such esoteric tasks as the *epoche* and the reduction, ‘bracketing’, identify ‘essences’, engage in imaginative variation, and so on, in order to ‘do’ phenomenology? What, at the very least, must be shown to be done? What, in other words, constitutes the ‘bottom line’ of phenomenology in the human and social sciences? Questions like these plagued my mind.

Discovering van Manen’s (1997) ‘reduction’ of the “elemental methodical structure” of hermeneutic phenomenological research to the “dynamic interplay among ... six research

activities” was thus a breath of fresh air. Uncluttered and broad enough to allow for a wide range of idiosyncratic responses, these six steps nevertheless are embedded in the philosophical phenomenological tradition, particularly the works of Heidegger (1962), Merleau-Ponty (1973) and Gadamer (1975). van Manen, however, is firm in his view that one should not “consult this text as a mechanistic ‘how to’ primer on human science methods” (*ibid*, p. 34). Quoted verbatim, van Manen’s six steps are:

- (1) turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
- (2) investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualise it;
- (3) reflecting on the essential themes which characterise the phenomenon;
- (4) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
- (5) maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
- (6) balancing the research context by considering the parts and whole (van Manen, 1997, p.30).

Further on, van Manen makes special mention of the role that ‘phenomenological literature’ should play in developing phenomenologists. He promotes the notion of ‘dialogue’ and a ‘conversational relation’ with other phenomenologists, so that one can begin “to partake in a tradition”. “Naturally,” he says, “we should not assume that we must uncritically accept or integrate those insights into our frame. Fitting ourselves into a research tradition means that we contribute to this tradition: (a) in gaining a better grasp of the topics to which this tradition has dedicated itself, and (b) in articulating and in experimenting with new methodological approaches that further the human science tradition” (1997, p.75). Taking these views of van Manen as a particular point of reference prompted me to risk proposing a different way of conducting the data analysis process (in particular) and ultimately gave rise to the process I devised as most appropriate to the task of this study. I would still argue, however, that the following characteristics identified by van Manen (1984a) (cited by Pinar *et al.*, 1995, p.407), as key features of phenomenological research, remain central to this work. These are: 1) that the ‘lifeworld’ is the prime ‘site’ of research and as it is ‘immediately experienced’. Thus the phenomenologist attempts to report “a deeper layer of experience than is accessible to most in the everyday ‘practical’ world”, and a more “direct experience of and encounter with the world” 2) “Phenomenology is not interested in the frequency of events or their contiguity to other events; phenomenological research seeks instead the experience and meaning of events”. 3) “Phenomenological research is the practice of ‘thoughtfulness’, ... for Heidegger an ‘attunement’ to what it feels like and means to be alive”. 4) “Phenomenological research does not produce knowledge for knowledge’s sake; rather it produces knowledge to disclose

what it means to be human". In addition, I contend that the six 'research activities' identified by van Manen above as characteristic of hermeneutic phenomenology are also inherent in this study.

In the final section of this chapter, I identify the central phenomenon of this study, and how it came to be so, and describe the steps in the data analysis that I devised to govern this study.

4.6 'Naming' the 'object' of research

Generally speaking, and as the reader now well knows, the 'object' of reflection in phenomenological studies is the 'lived' experience of a phenomenon. In the vast majority of human and social science phenomenological studies, 'the phenomenon' is some aspect, element, facet of experience that resides 'within' an individual. So the phenomenon might be anger, the experience of victimization, living with an ulcer, grief, and so on. However, approaching a component of the formal curriculum (e.g. a 'module' or 'course' or 'assignment' etc.), as I wanted to do in this study, posed some very interesting challenges to me. Knowing that that which is *lived* is central to the phenomenological project, I struggled with trying to determine exactly *what* of 'that which is lived' constituted the most relevant phenomenon in terms of the pursuit of a greater understanding of the impact of the RWAT module. The struggle to get greater and greater clarity on what exactly the phenomenon under study should be, demanded increasingly strenuous intellectual debate and questioning, pushing reflective limits to an extraordinary level. I knew that it was necessary to find a way to speak about the RWAT module in such a way that it could be 'seen' to be standing in its own space, despite its fundamentally non-autonomous nature. Doing this kind of intricate, multifaceted, illusive kind of thinking, however, took time and energy, and was quite unlike any previous 'reflective' practices with which I had engaged. And as the notion of 'lived experience' was carefully pared away, a disconcertingly large tapestry of possibilities revealed itself.

To start with, it was extremely difficult to imagine anything but 'students' lives', but constituting the *phenomenon* as 'students' lives' rang shallow and inappropriate – and potentially a methodological nightmare. Which students? Where? Why them? What period of their lives? But if 'students' lives' was not the phenomenon, then what was? Consideration was then given to the purpose of the RWAT module, and its outcomes. Thereafter 'the academic argument' that, as indicated earlier, we teach in the module (according to the model developed by the Sydney School of Systemic Functional Linguistics) became a possible phenomenon. If the main goal of the module is to teach this genre (in the very

limited, formulaic way that it is taught), shouldn't this be the 'object' of enquiry? Dozens of possible research questions were drafted and re-drafted but the words needed to define a single, recognizable, researchable phenomenon remained unformulated. Coming to the point, therefore, when the phenomenon for this study could be identified as 'RWAT as a *lived module*', was a culmination of months of rigorous and disciplined thought, the full extent and rigour of which is impossible to convey adequately here.

Finally, it was possible to see that if the RWAT module was uncovered as a *lived module* (as opposed to the module as *thought about*), it would be possible to claim that what we would learn about the module in *this* way could enable us to reach a far more profound insight into the module than we could ever have reached by thinking about it. As I saw it, the only way I would be able to discern what the RWAT module was actually about, that is, what it is that gave life to it, was to explore students' experiences and perceptions of it, for without the lived experiences of the *students* (and not ours i.e. the curriculum developers/module writers) the module itself was nothing but a flaccid set of A4 pages lying on various desks. So the phenomenon under study *is* the RWAT module as a 'lived module'. I came to the position where I realised that if I viewed the RWAT module in this light, it would be possible to 'read off' a whole lot of things about what does or does not enhance academic literacy development (in this case, a specific literacy). These 'readings', I surmised, would make a valuable contribution to future curriculum planning, especially in the context of distance education.

4.7 Steps in the data analysis process

What emerged quite rapidly for me, very early on in the study, was the need to distinguish between a 'step' and a 'state'. A 'step', on my terms, is characterised by being integral to a progressive, *linear* process. So the first step in data analysis is a prerequisite for the next step, and so on. A *state*, however, is a 'willed', willing, disciplined, 'condition of the mind' that is necessary to assume at significant moments *throughout the research period* but most especially during interviews i.e. the collection of raw data, and during Step 1 (according to my structure) of the data analysis process. I shall refer to this state as one of *Intellectualised Detachment*, and for the purposes of this research study, replaces use of the terms *epoche*/reduction and 'bracketing'. This state of Intellectualised Detachment is assumed in order to identify and limit the influence of *known* assumptions, prejudices, beliefs etc. This is an *intellectualised* task. It is consciously taken on as a prerequisite to engaging with the raw data, and immediately prior to the first, and subsequent phenomenological readings of it. *Unknown* assumptions, prejudices, beliefs etc, to all intents and purposes, in my view, remain just that, unknown, and neither 'bracketing' nor a state of Intellectualised Detachment

can be assumed to reveal them. It is possible that with the wisdom of hindsight, or through unexpected, unpredicted, previously unimagined experiences, sedimented assumptions, prejudices and beliefs etc. are laid bare, but one cannot build that into the 'steps' of data analysis. The state of Intellectualised Detachment should, therefore, be understood to play a critical, governing role in the evocation of 'meaning', what can be said to constitute knowledge, and by implication, how a researcher sculpts the inherently symbiotic relationship between Self and Research.

As one learns to reside more comfortably within this state of Intellectualised Detachment, it becomes increasingly apparent when working with the transcripts, that as much as one needs to learn to *read* phenomenologically, so must one learn to *listen* (to the words in the text) phenomenologically. Drawing from Hugo (2004), it is best to understand this kind of listening as 'paying attention to the plain statements' participants make i.e. those seemingly ordinary comments and responses that at first glance seem to hold little more than a tangential reference to experience of the phenomenon so urgently being pursued. Rather than constantly anticipating what a participant is leading up to, or relentlessly prompting them to say more, one needs to 'silence the self' so that a 'clearing' is allowed to emerge. One needs to get comfortable with silences, pauses, and haltering expressions of experience and trust that a participant is fully capable of finding the words to convey exactly what she/he wishes to convey – even though that meaning is being articulated in an additional language. When one consciously drops 'the questioning analysis', and allows the text/context to unfold, not seeking 'to add or overturn the text' but rather to 'humbly follow its path', the interview context becomes a site of extraordinary revelation and insight, and again, a springboard to greater self-awareness and reflexivity.

For the purposes of this study, I have worked with the following self-generated data analysis process, comprising of three key steps.

Step 1: *Attached Immersion* – in the raw data. The word 'attached' here takes its meaning from its use in the Buddhist meditation tradition. It represents a unique quality of focus, of *mindfulness*, one imbued with respect, and upholding the sanctity of that which is the focus of thought and reflection. In this study, in Step 1, this focus is on the original/ authentic words spoken by the participants in the research. And 'immersion', because without steeping oneself in that to which one has attached, allowing oneself to be enveloped by the words, focus or 'attachment' is easily loosened or lost altogether. A state of Attached Immersion is only possible once a state of Intellectualised Detachment has been achieved, underscoring the intimate relationship between Detachment and Attachment despite their seemingly oppositional form and function.

Step 2: *Highlighting 'Nodes' of Individual Experience* – relevant only to the phenomenon under study. These 'nodes' are linguistic manifestations of experiential encounters with the phenomenon – words, phrases, sentences – embedded in the actual words of the participants. Their 'expressive existence', however, relies entirely on the co-instantiated nature of them. For this reason, nodes of experience are presented within a 'dialogical' frame i.e. the particular conversational moment that gave rise to them is presented as a whole. So, those reflecting a relationship to the phenomenon under study *are* singled out for attention, but are understood to never exist in isolation, hence 'nodes', rather than, for example, 'units', and the presence of the voices of both researcher and participant in each case are evident within the nodes. And because 'nodes' do not exist in isolation, they do *de facto* constitute points of association and connection in the vast networking, webbed system that is the historical-social i.e. the authentic context of existence.

The process of identifying and naming nodes of experience was an extremely demanding, yet fascinating task. It required not only that I be guided by the key analysis question which I formulated and which read: 'What do participants overtly and inadvertently tell us about what breathes life into/ incarnates the RWAT module?', but also the over-arching research question viz. 'What is it like to acquire an academic literacy?', and the secondary research question viz. How is this experience influenced by the mode of delivery in which it is occurs? So, determining the exact focus of a particular node was not easy and took a great deal of time. In many instances, for example, two experiences seemed to overlap or flow into one another so seamlessly that there seemed little justification for separating them out, yet something within each would nag to be recognised for its uniqueness. It would only be after reading and re-reading whole sets of experiences numerous times, that is, totally immersing myself back in the words of the interviews, that the individuality of a particular experience would surface with the type of clarity that I understood as characterizing my construction of 'nodes'.

When it came to naming nodes, I made the principled decision to draw on participants' own words (from within each node) for this aspect, because the focus in Step 2 is still on the *individual's* experience of the phenomenon. This means, of course, that 'node names' across the six participants, *at this level of analysis* differ in most instances. However, I believe this is an important aspect of the study since it continues to prioritise the uniqueness of each individual participant.

The final point to be made about identifying nodes is that I used a wide lens on the interview data when doing so. By this I mean that I paid attention, not only when students were speaking directly about the RWAT module, or even more specifically, about a particular

academic literacy 'induction moment', but also when they were speaking about experiences *apparently* beyond or disconnected from the RWAT module/ academic literacy acquisition process per se. So for example, when students articulated nodes of experience related to the notion of 'sacrifice' or 'time', but did not mention RWAT explicitly, I understood these issues as potentially having an impact on their academic literacy practice induction process, even if they did not say this explicitly. *Step 2 should be understood as strongly phenomenological in orientation.*

Step 3: *Writing an interpretive (hermeneutic) response* (in this case assisted by Discourse Theory, after Gee, 1996, 1997, 2004) – in response to the 'collated experiences' identified in Steps 1 and 2 above. This is a critical preparatory step to answering the research questions, and constitutes Chapter 7.

4.8 Conclusion

In the light of all the above, it is my fervent hope that the way in which terms are defined and used hereafter, and the research procedures with which I have engaged, will assist other students, and most particularly South African students, to grapple with the details of 'method' in applied phenomenological studies. In Chapter 5, these methods and procedures are elucidated in more detail.

Chapter 5

Research Design and Method

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design and methods used in this study. That is to say, to reiterate the research questions; to go into some detail on who the participants were and how they came to be selected; to provide a rationale for a multiple interview approach, to provide further comment on interviewing as a method; to describe the data analysis process; and to discuss matters of trustworthiness and ethics.

5.2 Research questions

Though the research questions were presented in the introduction to this thesis, this seems an appropriate place to reiterate them. Thus they are:

Primary question: What is it like to acquire an academic literacy?

Secondary question: How is this experience influenced by the mode of delivery in which it occurs?

5.3 Participants

The students who constitute the participant group in this study represent not only the majority student cohort in the Honours programme, but also the majority of practicing teachers. They were thus African women and men, speakers of English as an additional language, and acquired their initial teacher qualification through apartheid styled teacher training colleges (not universities). They were also all in their second (and ideally, final) year of the Honours programme, between the ages of 35-45, and with five years or more teaching experience behind them. The students in this study, therefore, represented that cohort of teachers who not only endured the worst of apartheid ideology's discriminatory practices, but have also been at the epicentre of the curriculum changes visited upon the schooling system since 1997. They also all entered the Honours programme as a result of the admission changes effected within the School of Education, Training and Development since 1999, (as indicated in Chapter 1). Given the university's growing emphasis on students' academic literacy levels since 1999, accessing the experiences of representatives of this particular cohort of students, in relation to RWAT as a 'lived module' was, therefore, deemed a particularly relevant focus for research.

5.4 Sampling

As already discussed, sample sizes in applied phenomenological studies are characteristically small. In this particular study, six (6) Honours students participated, four of whom were women, and two of whom were men. The group was established through purposive sampling, using the broad criteria identified above i.e. in their second year of Honours studies, and African, speakers of English as an additional language.

Stones (1988, p.150) provides additional and different, but equally important criteria for the selection of participants in phenomenological studies. These are: 1) that they should “have had experiences relating to the phenomenon being researched”, 2) that they should all be “verbally fluent and able to communicate their feelings, thoughts and perceptions”, and 3) that they should have a sense of commitment to the research.

Working with Stones’ criteria, I was confident that the first of these criteria would be well met as all six participants had completed their first year of part-time Honours study, and thus, done the RWAT module. The willing participation of one student who had failed both the main RWAT examination, and the supplementary examination, and who, by the time he was interviewed had yet to attempt the module for the third time, was regarded with particular admiration and respect.

I was also confident that we would meet the third criterion as all participation had been voluntary. Proof of the participants’ commitment to the research was borne out by their willingness to be available for all three interviews, their punctuality at interviews, the unhurried time offered during interviews, and their readiness to check transcripts and follow up on questions and gaps identified as a result of this process.

Before moving on, however, it is extremely important for the reader to recognise that Stones’ second criteria viz. that participants should all be “verbally fluent and able to communicate their feelings, thoughts and perceptions”, is a central facet upon which the ‘linguistic axis’ of this study turns. To be ‘verbally fluent’ – taken in this thesis to mean being able to ‘speak with ease’, being able, as it were, to ‘find the words’ necessary to respond to questions and probes fairly easily – must not automatically be taken to be synonymous with a highly sophisticated level of language competence. Thus, although the participants in this study were fluent speakers of English as an additional language, the aim of the interviews was to elicit an *unselfconscious, narrated* disclosure of their experience of the RWAT module, not an academic or formal, intellectual evaluation of it. There was no need, in other words, for participants to exhibit an oral mastery (in either their own mother tongue or English) of any particular ‘public’ and/or academic discourse, in order for the interview data to be rich,

textured and relevant. This is a critical point to observe, in my view, if the role of phenomenology, as an effective and efficacious research method in the human and social sciences is to be reasserted in post-apartheid South Africa. To date, the norm is to only engage in phenomenological research with participants who have a sophisticated grasp of the language of the interviewer. This study hopes to have demonstrated that not only is this not the case, but that to work from this premise is to rule out the rich potential for cross-cultural and cross-linguistic phenomenological research in this country. Eliciting participants' 'feelings, thoughts and perceptions' depends largely on the skill as an interviewer in recognizing when a particular experience/ example/ event signifies a deeper relevance and connection to the phenomenon than a participant maybe aware of – and being able to probe it further. However, it is also important to acknowledge the limitations that 'language' can impose on phenomenological studies such as this one. This point will continue to be elaborated on in this and the following chapters.

5.4.1 Selection of participants

The total number of students who registered for the RWAT module in 2004 (making them second year students in 2005), was 236. Of these, 181 (77%) were African, English second language speakers. Within this cohort, 115 were women, 66 were men, and 148 were isiZulu home language speakers (other indigenous languages constituted the remaining English L2 profile). In order to identify possible participants, I began by submitting an open-ended questionnaire containing only four questions to *all* students (regardless of race, language, history), who attended contact sessions at the campus-based Pietermaritzburg Regional Learning Centre (RLC). Attached to this questionnaire was a letter to students explaining the purpose of the research and inviting their participation (**Appendix B**). Limiting the distribution of this questionnaire to Pietermaritzburg only reflected a strategic decision to allow for a personal monitoring of the completion of the questionnaire, and to ensure that the entire research process could begin at the earliest opportunity. I personally addressed each tutorial group about the purpose of the questionnaire and the research itself, prior to them putting pen to paper.

The total number of students who, therefore, completed this initial questionnaire, was 85, and proportionately reflected the demographics of the total RWAT student cohort. Students could not remain anonymous as student numbers and contact details were asked for. However, this was a very transparent element of the process and was met with no overt resistance or resentment. Inviting everyone to respond to this questionnaire, even though my target participant group was African speakers of English as an additional language, was done for purposes of equity.

The questionnaire was written in English but students were invited to respond in whichever language they chose. Of the 85 responses, only one student elected to respond in her/his mother tongue (isiZulu). The following questions constituted this first, widely distributed questionnaire (see Appendix B):

- (1) How did you find the RWAT module? Do you think you learned anything useful in the module? Give some examples of what you feel you gained.
- (2) Mention one incident/ experience (or session or assignment) that you really enjoyed, and describe in some detail what happened there to make it so enjoyable.
- (3) How did learning take place in the module? Briefly describe a typical contact session.
- (4) How did the students in your tutorial group feel about the isiZulu translations in the RWAT module? Give some examples of the things students said about these translations.

Section C of this questionnaire asked students to indicate whether they were interested in participating as interviewees in the project, and the time period during which the interviews would take place.

While the quality of the responses to the above four questions were definitely taken into account, of far greater significance to me in terms of making selections of students to interview, were those who indicated an interest in participating in the research and who agreed to the somewhat rigorous interviewing process. I felt instinctively (having no previous phenomenological research experience) that the thrust of the study would require participants who would be willing to share levels of experience that went far beyond 'mere opinion' and superficial recount. Thus, there was little point in recruiting anyone who was not intrinsically motivated to participate.

After working through all 85 questionnaire responses, the number of students who expressed a direct desire to participate in the study and offered to make themselves available to be interviewed over the period I had identified, was 17. Of these 17, only 8 were African and speakers of English as an additional language. Of these 8, one phoned me to say he could not guarantee my safety when visiting him in his home area for interviews because of the high rate of hi-jackings, and thus advised me to drop him from the list. I was very grateful for such an honest and concerned communication. Of the remaining 7 students, I invited one to serve as a 'pilot' participant in the interview process so that I could engage in what I understood to be phenomenological type interviewing before proceeding with the

other participants. I had had no previous experience to date of probing 'lived experience' (phenomenologically or otherwise) from a cross cultural/ cross-linguistic perspective and was persuaded that entrusting my ignorance to a mature, confident student would pay dividends for the research as a whole. I was not wrong about this and remain deeply indebted to this student for her time, insight, wisdom and patience.

In effect, therefore, the remaining six students who constituted the participant group, were self-selected, an aspect of the research which I have always considered to be one of its strengths. When questioned as to why they wanted to be in the project, these students variously expressed an interest in finding out about how to do research in general, in wanting to know more about interviewing in particular, and/or simply wanting to contribute this academic's efforts to understand more about her students, perceiving the special relevance of the thrust of the study to their own experience during the Honours programme.

5.5 Data collection: the phenomenological interview

It has already been established in previous chapters that interviews are the primary sources of data in applied phenomenological studies, and this study is no exception. Although 'corroborating sources' such as the 2004 formal RWAT evaluation, and the examination scripts of the participants in this study were available, interview transcripts constituted the total corpus of raw data used. The value of the 'corroborating sources' just mentioned lay only in the contribution they made in confirming my own critique of either the research design itself and/or recommendations for further study, thus references to these sources play no significant role for the reader.

The phenomenological interview, because of its intention to evoke an unselfconscious, narrative style response to probes into the 'lived experience' of a particular phenomenon, can be generally categorized as "open-ended, apparently unstructured ... almost friendly conversations" (Seidman, 1991, p.9). Thus, and as with all qualitative interviews, the "social relationship', that is the conscious awareness of the intersubjective nature of the interviewing context, and existent or emerging power relations, is of critical importance" (*ibid*, p.72). As a theoretical engagement with the notion of intersubjectivity was undertaken in Chapter 3, it will not be repeated here. However, from a methodological point of view, sustaining the level of intersubjective 'awareness' so critical to this kind of study, requires a heightened awareness of, and sensitivity to, existent and emerging power relations, and the inherently shifting nature of them. In an interview conducted in 1986, in which she was joined by John Hutnyk, Scott McQuire, and Nikos Papastergiadis, Gayatri Spivak, the cultural, feminist and literary theorist, began by saying:

You want me to comment on this interview? Now, in this room? Well, in a situation like this one, the hegemony is rather clearly articulated. There is one person who is supposed to have some answers, and others who ask questions, and given that questioning and answering is placed in an orthodox way, the one who answers has the power. On the other hand, since this will get transcribed and published, and given over to people, that easy articulation of the hegemonic situation is no longer operative, because the person who gets judged is the person who answers the questions, so that there is a certain kind of nervousness on the part of the person answering (Spivak, 1990, p.35).

What Spivak so astutely identifies here, is that there is no 'easy articulation' of the 'hegemonic situation' when interviews are used as significant sources of data, and to think or act otherwise would be extremely naive and potentially dangerous. Staying alert to the ebb and flow of hegemonic possibilities is thus a necessarily exacting element of the interview process, most especially when it is characterised by the uneven contours of race, language, gender and power as is so often the case in the South African context. This point is elaborated on below.

The role of the interviewer/ researcher in in-depth interviews (and phenomenology is by no means the only methodology employing this type of interview, of course), is important to unpack. There is a lot of 'obviousness' about this unpacking admittedly, and there is a wealth of literature available on ways to limit the impact of the researcher on the quality of data evoked by the interactive interview (see, for example, Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Drawing on Guba and Lincoln (1985), Seidman, however, contends that "rather than decrying the fact that the instrument used to gather data affects this process, we say the human interviewer can be a marvellously smart, adaptable, flexible instrument who can respond to situations with skill, tact, and understanding" (1991, p.16). I agree wholeheartedly with Seidman but maintain that a further dimension of the interviewing process is even more critical to internalize and uphold, and that is that the 'meaning' embedded in the responses of interviewees to interviewer questions and prompts, is *co-created*. By this I mean, that the so-called 'meaning' that emerges as an interview unfolds, that 'force' which constantly imbues the interaction with new energy and direction, does not reside solely with either the interviewer or the interviewee, but is a 'new', *intersubjectively constructed* 'product' of both interviewer and interviewee.

In the *ideal* phenomenological interview, the researcher aims to provoke, through possibly only one or two governing questions and sporadic prompts and requests for clarification, a narrative-style response to the experience of the phenomenon under study. When asked to describe their experience of a phenomenon, an ideal phenomenological interviewee describes, unselfconsciously and fluently, her/his experiences, inadvertently (because that is

the nature of story telling) concretizing these descriptions in physical actions and behaviours. Such a goal in phenomenology works from the premise that normally what one expresses in speech is what one thinks. Merleau-Ponty (1968, p.126) puts it this way:

But because he has experienced within himself the need to speak, the birth of speech as bubbling up at the bottom of his mute experience, the philosopher knows better than anyone that what is lived is lived-spoken, that, born at this depth, language is not a mask over being, but if one knows how to grasp it with all its roots and all its foliation – the most valuable witness to Being.

So the goal in phenomenological interviews is to capture the experience of the phenomenon through that which is spontaneously and unwittingly given, rather than through a thoughtful, intellectualized response. But there is always a gap between the 'ideal' and the 'real'. So what one has to consider is the nature of the problematic that lies within the gap that prevents an 'ideal' ever becoming a 'real'. In the case of this study, I would foreground 'language' as one of the key problematics (*not* 'problem') here. Given that, for various complex reasons, participants chose not to draw primarily on their mother tongue, their 'language of thought' to speak about their experiences of the RWAT module, then that which would normally 'bubble up at the bottom of his mute experience' (a constituent of the 'ideal') has in fact been rendered silent. In its place, another voice speaks (as a constituent of the 'real'), one that reflects multiple points of reference residing in different cultural and linguistic norms. This voice, which the phenomenologist so badly wants to hear and hopes is the 'unedited' *lived-spoken*, inevitably takes a more winding, self-conscious, uncertain, considered route to the surface. Add to this the uneven power relations inherent in virtually all human and social science research contexts, and the 'gap' should be fully explained.

In this study, despite an informed and sustained effort to diminish researcher input in all the interviews, and to invite 'narrative responses' to probes, it was sometimes extremely difficult to get participants to offer *consistently* extended, voluntarily, descriptions of experiences. Initially, the researcher's inexperience as a phenomenological interviewer may have played an important role, but this was not the sole cause. My analysis of the reasons for the often uneven flow of conversation, the repetitions, the hesitations, the silences and pauses, and the circular nature of some of the exchanges in the interviews, relates directly to understanding the interview as a microcosmic reflection of the complex nature of *intersubjectively constituted* social relations that typify so many contexts in contemporary South Africa. In other words, for all the reasons already cited i.e. power, status, language differences, unaligned cultural practices etc., the odds of free-flowing, self-revealing 'talk' emerging in the context of this study (and any others like it) are not overwhelming, despite the very sound and harmonious relationship that can develop between a researcher and

participants (as was the case here), *and* participants' high level of English language proficiency. I would argue, however, that what *does* emerge in interviews of this nature, can still be regarded as rich phenomenological data, as will be shown later.

So though I would describe the interviews in this study as a blend of the unstructured and non-directive formats, they were not entirely without planning and direction. Because this study both investigates a particular literacy (manifested from within a particular component of a formal curriculum, itself reflective of a 'component' design – non-phenomenologically speaking), and draws on existent literacies, interviews, in my view, demanded some form of 'directing'. From my own experience with students, and the responses given on previous questionnaires, I was convinced that unless I assisted participants with penetrating their experiences of the RWAT module through identifying specific aspects of it, they would have had very little to say in response to the request that they "tell me about your RWAT experience". For this reason, and very broadly speaking, as the uniqueness of each interview was still given full rein, the following aspects of the 'RWAT experience' were targeted at some point across interviews: 'first encounters' with the learning materials, contact/tutorial sessions, the isiZulu translations, the readings, the Scheme for the Academic Argument, study groups, the issue of time, and possibilities for 'transfer' of learning. As I perceived it, each participant's experiences of these aspects would speak to their experience of acquiring literacy in the academic argument.

5.6 Interviews: Focus and spacing

Three interviews were conducted with each student, each one of which lasted between 60 – 90 minutes. Seidman (1991) describes the 'three-interview series' as a distinguishing characteristic of phenomenological interviewing. In his view, this structure "works best ... when the researcher can space each interview from 3 days to a week apart" (1991, p.14). Working within this framework means that the entire interviewing process would be completed in three weeks. Seidman's thinking in this regard is that, by keeping the period between interviews down to a minimum, no connection is lost between the researcher and the interviewee. More particularly, Seidman contends that "this passage of time reduces the impact of possibly idiosyncratic interviews. That is, the participant might be having a terrible day, be sick, or be distracted in such a way as to affect the quality of a particular interview" (*ibid*). While I could certainly endorse Seidman's perception that a 'loss of connection' might be avoided by holding each interview in very close proximity to the next one, reasoning that this would also minimize the idiosyncratic nature of the interviews – and by implication strengthen the validity of the data - seemed flawed to me. Seidman also makes no reference to the possibility of the *researcher* having a 'terrible day', being sick and/or distracted, and

the implications of this for the quality of the data collected. What needs to be acknowledged, in my view, is that every interview in every context is at base, idiosyncratic. Though one might be able to control for a number of variables, the kind of days people have (sickly, distracted, terrible) can never be controlled for and thus, each interview must simply be considered for what it is. The so-called 'distractors', in other words, contribute to the inherent texture of the interaction and must be embraced as such. In the context of this study, participants simply could not make the time and space in their already over-subscribed lives to meet such an intensely regulated schedule as that suggested by Seidman. In addition to participants being unable to match Seidman's three week schedule, I was not able to complete all the transcribing within such short periods, and since it was imperative for my own engagement with the process, that participants be able to read and respond to each interview transcript before another interview took place, the irregular spacing of interviews became the reality. Thus, the first two interviews took place within four weeks of each other, but the final interview was only held three months after the second one.

When it became obvious that there was going to be an extended period of time between the second and final interview, I experienced moments of great anxiety and concern. Having only the literature to go by, I worried that I was 'getting it wrong' and that as a consequence, was compromising the quality of my data. Yet, simultaneously, I knew intuitively that my engagement with the participants and the interviewing process to date was good, and by 'good' I mean that during the relatively short time we had all 'known' each other – through our first and second meetings and conversations – we had all worked hard and quickly to establish an environment framed by mutual respect, appropriate levels of trust, and collegiality. By the end of the second interview, therefore, and despite the tensions evoked by my inexperience of the multiple interview process, I was convinced that delaying the final interview would not destabilize or diminish the quality of the project in any significant way. With the proverbial wisdom of hindsight, I still believe this to have been the case.

In summary, the three interviews broadly covered the following areas:

Interview 1: Autobiographical focus with an emphasis on literacy development

The rationale for this focus was based largely on my own extensive previous experience with working with students to uncover aspects of personal and pedagogical histories, but was usefully endorsed by Seidman (1991). When one wants to fast-track the establishment of good (trusting) relationships, foregrounding the life experiences of the Other though, sensitive and tentative queries and probes can sometimes work very effectively to do this. And, by emphasising 'literacy' acquisition *and* learning, over straight autobiography,

participants could recount their early literacy histories without too much self-consciousness and/or restraint. Critically too, taking this line in the first interview, allowed me, almost as an artist might, to paint in broad brushstrokes, the backdrop against which all other literacy experiences and attitudes (as recounted in the second and third interviews) could be seen in perspective.

Interview 2: Exploring the RWAT experience directly

In this interview, I had with me a set of RWAT artefacts viz. the full set of learning materials, and one student assignment (*not* that of any of the participants') marked and notated by one of the tutors. This strategy was suggested to me by a colleague and I am grateful to him for the suggestion. My rationale for the focus of this interview, and the inclusion of artefacts, was that having established the broad nature of literacy experiences and attitudes up until the participants' Honours degree, it was imperative to now foreground the phenomenon of the study. The RWAT module itself became, therefore, the explicit focus of this interview.

Interview 3: Plugging gaps, confirming, expanding.

The thrust of the final interview emerged only after I had spent considerable time working with what had emerged from the previous two. It varied, therefore, from one participant to another as for each one, slightly different elements still needed to be covered in order to ensure some measure of consistency. Thus, for example, if five out of the six participants had mentioned 'time' as a stress factor in their lives, but the sixth had not by the end of the second interview, then I explicitly addressed the issue of time in the final interview with this participant. At this interview too, I engaged participants in a series of 3 sentence item exercises in the hope that they would in some way shed further light on the cognitive processes involved when participants 'made meaning' out of words. All three items came from one of the readings in the RWAT Learning Guide Part One. One of these exercises involved organizing isiZulu sentences into a coherent paragraph, one involved doing the same with English sentences, and one required participants to translate into English, the following isiZulu subheading: *Yini ucwangingo lohlobo lombhalo?*, which loosely translated means 'What is genre analysis?' Each participant was timed as they did these exercises.

After a great deal of deliberation and only after the transcribing of this last interview had taken place and time had been spent working with these transcripts, I made the decision to omit this aspect of data from the study completely. Though participants were asked to provide a 'think aloud' protocol as they worked, the results were so uneven as to make it impossible to draw any truly relevant conclusions or comparisons. Furthermore, as I already had over 400 pages of interview transcripts to work with, this additional data simply made

the project too extensive and cumbersome to deal with. In the event, the interviews dealing directly with the RWAT experience yielded by far the richer data and I am satisfied that I made the right decision in this regard.

5.7 Data analysis

As indicated at the end of Chapter 4, I developed a set of procedures for data analysis that I believed best suited the nature and demands of this particular study. As will become apparent, they owe a profound debt to the hermeneutic phenomenological tradition but also exploit the scope within the phenomenological movement to do things differently. Thus, there is a heavy emphasis on 'pure description' and 'interpretation', but all the data analysis steps most commonly associated with applied phenomenological studies are not employed. My unease with many of the elements of phenomenology-as-methodology has already been expressed in Chapter 4, so I do not need to say much more here. Perhaps, however, it would be useful to reiterate some of my concerns.

In short, I was too sceptical of mainstream applied phenomenologists' claims with regard to what they revealed about data (and by implication, what could be said about 'experiences'), and had little authentic faith in the processes themselves. I was not comfortable, for example, in claiming that, even by adhering rigorously to the process of 'imaginative variation', I had arrived at the 'essence' of anything, most especially because the study only involved six participants. And so though I was willing to develop a 'Synthesis of Experience of the Phenomenon' for each participant, I could not in all honesty take these further, and create, for example, a 'General Description of the Structure of the Phenomenon'.

Furthermore, as the study as a whole was originally conceived as a literacy study rather than a phenomenological study, I felt a strong imperative to accord 'literacy issues', *from a theoretical and conceptual perspective*, as much attention as I did those in relation to phenomenology. Thus, I made the decision to move directly from 'Individual Nodes of Experience' to an interpretive (hermeneutic) response which integrated Discourse Theory (predominantly) with a now 'collated' description of participants' experiences. In this way, as I saw it, the integrity and nuance of individual lives and shared experiences were upheld, whilst simultaneously being set against an explanatory framework that offered possibilities of understanding these experiences in a way that had not been considered in the RWAT module or the Honours programme before. In addition, by adopting this approach, I felt that I had preserved my own integrity as researcher and practitioner, and made myself accountable for my collusion in the participants' RWAT experience. Just as a reminder to the reader, the following three steps governed my data analysis process:

- (1) Scheme for the Academic Argument Attached Immersion – in the raw data.
- (2) Highlighting of Individual Nodes of Experience – of the phenomenon.
- (3) Writing an interpretive (hermeneutic) response – in this case assisted by Discourse Theory (after Gee 1996, 1997, 2004) – in response to the ‘collated experiences’ identified in Steps 1 and 2.

5.8 Trustworthiness and rigour

Given the phenomenological framing of this study and its intense engagement with the lived experiences of a small group of participants, it does not try and ‘prove’ reliability or generalisability. It is quite apparent that I cannot claim that were this study to be “carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context (however defined), [that] similar results would be found” (Cohen and Manion 2000, p.117), or that the conclusions reached could be generalized to other contexts, given the size of the sample group in the study.

The issue of ‘validity’, however, is important since it relates to the ‘worthwhileness’ and quality of the research and the degree to which it can legitimately lay claim to an accurate representation of the ‘object’ or phenomenon under study. How one ensures validity, particularly in qualitative, interpretive research, is constantly open to debate, and a range of different and contentious positions can be identified in the literature. Hammersley (1992), cited in Cohen and Manion (2000, p.107), for example, suggests that “validity in qualitative research replaces certainty with confidence in our results, and that, as reality is independent of the claims made for it by researchers, our accounts will only be representations of that reality rather than reproductions of it”. Others argue for “authenticity” and “understanding” as more suitable terms than ‘validity’. Richardson (1994, 1997), cited by Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p.279) proposes “a deliberately ‘transgressive’ form [of validity], the *crystalline*” (emphasis in original). Using the metaphor of a crystal, Richardson maps the properties of a crystal onto a construction of validity which she feels speaks far more clearly to the intentions of writing “nonauthoritative, nonpostivist” texts (such as one might find in phenomenological studies). She says, “Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities *and* refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns, arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends on our angle of repose. Not triangulation, but *crystallization*” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p.280). [Emphasis in original]. Patti Lather (1993), also cited in Denzin and Lincoln, aims too, to “rupture validity as a regime of truth, to displace its historical inscription ... via a dispersion, circulation and proliferation of counter-practices of authority that take the crisis of representation into account” (2003, p. 280).

Working within a similar mindset to those authors quoted above, in relation to validity in phenomenological research, van der Mescht (2002, p.47) identifies two areas of 'rigour' which he believes all qualitative research should manifest. They are of particular relevance to this study and are described below.

Firstly, the notion of internal rigour relates directly to the nature and depth of the descriptions the researcher presents as being accurate reflections of the participants' experiences. 'Thick' description is the desired goal but as van der Mescht warns, "not all description is 'thick' description, and quantity does not contribute to 'thickness'" (2002, p.49). Citing Salner (1989), van der Mescht asserts that, "Writing thick description requires a certain talent, a facility with words, and 'aesthetic sensitivity' or at least the willingness to practise a skill that may not come naturally" (*ibid*, pp.49/50). Writing 'complete' (and hence 'valid') phenomenological research, therefore, demands much more than "a passing ease with words" (van der Mescht, 2002, p.49). This last comment also highlights, once again, the role of 'language' in research of this nature.

Secondly, 'scientific' rigor, from van der Mescht's perspective, refers to being "methodical (organized and careful)" and "systematic (consistently operating within well defined and transparent guidelines)" (*ibid*, p.50). Researchers who aim for the kind of scientific rigour described here, will ensure that they constantly maintain a disciplined grasp of all aspects of the research process. In other words, the 'triad' composed of the phenomenon, phenomenology and the research question must be held in constant balance. Implicit in this balancing act is a capacity to distance oneself sufficiently from the research process to be able to recognize the inadequacies and shortcomings of one's engagement with it. It also implies an awareness that claims to 'trustworthiness' of data cannot be made unless texts generated by participants e.g. interview transcripts, are returned to participants for confirmation, clarification – and change if necessary. This was done for each participant for each interview in this study.

In terms of establishing the 'trustworthiness' of my identification of nodes of experience, three academic colleagues were asked to evaluate Chapter 6. The purpose of this exercise was not to have all three reviewers concur with each other and me, but to have each one be able to recognise the 'legitimacy' of a) all nodes identified, and b) how each node was 'named'.

5.9 Ethical considerations

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002, p. 65) note that "the essential purpose of ethical research planning is to protect the welfare and the rights of research participants" and

suggest that the following three principles should underpin all ethical decisions: autonomy (of the participants), nonmaleficence, and beneficence. In order to adhere to the first of these principles, autonomy, I ensured that voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all participants in this study, and that they were aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any point should they wish to do so. In the informed consent form which I asked them to sign (**Appendix C**), they were assured of “the parameters of confidentiality” (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 2002, p.68) which would govern use of the data provided by them. This included an assurance of anonymity, and information on how the data would be “recorded, stored, and processed for release”, and the format/medium of publication of all or part of the study e.g. thesis only, journal article etc.

The second principle, nonmaleficence, and growing from the first, means that there should be no harm done to any of the participants – emotionally, physically or socially. As the participants in my study are not members of what are commonly recognised as ‘vulnerable populations’ e.g. young children, prisoners, the mentally retarded etc, but professional educators, they were well placed to fully internalise the implications of all aspects of the research and make their own personal decisions with regard to participating in it. So, at first glance it would appear safe to say that this study ‘would do no harm’. However, if the notion of *exploitation* of participants is engaged with in depth, it is perfectly apparent that some degree of exploitation characterises all social science research, and that the principle of nonmaleficence is consequently compromised every time. “Interviewing as exploitation” is a constant concern for Seidman (1991, p.7), for example, and “provides a contradiction and a tension” within his work that he has not yet resolved. In the context of this study, I was particularly aware in the three years following the interviews (2005-2007), when it was still necessary to contact participants on various matters, that I was possibly tending towards exploiting the relationship we had established initially. Though five of the participants gave no overt sign of being disenchanted by my further requests for minor details and information, in 2007 one became suddenly abrupt in manner, and I made the immediate decision not to contact him again, working from the assumption that I had overstayed my welcome. And perhaps this is an important counter-point to remember when it comes to considering the notion of exploitation viz. that research participants can choose *not* to be exploited if that is what they feel is happening.

The last principle, beneficence, clearly relates to the previous two. Terre Blanche and Durrheim explain this principle as one which “requires the researcher to design research such that it will be of benefit - if not directly to the research participants then more broadly to other researchers and society at large” (2002, p.66). At the end of the interview period, all

participants expressed their pleasure at having stayed in the project, and claimed they had learnt a lot about research from it. Furthermore, no participant bore any financial cost for their participation as when it was necessary to pay, for example, for transport, this was covered by the project. Lastly, as an academic and researcher engaging in what I saw as an important and 'worthwhile' project (an ethical consideration of its own), I anticipate that 'other researchers and society at large' will, perhaps not immediately, but ultimately be the greater beneficiaries of the work done here.

5.10 Conclusion: 'Technical' information necessary for reading extracts from the interview data in Chapter 6

As the reader engages with Chapter 6, s/he is immediately immersed in the world of the interviews through the *verbatim* presentation of data from them. As indicated earlier, this 'world' has been understood by me as one that was co-instantiated by both parties to each interview i.e. researcher and participant. A range of 'codes' have been used in the transcripts to denote different types of 'moments', convey information etc. The following very simple 'codes' have been used, and are uniform throughout:

- (a) Bracketed information following each direct quotation from interviews e.g. (3.2.151). The *first figure* indicates the *number of the participant in the order in which first interviews were conducted*; the *second figure* indicates the *number of the interview* (first, second, or third/ final); and the *last figure* indicates the *line reference/s* from the original interview transcript.
- (b) ... (three dots) = hesitations in expressions of thought.
- (c) .. (two dots) = to indicate *pace* - if a participant has repeated a word/ phrase for emphasis.
- (d) - (dash): as it is commonly used in English i.e. to indicate a break and intentionally added information.
- (e) , (comma): short pauses. These are often used conventionally and where any reader might expect to see one. However, they have also sometimes *not* been used in places one conventionally associates with inserting a comma e.g. after every 'for instance'. The comma was only inserted if the participant her/himself paused, but, for example, Dick often spoke very quickly with no conventional pausing between thoughts/ phrases etc. I have tried, therefore, to reflect each participant's idiosyncratic flow of speech.
- (f) [] [information in square brackets]: researcher's comments and/ or prompts in the interview.

Chapter 6

Individual Nodes of Experience

6.1 Introduction

In terms of the data analysis process and the three steps described in Chapter 5, this chapter is effectively constituted by Step 2 in the data analysis process. To reiterate, Step 2 involved '*Highlighting 'Nodes' of Individual Experience* – relevant only to the phenomenon under study'. For reasons of length, I have included only two complete 'profiles' in this chapter. However, to provide the reader with a point of entry into the lives of all the participants in this study, central, I would suggest, to a full engagement with it, I have included in this chapter, the short biography and 'Synthesis of Experience of the RWAT module' of each remaining participant. The 'Nodes of Individual Experience' of these latter four participants are included as **Appendix D**. I urge the reader to engage with these if possible, as I believe one of the major strengths of this study lies in the way the detail of participants' literacy experiences as 'lived' has been captured. 'Knowing' each participant would also add meaning to a reading of Chapter 7.

When writing the first draft of each individual's 'profile', extensive detail relating to participants' lives *prior* to their engagement with the RWAT module were included. This was because the interview data contained a wealth of biographical detail, particularly with regard to participants' earlier literate life histories, that nagged to be included. However, on returning to each profile once they were completed, I realized that, because of their length, I had little choice but to find a way to condense them. Since the primary focus of the study as a whole (in phenomenological terms) is the RWAT module as a 'lived' module, I was forced to recognize that the only realistic option was to offer an abridged version of biographical details, in favour of retaining the full depth of experiences related directly to the phenomenon under study.

Going about Step 2 reflected an intensely reiterative process, tightly linked to Step 1, whereby, over a long period of engagement with the interview transcripts, distinct 'nodes' of experience emerged. These 'nodes' were identified in terms of whether or not they could be understood to *incarnate the RWAT module*. They were embedded, of course, in what the participants overtly or inadvertently told me about their RWAT experiences.

To effect the 'unveiling' that characterises this chapter, the discourse style of the chapter tends towards that of narrative and assumes the right to a degree of novelistic license while doing so. By this is meant that as 'narrator', I have claimed the right to insert my own

presence whenever I deem it helpful and/or necessary. Thus the reader will encounter numerous 'episodes' where the original dialogical nature of a conversation between me and a participant is preserved through the inclusion of my responses – be they in the form of gentle encouragements, grunts, further prompts etc. This approach was indicated in Chapter 5. My responses are always presented in [square brackets] to differentiate them from the words of the participants. Additional 'information', such as when a participant might have carried out an action, or laughed, is also indicated in [square brackets]. In short, as far as possible, I have intentionally attempted to convey the authentic intersubjective nature of the perceptions and meanings inherent in the nodes of experience depicted in this chapter.

From a phenomenological perspective, this chapter can thus be characterised as descriptive. The reader will discover that I have made use of participants' own words extensively to inform these descriptions, and have included isiZulu tracts wherever they occur. I've included all the hesitations, the uncertainties, the struggles to make a point, not to make the thesis longer, but to oblige the reader to share in what it means to make meaning in a language that is not the language of your dreams or your prayers, or that of the conversations you have at the taxi rank on your way home.

The presentation of Individual Nodes of Experience, therefore, should be understood as an opportunity for the participants in the research project (and this includes the researcher) to have their voices heard. In addition, they invite the reader to enter into conversation with them. As I treated each interview as a unique event, however, despite certain broad similarities in respect of certain probes and directions of talk, there were varying degrees of disclosure on all matters, which explains why not all profiles carry quite the same detail. I do not see this as in any way problematic, but rather a defining feature of what it means to agree to work at the level of individuality. And when it came to deciding on the appropriacy of inserting and/or labelling subheadings in the profiles, again I was led by each 'context of individuality' knowing that, in the next chapter, scope for mainlining and streamlining experiences was more than adequately available to me. Thus the descriptors/ 'names' of nodes are words that they participants themselves have used when describing a particular experience. My choice of these words was made on the basis that they best captured the central/ core 'meaning' of a particular experience.

Another point to be made is that I have chosen to conclude each participant's biographical sketch with a brief indication of their present status in relation to the RWAT module and the Honours programme, identifying those who have graduated and those who have not. It is important to bear in mind that the data on which this study draws emerges from interviews with the participants in their second, and supposedly final, year of their Honours study. Thus

at the time the research project began (2004), all participants should have completed four first year modules, and would have had four still to complete in order to be awarded the Honours degree. RWAT, as declared at the start of this thesis, is one of two compulsory modules in the programme and no student, therefore, can graduate without passing this module. The irony of this requirement should not go unnoticed given the assertion by the RWAT module developers that it was framed by a socioliteracy perspective.

Finally, and just as a point of interest, all participants were invited to select the pseudonym by which they would like to be 'known' in the thesis. It will only be through engaging with each of the biographical profiles that the relevance (if any) of their choices of 'naming' might strike the reader as significance.

6.2 Dick

6.2.1 Biographical sketch

At present, Dick teaches the English first additional language syllabus to Grade 11 and 12 isiZulu mother tongue speakers in a high school not very far from the mission station on which he was born, and where he has primarily lived for the past 40 years. He is also a Head of Department (Languages) in his school, and the English Language Cluster Co-ordinator for the area, which means that he is responsible for co-ordinating the English language teaching programmes amongst approximately 5 local high schools. During the week he lives with his parents in the family home on the original mission station, but most weekends he returns to his wife and two children who live in Pietermaritzburg, approximately 80km away.

Dick comes from a highly literate family with his mother having been a nursing sister and his father a teacher on the mission station during the week, and on Sundays, a teacher in the mission Sunday school. As a young boy, he was surrounded by other 'literate influences', such as the teachers who lived in cottages next to his home, and their neighbour, the reverend, and hospital staff. All in all, Dick enjoyed a "happy childhood because I was fortunate in ... I can say, I was staying next to the hospital, next to the crèche, next to the College of Education. And our teachers" (3.1.168-9). Living so close to the hospital meant too that Dick was exposed to English at an early age "because when you go to hospital you meet a doctor speaking English ... the white doctors ... others are from England and so forth. [Oh, ok] So, the Administrator was a white man. So you can see that when you go to a doctor he knows that this is the Sister's boy, so he just approach me in English because he knows that you are from a literate family. So ... there's no need for a nurse to come to help and tell the doctor what is it that you are suffering from and so forth. So, it made me to ... but I didn't by then realise that I was making use of language" (3.1.199-203).

The medium of instruction in the mission station school Dick attended was isiZulu until the end of Grade 4, “Then, by then, there was this thing of changing the education system whereby you had to learn now in English for subjects. [OK, as a medium of instruction?] As a medium of instruction. It was the first year we studied that thing. So there was a lady there, related to Mrs X who was the ... the principal of the college by then. She was Mrs Y. She is now a principal at Ingweni. [Mmm, mmm.] She worked a lot. Teaching us English, to speak English, making sentences, not allowing us to speak in Zulu in class, you see, because we are used to Zulu now and writing it ... teaching us to write short paragraphs and so forth” (3.1.42-51).

This ‘English-only’ policy Dick experienced in primary school continued in high school, and won his approval. “It was nice, it was very nice. ... I’m in favour of it because what it does, it makes in the students to ... to learn more within themselves, because somebody will come up with a new word and we’d say, what is the meaning of that word? How do you make use of it? What does it mean? You see” (3.1.271-3). ... [And it didn’t make you feel that people were taking your Zulu away from you?] No, it didn’t because ... before they said that ... they called us into an assembly and they told us that our problem is here and there, so the best way to be able to do this in one of the language disciplines is that we must speak the language. We would be having more time of our own vernacular at home, then for these hours that we are here ... [At the school] (3.1.278-82). And according to Dick, this rule was respected by everyone because “by that time we had discipline ... unlike now” (3.1.286).

Professionally, Dick defines himself as “a language person”. He’s not sure if perhaps “it’s something that I inherited from my father because he can speak good English” (3.1. 517/ 522-3), but since “some other time when he speaks I cannot even say what he ... what is he saying now” (3.1.523-4), this might not be the case. However, Dick is an avid reader of books – at the time of the interviews he was busy with one of Chinua Achebe’s novels – and newspapers. He also listens to the radio a lot and has “the love of music ... I listen to David Gresham. ... Because one of the things that I was taught is that I must also listen to words, to a radio in English. So I used to listen to them when they are reading the news, you see” (3.1.883-4).

As an interviewee, Dick was a very intense and alert man. He would watch me constantly, often wanting to answer/ respond before I had completely said what I was trying to say, as if a mere word or two on my part provided sufficient lead-in to a discussion. I experienced a restlessness about him when I first met him that was hard to pinpoint given that he had volunteered to participate in the research project, but I soon came to realise that that is his general disposition wherever he is. He led us into many sidings outside of the areas under

discussion in the interviews and/or frog-leaped from one point to another within one idea, making for a fascinating yet often quite fragmented response. He also often spoke very fast, making it on occasion difficult to sustain a thread of conversation or probe more deeply when necessary. He was also alert to outside noises and was easily distracted. As a host, however, he was warm and generous and made both my visits to his home a very hospitable experience. What stood, and no doubt still stands central to Dick's life, was the death of his brother shortly after he had finished at Training College in the early 90s. This event clearly shattered his world at the time, and remains a great void in his life. Searching for something to fill this void contributed to his decision to register for an Honours degree.

To conclude, perhaps it is important to say that Dick did not go straight from school to college. The period in which he completed his Grade 12 coincided with the years of civil unrest in South Africa viz. the mid 80s, and for this reason, Dick did not go to college immediately. Instead he joined the post office and worked in the telephone exchange for five years. His decision to go to college was not his own – “In fact, I didn't wanted to be a teacher, it was my father's influence” (3.1.451-2). Dick felt too old to start at college by that time but “then I decided no, I must go back to school and learn something that would be tangible” (3.1.455-6). He was prompted too, by a friend, “an inspector in Kokstad” who asked Dick, “Don't you like to see yourself one day wearing a gown, and the whole thing?” (3.1.471-2).

When I made the observation that Dick seems to have associated a lot with ‘people who were educated beyond school’, he picked up immediately on this saying, “Beyond school, yes. So in that ... that made me to ... must go to school [college, actually], I must go back to school. What is it that they using to go to school? What is it that contributed a lot to these people to be where they are? I'll make it one day! And I think of a policeman who came to my diploma ceremony and he said, ‘I can call you a man!’” (3.1.494-8).

An important concluding point to make with regards to Dick's personal biography is that at the time of the first interview, he had known he had failed his first attempt at the RWAT module. By the final interview, he had failed the supplementary examination he had been granted as well, so the entire backdrop to Dick's participation in the project was one characterised by a lack of conventionally designated indicators of success, a point worth bearing in mind when engaging with the nodes of experience that follow.

6.2.2 Nodes of Individual Experience – of the phenomenon

1. “Frightening! Very frightening”

Dick had a two year break between completing his college teacher’s diploma and registering for the Honours degree “on what would happened in my family and so forth” – a reference to the death of the brother mentioned earlier. He thought that by continuing “learning something” it would “help me out to forget about everything and so forth” (3.2.28). Perhaps it is not surprising, given his reasons for registering for the Honours i.e. to escape loss and grief, that he found the experience of getting his RWAT materials “Frightening! [Laughing]. Frightening” (3.2.13). I asked what was so frightening about it, to which he replied, “The material was three documents, not knowing which one to start off reading and so forth, you see ...” (3.2.32-3). ... “What was going on, what is it that I must do and so forth.(3.2.39).

2. “I went for an advice ... he said take it easy”

To cope with the fear that receiving his RWAT materials had triggered off in Dick, he “went for an advice to learn to X, he gave me another, he said, take it easy, you go through it, you will see what is that’s going to go, I can see you’re panicking and so forth but there’s no need for that. I tried to do that, I did it for about two weeks but taking it slowly, slowly ... then I was able to go through” (3.2.67-70).

3. “Oh, genre! I said WHAT is this thing?”

A little later, Dick revealed that the word ‘genre’ had proved problematic for him too in the initial stage of attempting to access the RWAT module. “I did read a lot about this but the thing is you see, when you are ... it’s for the first time for you to learn something, you ... like for instance, what was it ... it was very ... I had to go through it with a dictionary, I don’t know how many times ... oh, genre! [Oh, genre itself?] Genre itself. I said, WHAT is this? Maybe it took me about a week to understand that if I’m not mistaken. I even went to ask my father, what is it that you understand about this? [laughter] So he did explain to me. [Did he know it?] Ya, he knew it. He knew it – he is a retired teacher” (3.2.751-760). ... So he went through something whereby he had to tell me what is it that is going on, how do we understand it. He had to go through and read here. [Ok, ok.] He had to go through and read here. I just, I said to him, I must get used to it, I don’t have time to seek for information, please can you help me out. So then thereafter I started. I can still remember it took me about one week to understand it” (3.2.763-8).

4. “I found that most of the things must be said by us”

The fear that RWAT initially instilled in Dick ran deep. After struggling to understand the word ‘genre’ (as just described) - “which took me astray” - his overwhelming response after this “when I looked at the Reading and Writing, I said no, I’m not going to touch this. There was that fright! You see. So going through this ... I cannot say whether I did go through thoroughly because the thing is when I was doing this course, I’m still say it was frightening” (3.2.770-3). What emerged directly from this last comment was that contact sessions held a unique fear for him, not because he had to mix with other race groups – he was very used to that from living on the mission station – “but what is it that is going to go on? What is it that she is going to say? And I found that most of the things must be said by us! So it was the first experience for me then. So then it is there that I realised that if you don’t go through all the activities then you’ll be lost out, you see, because now you couldn’t ... it means that you must catch up by writing, also listening, so two things at the same time, two processes at the same time. That’s the thing” (3.2.93-98).

5. “I decided to forget about the Zulu”

When going through the RWAT Learning Guide Part Two, Dick discovered that “in some text you have something written in Zulu, and when you relate it to English as you are a Zulu-speaker, you find that you have a problem to understand what is going on” (3.2.104-106). In the second interview, I asked him to explain more to me about the ‘problem’ of the isiZulu translations. “Like for instance, for myself,” he began, “I decided to forget about the Zulu. [Ok] Totally. Concentrate on the English one so that I understand that” (3.2.108-110). I suggested then that the ‘Zulu for you wasn’t great’, to which he replied, “It wasn’t a great one because what I ... I ... I picked out here is that I must be able to ... when I’m writing now, answering the questions and so forth, I must be able to say what this author said in relation to this, what is this one saying, when you are comparing the two, are they agreeing on so forth. You see. [Ya. So it didn’t help to have the Zulu then?] No, I decided ... I didn’t want to get myself confused, because I saw that when I’m reading the Zulu text, I’m now getting lost, but it does explain everything – it is clear” (3.2.112-9). [After all that you say the text is clear?] “The text is clear!” said Dick. “Then what made you get lost?” I asked. “Make me understand that”. Dick answered: “What makes me to get lost is that now, what is it that I must do with this text? Must I respond in my own language? Because I know some ... more of the Zulu words maybe of saying what is there in the text and so forth so I said to myself you know, in order not to find myself when writing a sentence finding that there is now in ... the Zulu is intruding in what I’m writing so I’d better stop writing ... er, reading this, you see” (3.2.120-9).

6. “It becomes easier when you read something in a language that you are going to make use of”

Dick went on to set his decision to ‘forget about the Zulu’, because it got him lost and confused, against why it was better for him to stay exclusively with English. It was because “... something that is written in your own language ... it’s very difficult to translate ... because now you must read. When you read you try and ... visualize what you have read [yes] and then thereafter you will be able now to put this in your own words. Now when we read something in your own vernacular language and you find that the terminology is not the one that you are used to, [ok] it would be very difficult for me to code switch now [ok]. That’s the thing ... so it becomes easier when you read something in a language that you are going to make use of like when ... [So it’s English in this case?] In English in this case ... I read it in English ... like one of my teachers usually used to say when you ... when I ask you a question and I’m speaking in English, please think in English. [laughing]. [Do you ever think in English?] There’s the thing. In other words he was trying to help us out not to make use of our own vernacular language because what would happen there, there are words in English, whereby you won’t be able to translate them into ... that are in Zulu, that you won’t be able to translate them into ...like for instance if I say *segqi*, that you cannot say it in English, it’s something that is way, is away, far away from English. [And what does it mean?] In fact by so saying, that’s a full sentence, by saying ‘Come, please come to me’. [Ok, is that what it means?] So one other person would take an action and step down on the floor [yes]. There are two meanings for that [ok] you see” (3.3.260-291).

7. “It’s unlike the Zulu that we speak daily”

In the final interview, Dick was able to expand a bit more on why he left the isiZulu texts alone. He started by saying, “I had a look at one or two paragraphs and I said to myself, no, I’m not going to be able understand this if I’m making use of Zulu” (3.3.364-6). When I asked him to explain more about what he meant, he said, “Because the thing is ... what I’ve learned is that what is written down there must fit it into the theories that are there so it would difficult for me now to translate, you see” (3.3.370-2). I asked then if it was ‘because the way in which Zulu’s been used here is unfamiliar’. “It’s an academical thing,” he said, “... it’s unlike the Zulu that we speak daily [ok] So like for instance, if you are teaching Zulu, you are teaching grade 12 Zulu, the students there will tell you that this is an academic thing, this is not ... even the writers of Zulu are [ya] writing something that is very much academically, Professor Ntuli [ya], DBZ, like ... Professor Hlongwane⁵, all them they are writing something

⁵ Well known isiZulu writers and academics.

which is ... I mean, for instance how we speak [ok]. It's quite a different subject, which you cannot talk to everybody ... the man on the street. [Sure.] You see, you cannot talk about that thing to a man on the street, because he is not interested in that, he is interested in the communicative language [ok] you see, that ... is not a communicative language, it's an academic language. (3.3.376-88).

8. "The mistakes are not there ...because we are not observant"

Dick's reasons for not using the isiZulu translations were also overtly tied up with his sense of what it means to be an English second-language speaker. As he said, "It's very difficult when you are a second-language speaker for English because some of the things – the mistakes that we make are intruding because of your first language. ... They are not there because we are not observant, but ... but because of the first language that is causing that" (3.2.307-313). ... "And then you find yourself not arguing to the point. Maybe because of your language is intruding, the way you ... because what is this ... language change is a very difficult thing because it goes along with this thing, culture" (3.2.315-7).

9. "You're trying to be yourself now, having the wrong conception of the word"

I asked Dick to expand on his thoughts on the link between language and culture. He said, "Language and the culture. So, it might happen that you have a viewpoint in your own culture, whereby to me it's something totally different. It was as if in the morning when I was listening to a radio, then this thing of words, words saying something else in your own language, and the word, the same word, saying something else in the other person's own language, then you're trying being yourself now, having a wrong conception about the word" (3.2.321-6).

10. "We find ourselves astray"

The possible result of this kind of situation is that "then we find ourselves astray! We are left out now, you are saying something which is out of point. That is why I said for ... earlier, that I decided not to look at what is written in Zulu because I knew that I'm going to write something which is very wrong, because I'll be understanding it the other way round, you see" (3.2.354-8). In the end, Dick "left it [the isiZulu], just like that. I went on with what was written in English and that helped me a lot" (3.2.405-6).

11. "I'm living in two worlds, you see"

Dick's internal orientation towards isiZulu and English was thus a complex one. He claimed an irrefutable 'Zulu' identity – "My identity! I'd describe it as a Zulu-speaker", but if given the

choice between studying in isiZulu or English, “I would choose English, because I'm very much used to it, I've taught it, I've taught English for about ten years now” (3.2.1165-6). When I asked then what English ‘represents’, he said, “It represents what? ... my work life. It represent my work life. [Ok] And is something I am living on. With it I'm making a living. [So it's powerful] It's very powerful. Very powerful. Very powerful. Because I even find myself... I said to myself, when I'm finished B.Ed [Honours] I must do something in English because now and then I want to improve” (3.2.1220-4).

In terms of Dick's perception of the relationship between language and culture he had raised earlier, he has adopted the following approach: “You see what I do is this ... that when I want to ... to send a message to someone who is not in my culture, I ... I ... like to use his own language because I hope the message will be sent easily to him, because he might not understand what was it that I was saying” (3.2.1169-1172).

In the final interview, Dick reiterated his position on the relationship between English and isiZulu in his life: “.... to me, English is a language whereby I'm making use of it so as to make ends meet [ok]. On the other hand, I've got my ... first language whereby I have to respect how do ... how I grew up, I must portray the way that my parents have shown, so ... many of the things are attached to my culture in Zulu.[In Zulu.] Whereas on the other hand ... in other words I'm living in two worlds. [Ya, I think you are. I think most of our students are.] I'm living in two worlds, you see. [Is there any way those worlds can meet?] In a way there is ... because ... for progress [ya] I must make use of English, and for the upbringing of my kids, some of the things they must respect because of my culture [ok], so I must make use of my culture in order to give what advice and so forth that, no, we are not allowed to do this in our culture, you know how kids are ... they are very questioning, and you tell them not to do this, they say, give me the reason why” (3.3.324-345). At this point, Dick concluded, that “It's unlike us when we grew up” (3.3.349).

12. “It needs someone who is going to explain it better”

Dick struggled with RWAT and his general grasp of the module was slow, compounded it seemed, by a tutor inadequate to the job (in his view). Dick said, for example, that he found the module “... interesting *but* it needs someone who is going to explain it better” (3.2.185). He wasn't able to make it clear for us because what happened is this – I don't remember the actual point, but when Mike Hart came, he had said something to us of which was opposing what he had said ... she had said, you see, so then we complained about that” (3.2.216-9).

13. “There were clouds ... and now the sun is coming out”

“So what happened to us in one ... it was the last lecture whereby who was the course coordinator ...? [Mike] Mike ... Mike Hart [Yes] He came to us and er, it was clear like ... after he had talked to us it was clear like ... [What did he do that made the difference?] The way he explained what was it that was contained in Assignment 3, what is it that we must do” (3.2.185-96). “We were clear about what he wanted and we were now having light of what this could be expected in the examination ... this is the way that we must write it. It became clear by then” (3.2.207-9)). I observed that ‘light was a long time coming’, to which Dick responded, “Hey, a long time! If he did it when we were doing maybe Assignment ... we were about to do Assignment 2, then we would appreciate it!” (3.2.211-2). Later in the interview Dick used a similar ‘light’ metaphor when he repeated the point he’d made earlier. “... I still remember,” he said, “the day when Mike came, ei, that was a day when I started to know what was it that was going on, ei, it was like as if there were clouds, and ... [Really?] ... and now ... the sun is coming out [laughter].” (3.2.408-12).

14. “Maybe I cannot have an answer even now”

When I initially showed Dick the Johnson text, I began with the following prompt: “I want to know how, when he talks about genre teaching, or teaching writing as a political project, what did you understand about that?” He said, “All right. Let me think. There was speaking about how do we write ... how powerful is writing to politics. [Ok.] I understood it that way. That when we are writing something in the political point of view of it ... [Ok, can you give me an example of ...] Of what? [How you might apply that, or ...?] I don’t have the example at this juncture, but that is how I understood it, that he was saying something about what ... about how writing is powerful in politics. I don’t know whether I understand it correctly, or whether ... [Because he talked about the pedagogical and the political project ...] And the political project ...” (3.2.904-16). I tried a *slightly* different angle by saying, “What was your understanding of the difference between those?”, to which he replied, “Maybe I cannot have an answer even now. ... Because when I ... I don’t have a correct answer for that” (3.2.328).

15. “Because in our culture, when I am a learned person, I’m not learning for myself only”

Despite the tentative response above, when I showed Dick the sample assignment where the student had written “*The Genre approach as a political it help the disadvantage student to the access of ...*”, and said, “What is he saying?”, Dick said, “What I figure out here is that through writing you develop a person even if he is in the remote areas of the country. [Ok]

Because one reading and writing helps you to be empowered socially and economically and culturally. [Ok.] You see. That is what I understand is what he/she is saying. And in that manner the society, that is the ... the standard of the society is uplifted because of the people who are learned' (3.2.933-41). Was he saying that in effect that more opportunities become available thanks to the 'people who are learned'? "More opportunities, and then to be able to uplift others who are there, because in our culture, when I am a learned person, I'm not learning for myself only, also to help others in the family, the extended family and so forth" (3.2.943-5), which point brought him neatly back to "what I was saying when I said, some other cultures would understand that in their language and I understand it in my own way, of my own culture" (3.2.947-9).

By way of support for the point he had just made, he cited his own family experience: "... for instance I was saying, if my granny did not ask the Lutheran Church to help my father to learn as a teacher, I wouldn't be a learned person, because my granny had, so that's why I am here. The Lutheran Church helped my father to learn to become a teacher, so she saw the need, because she now has money, from an economic point of view, because she has ... she is able to teach me. Is able to send us all to school. In other words whilst at the same time as I'm now a learned person I'm helping the community. [Ok, ok.] Ok. Which means that the society that I'm living in is also going to be uplifted" (3.2.957-67).

16. The Scheme for the Academic Argument: "Ya, no I didn't use it much. I didn't use it much"

When I showed Dick the diagram of the 'Scheme for the Academic Argument', and asked him if he remembered 'this picture', there was a long pause before he answered, "What was that? Oh structure ... ok, right, academic writing" (3.2.539). When I asked if he had used it much there was another very long pause. He then said, "I don't know whether I used it much or it was of ... (3.2.541). He then trailed off into another long uncomfortable pause. I tried to ease his discomfort by telling him that some students had said they didn't make much use of the diagram, to which he quickly responded, "Ya, no I didn't use it much. I didn't use it much" (3.2.543). The effort of excavating memory and process was clearly becoming arduous for Dick and though I was tempted to leave the subject, use of the 'Scheme for the Academic Argument' is in fact so central to the pedagogical pathway followed in the RWAT module that I decided to push ahead. Pointing to the three stages in the diagram, and the various compulsory and optional moves contained within each stage, I then asked Dick if he remembered any of those. He studied the pages carefully again and then replied, "Ya. The claims?" "Well, the *model*", I said. Suddenly recollection seemed to flood back in: "In fact I remember ... now I can remember this, ok, it's a long time. [Yes, it is a long time, I'm asking

people to go back.] “Yes. Because what he said that we must have a claim. Then thereafter you support your claim. So in supporting your claim you must give also what the authors are saying” (3.2.546-52).

17. “I said oh no, I must create my own way of thinking”

Rather than adhere to the structure taught in the RWAT module, however, Dick had devised his own. “I even have the structure where it says this is the point but you go in– out, in-out. [Ok, ok!] That’s the way I thought of it, ok? [Yes. So you had a picture?] Yes, I have a picture. I just draw it like that so I know what is going. [Draws a picture of a straight line – perpendicular – and a weaving/ snaking line that crosses and re-crosses the straight line] Ya, and this point runs ...” (3.2.554-62). I remarked that this looked a very interesting representation of process and said that I too tend to visualize a lot. Dick went on: “ You see, when I had this, what was it ... mind map for the first time, when we were ... when we saw that, that’s one thing that I was a little bit disturbed ... what is it that is going on here? [Was that in Psychology⁶?] It was in Psychology. So a mind-map, eh, I was thinking, what is it that is ... I said oh no, I must create my own way of thinking. So that I will be able to conquer this. [Absolutely. And do you still do that kind of thing?] I still do it. When we have a point, you go in-out, go in-out, until you come to a conclusion, whereby you are summing up everything” (3.2.566-75).

18. “How am I going to get out from this ... because we attach everything to this”

Coping with getting low marks, or even worse, failing, was something Dick faced more than once in the RWAT module. As we penetrated the experience of failure, a window was opened onto the contextual and emotional complexity of this experience which this node, and the following 3 nodes show.

18.1 “What is it that they are going to say at home when you have failed?”

“So then if you see your mark’s very low and you do not know what is it that makes me to get low marks, how am I going to get out from this, because I’ve paid a lot of money and so forth, you see, because we attach everything to this (3.2.426-9). ... what is that they are going to say at home when you have failed, you see, because that’s basically that’s the thing” (3.2.789).

⁶ ‘Psychology’ – a reference to ‘Psychological Perspectives’, the module that ran concurrently with ‘Reading and Writing Academic Texts’, in the first semester of 2004 in the B.Ed Honours programme.

18.2 “In most instances I don’t want to tell people what I am doing”

Dick hid his Honours involvement from people in his community, a fact which emerged in the second interview and again in the final interview. After failing RWAT the first time, he said he “met one other lady who was teaching me and I was teaching at ... she said, I saw you when you were ... what is it that you are doing there? Being afraid to tell a person because you know some of the courses you have dropped them and so forth. [Laughter] [Oh no! It’s not easy, in fact!] No it’s not very easy” (3.2.798-803).

And then again, now having failed the RWAT supp as well, he said, “So I was talking to another guy yesterday and he said to me will you becoming to the [church] meeting on the fifth and I said I can’t come because I have got something that I am doing. ... You see ... [ya] and in most instances I don’t want to tell people what am I doing. I just want to surprise them” (3.3.16-19). I checked that ‘people’ really don’t know he’s studying, to which he responded, “Some of them know ... but the other guy I was talking to ... he’s not having a clear idea of what is it that I’m doing. I[ok] just want to surprise them when I’m graduating [ya] and they come to me” (3.3.23-5).

18.3 “In the group, the marks you got are not saying what you are”

Aside from having to live with a sense of failure in the context of family and the community, Dick had also to negotiate the context of his tutorial group. This was not easy either. : “No, you can’t show anybody your marks, you keep it there Hide it, ya. ... Ya, it’s not easy to show somebody that you’ve failed because the way ... in it may be a person facing in the group, the marks that you got are not saying what you are, you ... [That’s always the trouble, hey?] ... and then they’ll start to look down upon you, you see. So there is nobody who want to show [anybody]” (2.3.725-36).

18.4 “It demoralizes you ... what if these kids know that you’ve failed?”

And lastly, there was the struggle to place his failure in the context of his role as a teacher. As I probed to understand the effects of repeated failure I asked Dick what such experiences do ‘to your heart, to your confidence’. He answered that, “... it demoralizes you. And then you come to class and you ask yourself what if one of these kids knows that I’ve failed the module that I was doing at the university? And you see that it is contribute negatively to them, they won’t trust you, you see ... they won’t trust you.” (3.2.474-8).

19. “But on the other hand ... we complimented each other”

In the midst of what seemed to be a very bleak experience of failure, however, encouragement from fellow students made a difference. Dick told me, “So then that is what happened with us, that we ... we tend to attach what, our feelings that we ... we are not going to make it! But on the other hand the ... the guys, when we were together, we complimented each other, no, no, we are going to make it, it’s just that we haven’t yet got the key to go through. Hence, what happened, at the end of the day ... I’m still going to do it again” (3.2.431-5).

20. “When I’d finished writing on that day I said to myself, well, I can say I did it”

Dick declared that he had had no sense, immediately after either examination, that he had failed RWAT. When I asked what had happened to make him fail the module twice, he said, “I don’t know because when I got that supplement, I went through for about two days. I asked my principal for two days not to go to school, and I went through it. When I’d finished writing on that day I said to myself, well, I can say I did it. Because, the thing is, what ... the skill that I’ve discovered here is that one ... I must be able to ... my first paragraph, I must be able to write it in the manner that it says all about what I’m going to say on the next ... on the following paragraphs up to the conclusion. Then I had that in my mind. So I had to look at these authors, what are they saying, and then know all ... I mean, know the points, how ... what is it they are arguing about and so forth. Then I said, I’m on the right track when I’m just leaving.” (3.2.444-53) [So why do you think you failed?] “I don’t know, maybe it’s that the points were not enough, I don’t know” (3.2.455).

21. “Because I didn’t knew this, but now I know that it might happen”

What the experience of failure did show him was, “Because I didn’t knew this, but now I know that it might happen that you understand something and you write about it, and you find out that no, you were not writing about what has been asked” (3.2.485-7).

22. “What I’m doing is to go through ... what it is that they are looking for”

Spontaneously Dick added that on his next attempt at RWAT he would do something different: “So you ... one other thing that I think is going to help me with what I’m doing is to go through what ... what the guide ... the guide for marking, which is stating what is it that they are looking for. Have a look at the ... [Assessment criteria]. Assessment criteria, I will look at it you see, then it is going to help me” (3.2.487-91).

23. “I am pressed with time”

In the biographical sketch of Dick I mentioned his tendency on occasion to ‘frog-leap’, within one main idea, from one associated thought to another, and that this sometimes made for quite a fragmented description of experience. When it first came to talking about ‘time’, this evidenced itself very strongly, as in one *single* ‘conversational turn’ (3.3.7-15), Dick said much about his experience of time, but in a very ‘distributed’ way. I thought it appropriate to give an example of this, and the way in which nodes were identified from within this single extract. It went as follows:

“Oh well the thing is ... I have tried to organize time for myself and during the course of the week as a person who is teaching daily. I would like to see myself as being somebody else in the near future looking at the people who I grew up with ... some of them have been very good to me as teachers and I see them that they are learning something new - as it happened to me. So I try to organize time that at least as they ... [trailing off] When we are attending ... at least twice a month [yes] so that saves at little bit of time, but the thing is I have been talking to my father and he is saying I am becoming anti-social because some of the things I don’t attend because I am pressed with time, the church, they also need me (3.3.7-15)”.

From the above, the following nodes have been identified. Given the very ‘confined’ nature of the context of the nodes, the ‘name’ of the nodes and the description of the experience itself tend to be very closely associated, and in some cases are one and the same thing.

23.1 “Oh well the thing is ... I have tried to organise time for myself”

23.2 “... and during the course of the week as a person who is teaching daily”

23.3 “So I try to organise time so at least they ...”

“I would like to see myself as being somebody else in the near future looking at the people who I grew up with ... some of them have been very good to me as teachers and I see them that they are learning something new - as it happened to me. So I try to organize time that at least as they ... (trails off)”

23.4 “... when we are attending [contact sessions]... at least twice a month ... so that saves a little bit of time”

23.5 “... he is saying I am becoming anti social because some of the things I don’t attend”

“... but the thing is I have been talking to my father and he is saying I am becoming anti social because some of the things I don’t attend because I am pressed with time, the church, they also need me”.

However, because Dick did at later stages in the third interview return to issues of time, *where it is appropriate to do so*, I am now going to use some of these same nodes and instantiate them further with additional descriptions of time-related experiences provided by Dick. To create new ‘names’ for nodes that echo existing nodes would, in my view, be a pseudo-exercise and unwarranted, hence this move in this instance.

24. “Oh well the thing is ... I have tried to organise time for myself”

Juggling the needs of his wife and children and studying has been extremely difficult for Dick. “That one,” he said, “has made me to get into trouble” (3.3.130). His children “could not understand that I must have the time to study in the evening” (3.3.142), which is why Dick lives ‘away’: “Because as I’ve told you before, I’ve got a house in Maritzburg [yes]. That’s where my wife stays and then my kids. I stay with my father. Here, I have enough time to study ... I organize my things nicely, then the kids do not understand. They say you are just regretting, you are just not coming to us in time, you don’t ... when you come you are not so nice as you usually before ... especially my young son. [So he is missing you?] He’s missing me ... one other time we discussing with him, he said what is it that you are doing at school? I came in and then I drove to the University, I said I’m just studying something on honours and he said what is that? I don’t understand it. I said you will learn to know it when you are grown up” (3.3.1446-58).

25. “... and during the course of the week as a person who is teaching daily”

In expanding on what it meant to be ‘a person who is teaching daily’, Dick asserted that, “It’s a very difficult thing. Because you have to organize your time for studying, organize time for your lessons, lesson plans and so forth, you must organize time for marking, you must organize time for looking at the register for your class. Unfortunately for me I’m also doing the other job , I’m a acting H.O.D for languages .. [yoh] I’ve got to look at the teachers, what they have submitted, what they have not submitted. I must go back and tell them ... I must have meetings with them” (3.3.120-6).

26. "...he is saying I am becoming anti social because some of the things I don't attend"

No longer being able to attend all the meetings he should, especially church meetings, because of the time constraints imposed by studying, has impacted significantly on Dick's life. He said, it "has changed my life a great deal ... because in some instances I've got to go in the afternoon and look for someone who was in the meeting and he must tell me what was it that was happening. You know that when getting a second hand information you don't get everything [yes] ... you don't get the gist of the thing, And the reason ... and there are some questions that you will ask yourself or you ask a person maybe who won't be able to answer because of what was going on there, he didn't ask the question or maybe that question did not crop up into their mind" (3.3.31-8).

27. "It needs a person who is disciplined"

Studying within a 'hectic' context, that is, one that demands so many changes of behaviour such that family and community relations suffer, requires a particular type of person. In Dick's view "it needs a person who is disciplined who know what is it that he wants to do because it involves money. [It does, doesn't it?] Ya it does ... and you must be a disciplined person will make use of your time. You don't just do as you please ... and in some of the things you must discipline yourself. [So it requires a lot of self-discipline?] A lot of self discipline because with us ... we also take alcohol ... [laughs loudly, difficult to hear more]. [So do we.] So you must know when to take that, and you mustn't consume a lot you must just take one or ...[ya] and you leave it as it is. [Ya, you stop.] You stop you go and sleep in the evening you wake up ..." (3.3.423-44).

28. "I've got someone now who is saying that we must club together"

Dick, like so many students including those in this study, belonged to an informal study group. However, his membership was extremely peripheral because as he said, "I'm unfortunate because I'm living in the bundus⁷ here [ok] so I don't have friends I'm studying with, like what I've said ... it only that it needs to happen when I've continued my studies [ok] because I've got someone now who is saying that we must club together, study together. [oh ok] It only happens when we arrange and they form them in town ... that one Saturday I must come up and we go to SACOL⁸. [yes] We go there and study together" (3.3.469-74).

⁷ A colloquial word meaning a remote, usually rural area

⁸ SACOL – a reference to what was previously the site of the South African College of Open Learning in Pietermaritzburg.

29. “This grouping of ours is for understanding”

I asked Dick what his study group did when they were together, what I would see if I looked in the room. He replied, “Ok, it would be a discussion on what do we understand the theory, how does it fit in on what we are doing? And then we make examples, different examples on what we are doing. [And you share your writing or not?] No, we don’t, we do it on our own. This grouping of ours is for understanding what is it that is going on within the module and so forth, then there after you go and write on your own [ok] ... because we are trying to run away from this, to write one and the same thing. [No I know.Ya. No, you can’t do that. And the languages that you are using?] We are code switching. Because it happens that a person understands something better and you translate it into its own language” (3.3.479-93).

30. “So he was taking me as if I am her child”

One of the members of Dick’s tutorial group was able to “explain this thoroughly” to him – ‘this’ being the concept of scaffolding. What made the difference for him was that she was able to give examples of the points she was making. And so, “you see, when a person is using examples, that’s the way that you begin to understand things, you see. So I saw to it that, oh, it’s the level where she’s teaching which makes her to be able to make so many examples because the pupils with whom he is teaching, they need more examples so as to understand the thing, so he was taking me as if I am her child, I worked, at the level, you see, so that was very much good” (3.2.831-6). This experience convinced Dick of the imperative to teach with many and relevant examples but also gave him a new insight as to the status of primary school teachers such that “I said to one ... to my students that please do not ever judge anybody by the class that he is teaching” (3.2.837-8).

31. “You are now a changing teacher”

When it came to the issue of ‘transfer’ in relation to the RWAT module, Dick’s only emphasis was on changes in himself relating to his professional context. In the final interview, for example, he spontaneously told me that “my students at school, and said something that I like very much, they said you are now a changing teacher” (3.3.76-7), and when I asked what they meant by that, he said, “I’m now presenting my lessons, you see it’s unlike last year. I’ve got more examples, I’m using other lecturer’s what ... ideas and so forth” (3.3.82-3).

32. “I now begin to use it with my students”

This aspect of transfer relates back to the impact Mike Hart’s input in a tutorial session had on Dick. With regard to this he said, “Because what I like ... what he [Hart] made to remember also the words like “furthermore”, “consequently” “so forth”, I now begin to use it with my students also. We say ... because I’ve now begun to teach them that they are committed, you are committed as you say, because I take about three weeks to teach them because I know it is something that is going to count a lot in their marks” (3.2.575-80).

33. “When you come to a workshop ... the facilitators can see that this person is studying”

I made the observation in the final interview that the Honours degree certainly seemed important to Dick. “Very much important,” he started, “in a sense that ... it has opened some other avenues for me as a person who’s involved in management at school [ok]. Some of the new things that are coming up ... RNCS⁹ ... we are attending workshops. When you come to a workshop ... in the workshop the facilitators can see that this person is studying something because you’ve got an input on what they are saying [ok]. You’ve got an input in what they are saying ... like for instance that other week ... there is a week that we went in there, it was about a whole week in September ... what we were doing there was for English [mh] and some of them noticed that ... fortunately I wasn’t alone I was with the other students, [mhh] we are learning with them at the university... And then they understood that and they took that as a very good thing to do [ya] - that we are studying As we are studying, we’ll be having an input, a very good input at school. We’ll be able to translate what has been written down [ok] because it’s something else to translate what has been written on the book and something that will be said by someone else verbally” (3.3.162-175). The specifics of the type of ‘input’ Dick and the ‘other students’ were able to contribute to this workshop did not emerge in this conversation but Dick was very pleased to have been ‘noticed’ nevertheless.

6.2.3 Synthesis of experience – of the phenomenon

Dick’s ‘lived’ reality of the RWAT module, that is, the experience of acquiring an academic literacy, was one significantly marked by fear, confusion, failure, shame and loss. Fear on entry, when confronted by the learning materials, and alien terminology, fear at discovering the degree of interaction and participation expected of students in contact sessions, fear of discovery once he began to fail assignments and examinations; confusion when trying to gain understanding of key concepts in the readings e.g. ‘genre’, and ‘the political and

⁹ Revised National Curriculum Statements

pedagogical project', confusion when trying to fathom the structure of the Scheme for the Academic Argument (leading to his own alternative creation of a structure), and confusion at the cause of failure in the examination in the face of certainty that he had passed. Shame was intimately related to failure and governed the way he came to relate to his family, his friends, his colleagues and his community. So deep was this shame that he tried to conceal not only his participation in the Honours programme, but his repeated failing as well. Too little time to accommodate all the demands of balancing part-time study with a full time job, in addition to being a family man, reduced him in the eyes of his children, kept him away from his wife and children on a daily basis, eroded the time he usually spent with friends, led to him neglecting his church duties, compromising his studies and struggling to fulfil his professional school-based duties.

Dick found the isiZulu translations problematic when it came to relating them to the English versions, largely as a result of his perception that certain words/ concepts/ phrases are simply 'untranslatable' from isiZulu into English, and vice versa. Furthermore, the kind of isiZulu in the translated texts was not one he considered the kind 'that we speak daily'. Had he tried to work with texts in both languages, Dick was convinced that he would go 'astray' and so he decided not to risk confusing himself. He thus abandoned the isiZulu ones in favour of working solely in English, this despite his dominant identity being that of a 'Zulu-speaker'. He attributed the ease with which he made this choice to the fact that he lives 'in two worlds', an 'English', one in which English represents his work life i.e. an English as First Additional Language educator, and a 'Zulu' one, to which he attaches his 'culture'. Choosing an 'English-only' approach thus made good sense to him, especially as it reflected the substance of language policies implemented during his own schooling, and which he fully supported.

Dick said that he had had a tutor who had not been able to explain things very well, and in fact offered an oppositional view (on an unspecified matter) to that put forward by Mike Hart. Fortunately, the latter was able to clarify matters very well for Dick, but it was clearly too little too late. Though only a very peripheral member of his peer study group (for geographical distance and transport reasons), Dick nevertheless did belong to a group which met outside contact session hours.

Despite negative experiences, however, Dick did identify benefits he derived from the module. His learners at school told him (this was mid-way through 2005) that he was 'a changing teacher' in so far as he presented his lessons better than in previous years, including more examples, particularly, where possible. In addition, he had begun to teach his learners how to use more English connectors. Lastly, at departmental workshops, the fact

that he was a student studying at the university was understood 'as a very good thing' because it meant that he would be able to have 'a very good input at school'.

6.2.4 Dick in 2007

Dick's story does not end well, however. At the end of 2006, after having written 14 Honours exams and passed only three over a period of 4 years, he was finally excluded from the Honours programme. He never did pass the RWAT module. Mid-way through 2007 I attempted to re-engage with him but by then his exclusion from the University was finalized and he abruptly ended our association. I continue to be full of admiration and respect for his tenacity in the Honours programme and his willingness to remain in this study from 2004 – 2006.

6.3 Folly

6.3.1 Biographical sketch

Folly is a forceful personality, with a high level of self awareness and motivation. In her early 40s, she is divorced with one child, and shares a home with her mother. At the time of the first interview, she had successfully completed her first year of the Honours programme, which included passing RWAT, and taken up the Education Leadership, Management and Policy specialisation.

But Folly has not come to this place of self-confidence and self-knowing easily. The journey has been a long and painful one, and from her own account, is not over yet. It was very important for her in the first interview, for example, that I understand that she had "been through a lot" and that she found it extremely difficult to talk about her feelings. "So I think," she said, "whenever we have our interviews, have that in mind that I'm still struggling to deal with it, and I have... [No] ... not to be able, not even with you, I'd be able in life to tell you how I feel. [No, I – I ...] My marriage was a mess, so I had to get out of it, frustrated, down, finished, hurt. [Ya.] So I think I've boxed a lot within me ... [I'm sure you did, sure you did.] At least now I can talk about it rather than before I couldn't even talk about it (4.1.780-795).

The fact that Folly's adult years turned out so hard was clearly in direct contrast to most of her younger years. The daughter of a teacher, she was a bright, outgoing child who started school at the age of four. This came about because "I was just visiting the grade one class. Being the talkative type so the inspector asked questions, I always raise up my hands ... [Yes?] And then the next thing he wanted to see me in the register – I wasn't there! Just said

now, it's Phumi's¹⁰ child so she's just visiting. Why don't you register this child? And so then I got into school" (4.1.7-18).

Folly lived close enough to this first school to "leave the home when the bell rings. I haven't had a problem of traveling a lot to school. I never experienced that" (4.1.76-8), and throughout her primary school years – up to Grade 6 – isiZulu was the medium of instruction. In Grade 7, English took over, at which point "it was a matter of cramming everything, just rote learning" (4.1.161-2), so little was fully comprehended. In English lessons, "What ordinarily happened ... the kind of writing that you had to do, you say a letter for ordering books, but you'd have it written on the board, you will copy it, and then in the test in the examination it would come as is [You'd just repeat it?] Just repeat it as is. Because, for example, you would even say, we would know that we had five marks for the address, ... [Phew!] Five marks for the ... [Salu ...?] ... for the addressee. [Yes.] Ya, and then two marks for the salutation, and then two marks for the last words at the end. [The Yours Sincerely?] Ya. [Mmmm.] So even if we don't get the content right ... [You could pass?] At least you could pass. [Ya] That's how we'd do ... and we usually ... we had a choice, we could write a formal letter or an informal letter, we all write for the formal one, ... [Formal one] ... because at least you would know that I've got standing marks (4.1.204-27).

Throughout her secondary school years, Folly moved schools a lot because her mother, now a Home Economics teacher, was much in demand. Folly's naturally gregarious nature, however, seems to have ensured that this 'shifting' experience of schooling did not disadvantage her in any profound way, and very unlike most of the other participants in this study, she found her secondary schooling the 'best'. When probed for why this was the case, she said, "I was a prefect. [Ya.] I was always in the top five, that's what made me love school" (4.1.341-3). ... And we had a lot of competition in my class ... [Really?] So say, you ... you ... you beat me in this test, then next time. So we had this competition." (4.1.347-9).

Folly highlighted an additional three aspects of her secondary schooling, besides those of 'always being in the top five' and 'competition', that contributed to her very positive experience of it. The first of these was that she was a member of the debating team where "I think I was all builded up" (4.1.452). Debating taught her "debating skills, arguing skills ... mmm, I always love to be the last speaker. [So that you could ...?] Of all the others, I was so clear that I wrote everything out, with no one has to come and also upset ... [Upset the apple cart?] ... the argument. [Laughter] I always liked to be the last one (4.1.454-60). ... We were taught to say if someone is speaking, listen to all the points the person is saying, and

¹⁰ A pseudonym

then look at your topic are you for or against them, and then try to crush whatever the person is saying. [With another ...] With another argument, yes, with evidence. This is how you will do it" (4.1.523-6).

Secondly, English 'language issues' did not plague her high school years at all. In her memory, the "basis was formed by my Grade 9 –10 teacher. ... [Ya] Also in Grade 10, 11, and 12, the lady who taught me English was very good" (4.1.363-5). When I asked 'what made her good?' Folly replied that, "Oh, she was understanding, she was caring, she would take you through" (4.1.367). This teacher had the capacity to have her students visualize what they were reading about such that even though "you hadn't been to a theatre before but you would understand it and picture it in front of you" (4.1.369-70). In this way, works such as Julius Caesar and Romeo Juliet became accessible and undaunting.

And lastly, her maths persona was born. She said with pride, "I was a maths student" (4.1.242), and, "I didn't have any interest in languages" (4.1.430). And as a teenager she did no reading and writing outside of the school curriculum because again, "I love maths. [Really?] Yes, that was my passion, because I wanted to be a doctor initially. So I loved maths" (4.1.424-7). As what it means to have evolved into a 'maths person' played a significant role in Folly's RWAT experiences, this last point is of particular relevance in the next section on nodes, and is raised again in Chapter 7.

6.3.2 Nodes of Individual Experience – of the phenomenon

1. "At first I said it's a genre" (with a hard 'g' – genre)

Folly's first encounters with the RWAT materials were not encouraging for her. "Well," she said, "I received them before the sessions started, and I tried to look at them and I was just frustrated by the words. At first I said it's a genre (with a 'hard' g: genree). I didn't know it was genre (zhanree) ... I even called one of my colleagues who had done it before and then he told me, no, it's not ... he always said it's "genre" (zhanree), but when I came to class, really, I got the translation of the word, but I couldn't start – really, I couldn't move" (4.2.11-15).

2. "My God, what's happening? What are you talking about here?"

Folly began by going through the Student Guide: Programme and Exercises, and then Parts One and Two of the Learning Guides, but the 'business of not understanding' "really stopped – stopped everything because the language that was used there, really, I couldn't

understand it. My God, what's happening now? What are you talking about here?" (4.2.26-29).

3. "Only the first session that really helped me"

I asked Folly if reading some of the exercises and tasks had helped her understand. "No," she responded, "it didn't. I only read at the first session that really helped me. ... Only the first session that really helped me. ... What we did, the word itself was explained to us, so and then ... oh, at least now I can get it what we were talking about, different styles of writing, different types of writing text. So then I ... at least it was an eye-opener for me. And then I could understand really what I was talking about, but really, at the beginning I couldn't move" (4.2.30-7).

4. "We've done a lot of them"

Once Folly's eyes were opened to the fact the word 'genre' simply denoted 'different types of writing', and her tutor, "... would link what she does at school with the different genres that we were doing" (4.2.76-7) other realisations fell into place. So "when Joan¹¹ told us different structures, the different types of genres, it made sense. Oh my goodness, I've been doing ... maybe like we had written simple essays like the ... what are they called – [Like these narratives?] Ya, narratives. We've done a lot of them, we've read books in narratives, but you will just write a story without really understanding different structure that you are following. You just knew there should be introduction, body, end and then the conclusion" (4.2.111-117). "... It's just ... I got it in the first session" (4.2.125). As a result of this first contact session, Folly "didn't feel disempowered at all. I could see where we were getting to. So it was easy for me to make contributions or input to the class discussion" (4.2.620-1).

5. "We don't write a lot. We just do calculations"

Despite 'getting it' in the first contact session, Folly was adamant that the RWAT module was particularly difficult for 'maths people' in terms of the 'language that was used'. According to her, they shared "the similar experience, and mostly for ... for maths people – most of us are maths people [in her tutorial group], so the issue of language really is an enormous problematic, because we don't write a lot. We just do calculations" (4.2.40-2).

¹¹ A pseudonym

6. “In maths you don’t have ... you don’t write any essays”

I sought to understand better the nature and source of the barriers a ‘maths person’ experiences when confronted with an RWAT-like experience. What was her reference to writing really about? Folly began, “The barrier is maybe the segmentation of subjects as well, because you find that ... [Segmentation of?] Of subjects. You don’t have a link between maths and English, maths and the other subjects, so the targeted ... could link - like your science subjects, maths, physics, biology, and then you could at ... link those but you can’t really ... the only people that we thought that can link language is the history people ... there is a lot of language in history, there is a lot of writing, a lot of big terms ... we with mathematics we just use maths terminology, nothing else” (4.2.53-8). And so, “Yes, really it was a barrier because for a maths person you can’t compare with a history person when it comes to essay writing, because they do it a lot in history. Ya, but in maths you don’t have ... you don’t write any essays, just do calculations” (4.2.83-5). Later Folly reiterated this point saying, “And then writing an essay itself, I’ve been a maths person as well as practical subjects person, so really the issue of essays I’ve never been exposed to it before” (4.2.97-8).

7. “The language, er, also was a barrier”

Though *writing*, and specifically ‘essay’ writing i.e. extended writing, seemed to be emerging as the major problem which, in Folly’s view, ‘maths people’ faced, I asked her directly what it was about RWAT that had made her believe that ‘maths people find it [RWAT] more difficult than history [people]’, since she had chosen to foreground this particular aspect of her experience so explicitly. “The language issue,” she replied, “The language, er, also was a barrier. [Language ...] The language used in the documents. Really if you read at the ... some of the readers here, the kind of language that is used by the theorists, sometimes you find it, oh my goodness, I really don’t understand what is the meaning of this word, until you look up in a dictionary. But I would think for English and History people it would be much easier for them. (4.2.92-7).

8. “Like I wouldn’t know what to extract ... what to leave out from the reader”

The combined force of having to write ‘long pieces of work’ based on documents written in a ‘language’ she really didn’t understand ‘until you look up in a dictionary’, Folly unsurprisingly initially found assignments to be strenuous tasks. Though the primary prompt at one point in the second interview related to what she found *interesting* in the RWAT module, she ignored it, saying, “Before I come to what was interesting, the issue of referencing! [Ok?] Like I

remember in my second assignment the comments was, 'You reference a lot'. [Mmm?] Like I wouldn't know what to extract ... what to leave out from the reader. So I'll end up now always having those paragraphs, ... [Ok!] And then my essay won't be seven pages, it will go to 10 or 12 pages. [Ok. And what percentage would be *you* and what percentage would be ...?] ... the quotes, ja. The quotes would be more than ... [Than your voice?] Ya, than my voice, yes. But like I wasn't really exposed to that before, like the issue of plagiarism. I didn't know anything about it before. Ya, but really, the time went by, I grasped it! I was able to grasp it, because my marks were good in my assignments" (4.2.129-142).

9. "The English versions made more sense to me than them"

Folly's perception is that the isiZulu language "is very difficult" and the reason why she did not use the isiZulu translations in the RWAT module. She did *try* to read them "but the English versions made more sense to me than them" (4.2.212), and so she "just ignored them" (4.2.221) and worked exclusively with the English versions. For her, they really "didn't work".

10. "I'm not sure ... whether the type of writing really fits the language"

Folly had reservations about attempting to translate the two prescribed 'academic' readings into isiZulu. She said of this, "... I'm not sure as well of the writing genres in isiZulu, whether the type of writing really fits in the language [ok] ... I'm not a language person ...but I'm ...[What makes you think that? What example ... what are you thinking of?] For example the issue of the academic argument [ok] I... I wouldn't think there would be any written isiZulu because for whom it will be written? [ok] Because most academics are the people who understand English. Like I said before that it didn't help me ..." (4.3.12-26).

11. "It's more deep, it's more difficult"

Folly had a strong view that "the Zulu that was written here [in the translations], is not the kind of Zulu that you use on your communicating" (4.3.37-8), and that it would be best described as "more deep, it's more difficult. [ok] There are terms where really, it would take someone who have got a strong Zulu background [ok] ... because yes, we may be Zulus but our background in the language may not be the same ..." (4.3.42-4).

12. "It will further widen the gap"

The perception that this 'more deep, more difficult' isiZulu is not common to ordinary people is linked to Folly's perceptions of the possible consequences of having a stratum of isiZulu elevated beyond the reach of the average person. In her words, it "will ... it will further widen

the gap [ok] of the communicative isiZulu with the academic one [ok] ... and that ... that will make those that doesn't understand academic side of it further not understand it anymore. [ok] Ya. ... Because these kinds of writings, nowhere they can be used in our society, the academic writing. [ok] We don't get symposiums or things like that, that we need to talk about them in our own language" (4.3.63-8).

13. "Maybe you make it Zulu but it's an English word"

When it came to the actual mechanics of translation, Folly was of the view that isiZulu "becomes more difficult if you use a foreign word in it because there are some words that are ... are ... are not there, do not exist in isiZulu, and the minute you translate a certain word maybe you make it Zulu but it's an English word" (4.2.191-3). I asked for an example of what she meant by this. Folly gave the following: For example, if you say amaEssay ... [Ok, ok.] AmaEssay – a prefix for a Zulu word, but now as you say 'Essay' it doesn't exist in isiZulu, but an English word. So it ends up now ... you end up being confused really, what they're trying to say" (4.2.197-9). The problem here, as I understood it, is that the prefix 'ama' "it's many. It's many essays.. ... Because if it's one you'd say 'i-essay' but now the using of the word 'essay' it's not a Zulu word, so it ends up now, I haven't understood this word in English, so if it's put in Zulu now, it also doesn't make any difference, because it's not in the Zulu context as well" (4.2.207-10).

14. "The problem with Zulu ... isiZulu is a very very long language"

I wanted to know more about what isiZulu demands, how functions served by English connectors such as 'however' and 'although' are served in isiZulu and so on. "We use a lot of words," Folly explained, "because it could mean something else if a certain word is being used, or if it is not being used" (4.2.156-7). The example she gave was a joke. "Ya, it says, it is like a message that was sent by a man. ... Ok, Ungaieshlaba umkomo noma – What is it saying? But it's about slaughtering a cow, and so by the accent or the ... the pitch that we use for the last letter 'ungaieshlaba ungaieshabi nkomo' so it ... for a person can translate it to something else. [Ok. And what will the different meanings be in that joke?] Ok, we can start with the cow, the father is giving permission to slaughter the cow, but the father intended to say that you mustn't slaughter the cow, but when the recipient got the message it was that permission has been granted" (4.2.161-9). The issue of 'length' continued to occupy Folly's thoughts as she immediately added, "And the problem with Zulu ... with us Zulu speakers, isiZulu is a very very long language. For us it takes a long route before I can come to a point. So you'd end up really being told that you have written too much" (4.2.174-6).

15. “First read it in English and then you put it in isiZulu”

Elaborating on this point still more, Folly pointed out that as a speaker of English as an additional language, you have to “first read it in English and then you put it in isiZulu. You think in isiZulu and then try it in English and then you can answer back” (4.3.143-4), but “... with that process, isiZulu doesn’t take short cuts. [oh] It’s *very long*. So you’ll find that now you want to say something but because we are translating it from isiZulu so it will take a long time before you can reach the point and you will end up people saying I’ve written four pages, but mine are eight” (4.3.148-52).

16. “I didn’t understand the structure before”

While hesitant to label the way in which writing is ‘taught’ in the RWAT module as ‘correct’ “because I haven’t compared it with the other ones” (4.2.239), it was to ‘structure’ that Folly preferred to speak. “ ... like for example”, she said, “I didn’t understand the structure before, for example the argumentative, you see, I had never been exposed to before. But when the structure was given to me it was much easier because you know that you start with this, you follow with this, in your first paragraph. And then you must link your paragraphs, your first claims, put support, then everything. [Ok.] And then the conclusion, how do you do it. It really helped a lot ... it really helped a lot” (4.2.240-4).

17. “There’s a formula that you’ve got to follow”

Working from the assumption that ‘structure’ *per se* is not something new to any of us, I mean most of us, to some extent at least, lead ‘structured’ lives, I asked Folly what had come ‘particularly into your understanding around structure’ as a result of her RWAT experience. She answered thus: “As I would say, being a maths person or a science person when you’ve got to calculate something there’s a formula that you’ve got to follow. So it’s much easier ... you just fit numbers into the formula. And it’s the same thing with the structure here. You know exactly, I start here, I follow with this one, and that’s how I end it” (4.2.259-262).

18. The Scheme for the Academic Argument: “It made a lot of sense”

Internalising the notion of structure in this way was facilitated, for Folly, by the Scheme for the Academic Argument diagram in the RWAT Learning Guide Part Two. She said, “It made a lot of sense. I don’t know whether my tutor explained it very well or what, but it really made a lot of sense because you knew just ... sometimes when you write ... like when you are writing you’d put something here, and then you’d put another paragraph as long as we were

writing paragraphs as paragraphs. Different line, separated by the empty line, but now you'd know exactly what do I put in this paragraph, what do I put in this paragraph, what do I put in this paragraph. Rather than just writing lines that don't cohere, you just skip one line and then you continue" (4.2.268-74). ... "So we'll have ... with the structure, you could really understand ok, give my background information and where do I ... where do I draw my background information from, and how do I link it to my point of view, and how do I support my point of view. So with the concepts being involved there it was easy for me then to fit everything together" (4.2.289-92).

19. "So it's not just that I'm having this point of view, but where do I base my point of view from?"

I asked Folly then how she understood the need for background information in the essay-as-argument genre we taught in the RWAT module. Folly replied, "I understood it because that ... maybe one of the reasons why we need the background information to show that maybe this has been ... it's not a new thing, so there are some causes behind for it to lead to what it is now. So it's not just that I'm having this point of view, but where do I base my point of view from? For example, if you look at the ... like we are managing, we are doing a module on managing change in South Africa in education, with the background information where do we come from as a country? Do we really need change? If we need change, then change will be there, and how do you manage it? So now, you see, it links to what we are moving towards" (4.2.295-302).

20. "It wasn't that difficult to draw on background information"

Since Folly has been in education a long time "and I've been in structures where you get a lot of information about the happening of things around you, so for me it wasn't that difficult to draw on the background information" (4.2.539-41), 'background' *per se* did not pose a problem for her. What she did wish she'd known beforehand, however, was "For me mainly it was the structure, or if I'd known the structure before" (4.2.538).

21. "So if I skip now to the second paragraph I may lose interest"

When it came to probing Folly's use of the six scaffolded reading steps provided in the Learning Guide, it emerged that the only one of which Folly had made any use, was that of the 'synopsis', where the text is summarised in as close-to-as-possible ordinary, everyday language. When I asked why she hadn't followed all the others she said, "Maybe by the time ... when you read into that you know it's going to talk about this ... the interest grows, so I want to see what they say about this in the first ... in this particular paragraph. So if I skip

now to the second paragraph I may lose the interest that has developed in the first paragraph, so by then doing this different (can't hear) I just read through" (4.2.320-4).

22. "Ya, the political one where it is also about power"

When it came to identifying the reading/s that captured her interest the most, Folly identified Johnson as the one that was "very interesting ... maybe it's because of the case studies that was involved there" (4.2.348/350). Again, I nudged us towards the 'political and pedagogical project' of the Genre Approach so well encapsulated by the Johnson reading. Could Folly remember that? "Ya, the political one where it is also about power" (4.2.354), was her first response. "Talk to me about that", I said.

"I could relate it," she began, "because I remember when I started with SADTU¹² I didn't have that much of a political background. They would talk of all these big political terms and I would say now goodness, what are these people saying? So they would talk about socialism, figuralism [sic], all these big terms ... my goodness ... I can't even be part of the discussion here because I don't know what they are talking about, but the minute I stand with them I would listen to them, and then I end up being able really to participate in the discussions. Because at the beginning I wouldn't fit in. And I've seen it many a time because if, for example, in a meeting, if the language spoken there you don't understand it, you feel shy even to make an input. And it does happen for many teachers that they can't make an input, so it doesn't give you any power to say whatever you want to. Ya" (4.2.357-9/363-70).

22.1 "The more of it you have ... you become powerful"

I pursued this train thought in relation to Folly's experience of 'power' in the RWAT module. How would she describe it? "Power and information. [Ok. Carry on.] Together. I think, if you don't have the information that's relevant to what is being discussed, you won't have power. [Ok.] Like, I've seen it in many a times that in many schools shop stewards¹³ will have more information than the principal. And they'll end up being powerful towards the staff. So it means now if you've got more information, the more of it you have, the more skills you have, you become powerful" (4.2.378-86).

23. "So you'd like share leadership"

Folly belonged to a study group, though as far as she is concerned she "can use both methods" (4.2.442) i.e. study alone or as a member of a collective. She said that she had

¹² South African Democratic Teachers' Union: the largest teacher union in South Africa

¹³ A rank within the teacher unions

been "... used to studying on my own, ya, but I would see that ei, sometimes the group would ask you to come and help. And they will be aware that as I am helping them I am also learning something from them as well" (4.2.444-6). I asked if she ever took a leadership role in her study group, to which she replied, "Basically I wasn't aware ... I wasn't aware that I was taking a leadership role. But we'd give each other a chance, ok, tackle this one, tackle this one, tackle this one. So you'd like share leadership" (4.2.451-3).

24. "So that issue of cohesion ... it helped me a lot"

On the matter of 'transfer' and what 'RWAT learnings' had proved useful to her, Folly immediately replied, "Er ... I'll refer again to our SADTU meetings, when you got there they have three cards, yellow card, green card and a red card. The green card you raise when you want to make a point, yellow card if you want clarity, and the red card if somebody is saying something out of order. So you would just raise up your hand and say something, and just see that red card and it means, my goodness, or I'm not speaking on what ... on anything that is relevant to what is being said now. So that issue of cohesion ... it came up so, it helped me a lot, because you'd say, ok, we're talking about this point now. So I won't go further to that one, because it doesn't link to what is being discussed at the moment" (4.2.417-24).

25. "A lot and a lot of sacrifices"

The sacrifices Folly described were not limited to one context of her life but to several, hence the 'sub' nodes of 'sacrifice' here, some of which speak entirely for themselves.

25.1 "I've lost friends"

25.2 "Mom, you always have to go to varsity. Do you have to?"

Of her relationship with her daughter on account of her studies, Folly said, "Fortunately for me I live with my mom, [ok] so my daughter couldn't feel that much gap, but I really sacrificed my time with her. [Really?] I really did. [And did she say things? Did she feel it?] Ya she felt it. 'Mom you always have to go to varsity. [Ya]. Do you have to?' I said, 'Baby, yes. I have to go there ... I have to study' (4.3.218-28).

25.3 "So it's another sacrifice you have to do with your neighbours"

When doing RWAT and the other first year Honours modules, Folly, as with the other participants in this study, was obliged to adhere to the Saturday contact session model of delivery (as opposed to the block holiday model). But Saturday is also, from a cultural

perspective, the day most often set aside for funerals. In the context of the HIV/ AIDS pandemic, the number of funerals held on Saturdays has increased dramatically over the past 5 years, and come to affect students on the programme. Folly said of this, “And you know what it’s like in the communities, there are a lot of funerals going around [ya] and if you are not there,[ya] people will think oh, she doesn’t care about us. [ok] So it’s another sacrifice that you have to do with your neighbors as well, sacrificing even ... ya the most important ... one of the thing in the community” (4.3.347-53).

25.4 “If you don’t help out, they won’t even go and help you out”

Attending funerals within communities such as that to which Folly belongs, embodies much more than simple ‘attendance’, and non-attendance penetrates deeper than a just a perception of a lack of care, although that, as has already been shown, is there too. Folly explained further. “In our community,” she began, “In our community if you don’t attend funerals, they won’t attend to you as well ... if you’ve got a problem. [Really? Ok so it’s really serious.] Ya. It’s like how you ... if you don’t help out, they won’t even go and help you out. Like we’ve got this thing of preparing meals. If you don’t go to their homes after funerals, they won’t come to your home as well. They go to the church, to the cemetery and they go to their homes. You cook them the food and the food will rot in the ovens. [Really? Really?] Ya. So how you do things to your neighbours will affect how it’s done to you in the future” (4.3.355-60).

25.5 “Oh, *educated people*”

And then there are the tensions within her community that relate not only to non-attendance at funerals (as above), but non-attendance *because someone is engaged in further study*. In Folly’s words, “Well, sometimes it happens in the family, [ya] and you’ll say, I can’t attend the funeral because I’ll be at school. Oh, *educated people*” (4.3.361-2).

25.6 “Maybe if the person has got some ... is educated, because she would understand”

I remarked on the fact that the rituals and expectations surrounding funerals seemed to run very deep, culturally speaking. Folly replied, “Ya it’s very deep Carol, it’s very deep. [Ya] We have that community values that we uphold ... and it’s better if you have got other family members who could attend, [ok] and maybe if the person has got some ... is educated, because she would understand. [Ok] That’s the pressing issue ... you have to be there. [Ya] But for other communities where people are not ... they don’t value education that much,

[ya] you'll be like ... oh, you think you are better now because you are being educated" (4.3.366-98).

26. "So you have done your Honours, so now you want to change us"

The consequences of being 'better educated', however, is not a new theme articulated by students in the Honours programme and I said as much to Folly. She agreed. "And because you'll come with these good ideas, to try and bring some change into the school. Oh, so you have done your Honours, so now you want to change us. And it's worse if you've got a principal who is easily intimidated, who doesn't have the same qualification as you have. [Ya] It's very very difficult" (4.3.412-5). ... Like I had a problem with my principal when I was first appointed (4.3.427-33). ... He would do things that would frustrate me, I would go home crying. And I went to my psychologist and spoke about it. He said look, if ... just analyze it first. [Ya] If it's linked to personality, just don't deal with it. And from there I was healed" (4.3.445-7).

6.3.3 Synthesis of Experience - of the phenomenon

Folly came into the Honours programme imbued with a strong discipline-based sense of Self i.e. as a 'maths person', but also grappling with her own personal journey out of a very bad marriage, with the help of psychotherapy. Her life, therefore, was complex but she engaged with it full on though very privately. Her first encounters with the RWAT module, that is, with academic literacy, threw her in ways she had not expected. Used to being confident and highly competent in her professional context, suddenly she found herself asking, 'My God, what's happening now? What are you talking about?'

She found the 'language that was used there' (in the RWAT readings) extremely daunting, because 'maths people' 'don't write a lot', they 'just do calculations'. The term 'genre' was completely foreign to her initially but she grasped its meaning at the first contact session and thereafter had no further difficulties with the concept. The demand to write 'an essay' i.e. an extended text, also posed several problems for her, one of the most serious for her being 'what to leave out from the reader'. Quick to recognise plagiarism as a key academic literacy practice, Folly knew she was plagiarizing when she included large amounts of text from the original readings, but as plagiarism itself was something she 'didn't know anything about it before', she did not for a long while know how to do otherwise. The 'good' marks she got in her assignments indicated in her view, however, that over time she had learnt how not to plagiarise.

The Scheme for the Academic Argument resonated with Folly because it represented a central element of what it meant to be 'a maths person' i.e. 'structure'. In a similar way, she recognised the 'stages' and 'moves' in the Scheme as a 'formula' (similar to maths formulae), and so was able to internalize their purpose and subscribe to them. Furthermore, through her experiences as a member of SADTU, and her participation in SADTU meetings, she was able to grasp the notion of cohesion and the relationship between 'the language spoken' in such contexts, and power.

Folly made no use of the isiZulu translations to assist her in the RWAT module. Her decision to ignore the isiZulu texts and work exclusively with the English versions was based on her experience that 'the English versions made more sense to me'. She had strong reservations about the 'type of writing' employed in the isiZulu translations, feeling that there was possibly little use for this level of isiZulu in Zulu society, and that too much use of it would widen the gap 'of the communicative isiZulu with the academic one'. She blamed the fact that she wrote essays that were always far too long, on isiZulu – for being 'a very very long language'. Because the process of writing in English required (as it did for all participants) that she 'first read it in English and then you put it in isiZulu. You think in isiZulu and then try it in English and then you can answer back', she ended up writing too many pages.

The sacrifices Folly made in order to study the RWAT module and the Honours programme more generally, were profound. She lost friends, radically reduced the time she spent with her daughter, and compromised relationships between herself and her neighbours and community. She drew attention to the seriousness of having to miss community funerals (in order to attend contact sessions) and the effect this has on community relationships. Thus, if 'you don't attend funerals, they won't attend to you as well ... if you've got a problem'. Some times the severity of the situation is slightly alleviated if someone in the grieving family is also 'educated' or presently studying. If this is the case, there is generally greater understanding. It is always, however, very stressful to have to miss any funeral.

Folly highlighted the fact that being 'better educated' can also bring other tensions, particularly in a school context, and most especially if the principal is less qualified than members of his/her staff – as was the case for Folly. Though confident that there would be some carry over of the RWAT experience into her new job, at the time of the final interview, Folly could not pinpoint anything specific to date.

6.3.4 Folly in 2007

As indicated at the start of Folly's profile, at the time she volunteered to enter this research project, she was in her second year of the B.Ed Honours programme and specializing in

Education Leadership, Management and Policy. By the end of our interviewing period, she had left the education profession and become a marketing agent for mathematics textbooks for a national publishing company. Despite stepping out of the Honours programme four months before its conclusion, she nevertheless completed the programme, with admirable results, in tandem with beginning her new job, which also requires a lot of travelling away from home. Having matriculated at the age of 16, and taken her first teaching post at the age of 20 (in Maths and Science), Folly was thus taking 18 years of school-based experience into her new position. She continues to do extremely well in this post.

6.4 Nothembu

6.4.1 Biographical sketch

Nothembu is the principal of a primary school in a rural area 90km inland from Pietermaritzburg, but lives with her children in Pietermaritzburg. She thus makes a daily round trip of 180km in order to run her school. For me, Nothembu embodied maturity, good humour, commitment to the project and an innate love of children and teaching. It seemed as if no experience had been wasted on her. From experiences she had as a young child, through school, college and post graduate study, lessons from them all in some way found their way back into her teaching, primarily, but also into her life. What stood out for me about her too, was the ease with which she could laugh. All three of our interviews were touched with a quality of lightness that made them really fun to be party to, despite the seriousness of many aspects of our conversations.

Nothembu does not come from an 'educated' family in the common sense of the word. Her father was a labourer and her mother a domestic worker. Nevertheless, 'education' mattered to the family, evidenced in the way "... I don't know how he [her father] interpreted the thing, but he had a board that he had bought for us. And the older sisters ... usually when we play, they used to be teachers and we used to be learners, they write something on the board and we learn, we read, they ask us to read, me and my friends ..." (6.1.10-13), and their pre-school games were all mimics of 'school' along similar lines. Also, her mother "was working for the white lady so she heard that I ... I don't know if it was influence from her or whatever, but she ... they used to say Thandeka¹⁴, you have to take your children to school. So school was very important in the home" (6.1.90-3).

isiZulu was primarily the language of learning for Nothembu from Grade 1 through to Grade 4, though with a sprinkling of English thrown in from time to time. English, as the medium of

¹⁴ A pseudonym

instruction was introduced in Grade 5, and it was initially very difficult for her to cope with this dramatic transition. As she said, "...like Geography, History, we have to learn it in English, but just sentences, sentences, sentences, like we were reading about Jan van Riebeeck arriving at the Cape, the teacher would come and say, "Where did he" Eh, we were struggling, struggling. We have to memorise all the things so that when the teacher says, "Arriving ...?" then we understand, or maybe she's asking that ... [Date?] Ya. It was very difficult. It was for the first time for us to learn everything in English in Std. 3 (6.1.103-111) ... Eish, it was hard. And the teacher wasn't er, you know, taking us as if this thing is new, she was forcing the thing to us and then we had to work hard. Fortunately the siblings ... [Yes] Yes, ... I don't know what happened to the people who don't have elders who can help them. Maybe that is why they were struggling. I ... I ... it wasn't the same as I have the problem because of those people at home, they have learnt the thing and then they are ... they help me" (6.1.115-122).

'Composition writing' and letter writing were the dominant forms of extended writing Nothembu experienced in English classes from Grade 5 onwards. "Write about your school. A journey by train – at that time I haven't been to the train ... [laughter] ... I just don't know what the train is!" (6.1.145-7). I asked Nothembu to describe a typical composition lesson to me. "The teacher simply said, 'Write a composition'. He gave us the topic. It was easy when it was about my school, though at the time, no, no, it wasn't that really much easier, because even the vocabulary, I didn't have any! So we have to go to those people again! I think most of the people who were helping us are our ... were our sisters ... our siblings, yes. Because we have to take the topic back to them and ask, 'The teacher said we have to write this thing' and then I struggle, struggle, go back to the class. She had to take the exercise books and then correct all the mistakes that we had with a red pen, and then we had to rewrite the whole thing" (6.1.150-7).

When I asked Nothembu how her English had 'grown' she answered, "If I can tell you, it was ... it was much better when I was doing matric" (6.1.294). "In matric," she said, "In matric the teacher that was teaching us there, he used to give us topics, familiar topics. [Such as?] Such as 'My Friend' to start with, and we used to go and prepare ourselves for that, again using the siblings, and then when we come back ... you know sometimes when the topic is difficult for us, or the word, when teaching literature, he will have to explain it in details, giving us the synonyms of the word, using the word in sentences, then it became now clearer for me, ya. [And he was happy to do that?] Ya. Like when he was reading a poem, we used to do our poems in classroom, let's say maybe the word comes out from the poem. I don't know how he picked them up, but he would write the word on the board, and then he

would start explaining the word in detail, and how the words might be used in other situations, “Oh no, I’ve considered... “ ... ooooh, this is how the thing’s done... ooooh, ok, then when I’m doing that very same work we did in class, it was ... a bit easier and understandable” (6.1.298-313). I asked if this teacher made much use of code-switching. Nothembu answered, “Not that much, but sometimes when ... I don’t know how ... maybe he saw was that we haven’t understand the word then he’d make use of Zulu, but when explaining the word he was using simpler English. Ya, ya” (6.1.317-9).

When Nothembu herself started teaching, she built on her own experiences, both good and bad. With her first Grade 8 English class, for example, she “started back realising what difficulties I had when I was a learner. I now come back to them and do everything with them” (6.1.489-90). So the topics she gave them were ones to which they could relate, they brainstormed ideas together as a class, wrote relevant vocabulary on the board, and used isiZulu whenever it was necessary to make meaning more accessible. The way in which her own learners responded made her realize that “if we were taught maybe in the other way round, we might be better students. [Oh, absolutely!] Because even if we were not given that lot of teaching, but we managed through hard work ... [Yes] So we were capable. If ever we were given the instrument to ... to ... I don’t know what to say, or to cook us ... or to ... [Yes, yes.] ... we would be excellent (6.1.533-42).

But as Nothembu herself observed, despite all the difficulties she encountered, she still managed to get a matric exemption.

Nothembu continues to make use of isiZulu to help her Grade 4 learners with new concepts and ideas, but not at the expense of their English development. Unfortunately, members of her local district office consistently undermine both her efforts and new language policy. Following a short conversation to two members of this office recently, on using ‘a little bit of Zulu’ to aid in the teaching of English, they ruled, “No Ma’am, don’t allow them to talk much in Zulu” (6.1.608-13). Even when she tried to explain to the inspectorate that “when I started teaching these learners, I used a lot of English and then what I found out is that I was going alone, I was leaving them behind. What is important, is it to go alone or to go with them?”, they insisted she adhere to an English only policy. She has decided to simply go on doing what she knows is pedagogically “best for my learners. Not to be praised, no. I want to help them move with me, not to experience the problem that I experienced!”

6.4.2 Synthesis of Experience

Nothembu’s lifeline in the RWAT module was her informal study group. It was ‘the best way’ for her. Though she did not say how the group came to be constituted, it was in the context

of this group that she came to make sense of the three-book format of the learning materials, understand the word *genre*, access the readings (though the thrust of the Johnson text remained illusive), the Scheme for the Academic Argument, 'this thing of writing claims' and where exam preparation was done. In other words, all the critical elements of the literacy practice exemplified in the model of the genre of the academic argument used in the RWAT module. All the members of this group were isiZulu mother tongue speakers like herself.

The additional support of Nothembu's informal study group was so essential for her because what she encountered in the RWAT module was a 'way of writing' that was entirely new to her. She had never before engaged with the notion of 'background information' as a necessary precursor to launching into a discussion, or more generally, 'it was my first experience of writing an introduction like that'. However, doing so made sense very quickly because as she said, 'Nothing is coming out of nothing'. Neither had she engaged with the idea that 'information should make a coherence from the last one to the new paragraph'. The case study of Thulani in the Hart (1995) reading resonated fully with Nothembu's own school experiences, and highlighted for her, the need to make outcomes clear and the need to create a learning environment that validates learners' existing knowledge and experiences.

The isiZulu translations helped Nothembu 'a little bit' but not much because what she discovered was that 'this Zulu translation ... was a *direct* translation. It was just like in court when people are just putting the words as they are without knowing that they are ...' [Emphasis in original.]. She foregrounded the grammatical differences between the two languages as the reason for the translations not being really useful. These differences preclude the possibility of evoking exactly the same meanings in both languages. 'So when the thing is translated [from English] ... you don't get the real thing in the Zulu part'. Nothembu's friends in her informal study group also had problems with the isiZulu translations and discouraged her from using them. They advised her to 'forget about Zulu. It's the other thing – just go back to English'. So she did, using the translations thereafter only 'as a dictionary'.

Unfortunately for Nothembu, the insistence by other module co-ordinators to 'do what you did in RWAT, you must do what you did in RWAT', resulted in her *misapplying* a *teaching* procedure in the RWAT module to her assignment writing in the *Psychological Perspectives* module. So, instead of writing her Psychology assignment essay as one whole piece of work, she began each paragraph on a separate page, only to get the comment, 'this is not good practice for an academic assignment'. A year later, she was still unsure 'which one is good or right'.

As with all participants, time was a critical factor for Nothembu too. As a principal of a school (and one who travelled 180 km per day), a mother, a community member and part-time student, her days, nights and weekends were stretched to the limits. Most crucially of all, she had no time for herself, 'as a human being'.

6.4.3 Nothembu in 2007

Nothembu completed her Honours degree in the minimum two year period in 2005, which means she passed all modules satisfactorily the first time round. Although she expressed an interest in registering for a Masters degree at the time of the interviews, she has not yet done so. She remains principal of the school in Impendhle where I first met her.

6.5 Michelle

6.5.1 Biographical sketch

Michelle is a married woman in her early 40s with five children, the youngest of whom are twins of 6 years of age. Her husband works in Pietermaritzburg (144km away) during the week and only comes home on weekends. Though it took some getting used to, she is now "staying that life" and has learnt to do things alone, describing herself as "a single parent during the week". Having five children to care for means this is a heavy load and leaves little time for herself and/ or her studies.

She teaches isiZulu as a *home* language to Grades 10 – 12 at the local township¹⁵ high school, and is immensely proud of her achievements in this regard. Since 1994 all her matriculants have passed their Grade 12 isiZulu exams and in 2001 she herself was awarded a certificate for 'good achievement'. Michelle has a passion for isiZulu (the language) and Zulu culture and identifies herself unhesitatingly as Zulu. Providing a good education for her own children and her learners is a top priority for her. She is 'dedicated on' her work and takes the mentoring/ pastoral role of an educator very seriously, leaving a few minutes at the end of every lesson to give the learners 'advises' [sic] – tips about life and how to conduct themselves so that they enhance their personal dignity and safety.

However, her own high school experiences were very unlike those she works hard to create for her learners now. Aside from the massive countrywide disruptions as a result of the 1976 Soweto Riots, which saw Michelle and her friends hiding in cupboards for fear of being victimised by 'the boys coming from Johannesburg', she and her classmates (mostly the

¹⁵ 'Townships': Urban and/or per-urban areas demarcated for black South Africans during apartheid. They remain largely black today. Schools in these 'townships' are attended by black, African indigenous language speaking learners only and tend towards being monolingual.

girls) were constantly subjected to harsh and humiliating physical punishment, particularly by male teachers. So if, for example, in the Afrikaans lesson, which she and her peers found 'so difficult', when they were 'failing to cram' i.e. prove that they had memorized work correctly, their Afrikaans teacher would beat them. This teacher would make the learners stand against a wall while he asked them questions. When they couldn't answer or answered incorrectly, they would be beaten on the buttocks or slapped across the face. And 'class captains' (usually boys) i.e. learners accorded the authority by teachers, to discipline their peers, would also hit the girls when they felt they were making a noise, even if, as was so often the case, they had not spoken at all.

The shock of high school for Michelle, however, was felt most keenly through the switch from having "those subjects in primary school, they were taught in Zulu, so now when they started high school they change and begin to introduce English ... those subjects were taught in English - now its something which is overwhelming" (1.3.201-3). And the way in which these content subjects were taught clearly did little to enhance Michelle's English proficiency. In Biology, for example, assessment took the form of multiple choice, "and in composition the teacher can make an example [on the board] and we can stick on that because it will come out in the exam" (1.3.247-8). When asked if learners were then expected to rote learn the composition, the answer was, "Yebo, we did a lot of recitation" (1.3.252).

However, despite the difficulties Michelle experienced with learning through English in high school, she is "not against English". She attributes this attitude to her Grade 10 English teacher who "was good to us ... although he was beating us a lot" (1.3.397). While teaching Shakespeare, this teacher was able to "explain those difficult words" sufficiently for no strong resistance to the language itself to be evoked within Michelle. It was during her training college years, though, that Michelle experienced the most substantial leap in acquiring English proficiency, despite finding it initially as daunting to grapple with English texts as she had found it at school.

Michelle's love of isiZulu tells a different story. Beginning in the early primary school years where reading the isiZulu Bible and reciting "those proverbs" (1.3.95) formed the basis of isiZulu instruction, she enjoyed a sustained exposure to isiZulu as a medium of instruction in all subjects until she was approximately 9 or 10 years old. And in high school a nurturing isiZulu environment simply continued. isiZulu became her 'best' subject. Captivated by the contents and potential for learning of the *literature* syllabus (poetry, novels, plays), and what seems to have been a very interactive learning environment, her knowledge of, and love for isiZulu was firmly established.

From this brief biographical sketch, it should be clear that when Michelle made the decision to register for the Honours programme in 2004, she led an extremely full and demanding life, and one might wonder why and how she contemplated voluntarily taking on more. As it happens, her inspiration to further her studies came from the example set by one of her colleagues at the school she teaches. Michelle had watched this woman for some time. She noticed that she studied during tea and lunch breaks, and aware that she too had children and a family to take care of, Michelle asked her why she was doing all this extra work. She answered, “No ... I’m upgrading myself ... and my eyes are open taking this course. ... Ya ... you must come ... when you come ... because you like to learn” (1.2.105-110). Michelle’s colleague told her that “these modules are not so difficult but it needs hard work. There you are given ... eh ... the work and you must submit ... you must read ahead, so that if you are attending these contact sessions, you have something. And these tasks ... these portfolio task [sic] ... and these assignments ... you must do it because they are your marks”. After that, Michelle and another friend of hers made the decision to register. Her colleague brought the relevant forms to them both, and as she handed them over she said, “Somebody wants to do honours! Take it ladies, it’s not so difficult ... take it.” (1.2.124-133). So Michelle took it.

6.5.2 Synthesis of Experience – of the phenomenon

Michelle’s experience can be characterised as one constantly fraught with anxiety and stress. With far too many demands to realistically accommodate in any given time period, it was a constant struggle to find time to study and meet these demands. Thus, when she first opened her RWAT learning package, she didn’t know whether she would manage or not. Not only was there so much to do but ‘everything was new to me ... the new terms ... the academic thing’. She worked most closely with her friend and school colleague, Thabisile¹⁶, ‘helping each other because we are having the same problems’. These problems were mainly ‘these English words’, so they would borrow a dictionary so that they could ‘work out the meaning of that word’ but they ‘struggled with some of the words ... we didn’t understand’.

The readings proved extremely difficult to access, except for the Hart (1995) one with which she could identify closely. This reading, which focuses on the literacy experiences of a Grade 10 black learner in a township school in the 90s, made it ‘clear about how was education in those years’. This was the same kind of education that Michelle had experienced – no explanations, copious copying from the chalkboard, and lots of punishment, hence the way in which it resonated with her, and its accessibility.

¹⁶ A pseudonym

The Johnson reading (with its focus on the Genre Approach as a 'political and pedagogical project') was particularly difficult for Michelle. So was the Scheme for the Academic Argument. 'That background, I struggled with that thing ... how to relate ... hey ... hey ... hey, it was so difficult for me'. So was 'doing these claims, the topic sentence'. When working on the last assignment in class, Michelle 'didn't eat, everything was so difficult for me', and 'the other thing was that coherence ... eh, I was failing that'.

When confronted with particularly difficult English texts e.g. the Johnson text, Michelle would 'read aloud if I'm alone so that I can be assisted'. If there was a difficult word she would 'go quickly and look in the dictionary so that I can find the meaning ... so that I can have a clear understanding of what it means because if you don't understand the word, you end up reading not understanding'.

Michelle attributed much of her struggle with the English texts in the RWAT module to her lack of exposure to English as a result of being an isiZulu first language teacher for so many years. She felt that this had resulted in her (and her friend Thabisile) being 'used in Zulu, not well enough in English', though the upside of this experience meant that she had no difficulty with the isiZulu texts and, in fact, read them *before* engaging with the English versions. So familiar was she with teaching Zulu literature at matric level, that the RWAT isiZulu translations were easy for her to read. She took umbrage at her Zulu colleagues' negative attitudes to the translations, feeling that they were 'degrading our Zulu'.

Michelle's difficulties with the prescribed readings and hence, preparations for contact sessions, meant that she often came unprepared to these sessions. This in turn left her feeling 'inferior because you didn't read'. So, when 'other people can talk and talk and talk ... you contribute just a little and when you are supposed to do the activity, maybe it's the first time'. Nevertheless, she was at ease with in her multiracial tutorial group even though the 'Zulu speaking ladies' 'scolded' her when she joined a racially mixed group.

Michelle found the 'terms they are using' in RWAT assessment 'confusing' and failed the first major assignment. She was shocked by her results in this assignment and asked herself, 'Am I *dom*? Am I stupid?'. She took her assignment home and looked at it '*alone*. With *no-one*!' However, assisted by another member of her tutorial group, a 'proud ... lovely lady', she got additional help and passed her next assignment and her examination.

Notwithstanding the challenges she faced, Michelle felt that 'there is that difference' as a result of her RWAT module experience. This 'difference' could be seen in the way she could now apply 'that knowledge' to other modules i.e. 'the intro ... background ... and then ... that

style ... this essay will discuss ... even those claims'. This knowledge also included 'structure ... how we can plan an essay', and 'this thing of scanning'. In terms of her teaching context, Michelle 'learnt something from the university', viz. the value of group work. So, whereas she was 'used to feed my kids ... telling them everything ... I was working hard for them and they were relaxing', she realized after her RWAT experience that she could do things differently. So, she 'started to group them' and teach them to present on different aspects of whatever work the class was covering. According to Michelle, her learners love this new approach and 'cry' when the bell goes to end her lessons.

6.5.3 Michelle in 2007

By the end of 2004, Michelle had passed the RWAT module the first time round, together with her other three first year modules. At the time of writing up the data (2007), however, Michelle's fortunes had changed, and as this thesis is concluded, she has yet to complete the eighth module in the programme. In effect, this means that unless she passes this module in the second semester of 2007, she is in danger of being excluded from the Honours programme according to Rule ED 56 (ii) which states a student may not register for more than eight semesters for a part-time Honours degree. In closing, I would like to invite the reader to consider the possible consequences for Michelle, of this happening.

6.6 Vusi

6.6.1 Biographical sketch

Vusi is the principal of a school in the same township in which Michelle's school can be found, but he lives 19km outside of this township. He has been a teacher for 24 years and has been at his present school for 8 years. He is also a church minister in a local church and a committed family man with two young children. He makes a 224 km round trip in order to attend contact sessions in Pietermaritzburg, but has his own transport.

When Vusi was young, he was part of a family "where I couldn't have someone to help me to write and all that" (2.1.10). The family was poor, poor enough for Vusi to have to give up school in Grade 10. Although his father was working, "but he was not earning a lot. ... we were four children. He was earning about R30 something a week. It was very difficult then ... so I had to quit ... actually I had to apply to the college. So in that way I didn't do what is called a matric" (2.1.362-6). Without a matric, in 'those days' i.e. from the 50s through to the 70s, many black teachers (without matric certificates) got two years of training and were then sent out as full time teachers. Vusi was one such teacher. Highly motivated however, he

subsequently studied for his matric through a correspondence college (Rapid Results), completing it in 1986. By this time, he had already been teaching for four years.

Though his father was a labourer, Vusi's uncle became a lawyer and it was he who "encouraged me to read, to study ... because the others didn't reach that place" (2.1.405-6). Vusi's eldest brother was also a teacher, and a principal of a school, but died in 1999. Out of a family of four children, therefore, two became teachers, Vusi's sister married, and his other brother "couldn't ... yes, couldn't go on. So he is always at home." (2.1.411-2), for reasons Vusi did not divulge.

Vusi is, like Michelle, first and foremost 'Zulu' and is steeped in Zulu cultural norms, particularly those which dictate respect for, and compliance with, hierarchical status and expectations. But, finding a place that accommodates the tension between making obeisance to positional power and preserving one's own dignity and personal power is not easy for him. At the end of our first interview, for example, when I asked if there was anything he would like to ask me - a procedure I followed with every participant at the conclusion of each interview - almost with surprise Vusi answered, "And then I can do that?" (2.1.939). When I went onto emphasise that the nature of our interview relationship could be understood as equal and reciprocal in the sense that I was open to being asked the same kinds of questions I was asking participants, he responded with, "I see ... I see. Sometimes ... eh ... I'm also learning that because I thought I had to answer the questions" (2.1.950-1), which of course was the underlying intention of the interviews, but not in the manner Vusi had assumed it to be. "I'm also free to It's good that ... it's good that you have put it" (2.1.970), he concluded, before taking us in another but allied direction. "But", he then said, "but if I may ... if I may disturb you, ma'am, in most cases ... what ... um ... if you are chatting to guys like us ... you know students like us ... black students, what do you normally ... eh ... do you normally feel that they always want to be submissive to you as superior, or maybe they will ... sometime want to challenge you ... to put something ahead of you?" (2.1.977-81). I was instantaneously aware of the sensitive nature of the turn the conversation had taken and so worked hard to have him understand that people as *people* are always my first concern, hence my awareness that some students do act in the way he had just described, but that I always try to establish a teaching and learning context in which that kind of reaction is not deemed necessary or even remotely expected. Vusi interrupted me at this point to say, "Because it's us. It's a culture thing. ... Yes, we can't do away with it. I had a friend actually. He was a principal ... he was a principal at X High School ... now he is promoted ... he is an acting SEM¹⁷. Now that he is my superior, I have to ... [things have changed?] ... yes,

¹⁷ Superintendent of Education Management

changed ... so we've got that ... I don't know ... within us, sometimes ... I might want to confront you ... to challenge you with some question and all that, but you know with these ... the culture there is that (2.1.991-1000). ... with us, we have that understanding you know ... within the culture actually" (2.1.1020-1).

When I tried to reassure Vusi that I understood something of the nature of the cultural norms that exerted an influence over how he should conduct himself, but that this was nevertheless something that he himself had to grapple with, he replied: "No ... no, I think I understand" (2.1.1025). He went on then to offer some comment on where he saw black students and young people today, using his own children as examples. "In most cases ... in most cases," he said, "I think the black students are growing very well, they are very good you know. I've been noticing my kids ... we normally use a very good debate with them ... we can have a difficult one and sometimes I could feel they've got a lot to say. Yes ... ya [both of us laughing] (2.1.1025-9). We spoke as parents then, sharing the same reservations about the consequences of the changes that living in the 21st century might bring to present cultural practices, as far as our young people are concerned. I offered my opinion that "the moment you invite ... or you ask your children or young people or anybody, to give an opinion, you've opened a new space, because you can't tell them it's wrong" and ventured to suggest that he rather than I, could answer for whether the changes confronting us all are also a "challenge to African culture". "Yes. It will have ... it will have an impact traditionally ... because some of the customs will be dealt ... maybe ... will be done away with by kids ... because of the exposure and all that, you know ... the way they would like to feel. Because sometimes, when we ... when you ... when we grow up, we couldn't ask ... if we told something, we couldn't ask why. Why was not in our vocabulary" (2.1.1038-42).

As the awareness of the subtle relationship between changing power relations and the consequences of government-directed transformation processes eased into Vusi's consciousness, other thoughts struck him. "I was thinking of the amakhosi¹⁸. Those people need to be educated now because they are leading professors ... they are having professors in their places and all that. Those people can just play around with their minds, so then it's very difficult" (2.1.1050-2). Thus, from the outset, the influence of relations of power characterised the Vusi I came to know and understand, predominantly of course, as a student in the research context, rather than in his personal/ domestic life. Further reading of Vusi's nodes of experience will show evidence of this sensitivity.

¹⁸ Traditional leaders

6.6.2 Synthesis of Experience – of the phenomenon

Vusi came into the Honours programme ‘ready to learn ... ready to accept ... consume whatever is brought to me’. Although he too, found the three-book format confusing and the learning materials difficult to interact with, he considered the module to be ‘good’ in that ‘it opened us, our eyes ... To understand our mistakes as teachers ... of ignoring some of the writing that children should do’. The Scheme for the Academic Argument, however, posed serious difficulties for Vusi to start with as he had never encountered anything like it before. The range of stages and moves (compulsory and optional) proved extremely complicated for him to master. He attributed the reason he struggled so much to the fact that ‘maybe I lack information or maybe the link ... [and] a lack of vocabulary’. Essentially, for him, it was ‘the unfamiliarity and the grouping’ and that all the stages and moves ‘should work together’, that constituted the greatest challenge. Nevertheless, as a result of the RWAT module experience, Vusi ‘can now write my thesis ... I try to write them academic ... and whatever I write now since I passed the RWAT I’m writing according to it’.

Vusi was another participant who did not make use of the isiZulu translations. He ‘tried to read and tried to let it link [but] it was very difficult to link it.’ To him ‘it was like Zulu and Greek’. In other words, and this he illustrated through an extended engagement with the word *isimanje* (used in the isiZulu translation of the Reppen article title), there were too many ‘untranslatable’ words which had been given inappropriate isiZulu translations. In summing up his opinion, however, he declared the translations to be ‘very good Zulu ... it’s a very good accepted Zulu’. Aside from bumping into translated isiZulu words which troubled him, Vusi also discarded the isiZulu texts because of a shortage of time. For him, once having a read a text in English and having to do a related task or assignment, and having *completed* the task/ assignment, there was no time and little point in going back to read the isiZulu text.

Vusi found the formal formative assessment process i.e. writing two academic argument essays, intimidating. The task of cutting and pasting paragraphs during the fourth contact session was one he particularly did not enjoy, but ‘as time goes on we noticed that whether we like it or not, this is what is wanted’. He was of the opinion that ‘since we are students we have to oblige’. Fortunately for Vusi, he had a vibrant, committed, informed tutor and he attributes his passing of the module hugely to this tutor, even though he ‘didn’t pass the RWAT the way I wanted’. In addition, he belonged to an informal study group which met regularly and provided additional support.

As a principal of a school, a church minister, a father, husband and part-time student, the constraints of time were as severe for Vusi as all the other participants. Furthermore,

inspired by some of his RWAT experiences, particularly that of getting children to write 'essays', he has become 'a mentor there [at his school] for creative writing'. So he has stopped 'teaching language' and is concentrating on getting learners to write essays 'on Life Orientation' which is 'something that I learnt from RWAT'. Though 'we can't say they are good' yet, they've been able to write some books'. He is also full of ideas of how different genres, for example, recipes, can 'even earn money – just by writing a recipe ... [or] even develop something like a menu'. In addition, at the time of the interviews, Vusi also found the structured format of the Scheme for the Academic Argument relevant for assignment writing in other modules which means he was able to produce something that was a 'highly academic structured essay'.

6.6.3 Vusi in 2007

Vusi successfully completed his B.Ed Honours degree in the minimum two year part-time period, and in 2007 was accepted into the Education Masters programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. He remains principal of the school he headed when this study began in 2004.

6.7 Zola

6.7.1 Biographical sketch

Zola is a vibrant, engaging, single woman in her late 30s who has never been married and has no children. She lives with her mother and sister, and teaches Grade 1 in a local urban primary school. Her school deserves some mention since it is quite unique in South African terms, and is a teaching and learning environment Zola finds stimulating and fulfilling. Having some understanding of it will contribute to an understanding of Zola, hence the digression at this point.

The school is located in what was once an entirely Coloured area but which is now integrated in so far as Coloured, Indian and black families live there. It is, however, a largely working class community and there are often racial tensions between the different groups. The school itself was opened in 2000 in a corrugated iron building. The first principal to be appointed to this school was a black woman, thus changing the traditional pattern of school governance and management in the area. This principal is an extremely forceful and dynamic woman who took on all the challenges with which she was faced. In 2004, plans were passed for new school buildings which were finally officially opened on 12 May 2006.

Between 2000 and 2006, the staff became increasingly multiracial with white, Indian, Coloured and black teachers taking up posts. This is a unique scenario for almost any

school in South Africa, but particularly so for a school embedded in the kind of social context just described. The school also embraces a heterogeneous group of learners i.e. Indian (Muslim and Hindu), Coloured and Black, though the latter group is the dominant group. There are no white children at this school. English is the medium of instruction from the Foundation Phase through to Grade 7. A large number of children at this school, despite being isiZulu home language speakers, have been through local pre-primary schools and thus understand a substantial amount of English. However, an equally large number of children come from an informal settlement nearby and have very little, and in some cases, no prior English experience. These children, needless to say, struggle the most.

Zola is a woman who is super-alert to the details and texture of whatever environment surrounds her. She finds herself making constant links between what she sees and what she knows. Learning Geography at Teachers' Training College, for example, has resulted in her understanding "a lot of things that happens around". "You see," she said, "when I was in town [the previous week] I just sat down on a bench in the street, and then I sat next to a lady who was wearing a polo-neck while it was very hot. And then she said, eh, places are not the same. It was very cold where I was coming from, now it is hot here (5.1.710-13) ... Ya, and I understood that temperatures are not the same. ... You can go to Durban and then when you are in Durban the temperature is not the same as the temperature here" (5.1.721-4).

She likes people too and has a natural 'sharing' disposition. In her own words, "I like people and I'm this kind of a person who likes to share things with other people. If I know something I share with someone who is next to me. ... I don't stay with something that I know without sharing it with people" (5.1.732-36). In fact, the person who inspired her to do the B.Ed Honours was a colleague who had graduated with a Masters degree the previous April, and who also used to like sharing his experiences. "You see, when he learned something he used to say, 'My friend, I'm going to come and see you', ... and then he shared that with me" (5.1.746-49).

Another indicator of Zola's conscious engagement with the world around her can be found in her attitude to change, and reading, though she clearly sees these two features of existence as closely linked. "What was good about teaching," she said, "is that you become a lifelong learner. Because you learn every day. You see, when things changes, they change in front of you. You are not always left behind" (5.1.763-5). When I suggested that some people are indeed 'left behind', she immediately attributed this to the fact that it's "because they don't like to read. ... Ya, they don't like to read. Even these people who are working with us. [Ya] I always see people sitting and telling stories why we are crying, we are frustrated, we have

assignments, we have a lot of work, and they sit and they do nothing! They are waking up, [imitating a yawn] (5.1.773-5).

Zola, on the other hand, has always loved reading and reads everything that crosses her path. As a teenager, she was an avid reader of *Drum and Bona*¹⁹. She liked stories particularly and would “look at the table of contents and then see which ... which ... um, I looked for interesting ... what do you call this thing in the table of contents ... contents? [Ya] And then when I see it is interesting then I page through it until I get to it. And read it” (5.1.807-12). She would also read household ‘tips’, for example, on how to get rid of stains and what one should go out and buy in order to do so. And today she is no different. “Even now, when I see something written ... you see yesterday I was in clinic ... When I go to clinic or hospital I read everything that’s ... while I’m waiting I stand up and go and read and read and read and read ... [That’s fantastic]. Yesterday I was in clinic. I came to Clinic at 8 o’clock and I left the clinic at 3. ...I read a *looooooof*” (5.1.782-9). And when she’s in a taxi, “I look at these homes on the road with a lot of writing” (5.1.795). But what interests her most now are “things about HIV and AIDS. [Ok] Because I don’t want to be left behind, because I did this HIV and AIDS course so when I see something about HIV and Aids I always read it because I want to see if it’s something new, or ...[Something that you know already?] Something that I know already” (5.1.821-8).

From the above, it is not difficult to see why Zola is convinced that “reading is power”, and that it “makes ourselves improve everything. We develop. When you read you develop”. Nor is it surprising that she is adamant that teachers must share with each other the things that they learn i.e. because without sharing ideas and reaching levels of common understanding, the differences in pedagogy will be too great, and it will be difficult to make claims to any kind of solidarity, ideologically and/or pedagogically. So it’s crucial that everyone reads ‘*everything*’, though there is such an absence of culture of reading amongst the people with whom she mixes that “They used to say if you want to hide something for someone you must put it in a book. And I agree with that. When there ... when these people broke into the house, they don’t touch books. So you can keep a lot of things in books!” (5.2.867-9).

In short, as I came to know her, Zola is just the kind of teacher her school needs – self-knowing, confident, endlessly curious about the world around her, an avid reader, and a limitless feel for people, especially young children. In the interviews, however, there were many occasions when I found it particularly difficult, that is, more so than the other

¹⁹ Historically important reflections of black political and social aspirations and experiences, these popular magazines were aimed at black working and middle class readers, and originally published in both English and isiZulu. Only *Bona* is available today.

participants, to evoke responses in her that went beyond short dialogical exchanges. Paradoxically, I'm inclined to believe that it was because she *is* so sure of her own 'person', as it were, rather than because she is not. There was thus never any sense of obligation on her part, to give me any more than I asked her directly. Nevertheless, there was much that she did say that was of great significance for this study as the following nodes will show.

6.7.2 Synthesis of Experience

Zola received her RWAT materials well ahead of the start of the first contact session and so had plenty of time to access them. However, she too found the three-book format of the module disconcerting and confusing. Finally, she took herself off to the local town library 'to sit down ... and give myself time to read', and there, quite fortuitously, she met a friend also doing the module. Within a very short period of time, and simply through seeing each other in the town library, Zola and a group of friends established an informal study group. This was well before the first contact session. This group was to play a critical role in Zola's RWAT experience.

Although the members of this group helped each other access the RWAT readings and prepare for assignments and the examinations, they did not all belong to the same tutorial group. This resulted in a significant problem for them i.e. they used 'to come with different things ... different stories ... different instructions', because 'we were not the same'. When faced with conflicting information, Zola would always fall back on what her tutor had told her to do, rather than the opinion of group members.

Zola placed a strong emphasis on the value of reading (in any language), and believed that when students said they were confused, lecturers should ask 'that person did you read ... did you give yourself time to read?' She did not find any particular reading as being difficult, but identified, particularly, with Johnson's view of the Genre Approach as a 'pedagogical and political project' (through her own engagement with setting up an Adult Literacy Centre), and with the notions of 'modelling, guiding, and scaffolding'. She was strongly of the opinion that if people 'can read and write they can be able to participate in the community, they can be able to raise their voices'.

The Scheme for the Academic Argument, though confusing at first, helped Zola when writing her essays. She had known something of what to expect when it came to structuring an essay through a friend who had completed the Honours programme just as she started. So she understood that 'your introduction must show the whole essay'. Furthermore, she quickly recognised that 'even when you read the books, you just find that structure'. 'Extracting claims from the topic', however, was a problem for her, as was 'this plagiarism'. Before she

started the Honours programme, she 'didn't know how to reference within ... the essay', but through the RWAT module she learnt that 'if I say something which is said by someone else, I must acknowledge that'.

The isiZulu translations were read by Zola but she made little use of them. This was because she 'knew that I know Zulu', and that it was English that required more of her attention. So, in fact, she started with the English texts. Grappling with the English texts was a complex process because 'English is not my mother tongue ... so I have to *read* it, try and understand it, try and look for the meaning, and look for the word that I don't understand. Maybe if I don't understand it I go to someone else'. She would try and visualize a word, and 'think what it is that you are looking at ... you understand it in your own language then you go back', and all this takes 'a lot of time'. In Zola's view, the isiZulu translations were written by 'someone who knows it'.

Choosing to study at a distance, for Zola, meant 'you change ... because you have to leave other things and do the things that you think are the most important'. Zola gave up her sewing business (doilies, pinafores, men's pants) which earned her extra money, in order to give her studies full attention. Her friends began to find her boring, and her mother became angry, unable to understand why her already overworked, too busy daughter, would take on more responsibilities. Household chores over the weekend became Zola's which meant that she had virtually no time to relax over a seven day period at all. Nevertheless, she was not worn down by it as it was what she expected.

From her RWAT experience, Zola learnt how to 'organise information' when writing in order to 'consider your reader'. She immediately introduced this notion of needing to be aware of the reader/ audience to her Grade 1 learners, as simple as the tasks they perform are. She also recognised her need to provide her young learners with more 'modelling, guiding and scaffolding', so as to 'assist their performance'. Finally, she herself is 'becoming more organised ... to make sure things are done in order'.

6.7.3 Zola in 2007

Zola had passed RWAT successfully by the time I interviewed her in 2004, and all other first year modules by the end of that year. She also took up the Education Leadership, Management and Policy specialisation option in her second year and completed her Honours degree in the minimum time, graduating at the end of 2005. In 2007, she continues to teach at the school described in the opening of this profile.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented, as faithfully as possible, the individual nodes of experience (and perceptions) of the six participants in this study, of the RWAT module. These experiences and perceptions have constituted the phenomenon, that is, they have incarnated the RWAT module, given it life, made it 'live'. Mindful of the fact that this study has only concerned itself with six students' experiences and perceptions, the extent to which these experience and perceptions can be said to have breathed life into RWAT is acknowledged as partial, yet without them, no indication of the nature of the breath that infused RWAT with a life force would ever have materialized. Furthermore, I would argue that it is in the absolute uniqueness of experience that the strength of a study such as this lies. It thus, not only makes no claims to 'sameness' but actively forbids it.

In the following chapter, individual experiences are collated and an interpretive (hermeneutic) response to them is offered. To facilitate this response, Discourse Theory (after Gee 1996, 1997, 2004) is called upon to assist.

Chapter 7

Consolidated experiences and interpretive responses

'The behaviours of any individual person, at a specific time and place, are meaningful only against the Discourse or, more often, set of complementary or competing Discourses, that can 'recognise' and give 'meaning' and 'value' to that behaviour' (Gee, 1996, p.166)

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6, individual nodes of experience of the phenomenon i.e. the RWAT module as a 'lived' module, were identified and presented. The point was made in that chapter that the 'names' of nodes took their reference from the core meaning of each moment of experience. The attribution of 'core meaning' was made by me but laid open to validation by three colleagues, and now, of course, the reader. The central focus in Chapter 6, therefore, was on the uniqueness of individual experiences.

The purpose of this chapter is to interpret those nodes, now as constellations of experience of participants of the RWAT module, predominantly within the framework of Gee's Discourse Theory (as discussed in Chapter 2) but other related theoretical concepts as well. While SFL theory offers alternative possibilities for an interpretive framework, I have chosen to step back from this field and foreground theories and concepts that critically revitalize the *lived* centrality of the 'social-in-language' (and concomitant issues of power and identity). In my view, it is precisely because of the deep impact evoked by the *absence* of attention to 'the social' in the RWAT module (exposed through this research) that it was ultimately rendered a dubious literacy pedagogical enterprise, hence the desire to re-situate 'the social' in this critique of it. Out of this interpretation, a pedagogical model of the lived academic literacy experience of participants will emerge, making it possible to answer the key research questions viz.: 'What is it like to acquire an academic literacy?', and the secondary research question, 'How is this experience influenced by the mode of delivery in which it occurs?'. In addition, the stage will be set for the concluding discussion (in Chapter 8) around how, if at all, 'academic literacy' should be understood and developed, and what pedagogical models are most suited to the task.

Despite the fact that the notion of 'Discourses' governs, at a macro-conceptual level, the way in which participants' experience of the phenomenon in this study are interpreted, it is also critical to this study as a whole, that the phenomenological position on 'language' also be sustained in the mind of the reader, and that this position not be seen as a contradiction to one that also has recourse to Discourse Theory. Thus, it must be remembered that I have argued elsewhere in this thesis, from a phenomenological position, that we are first and

foremost 'embodied' subjects, and in being so, and drawing on Merleau-Ponty (1962), that language 'is a Witness to Being'. I also said that I concede the socially discursive power of language, but that there is a point before and beyond which the 'social' takes ownership, thus evoking the notion of 'the speaking subject'. In my own view, therefore, it is not inappropriate to now engage with a theory that examines how the socially discursive power of language might be enacted. In short, there is no contradiction inherent in either of these positions.

To refresh the reader's memory the following areas were foregrounded in the interviews: 'first encounters' with the learning materials, 'the readings', the isiZulu translations, the Scheme for the Academic Argument, assessment, contact sessions, study groups, the issue of time, and possibilities for 'transfer' of learning.

7.2 Primary and Secondary Discourses

Before engaging with the notions of Primary and Secondary Discourse, I'd like to restate the broad features of a Discourse (discussed in detail in Chapter 2), as defined by Gee. Thus he says:

A Discourse is a socially accepted association among ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and 'artifacts', of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting that can be used to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or 'social network, or to signal (that one is playing) a socially meaningful 'role' (1996, p.131). [Emphasis in original.]

Gee, one should recall, then made the critical distinction between what he called Primary Discourses and Secondary Discourses. Primary Discourses "are those to which people are apprenticed early in life during their primary socialization as members of particular families within their sociocultural settings" (*ibid*, p.137). Primary Discourses, therefore, "constitute our first social identity" (*ibid*), and become the base from which we relate to all other Discourses thereafter. So they constitute the foundations of *who* we are, and *who 'people like us'* are, and the beliefs, values and so on, that 'we' stand for. They can then, also be understood to instantiate 'culture'. Secondary Discourses are essentially all those Discourses which are not a person's Primary Discourse but to which they become apprenticed, and/or access as part of their ongoing socialisation in the social world beyond that of the 'home'/ 'home community'. In the context of this study, for example, there has been an engagement with numerous Secondary Discourses viz. 'Academic Discourse', the Discourse of Genre Theory, the Discourse of Distance Education and so on. It is important to remember, however, that both Primary and Secondary Discourses exhibit the attributes identified by Gee in the extract

above, and are “intimately related to the distribution of social power and hierarchical structure in society, which is why they are always and everywhere ideological” (*ibid*, p.132).

At the first level of interpretation in this study, by applying the concepts of Primary and Secondary Discourse, astonishing clarity emerges with regard to participants’ responses to much of what they experienced of the RWAT module. Though I propose to unpack numerous further responses as I proceed, and to do so according to other aspects of Gee’s Discourse Theory and related theoretical concepts, it is central to the process to establish this first position. In essence, therefore, what the participants in this study experienced, *realised on entry and pervasively throughout*, was an alien Discourse, that is, a *Secondary Discourse* – what I will broadly refer to as ‘Academic Discourse’ at this point, which bore no resemblance to their *Primary Discourse*. Most importantly, participants perceived insufficient (and in some cases no) similarities to any other Secondary Discourses that they already owned, to facilitate a simple and seamless entry. In support of this claim, one only has to look at the shared/ common experience of the participants when they first encountered the RWAT module and its multiple-book format, and the numerous other examples which will be highlighted as this chapter proceeds.

Before proceeding with a more nuanced interpretation of the participants’ reaction to the multiple-book format of the RWAT materials, however, I think it is important to acknowledge that the RWAT learning materials *were* poorly organised and would not now meet the *NADEOSA Quality Criteria for Distance Education in South Africa* published in 2005. In other words, far greater care should have been taken at the outset, with regard to the ‘accessible presentation’ of the materials, through the use of clearer ‘signposts’, content pages, cross-referencing etc. Since the RWAT module (and all other modules in the 2004 Honours programme) were offered ‘at a distance’, the fact that the materials did not meet all established criteria for effective self-study learning materials, is acknowledged to be a serious pedagogical and professional oversight. Since the data shows that all six participants in the study were thrown by their first encounter with the RWAT module, and that the multiple-book format of the materials was the first issue with which they had to contend, I think we must acknowledge that at a very pragmatic level, this response can be explained by the poor organisation of the materials raised above.

Why it would be wrong to leave it there, however, and this is why the concept of Primary and Secondary Discourses is so useful, is because not only did the organisation of the learning materials make it extremely difficult for the participants to negotiate their way *independently* into the RWAT materials (despite each book bearing a quite different title), but the process also evoked *uncertainty, confusion* and *fear*. As an aside, I would like to say that it would

add to the reader's appreciation of the participants' responses to their first encounters with the RWAT module if, at this point, they turned to the Individual Nodes of Experience in Chapter 6 and **Appendix D**. However, should s/he not wish to do so, the extracts included in this discussion should suffice to convey an authentic sense of their experiences.

Since Discourses construct identities, work as social 'networks' or 'clubs', and hence have an implicit exclusionary/ inclusionary dynamic built into them (in addition to other attributes described above), they are to do with much more than just 'language'. The following extracts, drawing from nodes from the previous chapter, reflect participants' responses to their first encounters with the RWAT module, and bear this point out. Thus they said: 'We couldn't understand ... there were so many'; 'It was difficult'; 'Frightening! Frightening!'; 'My God, what's happening now? What are you talking about here?'; 'I had a problem of understanding ... which one must I start with?'; 'I tried to open these books, I tried to read them' but '... ei, it was difficult for me! Ei, ei, ei'. Vusi, particularly, noted that grappling with three books was also very time consuming. Bearing in mind that all of the participants were experienced, mature educators, and that two were school principals, one a deputy principal, one the Head of Department for Languages in his school, it is clear that they already 'owned' several Secondary Discourses relevant to the field of teaching and learning (amongst many others), for example, the Discourse of Leadership, the Discourse of English Language Teaching, and were thus 'literate' in these – where 'literacy' (after Gee) is defined as the mastery of Secondary Discourses (hence the scope for being 'multiliterate').

Thus, I would argue, that it was a Secondary Discourse ('Academic'), and its enactment in the range of *situated activities* and a specialist variety of language that the participants encountered in the RWAT materials (three times over) that evoked their fears, uncertainty and confusion - ascertained by a first glance at any one of the books – and that it was this that so dramatically destabilized their identities as to obscure all other judgments about how best to 'read' the materials. *Because this is where the power of Discourses lie i.e. in their power to construct and control identities.*

What these reactions reveal is that the participants intuited quite correctly that 'here' (in the RWAT materials) was 'the university'. That is, that though the RWAT module looked to be comprised of a set of three, admittedly slightly difficult-to-figure-out, soft-covered A4 books, it was also a symbol of a structure of social power, a Discourse that they were asserting their right to enter for the first time. As all six participants were first generation post graduate university students when they began the Honours programme with the RWAT module, though they 'owned' numerous existing literacies, or, put another way one could say they had acquired numerous Secondary Discourses (evidenced in the data through references to

church participation, community funeral rituals, union meetings), when they ‘paged .. paged .. paged’ through the learning materials, they could not ‘find’ themselves. The effect of this was a wave of debilitating anxiety and a sense of hopeless inadequacy. So powerful were these participants’ first alienating experiences of the RWAT module, that no natural recourse to their Primary Discourse, or any other Secondary Discourse was made in order to help themselves through this period.

To sum up at this point, and holding participants’ ‘first encounters’ still as the focal point, I would say that the participants did not have the ‘right’ *social language i.e. a specialist academic variety of language*, to bring to bear on the *situated activities* that characterised the RWAT module in order to penetrate the *situated meanings* of these activities (as planned by the course developers, and reflective of Academic Discourse), when they first opened the books. However, what they did do was bring their own existent *socially situated identities* to the RWAT module – constructed *outside* of the university by other Discourses – only to find that they were wearing the ‘wrong’ ‘identity kit’ (Gee, 1996) for this context. Without knowing what the ‘right’ one was on entry, it was inevitable that they should endure so much dis-ease, fear and confusion.

What I have tried to do in this opening section is to introduce elements of Gee’s Discourse Theory that I believe shed light on specific aspects of the data in this study. This pattern will continue throughout this chapter, though additional concepts will be drawn on where appropriate. So while it will become apparent that a particular shared experience might be explained from different focal points, in each case I have foregrounded what I believe to be the most useful perspective from which to view it. That the reader might disagree with my choices, and prefer others, is taken as a given.

So far then, what has been established is that for the participants in this study: 1) their Primary Discourses seemed not to be aligned in any way with the dominant Secondary Discourse (‘Academic Discourse’) they encountered in the RWAT module; 2) this dominant Secondary Discourse was ‘new’ but should be understood as just another of the many Secondary Discourses available to them (in a general sense); 3) the Secondary Discourses they already owned did not enact the appropriate identity for explicating the ‘situated meanings’ of the RWAT module, hence their inability to access it with ease and success, and their sense of being dis-abled (experienced as uncertainty, confusion and fear) on first encountering it. In Gee’s terms, therefore, the participants can be considered ‘authentic beginners’, that is, “people, whether children or adults, who have come to learning sites of any sort without the sorts of early preparation, pre-alignment in terms of cultural values, and sociocultural resources that more advantaged learners at those sites have” (2004, p.14).

7.3 Discourse and identity

7.3.1 On being a ‘maths person’

In 1.2, the point was made that Discourses construct identities. Thus, Discourses, “create, produce, and reproduce opportunities for people to be and recognise different *kinds of people*” (Gee, 1996, p.128). [Emphasis in original.] Having the ‘right’ social language to be visible and recognisable as a member of a Discourse, therefore, contributes to the instantiation of a Discourse identity. In this study, Folly presented a particular node of experience in relation to her encounter with the RWAT module that demonstrates this point very ably.

From the start of the interview process, Folly insisted that the RWAT module was particularly difficult for ‘maths people’ amongst whom she counted herself. Maths had always been her ‘best’ subject at school (she didn’t like reading) and she had been a maths teacher for many years. The consequences of being a ‘maths person’, for Folly, meant that ‘we don’t write a lot. We just do calculations’, and thus she saw in this a distinct disadvantage to herself and others like her who were doing the RWAT module i.e. teachers who take subjects where ‘language’ is not a focus, for example, maths and the sciences. In order to try and compensate for this dearth of what she saw to be crucial ‘language’ experience – ‘... really the issue of essays I’ve never been exposed to it before’ - she tried to find ‘history people’ to form a tutorial group because ‘there is a lot of language in history’. Doing this, she felt, would give her the kind of help she foresaw herself needing, because ‘the language, er, also was a barrier ... The language used in the documents ... the kind of language that is used by the theorists, sometimes you find it, oh my goodness, I really don’t understand the meaning of this word, until you look up in a dictionary’.

Armed with the understanding that Discourses construct identities, and these are always ‘situated’ and derived from the situated activities and associated situated meanings embedded in them, it is now possible to be more lucid about what happened to Folly. Through having been a maths teacher for so many years (more than 15), and having belonged to professional maths associations, she had learnt the ‘right’ ‘maths’ combinations of ‘saying (writing)-doing-being-valuing-believing’, and achieved professional recognition and visibility by doing so. Thus, this particular Secondary Discourse had constructed a particular identity for her, one which imbued her with confidence and a sense of empowerment, an ‘affordance’ earned by her ability to establish and engage in the social practices of this Discourse. Interpreting Folly’s reactions to the ‘language’ in the RWAT module in this way, enables us to see that in fact, it was not ‘language’ per se with which she struggled, but a

conflict of Secondary Discourses. Folly's (and other participants') recourse to a *dictionary* to resolve her 'language' difficulties, therefore, reflected a return to a school-based practice (embedded in an autonomous view of literacy) which was the only one she knew in terms of confronting a 'language' issue. Inevitably, a dictionary would not have provided the answers she was really looking for.

7.3.2 Reading as 'recognition' of the Self

Nuttall (2001), writing within the context of representations of reading in African literature, contends that

two notions have tended to dominate discussions by writers, their characters, critics and theorists about what reading *is*. The first is that reading is about plunging into the heart of the non-self. Through reading one enters a world of fantasy, otherness, strangeness, in order to lose, escape, abandon that self that can be named, identified, recognized. The second is that reading is about recognizing oneself, as if for the first time, in the text before one (2001, p.392).

Though Nuttall's paper foregrounds the reading and writing of postcolonial African literature, her engagement with the notion of 'recognition', particularly in canonical African texts (e.g. Dangarembga, Gordimer, Achebe, Soyinka), speaks, in my view, to the interiority of experience when an individual's Primary Discourse is accessed through reading. As such, it has I believe, much to say to the response of participants in this study to the 'Hart reading' (see discussion below), and so will contribute to my interpretation of this node at this point. It sheds further light, in other words, on the relationship between Discourse and identity – the way in which Discourses work to produce and reproduce different kinds of people. Further elements of Discourse Theory could be pulled out here, for example, the identification of specific situated activities (within the Discourse of Schooling endured by Thulani, the main 'character' in the Hart reading), and the situated meanings embedded in these that enacted the identity that Thulani took on, but in this instance I wish to retain a focus on the effects on learning, of providing access to a Secondary Discourse by drawing on the Primary Discourse.

Thus, in the Hart (1995) reading, the focus is on Thulani, an 18 year old Grade 11 learner, and his school writing experiences (derived from his literate life history). The B.Ed Honours students discover that Thulani "has experienced very minimal writing and all his writing has consisted of 'one off' efforts with little or no comment on them. What little comment there has been has focused on narrow formulaic issues of address and spaces between paragraphs. ... The writing process in language classes has been confined to either copying teachers' essays and rewriting them in tests or examinations (a 'show' and 'tell' process) or writing on

a narrow range of teacher-determined topics” (Thomson, 2004, p.80). In short, the majority of African students in the Honours programme ‘recognise’ their own school experiences in those of Thulani. In the research group, for example, Michelle and Nothembu made a voluntary and explicit reference to the Hart reading. Michelle said, ‘We liked Hart. Ya ... it’s a long time. But ... eh ... he make us ... clear about how was education in those ... in those years. Teachers didn’t explain to the learners nicely ... they just give you a topic to write and ... maybe ... eh ... ‘A journey by train’, you don’t know how to’.

Nothembu explained why she too liked the Hart reading best. ‘It was just simple language ... maybe that is why I understood it very well. ... and the situation which was that ... was happening in us, or with us in classes. ... What I can remember is that Thulani ... the way Thulani was taught, he was just given task like saying, you have to write notes, you have to write a composition, without having been taught before, and without knowing why they are taught these things ... those things. ... Being the learner like Thulani confused as he was, I was also experiencing the very same thing when I was a learner, and also ok, that’s where the problem lies with us when we are teaching the language, so I have to go back in my class and practise the right thing out of this’.

One of the main things that Nothembu learnt from the Thulani reading (in her view) was that, ‘Sometimes when we teach, we don’t cater for the kids to practice. We just want them to reproduce what we have taught them, [mhh] without giving them a chance to say whatever they like to say to us’. So, as far as Nothembu was concerned, she *knew* Thulani, ‘It was a real situation. And I learnt from them. It was difficult for ... oh ok, this is what Thulani is experiencing, oh, we’re supposed to do it like this and like that, and then I tried to change my teaching as well’.

When interpreting participants’ responses to reading about Thulani, it seems reasonable to suggest that they recognised themselves, ‘as if for the first time’, in the text before them. In other words, this particular text ‘held’ something that was quite unique for the participants viz. a representation of experience with which they could identify – a ‘recognition of the Self’. But what ‘of themselves’ did they recognise, and where was its source? And what can be said about the fact that all the participants had a similar experience?

Starting with the last point first, it is important to remember that it is not only individual identities that are constructed by Discourses, but group identities too. Thus ‘cultures’ evolve “as social groups organize their lives around concepts, purposes, values, beliefs, ideals, theories, notions of reality, and the like. Through Discourse human life is organized into

shape and form which can be recognized and understood – it can be ‘read’ as having ‘meaning’ – by ourselves and by others” (Lankshear, 1997, p.16).

Thus, I would argue in the first instance, that the reason all participants ‘recognized’ Thulani and themselves in Thulani, was that they shared critical elements of their *Primary Discourses* i.e. their patterns of early socialisation and cultural participation. My understanding of traditional African society, is that hierarchies of power are fundamental to the maintenance of cultural cohesion (see Mbigi, 2005). In such a system, young people do not contest adult authority. I would suggest that this was one element of a shared Primary Discourse that the participants recognised in the Thulani story. All of them would have submitted to a teacher’s authority in the same way, doing what they were told to do, assuming that the adult, the figure of authority was ‘right’. In fact, if one studies the data carefully, it is clear that this pattern of taking it for granted that the ‘voice of authority’ is always ‘right’, persists, at least, in Nothembu and Vusi. Only now it is ‘the University’ or, perhaps more specifically, the RWAT module that speaks. Thus, Nothembu says (see above): ‘Being the learner like Thulani confused as he was, I was also experiencing the very same thing when I was a learner, and also ok, *that’s where the problem lies with us* when we are teaching the language, *so I have to go back in my class and practise the right thing out of this*’ [my emphasis.]

But if we are to talk of Discourses here, and attempt to explain the participants’ responses to Thulani in relation to them, then I would suggest that we need to go further than just the recognition of elements of their Primary Discourse, though I would not want the significance of this latter to be lost. Framing Thulani’s entire schooling experience, and that of the participants (evident in the data), and thousands of other black South Africans, was the Political Discourse of Apartheid. And it is the social practices (situated activities) and situated meanings that instantiated this Discourse, that I would argue the participants in this study, as *black South Africans*, recognised as common to each other and Thulani. ‘Recognition’ was at the level of ‘shared suffering’, disadvantage and discrimination. It would seem that for the first time, the participants comprehended the lived consequences of the Political Discourse of Apartheid that dominated during their school years and over which they had no control. Nuttall (2001:393) notes how Appiah (1992) saw the recognition of the self as “a crucial form of validation and a process through which one may come to question ideological assumptions”. The data suggests that Thulani’s experience served as a trigger to just this kind of process, making it one of the most critical moments in the module.

7.4 Vernacular and Specialist varieties of language

In the opening section of this chapter, the concept of Primary and Secondary Discourses was applied in order to explain the participants' immediate reactions to their first encounters with the RWAT materials, and to serve as an overarching description of what participants were 'up against' in the RWAT module as a whole i.e. a serious mismatch between their Primary Discourse and a Secondary Discourse. Here, I want to draw on Gee's work on specialist and vernacular varieties of language to interpret further aspects of the data. Though this feature of his work was identified in Chapter 2, I will briefly reiterate relevant points. Specialist varieties of language "are used for special purposes and activities" (2004, p.17) and stand in contrast to vernacular varieties of language which is the form of a language "used for face-to-face conversation and for 'everyday' purposes" (*ibid*). The important point about 'varieties' of language is that while vernacular varieties (and vernacular dialects) are generally closely associated with an individual's 'community of birth' and hence her/his initial sense of self (identity), they are not one and the same thing as an individual's Primary Discourse. They are rather the 'language bits' that help instantiate a Primary Discourse. Similarly, specialist varieties of a language (both academic and non-academic) are the 'language bits' of Secondary Discourses and contribute to an instantiation of these. In Chapter 2, attention was also drawn to the way in which vocabulary, syntax and discourse features differ between specialist and vernacular varieties, and that specialist varieties of language "are tied to socially situated identities and activities i.e. people use them to do things while acting as certain kinds of people with characteristic viewpoints, values, ways of acting, talking and believing" (Gee, 2004, p.93). Thus the close relationship between 'varieties' of language, and Discourses, should be clear.

The data shows that the word *genre* proved a problem to three of the participants and is the first example of Gee's point (also in Chapter 2) that "one key area where specialist varieties of language differ from vernacular ones is in vocabulary" (2004, p.18). If the reader goes back to the individual nodes of experience, s/he will see that for Nothembu, Folly and Dick, a grasp of the meaning of *genre* for them came only as a result of interactions with others i.e. a tutorial group, a tutor, and a parent respectively, and that for Michelle 'everything' was new, 'the new terms ... the academic thing', so the term *genre* can be taken to have been unfamiliar to her too. However, it is not possible to separate 'language' from 'content' since 'language' gives meaning to 'content' and 'content' (in this case) is only accessible through the specialist variety of language employed in the module. Thus, if the 'language' denies entry, it is denying entry to more than just the dictionary definition of a word. Participants (and other students) who stumbled on the 'meaning' of *genre* on entry to the module, effectively 'missed' the one concept from which all other concepts issued at the very point at

which *self-directed* study was expected to begin. The term *genre*, in other words, was so 'academically specialised' as to deny participants even recourse to non-academic specialist varieties of language, and thus they could not attribute any meaning to it at all.

Another example of vernacular vs specialist varieties of language relates to participants' grasp of the Genre Approach as 'a political and pedagogical project' as articulated by Johnson (1994). The relevance of targeting participants' experience of this compulsory reading (also translated into isiZulu) was that it was considered by the module developers to be the one reading that most effectively captured the 'political and pedagogical project' inherent in the Genre Approach, and by implication, the RWAT module itself. In the interviews, I worked from the premise that if the centrality and import of this point had been internalized by participants, even a year later it would constitute part of a day to day 'working' memory (since all participants are practicing teachers) and thus be ready to hand. As the data below shows, this was not the case for four out of the six participants, while for two it was.

Thus, Michelle found that "those things were confusing ...eish!" She could not get a grip on any aspect of the nature of 'the project' during the interviews, and in fact muddled 'the political' with 'politics' ("like the ANC"). Dick came closer than Michelle, saying 'that he was saying something about what ... about how writing is powerful in politics', but ended with 'Maybe I cannot have an answer even now'. Nothembu's tutor told her that she should 'write anything that you've got out of the political, something that you got out of the pedagogical'. So when she came across these 'cultural things', Nothembu would write 'political', and when 'he talks to the classroom, the teacher, teaching', then she wrote 'pedagogical'. But when pressed for more detail, she had to admit that, 'Er, I can't remember what information was there ... and pedagogically ... politically I think it's ... mmm-mmm, I'm not sure'. Vusi found it 'was very difficult at first, but it was ok at the end. ... But it becomes difficult for me to get close to grasp it'. However, later, when faced with the sample student essay in which the following extract appeared²⁰, Vusi answered differently. '*The genre approach has comprehensive influence and criteria in both political pedagogical, it also influence and challenges other approaches i.e. traditional progressivist.. The genre approach as political it help the disadvantaged student to the access of social, economic-cultural community and society. As a pedagogy it helps the learners with the access of addressing the question of equity in education ...*' After reading *this*, Vusi said that the student 'want to associate a genre approach as the ... as the approach that redresses or maybe trying to develop those who have been disadvantaged ... gave them access'.

²⁰ This extract is reproduced verbatim here.

What this data shows are the strategies participants use to try and make sense of the 'meaning' situated in the term 'political and pedagogical project', and how these strategies have recourse, this time, to non-academic specialist varieties of language. Hence, Michelle drew on her commonsense understanding of 'politics' to try and impose a 'meaning' on the term. Nothembu had a slightly more sophisticated 'cultural model' (or schema) on which to draw which allowed her to make links between things 'political' and things 'cultural', while Vusi was only able to make sense of the term when the entire concept had been reformulated (by a weak student) to include non-academic specialist vocabulary that he clearly knew.

But, as indicated at the start of this section, it must not be forgotten that Gee's specialist and vernacular varieties of language all contribute to the instantiation of Primary and Secondary Discourses. Thus when the participants cannot situate meaning accurately or appropriately, it means, *de facto*, that they cannot access the Discourse which 'owns' the meanings. In the cases cited here, the very fact that participants could not recognise 'the political' in the Genre Approach, that is, the intimate relationship between reading, writing and access to social power, means that did not recognise 'the political' in the RWAT module. In this respect, they were not only denied agency, they did not even know they had a right to it in the first place.

But what of Zola and Folly who *could* discern clear links between literacy pedagogy and social power, though neither foregrounded the Genre Approach explicitly in their responses?

If the reader turns to Zola's individual profile and reads the nodes of experience entitled '*Looking at the pedagogical project ... I linked it with reading and writing*', and '*If they can read and write ... they can be able to raise their voices*', s/he will see that Zola said, 'Knowledge is power, politics is power. So these things go together, because if the learners are able to read and write ... so they are able to participate in the community, they can be able to raise their voices, they can do a number of things, in the society. They can also bring about change in society'. But these views were not just mere opinions. They were based in Zola's own lived experience of becoming an active, expert reader and competent writer, and using this power to orchestrate the establishment of an Adult Learning Centre in her area, even before she joined the Honours programme. Encountering Johnson and the metalanguage he uses, therefore, posed no difficulties for Zola.

And where Folly is concerned, a similar situation pertains. She immediately recalled the Johnson reading as being 'very interesting' and as 'the political one where it is also about power'. Here too, the relevant context of situation/ context of culture necessary to internalise

the meaning of this term, were ones of which Folly had experience. When she joined the teacher union, SADTU, Folly was a naïve, inexperienced educator in the movement – ‘I wouldn’t fit in’, but by the time this study was conducted she had been inducted into all the social practices (which includes the literacy practices) of SADTU meetings (see Chapter 6 for Folly’s Individual Nodes of Experience). Folly realised that unless one has the ‘language that is spoken there’ (in any context), ‘you don’t understand it ... And it does happen for many teachers that they can’t make an input, so it doesn’t give you any power to whatever you want to’.

In terms of interpreting the different responses of Zola and Folly, again the interplay between varieties of languages and Discourses holds true. In the case of these two women, both had clearly had experiences of Secondary Discourses (perhaps they could be described as Development Project Discourse and Union Discourse respectively) where the non-academic specialist varieties of language particular to them overlapped sufficiently with the academic specialist variety of language inherent in the RWAT module, for them to identify with it and thereby gain a degree of access to the Discourse.

7.5 Discourse and cultural processes

7.5.1 The ‘language bits’ as mediums of cultural processes

I wish now to turn my attention to the participants’ responses to the isiZulu translations of two of the compulsory readings. This section constitutes the first of two parts of this chapter dedicated to this aspect of the data i.e. participants’ responses to these translations.

‘Language’, as an integral component of a Discourse (Primary and/or Secondary) has already been established. So has the premise that Discourses construct group identities, and that group identity, derived as it is from shared social practices, can also constitute a particular ‘culture’ i.e. a relatively large-scale group identity. For the purposes of this discussion, I would posit that the participants in this study are part of a larger social group which shares an isiZulu Cultural Discourse. In other words, they share “ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and ‘artifacts’, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing, and acting” (Gee, 1996, p.131). In order to show how language acts as a ‘medium of cultural process’, however, and to show how the ‘language bits’ of a Discourse relate to the Discourse per se, I will now foreground how four of the participants expressed their relationship to the isiZulu translations.

Immediate responses to the isiZulu translations included ‘It’s given me a hard time ... it was time to constrain us ... it was like Zulu and Greek’; ‘in some text you have something written

in Zulu, and when you relate it to English as you are a Zulu-speaker, you find that you have a problem to understand what is going on'; 'they were very difficult ... the English versions made more sense to me'; 'it's something else when you are reading in Zulu ... I don't get it in the Zulu way of putting things'. So for a range of reasons, these four participants (for each of the above quotations comes from a different participant), did not move naturally and seamlessly towards texts in their mother tongue but encountered a barrier.

In the first instance, there was the matter of the translations being 'direct' translations. Both Vusi and Nothembu contribute to our understanding of this attribute of the translations. Vusi, as we have seen, used an extended example – focusing on the use of the word *isimanje* in the translation of the title of the Reppen reading – to demonstrate how 'he tried to read and tried to link it [the isiZulu]' but to no avail, and that this used up valuable time. And despite being quick to assure me that the level of isiZulu in the texts was not difficult, in fact 'it's very good', he nevertheless made the point that he had 'noticed that some words here are ... have no alternative but to be put to suit the English. Couldn't be translated to fit in the Zulu – the correct Zulu'.

Nothembu likened the 'directness' of the translations to 'being in court when people are just putting words as they are without knowing that they are ...'. She identified the 'problem' as being located in the dissimilarity between English and isiZulu grammatical systems, saying that 'are not exactly the same'. Thus, when someone attempts a direct translation, 'exactly as it is in the English part, you don't get the real thing in the Zulu part'. So forced did Nothembu experience the isiZulu translations that she was convinced a non-mother tongue speaker had translated them, someone who 'was an English speaker who knows a bit of Zulu'. Far from being a readable text, then, Nothembu felt it was more like a dictionary because 'a dictionary explains a word in Zulu and then in English' and this is how she experienced the translations. She concluded that a 'person who doesn't know English at all, cannot read this Zulu'. Folly's perceptions resonated with Nothembu's. She too felt that isiZulu 'becomes more difficult if you use a foreign word in it because there are some words that are ... not there, do not exist in Zulu, and the minute you translate a certain word, maybe you make it Zulu but it's an English word'.

As shown in the previous chapter, Dick linked his reasons for not using the isiZulu translations to being a speaker of English as an additional language. Many of the mistakes he made in English he thus regarded as 'intruding because of your first language ... [and] not because we are not observant'. The possible result of this situation was that 'we find ourselves astray! We are left out now, you are saying something which is out of point'. He made a direct link between language 'and this thing, culture', and identity, describing his own

identity as 'a Zulu speaker'. Implicit in being 'a Zulu speaker' was the obligation to 'respect how do ... how I grew up, I must portray the way that my parent have shown, so ... many of the things are attached to my culture in Zulu' i.e. his Primary Discourse. However, English 'represent my work life [a Secondary Discourse] ... and is something I am living on. With it I'm making a living'. In effect, therefore, Dick was 'living in two worlds', making use of English 'for progress', but Zulu for 'the upbringing of my kids ... and to give what advice ... we are not allowed to do this in our culture.'

Engaging with the isiZulu texts meant that Michelle, too, operated out of 'two worlds', the primary one being her 'Zulu' world. And so, 'we think in Zulu and then we tried to translate it because we are mainly Zulu speakers'. These constant changes from one language to another were 'hindering' Michelle. When she read in English, she would translate what she had read into isiZulu, and then in order to write about what she had read, she would go back to English. However, if it was possible to understand it in Zulu, 'it's not so difficult to translate it to English'. To facilitate her learning, Michelle made heavy use of an English dictionary.

Folly shared Michelle's experiences. Unpacking what it meant to be a speaker of English as an additional language grappling with English texts, Folly said that 'first read it in English and then you put it in isiZulu. You think in isiZulu and then try it in English and then you can answer back'. There was an additional problem for Folly, however, in all this to-ing and fro-ing between languages that stemmed as she perceived it, from isiZulu being a 'very very long language', and thus disallowing 'short cuts'. The consequences of this for Folly were that, 'because we are translating it from isiZulu so it will take a long time before you can reach the point and you will end up people saying I've written four pages, but mine are eight'. And when Nothembu made her notes in the margins ('I bulge') as she worked her way through readings, these were in English rather than isiZulu because she knew that when she came to write her assignment she wouldn't use isiZulu. 'So I'll learn ... I must learn to understand it in English and do it in English. ... So when I put the Zulu words, it will be difficult again to think back and get the English word so that I can write it down'. However, in her 'mind', she understood in isiZulu. When it came to praying, however, the situation was very different from 'learning' for Nothembu, for 'it's better to pray in Zulu because sometimes when you pray something comes on its own, so the thinking is in my language so it's better for me to pray in my language'.

Lankshear notes that, "Discourses, or forms of life, involve agreed-upon combinations of linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours, values, goals, beliefs, assumptions, and the like which social groups have evolved and which their members share. *The important point here is that the language component is inseparable from the other elements in these*

'combinations'" (1997, p.25). [Emphasis in original.] Thus, while the participants here appear to speak only about 'language bits', what they reveal in doing so is the tension evoked by having to constantly exit and re-enter two different Discourses, the one a Cultural Discourse with exceptionally strong links to participants' Primary Discourse (and hence a primary identity), and the other a Secondary Discourse in which they are obliged to invest themselves if they hope to 'succeed' in the Honours programme. A paradox emerges when a *solution* to the struggle to constantly juxtapose their Primary Discourse with a Secondary Discourse is found in *abandoning* the primary medium of the cultural processes that constitute their primary identity in favour of English, a critical constituent of the hegemonic Secondary Discourse.

So this is a very complex issue and there is much more at stake than simply a choice about whether to read a text in isiZulu or in English. The issue is further compounded, however, by the fact (evident in the data below) that *both English and isiZulu texts* constituted the 'language bits' of an unfamiliar Secondary Discourse i.e. 'Academic' Discourse, thus adding to participants' struggles with *both* texts. Folly and Dick, particularly, experienced the isiZulu in the translations as uncommon i.e. 'not the kind of Zulu that you use on your communicating', and 'unlike the Zulu we speak daily' (respectively), and both decided to ignore them. Folly was uncertain of 'the writing genres in isiZulu, whether the type of writing really fits in the language', and their value for ordinary folk. She took, for example, 'the issue of the academic argument' and wondered 'for whom it will be written', basing her reservations on her belief that 'most academics are the people who understand English' (thereby, amongst other things, underscoring the insidious power of English). More seriously for Folly, was the potential consequence of having a stratum of isiZulu elevated beyond the reach of the average person. She saw that this 'will further widen the gap of the communicative isiZulu with the academic one ... and that will make those that doesn't understand academic side of it further not understand it anymore' because 'these kinds of writing' i.e. 'the academic writing ... nowhere they can be used in our society. We don't get symposiums or things like that, that we need to talk about them in our own language'. Finally, and in almost direct contrast to Nothembu, Folly concluded that because the isiZulu in the translations was 'more deep, it's more difficult, it would take someone who have a strong Zulu background' to have benefited from them.

Folly's fears need to be listened to carefully in order to determine the real source of them. Is she really speaking as an authority on the Discourse needs of Zulu society – suggested by her use of the pronoun 'our'? (More on the 'we' pronoun will be discussed shortly). And if she is, which isn't practically possible, is she right about 'academic writing' having no place in

this society? To both these questions I would maintain that the answer is no. I would argue that Folly's response is best explained by seeing it as a reaction to her fears and feelings of inadequacy in the face of the Academic Discourse she encountered in the RWAT module, and which threw her established professional identity so badly into disarray. What she is reacting to here are *all* the constituents that go to make up 'Academic Discourse' – not just 'the academic argument' – but the unspoken 'ways of being', 'rules of practice' etc. that characterise it *in any language*. Thus though she thought the problem lay with the isiZulu words, it in fact lay with the Discourse.

Dick echoed a similar sentiment to Folly. He said that he 'had a look at one or two paragraphs' but quickly said to himself that 'no, I'm not going to be able to understand this if I'm making use of Zulu'. Like Folly then, he experienced the Zulu as 'an academical thing' and 'quite a different subject, which you cannot talk about that thing to a man on the street, because he's not interested in that ... he is interested in the communicative language'. He endorsed Folly's view that the type of isiZulu required someone with 'a strong Zulu background', identifying isiZulu mother tongue Grade 12 teachers, and 'the writers of Zulu' as those most likely to be able to engage with the translations. Thus Dick resolved 'not to look at what is written in Zulu because I knew that I'm going to write something which is very wrong, because I'll be understanding it the other way round', thereby underscoring the point made by all four of the above participants that the translations were rendered unusable as an effective learning tool for them.

Zola and Michelle, however, did not share the same experiences and perceptions of the isiZulu translations as the four above i.e. they did not constitute the barrier they had for the others. Both these participants read all the translations, and neither had a problem with the 'level' of isiZulu in them, finding 'the richness of the words that are used' as indicative of the translations being written 'by someone who knows it [isiZulu]'. Zola's perception of the translator was that 'she didn't use the ... I mean the word that does not fit exactly ... about the topic ... on the English side'. Despite having read all the translations, however, Zola did not make any further active use of them. This move was grounded in her sense that it was because she knew isiZulu so *well*, that she did not have to pay further attention to the isiZulu texts, not because they were ineffective texts. Focusing ultimately on the English texts exclusively was thus because 'English is not my mother tongue ... so English I have to *read* it, try and understand it, try and look for the meaning, and look for the word that I don't understand'. Zola also expressed a great 'love to learn it [English]' and recounted how she helped English mother tongue students learn isiZulu while they taught her more English.

Michelle surmised that because she is a Grade 12 isiZulu mother tongue teacher with a Bachelor of Arts degree in isiZulu, the isiZulu translations were not a problem for her. What did offend Michelle was other students' negative reactions to the translations. She was 'a little bit hurt' by this and felt that these students 'are degrading our Zulu'. Importantly, Michelle read the isiZulu texts *before* reading the English ones (the only participant to do this), and though in her view the isiZulu used in the translations was 'good', she recalled that some students had said that 'some of the words are not translated right'. She herself, however, 'didn't have a problem when reading those things because I'm used to it'.

Michelle and Zola's ease with the isiZulu translations clearly indicates a *lack* of inter-Discoursal tension. In their case, I would suggest that lived experiences *outside* of the Honours programme had inducted them into levels of isiZulu Academic Discourse that were sufficiently comparable to those they experienced in the translations in the RWAT module. Thus, far from evoking feelings of fear and inadequacy, encountering these texts enhanced their primary 'Zulu' identity and, particularly for Michelle, facilitated a more effective learning process. That Zola still made a choice to work with the English texts only, was thus not a choice made out of fear, but one based on Discourse confidence.

7.5.2 On the right to say 'we'

In numerous instances, evident in the data, all six participants make use of the 'we' pronoun and thus, effectively speak on behalf of others. The following are some examples: 'We are not allowed to do this in our culture', 'It's unlike when we grew up' (Dick); As maths people 'we don't write a lot', 'We have those community values that we uphold' (Folly); 'That's where the problem lies with us when we are teaching the language', 'Sometimes when we teach, we don't cater for the kids to practice' (Nothembu); 'Because it's us. It's a culture thing', 'When we grow up, we couldn't ask ... we couldn't ask why. Why was not in our vocabulary' (Vusi); 'We didn't know how to use those words', 'We think in Zulu and then we tried to translate it' (Michelle); 'We as the second language speakers we don't practice this language', 'We are always saying we are confused' (Zola).

My own response to this practice sees an implicit link between it and the strength of the African collective consciousness, which in turn I would argue is *derived from a shared recognition of key elements of Primary Discourses*. Furthermore, I would contend that it is also worthwhile to consider whether this practice was enacted so overtly because the participants found themselves in such foreign territory, so under threat, that recourse to a majority, known 'we', in some way balanced the scales of size and dominance this new Secondary Discourse represented. As a way into a more in-depth interpretation of this

practice, I have approached the discussion from a phenomenological and Discourse perspective since the combined lens, I believe, enriches a possible understanding of it. Towards the end, I offer a 'pedagogical' comment on it. In starting from a phenomenological perspective, I have drawn on Spiegelberg (1973) to assist.

Spiegelberg's primary intention is to unpack the use of the term 'we' in social contexts, and sociology, a task he believed (in 1973) constituted 'unbroken ground'. He starts by making a broad distinction between 'we-talk' that occurs when 'we' is used to refer to people in physical proximity to each other i.e. close enough to be seen and/or in direct face-to-face relationship, and whom he then labels '*copresents*', and when 'we' is used in the absence of 'we-partners' and whom he thus refers to as the '*absentee-we*'. He also seeks to address the 'transforming functions' of the we-pronoun. Since the way in which participants in this study employed 'we-talk' reflects more closely Spiegelberg's '*absentee-we*', I will focus most particularly on this.

The first point he makes in terms of a *linguistic analysis* of the use of 'we' to indicate the '*absentee-we*', in terms of the way it gets dropped into everyday type conversations, is that it is exclusive, and exclusionary. That is, it indicates that 'you' are different and separate from 'us' – and likely to remain so. The second point is that the number of people represented by 'we' in this instance is unknown, though Spiegelberg would have it that "it is essential that 'we' be specified as a certain class of persons such as 'we sociologists' or 'we phenomenologists'" (1973, p.136). At a first level of analysis, there is not much to contest here, and I would say that the data examples provided above exemplify both these points. In other words, each time the participants made use of the pronoun 'we', they were clearly distinguishing themselves – as black, isi-Zulu speaking South Africans with a different history, language, system of beliefs, values etc. – from me, a white, English speaking South African with another history, language system etc. In terms of the 'class' of people on whose behalf they spoke, in this case it can best be described as 'we Zulus', or perhaps more broadly, 'we black South Africans' (though this last would probably have been a more loosely defined 'class of persons' than Spiegelberg had in mind).

Thinking into the matter phenomenologically, however, Spiegelberg, of necessity, explores the nature of the we-consciousness differently. Though I am condensing Spiegelberg here, essentially he maintains that if we move from what I would call an 'entry level' experience of the we-consciousness e.g. being a member of a group, but more consciously still retaining my I-consciousness, to a 'We-Union', which is a far greater, more profound 'moving together' in which we abandon our 'separateness' (not our individuality), we find a new union. In this new whole, "each claims the other as belonging to him and is claimed by the other in return.

In this sense and to this extent they might be said to identify and become 'solidaric' through a kind of 'soldiering' which imbeds them into a 'solid' unit, as the etymology of the word 'solidaric' suggests" (1973, p.142). In Discourse terms, I would argue that this type of 'union' characterises the cultural bonds invoked by the early socialisation processes inherent in any Primary Discourse. Thus, although Spiegelberg makes no link whatsoever between his concept of 'We-Unions' and that which might be said to be the 'glue' of cultural formations and identity, I see something useful in the way he speaks about the We-Union in terms of offering one possible explanation for how and why the participants in this study make use of the 'absentee-we' so easily.

Spiegelberg also distinguishes between different types of We-Unions viz. those which are strong or weak (determined by how much 'partners' have invested in them); permanent or temporary (determined by passing or lasting need); and superficial or deep (determined by the level of emotional involvement). Considering the way in which participants in this study made use of the 'we' pronoun, I would suggest that they did so from a position within a We-Union (of Zulu-ness) that was strong, permanent, and deep, and consequently accorded each of them a legitimate right to speak on behalf of those not present.

From the above discussion, it should be clear that 'we' talk can be understood to represent so much more than just a tendency to speak on behalf of others. From a pedagogical perspective, therefore, I think it is crucial that attention is paid to this pattern whenever it emerges. It could be a sign of distress (that a 'Discourse-crossing' is proving extremely intimidating) and/or a deeply embedded cultural pattern, both of which will impact on the planned teaching and learning process. In the case of distress, it would then be possible to ease the situation for students through making Discourse features and demands more explicit, and whenever possible, opening the debate in general on 'Discourses'. In the case of 'we' talk relating to cultural 'ways of being' i.e. Cultural Discourse, it should be possible to integrate an orientation towards collective/ collaborative 'effort' in the formal curriculum. In my view, this is not simply to introduce 'group work', and 'group assessment' (which of course, can be done), but to make provision for students, proactively, to establish study groups (see discussion below on informal study groups), and then to provide the kind of support that nurtures existing Discourse strengths, and develops new ones. In other words, to formally engage with 'we' talk as a critical element of the journey inherent in crossing from existing Secondary Discourses into Academic Discourse. This puts the onus on lecturers to recognise and respect the Discourse resources that students bring to the classroom.

7.6 Discourse and ‘situated practices’

By now the reader should be clear on the nature of Discourses, and the way in which they function to include/ exclude, the way in which they can constitute sites of conflict and tension, how they are instantiated by ‘situated activities’ or practices, and that ‘meaning’ is always ‘situated’ i.e. that it resides within the socially situated activities and practices of a Discourse, and not outside them. In this section, I identify a range of ‘situated practices’ that participants experienced and examine the nature of them in the light of what they can tell us about where the participants were placed in regard to either their Primary Discourses, or the Secondary Discourses they encountered in the RWAT module. Though there have been other examples of ‘situated practices’ embedded in data already discussed, I am hoping that this focused discussion will provide particular clarity as to the role they play in enacting and reproducing Discourses. In the context of any curriculum, therefore, situated practices can be understood as critical pedagogical elements. We ignore an in-depth understanding of them at both our own, and students’ peril.

7.6.1 The Scheme for the Academic Argument

In Chapter 2, the rationale for highlighting ‘the academic argument’ as the primary genre to be taught in the RWAT module was provided, as was the Scheme for the Academic Argument which formed the basis (in terms of structure) on which student ‘writing instruction’ (for that’s effectively what it became) proceeded, so there is no need to repeat any of that here. The purpose of this section is to foreground participants’ *responses* to the Scheme and to interpret them in terms of the notion of ‘situated practices’. In this way, I believe it is possible to gain far greater insight into why four of them struggled with it (while two did not), than simply to attribute this struggle to ‘inadequacy’ or ‘poor language competence’, on the one hand, and ‘success’ on the other, to being ‘competent’. As a way into this discussion, those who struggled will speak first.

Even when shown the Scheme in the interviews, Dick battled at first to ‘situate’ meaning within in it. Finally, after a long pause, he said, ‘Oh structure ... ok, right, academic writing’, and then conceded that ‘I don’t know whether I used it much ...’ After another long pause during which time he continued to stare at the page in front of him, he recalled that a claim was necessary and that one supported this claim with evidence from the ‘authors’. But the ‘model’ of writing the academic argument reflected in the Scheme was so alien to Dick that he decided that he should create his ‘own way of thinking’ and develop his own structure, which he drew for me on a piece of paper. This visual representation of Dick’s structure depicted a vertical line with a curved line weaving its way, snake-like down the line, criss-

crossing it at regular intervals showing that 'when we have a point, you go in-out, go in-out, until you come to a conclusion, whereby you are summing up everything'.

Nothembu, on the other hand, made no sense of the Scheme in time for the first assignment that required it (Assignment 2), so she 'didn't write background information', she simply started writing 'what was in the topic. Summarising in my own words'. She remembered that her tutor had 'tried to explain this thing, ei, but it was just maths in Afrikaans to me. Because it was a new thing'.

Michelle found most aspects of the structure embedded in the Scheme difficult to master. 'Hhayi! Hhayi! ... Heh!' she said. 'Most of us – it was difficult. ... It was new to us'. She also struggled 'with that thing, background', and formulating claims and topic sentences. The 'other thing was that coherence', and in Michelle's case, she was 'failing at that'. Vusi's first response was that, 'Ai, this was very difficult ... very very very difficult for me'. He described some 'macro' issues that were a problem for him, like 'finding out whether this [move] should be optional or compulsory, why it should be compulsory ... how to compile it ... the unfamiliarity and the grouping'. The notion of 'grouping' was difficult for him to internalize because what it meant effectively was that 'you have to understand all this together, these [all the 'moves'] should work together actually ... should work closely'. And so he worked to write his development of argument paragraphs, 'which as time goes on you get used to it', and end with 'the concluding stage'. However, despite all his efforts, the tutor had still said of his second assignment that 'No, you don't have to write so many sentences, you need just to write maybe five or ten or whatever sentences', accentuating the case that 'there's a lot to be done'. Nevertheless, if Vusi were to describe how he wrote prior to taking the RWAT module, and subsequent to it, he would say that he 'wasn't better as I'm doing now'. What this meant for him post 2004, was that he could 'now write my thesis' and that he tried to write 'them academic'. What the Scheme taught him ultimately was to 'understand how to relate the paragraphs, how to link and all that ... just to give my sentences name ... the numbers ... the sentences that will be claim sentences in the paragraph'. In short, it 'gained' him the idea of how to write 'logically'.

In summing up the node of experience of the Scheme for the Academic Argument for these four participants, it is worth re-establishing which aspects were raised as problematic by them. From the above discussion, these are: the optional/ compulsory moves element, the demand that background information be provided, that claims (in the form of topic sentences) be formulated (which infers a sentence to sentence relationship within a paragraph), that these be supported by evidence from the readings (not one's own opinion), that development of argument paragraphs should follow and lead to the concluding stage,

that the issues of 'logic' and coherence must be addressed, and that all of these should 'work together'.

If all these 'elements' are taken together, it is quite plain to see that they represent a particular literacy practice and one that is highly '*situated*' within a Western hegemonic Discourse, specific to formal schooling and higher education. In addition to being 'representational resources' (Lillis, 2001) of what Scollon and Scollon (1981) first named 'essayist literacy' (see 1981, p.48), descriptions of which Gee (1996, p.60) and Lillis (2001, p.38) appropriate freely, participants (and all students taking the RWAT module) experienced them within a particularly restrictive framework viz. the genre of the academic argument (after Martin, 1985). I suggest that the four above who had such difficulty identifying the *predetermined* 'situated meanings' embedded within the combined, layered force of the situated practices of 'essayist literacy' and 'the Scheme', did so because there was a non-alignment between Secondary Discourses and thus, de facto, between situated practices and situated meanings.

But what of Zola and Folly's experiences? Zola thought that 'this thing helped us when we were writing the essay' and Folly found 'it made a lot of sense', though neither had encountered it before. What emerged from Zola's experiences was that she had been prepared for what she encountered in the Scheme by a friend who had completed his B.Ed Honours just before she registered. In other words, she had begun to be inducted into some of the situated practices of both the 'Scheme' and 'essayist literacy'. So she understood that 'your introduction must show the whole essay'. In addition, she had made her own observations through all her reading of books, that 'you just find that structure. You find that the ... other paragraphs links with another up to the end. Even the conclusion', so nothing came as a great shock to her. But she too, struggled with formulating claims. However, with other members of her study group 'we tried, we tried and tried to work together. To take out the claims'.

Though Folly 'didn't understand the structure before', it quickly appealed to her mathematical mind. Steeped in calculations that follow formulae, she discerned a formula in the Scheme – 'you start with this, you follow with this, in your first paragraph. And then you link your paragraphs, your first claims, put support ... and then the conclusion'. Providing background information made the same sort of sense to Folly as it had to Nothembu. She too quickly saw that 'it's not just that I'm having this point of view, but where do I base my point of view from?' More than this, though, was the confidence Folly drew from her experience of being in education and 'structures' for a long time, such that 'you get a lot of information about the happenings around you, so it wasn't difficult to draw on background information'. In Folly's

case therefore, and as indicated earlier, she was able to draw on the situated meanings of another Secondary Discourse to make sense of rudimentary components of the situated practices representative of the Scheme and essayist literacy.

By defining participants' responses to the Scheme in terms of 'situated practices', and locating the practices represented by the Scheme within the practices of 'essayist literacy', I am attempting to target what I see as 'the heart of the matter' with regard to the pedagogy and ideology of the RWAT module, hence I would like to delve a little deeper into this powerful interplay of 'practices'. To do so, I draw on Lillis (2001) particularly.

Lillis identifies 'essayist literacy' as "the central action of higher education" (*ibid*, p.53). This form of literacy, which Scollon and Scollon (1981) believed underpins the 'modern consciousness' (see more on in this in Chapter 2), is the most privileged literacy in Western societies and is linked directly to formal schooling. In other words, "to do schooling successfully means doing essayist literacy successfully" (*ibid*). Rose, Hart and other Systemic Functional Linguists, would probably attribute the same sentiment to being able to "read and write powerful 'factual' texts", with 'the argument' being one of the most common in higher education contexts. For the purposes of this discussion, however, 'essayist literacy' (in my view) denotes a more historically hegemonic representation of 'ways of being', ways that have dominated student lives for hundreds of years in dozens of 'institutions of higher learning' contexts. Hence, its all pervasive power and durability.

Essayist literacy can, in one sense, be recognised as 'decontextualised discourse', although Scollon and Scollon also refer to it as 'reflexively contextualised' discourse. This does not mean that a reader cannot enter into a relationship with the text, but that the implications of a text/ writer being given one chance to 'put a case' must be understood. As Scollon and Scollon point out, this 'one chance' phenomenon has important consequences for the discourse structure of a text. They say:

The important relationships to be signalled are those between sentence and sentence ... As a reader this requires a constant monitoring of grammatical and lexical information. ... In reading essayist prose the contextual clues to interpretation are in the text itself. New and given information in essayist prose are signalled syntactically and lexically ... This requires a higher attention to syntax and especially to sequential relations among sentences. ... Logical relations of sentences ... must be explicitly marked (1981, p.48).

Central to the essayist prose in Scollon and Scollon's work is "the fictionalization of both the audience and the author" (*ibid*), a way with language that is socialised into being and fundamental to the 'modern consciousness'.

Lillis picks up Scollon and Scollon's engagement with the term 'essayist literacy' and uses it to explain why in the United Kingdom, current pedagogy surrounding essayist literacy is failing the needs of 'non-traditional' students. Given that in this study, all participants represent 'non-traditional' higher education students, I believe Lillis' work has relevance. So all-pervasive does she consider the confusion that non-traditional students seem to be experiencing in higher education in the UK "that it signals the need to look beyond the notion of individual confusion towards an institutional practice of mystery" (2001, p.53). She remarks on how the 'old' "dominant model of teaching and learning as implicit induction" (*ibid*, p.54) seems to have worked, so long as access to higher education institutions was restricted to small numbers of elite students with backgrounds that prepared them seamlessly for university. However, in the face of the increasing numbers and diversity of students now registering for degrees, this no longer holds true. And the same can be said for historically white universities (HWUs) in South Africa, particularly presently, at post graduate level in teacher education programmes.

Lillis recognises that there is "clearly diversity across literacy practices within HE" (*ibid*, p.39) but contends that "the notion of essayist literacy is important for exploring student-writers' experience of meaning making in academic writing in several respects" (*ibid*). Of these, the most important in my view, is that it helps academics to see that *students' writing* within higher education institutions "constitutes a very particular kind of literacy practice which is bound up with the workings of a particular social institution" (*ibid*). In other words, if all academics could grasp the foundational, informing principle of a social practice view of 'literacy', a small start could be made in shifting responsibility for students' academic literacy practices (seen along a continuum) to those people who have set the 'rules' of entry and practice in advance. "In brief", Lillis says, "essayist literacy provides a way of talking about student writing which acknowledges the relationship between literacy practices and knowledge-making practices whilst situating both within a specific socio-historical tradition" (*ibid*, p.40).

In the case of the RWAT module, and on the basis of the above discussion, I would suggest that what participants experienced was not one, but two 'practices', neither of which can in fact be de-linked from the other. Thus, from the participants' perspective, they understood themselves to be simply grappling with mastery of a discrete set of 'stages' and 'moves' – and the very close attention paid to the details of 'structure', numbers of sentences per paragraphs, number of paragraphs per 'argument' probably reinforced this sense. From an interpretive position, however, what becomes clearer is that what they actually encountered was a form of literacy very close to 'essayist literacy' and thus, elements of a very particular

Discourse. With no similar or prior experiences of these very particularly situated practices, participants floundered.

7.6.2 Assessment

To be 'successful' in RWAT assignments requires that students 'do what they are told'. That is, the 'situated rules of practice' that govern assessment in the module (and in all modules in the Honours programme) reflect a critical aspect of the hierarchy of power inherent in the Discourse of the Academy. That's one very important point to make. The dominant form of assessment is a written 'essay' in the genre of the 'academic argument' (according to the Scheme discussed above and in Chapter 2). So, a second important point to make is that the form of assessment in the RWAT module can be said to reflect 'the central action of higher education' viz. essayist literacy as discussed above, and is thus one to which the majority of students, and certainly the participants in this study, had no previous experience. Each assignment, therefore, is a 'situated activity', which is part of a wider set of *situated* assessment practices, all of which contribute to the instantiation of a Discourse (Academic) which bears little resemblance to one participants had experienced before.

Living 'without resemblance', however, can be very gruelling, but the textured details of this experience are seldom seen or invited by lecturers/ academics in charge of courses. Yet, it is these lived experiences that determine how students position themselves in relation to 'being' in this new Discourse they must attempt to enter. For each 'situated practice' in this new Discourse, there are a host of 'situated meanings' which must be recognised and internalised, but what the data below shows is that when situated meanings are opaque and inaccessible, the result is fear, confusion, misinterpretation and potentially failure. The responsibility on the part of academics to 'situate' assessment practices more overtly and explicitly within a Discourse framework, seems obvious.

Thus, Michelle, Zola and Dick shared experiences of anxiety and confusion in the face of their performance in assignments. When Michelle 'got 40 something' for Assignment 2, for example, she was 'shocked' and she asked herself, 'How come? Am I *dom*²¹?' She would always check the mark first, and if she had failed, 'your heart *beat*'. She found 'this assessment it's so difficult for us' because of the 'new terms that they must use which are difficult ... they are confusing us', confusion arising from the fact 'they don't use direct words'. When she got her assignments back, she would 'leave it sometime', maybe for a day, before she would look at it 'nicely'. Always, though, she would this '*alone* – with *no-one*'

²¹ 'dom': an Afrikaans word meaning 'stupid'

[all emphasis in original]. Tutor comments that simply identified a problem, or criticized without offering a constructive alternative, were of course, of no use to Michelle at all.

Zola too, would always look at her assignment results '*alone*'. And then she would check her marks. If she had definitely failed then 'Ei, you become more confused'. She would then take the assignment home, read through all the comments again and 'check where you made mistakes'. If an assignment looked anything like the exemplar assignment shown in the interviews (which had many, and mostly unhelpful tutor comments on it), and Zola had had an assignment that looked similar, she would feel 'bad, if they are bad comments'.

Dick's descriptions of his assessment experiences, while echoing those of Michelle and Zola above, also take us beyond them, into the truly shadowed areas of failure and shame.

Bearing in mind that Dick had already failed the RWAT module twice by the time the final interview was held, his experiences were inevitably more acutely defined, as the nuanced nodes in the previous chapter showed. What emerges from a careful exploration of these nodes is the complexity evoked by experiences of multiple failure in the context of a perceived 'high stakes' enterprise. So Dick's anguish, shame and loneliness are rendered more and more visible. Not only did he 'not know what is it that makes me to get low marks', but he felt completely trapped and demoralized, having no idea whatever 'how am I going to get out from this, because I've paid a lot of money ... because we attach everything to this'. Part of the 'everything' that was attached to Dick's efforts to improve his qualifications lay in the culturally defined expectation that a 'learned person' does not learn only for themselves. 'Learned people' also 'help others in the family, the extended family, and so forth', so the pressure to succeed was enormous.

Thus, for Dick, the consequences of being exposed as a failure were extremely severe, fingering the very centre of his Being. And so he made the decision not to tell anyone in the community i.e. outside his immediate family, that he was studying, 'being afraid to tell a person because you know some of the courses you have dropped them and so forth', so he would excuse himself from church meetings, saying to his friends, 'I have got something that I am doing'. He also saw it as an immediate threat to the regard in which his learners held him – 'you come to class and you ask yourself what if one of these kids knows that I've failed the module that I was doing at the university? And you see that it is contribute negatively to them, they won't trust you, you see ... they won't trust you'. Finally, he saw being exposed as a failure as a threat to his standing in his RWAT tutorial group – 'you can't show anybody your marks ... they'll start to look down upon you, you see. So there is nobody who want to show'. Despite Dick not showing his fellow students his marks, however, 'the guys' did

'compliment each other' and encourage each other saying, 'we are going to make it, it's just that we haven't yet got the key to go through'.

Having wrapped himself in a veil of secrecy, Dick faced his RWAT supplementary examination alone. He asked his principal 'for two days not to go to school' just prior to the exam and went through the module on those two days. Immediately after the exam, he said to himself, 'well, I can say I did it' and that he was 'on the right track', thus, discovering he had failed again was shocking news. The only reason he could think of why he failed was that 'maybe it's that the points were not enough', since he was so sure that he had done what was expected of him, that is, 'write it in the manner that it says all about what I'm going to say on the next ... on the following paragraphs up to the conclusion. ... So I had to look at these authors, what are they saying, and then know all ... I mean, know the points, how ... what it is they are arguing about and so forth'. What the experience of failure showed Dick is that failure is possible, 'that it might happen that you understand something and you write about it, and you find out that no, you were not writing about what has been asked for'. In preparation for a third try at RWAT, Dick planned to study the assessment criteria given in the learning guides 'which is stating what is it that they are looking for'. At the time of the interviews, Dick rationalized the attitude he had taken to his repeated failing of module by saying, 'I just want to surprise them when I'm graduating and they come to me'.

For Vusi and Nothembu, the activities surrounding Assignment 3 stood out particularly in their experience of assessment in the RWAT module, though for different reasons. In this session, students bring a draft version of Assignment 3 (the essay that carries the greatest weighting in the coursework), but with each paragraph written on a clean sheet of paper. They also come armed with scissors and glue. They then work on each paragraph in the contact session, and 'cut and paste' their revised paragraphs in the order they ultimately decide they should be, conferring with peers and their tutors while doing so. Because it is such a unique, concrete process, it tends not to be forgotten.

What Vusi foregrounded was the obligation to comply with what students were told to do. The actual task embedded in the 'cutting and pasting' exercise i.e. 'to write the essays', in Vusi's view, 'wasn't easy for us students', but as time went on what Vusi noticed was 'that whether we like it or not, this is what is wanted'. In other words, the business of writing a paragraph, having it peer and tutor reviewed, then having to 'start afresh and re-write it again ... was not good', but as Vusi (fairly astutely) observed, 'since we are students, we have to oblige'. Nevertheless, as he had already described himself as one who came to the Honours programme 'ready to learn ... ready to accept ... consume whatever is brought to me', he

didn't resist this assignment process, saying that 'at least it helped us because we knew that ok, now we pass our assignments'.

Nothembu, on the other hand, internalized the RWAT instruction for Assignment 3 to 'start a new paragraph on a new page', and the oft-repeated mantra 'you must do what you did in RWAT, you must do what you did in RWAT' so loyally, that when she came to write an assignment in the Psychology module, she did the same thing. As a result, her introduction in the Psychology essay 'was just so small ... and then I cut the page here, and my comment was 'this is not a good practice for an academic assignment'. Though she 'learnt from there', it left her really confused and 'even now I don't know which one is good or is right'.

An engagement with the experiences just described offer some insight into what it meant for these participants to 'live assessment' in the RWAT module. Uncertainty, self-doubt, confusion, anxiety, fear, loneliness, shame – all these penetrated efforts to 'do' assignments and 'get' marks. The danger of perceptions of the business of a core module like the RWAT module also emerges, and one wonders what price Vusi paid for surrendering his autonomous Self to the whims of the module co-ordinators. Assessment, the data shows, was thus both a provocative and punitive element of the RWAT module, and a critical determiner of Discourse identity.

7.6.3 Informal study groups

Students in the B.Ed Honours programme are always encouraged to form their own informal study groups (usually defined as three or more students working together), and many do. However, many find sufficient support within their tutorial groups and/or colleagues at their schools and/or have domestic/ personal circumstances which inhibit participation in a group outside of contact session hours. Underpinning the institutional promotion of collaborative learning is a social constructivist view of how knowledge is created i.e. it rests on the assumption that the 'collective' mind has more resources than a single mind. In distance teaching and learning contexts, informal study groups are of special significance, fast emerging as a critical element of learning support for students in DE programme all over the world, though essentially oppositional to traditional notions of the distance learner as one who is self-sufficient and studies alone. In the Honours programme students were urged to form these groups.

In this study, all participants drew strength from peers with whom they met outside contact session hours, but the exact nature and role of this support varied, as did the level of participation by the participants. Thus, in looking more closely at the groups, Zola's must be

noted for its highly supportive and cohesive nature and the fact that it was constituted *before* the first contact session even began. Through quite fortuitous contact in the local town library, within three days the group was formed. The group met very regularly, even over weekends, in order to prepare for upcoming contact sessions. The responsibility of members was to 'read before we came to the group'. However, if members had been unable to read (for whatever reasons), no-one was censured. Instead, 'we used to make others catch up. We used to help each other so that we did the same ... at the same level, at the same place'. The group tackled tasks (portfolio and in-text tasks) together too, and discussed 'what we don't understand'. It was around 'understanding the content' that Zola's group provided the greatest support because although sometimes she found herself 'not understanding the content ... when you go to the group you'll find someone has understood the content very well'.

Problems emerged for this group, however, when they discovered that they were not all in the same tutorial class. 'Everyone came with different stories' from their tutors and tutorial experiences. What this highlighted for Zola was that 'Eh, you see, we were not the same. So we don't teach in the same way ... so that is why we used to come with different ideas'. Thus when the group would meet after a contact session, members would come with 'different information... in such a way ... you end up following what is said by your tutor because you become confused'. Zola used to 'listen to all the stories' but if she saw that 'the other stories are confusing' she would just leave them 'and do the ones my tutor told me to do'. So though the group shared ideas, in the end 'you choose which one you take'. Despite these difficulties, Zola was of the opinion that 'a study group is very helpful'.

Vusi also belonged to a self-generated group which met in the university library 'or maybe a place wherever it's convenient'. There they would 'discuss some topics' [from the module] and talk about 'whatever we think'. However, it was the responsibility of the group members 'to study first'. In Vusi's study group they mixed languages (isiZulu and English) despite all being isiZulu first language speakers. isiZulu was used to 'explain sometimes ... like having some anecdote put on our discussions and all that stuff' because 'it's easy that way'. However, because 'at the end of the day ... we write in English', English too played a central role.

Nothembu relied 'mostly on the group' for a range of support: accessing the readings – 'we went to the group, and we read the thing and we discussed the thing', sharing ideas once assignments were returned – 'sometimes we would take the other person's claim' when the lecturer indicated that this was a 'good claim', and all would plan to use that claim in the exams, and preparing for examinations where 'people were just moving with this thing – oh,

this thing is not so difficult!' It was only when 'we are in the group' that Nothembu 'started to see, oh this is what was talking about there, talking about this, talking about this'.

Dick also belonged to a study group but his membership was extremely peripheral, a situation he put down to the consequences of 'living in the bundus²²'. He didn't have any friends doing the same qualification living nearby, but 'someone' from his tutorial group said 'that we must club together, study together'. This group, however, only met in 'town' (and Dick lived 80km from 'town') so it was only very occasionally that Dick would join this group. The purpose of the group, for Dick, was 'for understanding, what is going on within the module and so forth'. So the group members would discuss 'what do we understand the theory, how does it fit in on what we are doing ... and make examples, different examples on what we are doing'. As with Vusi's group, Dick's group members were all isiZulu mother tongue speakers. However, they would code switch 'because it happens that a person understands something better and you translate it into its own language'.

One member of Dick's group was particularly good at clarifying concepts for him, and she did this by way of providing examples. This approach registered deeply with Dick because 'you see, when a person is using examples, that's the way you begin to understand things'. He put her particular skill at doing this down to the fact that she was a junior primary school teacher and that teachers at this level 'need more examples' to help their young learners understand. The patience and caring this fellow-student displayed towards Dick made him feel that 'he was taking me as if I am her child', an experience that meant a great deal to him.

Folly on the other hand, though she belonged to a study group, was not reliant on them. She could, in her words, 'use both methods' i.e. study alone or as a member of a collective. She was used to studying alone, but she would see that 'ei, sometimes the group would ask you to come and help', and so she would go. However, while in the group, 'they will be aware that as I am helping them I am also learning something from them as well ... so you'd like share leadership', thus the benefits of getting together were mutually shared.

Michelle and her friend Thabisile worked together throughout the module, meeting during and after school hours, since both lived in close proximity to one another. It made sense to Michelle that they should work together 'because we are having the same subjects [in the Honours programme] so we are having the same problems'. These problems related almost exclusively to 'these English words' (as indicated earlier) and so they 'struggled with some of the words ... we didn't understand'.

²² Bundus: a colloquial term for a remote, rural, underdeveloped area

The data suggests that for all the participants, having peer support made a difference to their experience of the RWAT module. The groups, constituted as they were by people sharing many critical elements of a Primary Discourse, particularly ‘the language bits’, provided a safe space to ‘be’, a space that allowed a lowering of the affective filter (crucial to learning, especially in second language contexts, see Krashen, 1982), and which put ‘distance’ between the immediacy of the Secondary (Academic) Discourse when experienced in the physical environment of the university. And this was good for the participants. Anyone who has ever studied ‘at a distance’ knows the degree of loneliness and isolation that can permeate this type of study context, so getting together with peers (and often cementing friendships through the experience) can be a life-altering and success (however defined) enhancing experience. What is critical to this study, however, is to think more deeply into the nature of the ‘situated practices’ with which these groups engaged, and the consequences of these practices for the participants. In other words, what was really going on here, from a Discourse perspective, and to what extent did the processes engaged with in these study groups enhance or inhibit learning?

Bertram (2003), in a study of informal study groups on the same B.Ed Honours programme on which this research is based, noted on the positive side, that by forming their own groups, students were taking responsibility for their learning, and that students themselves were “convinced about the academic effectiveness and social benefits of studying together (*ibid*, p.23). The data from this study certainly endorses this view. Bertram’s research team’s observations of students in their study groups, however, revealed a worrying problematic, namely, that without any ‘expert’ voice to assist them, the students were “simply sharing their ignorance and not moving forward at all” (*ibid*, p.25). The task students were grappling with when observations for the study were conducted, required them to extrapolate from the distance learning materials, ‘five principles of holistic outcomes-based assessment’. In one group, very little happened for about 15 minutes before Bertram’s colleague intervened and told the students that they would *not* find a list headed ‘The five principles of holistic outcomes-based assessment’ in their learning materials but would have to constitute this list themselves. The second group had already agreed (during a previous informal study group session) that the ‘five principles’ were in fact the ‘five dimensions of assessment’ which appeared (as a heading) in the learning materials. In other words, they saw no conceptual distinction between a ‘principle’ and a ‘dimension’. Once again, Bertram’s colleague stepped in and told the second group what she had told the first. In yet another group, students told Bertram and her colleague that they had spent an entire week looking for the ‘principles’ and had finally decided that what was wanted was a list of methods of assessment. This group “was angry at the ‘University’ for setting an assignment ‘so they would fail’” (*ibid*, pp.22/23).

Bertram draws on the concepts of 'deep' and 'surface' learning (citing Martin and Saljo, [1984] 1997) to account for why the students in her groups struggled as they did, suggesting that what the 'University' required of them reflected a 'deep approach' whereas the students took a 'surface approach'. She attributes their 'surface orientation' to two things, "their educational background ... and their cognitive academic language proficiency" (Bertram, 2003, p.24). Without wanting to go into any more detail with regard to whether Bertram adequately accounts for students' behaviour in these groups, I would like to suggest that if 'what went on' in these informal study groups are considered in terms of 'situated practices' (with their embedded links to situated meanings, identity and Discourses), a more nuanced picture might emerge. Haggis (2003), in fact, offers an extremely useful and insightful critique of the trend in contemporary higher education practice to accept 'deep' and 'surface' approaches to learning as 'givens', and is well worth reading. The point she makes is that the reason academics fixate on 'deep' approaches as the only effective approaches to learning in higher education is because of their socially constructed nature and value-ladenness within a Discourse i.e. Academic Discourse (see further discussion on this point in Chapter 8), a point which underscores the thrust of my argument here.

Thus, if one looks at Zola's experience again, what seems to have been core to the *establishment* of her group was 'recognition' – on two levels, one at the level of all being strangers to a new Discourse (signalled by the 'artefacts' they all carried i.e. the RWAT learning guides), the other at the level of all being members of a shared Cultural Discourse (and by implication, many elements of the same Primary Discourse). The way in which the group 'worked' reflected many of the situated practices of the latter Discourse i.e. a strong collective effort, a spirit of *ubuntu*, shared vernacular and non-academic specialist varieties of language, and a shared, recognisable 'Zulu' identity. The main purpose of the group was around 'understanding the content'. Where the difficulties arose was when members of the group, belonging as some of them did to different tutorial groups, 'came with different stories'. When this happened, despite the cohesion and solidarity of the group, and despite asserting that 'you'll find someone has understood the content very well', Zola did what her *tutor* told her to do, not her peers. What Zola intuited, quite correctly, what was really at issue here was a set of situated practices in which 'content' and 'language' were both sides of the same coin, and that in order to penetrate the 'right' situated meanings embedded in this 'content', her tutor – a member of the privileged Discourse controlling the lives of the participants in this context – was the 'best' source of information.

Though the other participants did not raise the 'different stories' problem that Zola did, they did all meet for the same reasons i.e. to engage with 'content', thus I would suggest that the

interpretation I have applied to Zola's experience, applies to the others as well. What it is important to see then, is that informal study groups must be understood in terms of 'situated practices'. I think though, from what the participants say, and as a result simply perhaps from the purpose for which these study groups are established, that the situated practices of these study groups can also be characterised as 'hybrid' practices i.e. drawing on the representational resources of more than one Discourse. Thus, the degree to which they facilitate further induction into the Discourse of the academy (or a particular discipline), or do not, cannot be ascribed just to 'educational background' or lack of academic language proficiency, but to the extent to which they are able to mirror the situated practices (and embedded situated meanings) of the relevant Discourses.

7.7 The consequences of Secondary Discourse participation: Living 'time'

In relation to studying at a distance, 'time' was the central issue in all participants' experiences. This is a common theme echoed by 'distance' students throughout the world (see Lillis, 2001; Tait and Mills, 2003; Hellman, 2003). However, what this study discloses are fine-grained experiences of 'time', and its bedfellow 'sacrifice'. Both I would argue, are particularly critical to our understanding of the phenomenon, and make a considerable contribution to efforts to answer the key research questions. Through constellating these experiences and foregrounding shadings of difference and similarity, a saturated and startling picture of how 'living in time' emerges.

Situating what it meant to 'live time' for the participants in this study, within the parameters of the *consequences* of subscribing to a Secondary Discourse, however, is an important position to take (in my view), as it sustains and reinforces the primary thrust of this study as a whole, viz. to see into what it means to acquire an academic literacy. Reading experiences as the *lived consequences* of subscribing to a particular Discourse, is a way of extending an initial engagement with these notions, such that the more personal nuances of what I would describe as Secondary Discourse Displacement are appreciated. Foregrounding 'time' in the way this section aims to do, also reinforces the way in which a Discourse must be understood i.e. that they are 'forms of life'. Thus, because Discourses construct identities and literacies, they are implicitly about valuing, believing and acting in ways that make one group of people recognisable both to themselves and others. The way in which one engages in and with 'time', therefore, is critically reflective of one's Discourse membership.

As the reader engages below with the experiences of 'time' by participants in the study, I believe it will become apparent that what is really at issue here is the tension evoked by the jostling for dominance of a very powerful Secondary Discourse, over Primary Discourses. As

the intensity of the demands of the Secondary Discourse impact more and more on the fabric of participants' lives, they eat into, and erode, critical opportunities for the type of participation in their Primary Discourses that ensure continued 'recognition'. They also disrupt established 'reality sets' and force participants to interrogate 'situated meanings' in ways they had not done before.

Vusi, for example, when asked about the isiZulu translations, used the translation of the title of the Reppen (1994) article: 'The Genre Approach: Just Another Fad?' - *Ucwaningo Lohlobo lombhalo: Kungabe isimanje esidlulayo?* – and illustrated a point about 'time' in a unique and thought-provoking way. Thus he said, 'You know, it was time to constrain us. Ok. That's the first thing. But I tried to read and tried to let it link ... it was very difficult to link it. [Why?] You know it was ... it was like Zulu and Greek. Yes. Because now whenever you are talking about ... like here [pointing to the title] they say genre is another fad, just another fad. [Yes?] So that means it is ... is it a fashion? [Ok, and what does that say?]. Here is says *isimanje*. [Means what?] It means ... *isimanje* ... what can I say ... it's a modern, modern thing. [And what word ... can you just translate that for me?]. Like here 'Ucwaningo Lohlobo lombhalo: Kungabe *isimanje* esidlulayo?' ... because we don't have ... I don't know whether we do have a word for 'fashion', but I think that some people who are dealing with languages can have another one, but not *isimanje*. You see, because *isimanje*, it is a fad, as I've said, its clear with a fad ... it's a fashion, something that you ... if you ladies ... like ladies now, they wear trousers. Normally the trousers used to have bottoms ... [Yes] big bottoms, you know, so once that is in the fashion then we call that ... maybe we call that fashion, what everybody wants to buy that, but it's not *isimanje*. Ok, because what is happening in when people dress they refer back to what other ... what older generation people wore, you know, like short skirt and all that . It did happen, so it's not *isimanje*. This *isimanje* is something is coming now and passing. [Ok] But when these ... but looking at it contextually there you can find ok, it means fashion, for now, but you cannot relate it ... relate this later, and say *isimanje* is a fashion, [Ok] " (2.2.605-633).

Here, if one looks carefully at Vusi's explanation, one can discern *four* experiences of 'time', though at first glance it looks like just another lengthy explanation of a point. The first of these is what we might call 'linear' time, that is, the time in the interview, the period it took for Vusi to explain his thinking to me, the second is the 'time to constrain us', that is, by having to grapple with the isiZulu texts, it restricted any other use of Vusi's time (in a now past instance of the linear time of the interview), the third is embedded in the meaning of the word 'fad' or 'fashion' as defined by Vusi i.e. dressing according to an earlier time, referring 'back to what other ... older generation wore', and lastly there is the meaning of the word *isimanje*

itself which is 'something is coming now and passing', which for Vusi is not the same as what happens with a 'fad' or 'fashion'. Thus, when talking of 'time', it is important to be sensitive to the subtleties and distinctions of the word since experiences of time are always multilayered, often non-linear, and so it is easy to overlook where 'time' is weighted. In this example, all but the first experience of time are directly related to Vusi's existing Discourse membership, most particularly that of a Zulu Cultural Discourse.

For Michelle, time seeped consistently out of her control as she effectively mothered five school-going children on her own, 'during the weekends my husband is here and I take care of him', teaching full time, and doing all household chores. If one can imagine the 24 hour clock in Michelle's life, only five are allocated to sleeping – from nine at night and 'then I wake up at 2 o'clock' – and 3 are allocated to studying – from 2.00am to 5.00am. Over a week, that adds up to 35 hours of sleep, and 21 hours for studying, the latter meeting the suggested minimum for studying two modules concurrently (10 hours per week per module) on the Honours programme. However, if the recommended norm of 8-9 hours of sleep for adults is observed, Michelle is getting approximately 50% of the sleep she actually needs in order to function optimally. How this affects her mood, productivity and capacity to concentrate can only be imagined. What is significant here, however, is the way in which the demands of a new Discourse, perceived and acted upon as infinitely more powerful than her existing 'ways of being', force Michelle into a state of exhaustion and self-deprivation.

Nothembu's experience of time projects an equally split off picture, leading her to pronounce that 'we don't have time to study'. Yet she did study, she did submit assignments, write an examination and pass. So, from her 24 hour clock, where did she fit studying in? Like Michelle, 'you have to sacrifice for the night, not to sleep or to sleep late'. She would also get up before everyone else and 'do a bit of reading in the morning before I wash ... and get off'. Given that Nothembu caught her taxi at 5.4.5am every morning, we can surmise that she compromised severely on sleep too. Despite being a principal, she would also try 'to push it ... maybe at school sometimes ... during break' when she would 'just stay alone and do my work'. But as a principal, 'break time' is not entirely hers to command and so this period was also often interrupted because she would 'see the parent is waiting for me outside ... the teacher has a complaint', which made it all very strenuous for her too. What begins to emerge from Michelle and Nothembu's experience is that 'time' must also be understood in terms of 'loss'.

As Dick did not live with his wife and children during the week but with his parents, who are fit and able, the distribution of his time was of necessity different from that of Michelle and Nothembu. He nevertheless described himself as being 'pressed with time', with numerous

demands made on him. Thus he tried to 'organise time for myself', and then time 'during the course of the week as a person who is teaching daily'. Bearing in mind that he was acting Head of Department for Languages in his school, and the English Language Cluster Co-ordinator for schools in his area, in addition to being a senior phase teacher, 'teaching daily' probably under-represents his lived reality in this area of his life. He also felt beholden to 'organise time' to see those people who 'have been very good to me as teachers', and visit his wife and children in Pietermaritzburg at the weekend. But when he did get home 'the kids do not understand' why he has to be so 'absent' and said, 'you are just not coming to us in time' and that 'you are not so nice as you usually before'. His father (with whom he lived during the week) accused him of becoming 'anti social' and he found himself in a position where he increasingly missed church meetings and, as a result, got information second hand. What Dick came to understand was that studying in the way he was 'needs a person who is disciplined', who will 'make use of your time'. To be self-disciplined in the manner Dick was describing meant for him that 'you don't just do as you please'. And given that 'we also take alcohol', 'you must know when to take that, and you mustn't consume a lot. ... You stop you go and sleep in the evening you wake up ...'. Dick did not give any explicit indication of how much time he allocated to studying his modules per day or per week, or when he did this i.e. whether his hours were routined or haphazard, but it was in there somewhere. What he lost, however, through the forced redistribution of available time, were vital *human* connections that, prior to his studying would appear to have played a central role in his life. And this changed him and his relationship to them. Thus, as seen above, his children found him 'not so nice as you usually before', his father found him 'anti social', he couldn't answer questions raised at church meetings with any confidence any more because he had to rely on 'second hand information' where 'you don't get everything'. He had to circumscribe his drinking hours and leave his friends earlier than he had done previously. What emerges out of this is the image of an increasingly self-isolating and lonely man, oversubscribed in the school context and struggling with the RWAT module, all against the clock.

When making sense of Zola's engagement with 'time' and 'time as loss', a different picture emerges from that of Dick's. Zola confronted head-on the inevitability, once she began the Honours modules, of the re-organisation of her time. She called a halt to the 'busy person' she was when she 'used to make doilies, sew pinafores ... a lot of things ... cut pants for men and sew a lot of things ... even though it used to give me some money'. And the choice she made did not sit uncomfortably with her 'because it is going to improve my job'. She even saw pragmatic value in being forced to be occupied with something else, saying that 'if

you are not doing anything, you tend to move around ... you go to the shops, you end up spending money'. At one level, therefore, studying was a money-saver.

Despite tackling her studying in a proactive frame of mind, however, Zola was just as vulnerable to the invasive fingers of time as were the other participants. More particularly, and similarly to Dick, changes in the way time had to be distributed for Zola brought changes in existing relationships, changes that appeared to erode rather than bolster them. Thus, Zola's mother was angry with her, unable to fathom why she would study 'because you are working'. One of her friends 'even said I'm boring', and others she just didn't see anymore. As soon as school closed, Zola went to the town library to study. This would close at 5.00pm, then she would 'go for the taxi'. So most week days she would arrive home between 6.00pm and 7.00pm, at which point 'you find I'm tired'. She would sleep then which meant that she did not see her mother or sister until the next morning. To accommodate Zola's hectic week and daily late arrival home, her mother and sister would do all the household chores and the cooking from Monday to Friday. On Friday, however, they would say, 'the weekend is yours', whereas as Zola pointed out, 'I have to work very hard in the weekend'. Most Saturdays were taken up with contact sessions at the university, while on Sunday Zola would 'wake up in the morning, I clean, I wash, I do the ironing, I prepare the work for ... Monday, I cook ... I used to sleep at 11 on Sunday', all of which gave Zola 'a blue Monday' to kick off each new week.

Vusi said of time to study that it was 'really really really hard to secure' which tempts one to believe that it is possible to grab hold of a portion of time, pin it down as it were, so that it can be used for a specific activity, in this case, to study. But we know that this is not possible. So what Vusi experienced was no different from the four participants above viz. that a multitude of obligations and personally driven needs that had nothing to do with the intellectual endeavour related, in this case, to the RWAT module, appropriated the majority of hours in his 24 hour clock. Thus, being the principal of a school, a church minister and a committed family man with two young children meant that he had to 'study late ... late at night' and say to his children who wanted to spend more time with him, 'just borrow me this time, let me just do this'. It also meant he could not attend all church meetings and had to 'ask for an apology, please just do whatever and I will be with you next week'.

But what of 'time' when Vusi was actually engaged with the RWAT module? What experiences and factors here continued to deplete the finite supply of 24 hour 'time' in his life? Two of these, namely, the time it takes to translate between languages, and the time spent finding his way through the learning materials, have already been raised as shared nodes of experiences, so will not be discussed further, but should be noted for the context of

this discussion. Vusi also identified the pressure of due dates for assignments, and the reading strategies designed to assist students, as ‘forces’ of time. The latter, far from facilitating a more efficient engagement with the readings, simply constituted more reading – which ‘added on what you are expected to do’. Thus what Vusi’s experiences of time add to what others have already told us is that the concept of ‘loss’ can be applied both to lives lived ‘outside’ the RWAT module, and within it. Taken together, these hint at a toxic mix.

Folly’s explication of ‘time’ takes us ever more deeply into the lived consequences of studying in the way the participants in this study were obliged to do, and its effects on relationships. Aside from Folly ‘sacrificing’ time with her daughter which she identified as the primary domestic loss she experienced, so many Saturdays spent at the university deprived her of the opportunity and cultural obligation to attend funerals of members of her community. And because of the HIV/ AIDS pandemic, the increased regularity of Saturday funerals made her non-attendance ever more obvious, the consequences of which penetrated deeper than just a perception of a lack of care. Thus it was that ‘if you don’t attend funerals, they won’t attend to you as well ... if you’ve got a problem’. So built into African cultural practices surrounding funerals is the implicit understanding that one will go to the bereaved family’s home after the burial for a meal. But as Folly said, ‘if you don’t go to their homes after the funerals, they won’t come to your home as well. They go to the church, to the cemetery and they go to their homes. You cook them food and the food will rot in the ovens’. An additional tension is evoked when non-attendance is because someone is studying further. Then some people ‘think you are better now because you are being educated’. So when this is given as a reason for non-attendance, the comment is often ‘Oh, *educated* people’. It helps, therefore, if ‘you have got other family members who could attend’, and if that person is ‘educated’ so much the better for only then the situation is fully understood.

In summing up these explications of ‘time’, the full impact of Discourse-crossing and Discourse conflict must be internalized. Time ‘spent’ is time gone, though as Tusting (2000, p.39) points out, “past and future are emergent in and constructed in the present”, and thus ‘patterns’ can be both “regular and dynamic” (*ibid*). The possibilities that change represents, however, are very often far from self-evident and/ or easily embraced in the moment. Certain tasks and actions seem to immediately erode a personal grip on time, although the exact nature of events that do this, and their consequences, are unique for each individual. Through living ‘in time’ as an integral facet of a Discourse, every individual is simultaneously caught up in the ‘saying (writing)-doing-valuing-believing’ combinations of that Discourse. When stepping into a new Discourse, as the participants in this study were doing, these

combinations undergo an inexorable change process and being to infiltrate previously established situated practices, activities and meanings. In doing so, they also begin a process whereby new Discourse identities are slowly configured. The data from this study suggests, however, that this is never done without a high cost being incurred.

7.8 Re-situating ‘practices’

As has long since been established in this thesis, all the energies of the RWAT module developers and tutors was geared to teaching students about genres and the Genre Approach, with the genre of ‘the academic argument’ being given special focus. An implicit assumption issuing from the RWAT module being constructed as a ‘core’ module, was, therefore, that students’ writing and reading abilities (not ‘practices’ in the sense this word is used in this chapter) would be developed. This point has also been made previously. Thus, when one asks students about the *relevance* of the RWAT module given the above, what one most expects and *wants* to hear (if one is a regular member of the Faculty and the RWAT team) is that it has paid dividends in other modules and that the Genre Approach has now been applied in schools. In other words, what one wants to hear is that there has been a direct ‘transfer’ of learning. This is a simplistic rendering of hopes, but not a falsification.

In working to interpret participants’ responses to the ‘perceived relevance’ of RWAT, however, I have concluded that there is little point in speaking of ‘transfer’, since what far more authentically appears to have happened, is that participants have attempted to ‘re-situate’ certain practices. In doing so, some have crossed Discourse boundaries, and thus *de facto*, different situated meanings have been accorded them. Also, those participants who did re-situate the RWAT practices, most noticeably the Scheme, to other modules, give no indication that they have fully grasped the function of the ‘original’ situated practice. Instead, only the most superficial of ‘features’ of the Scheme are identified as having been ‘useful’. In fact, Vusi (see below) makes the most illuminating statement with regard to this by saying that he ‘might be poor in language and all that ... [but] the structure, wording and all that, I know I’m good’. Here, he has split off ‘the language bits’ of the Discourse from all the other ‘ways of doing and being’, without even being aware of having done so. Mostly what emerges are a range of examples of naive attempts to re-situate meanings, very few of which are related in anyway to ‘the academic argument’ as taught in the RWAT module, or the situated practices of ‘essayist literacy’. Since Vusi and Michelle *did* both find their RWAT experience useful for other modules, I shall start with them.

Michelle was able to apply ‘the intro ... background ... the introduction ... and then ... that style ... this essay will discuss ... those things. Ya, it helped us ... even those claims’. The

'structure' or 'how can we plan an essay' was also useful in other modules, as was 'this thing of scanning ... you must do in your reading'. Vusi believed that the 'good' marks he got in his Education Leadership, Management and Policy (ELMP) modules were also 'because of that structure' that he was taught in the RWAT module. So, though he felt he 'might be poor in language and all that ... the structure, wording and all that, I know I'm good'. As a result, he knew that even though the ELMP essay topics never stipulated 'Scheme' criteria for the construction of an essay, that he should, nevertheless, 'formulate my claim ... my sentence, my topic sentences ... I have to formulate paragraphs ... I have to put in many books in the table sometimes. And then refer from the sentence and what I've read from that book'. From their experience of the RWAT module, these two participants felt that they had learnt how to write a 'highly academic structured essay'.

Vusi, Michelle, Nothembu, Dick and Zola all indicated that they had taken something from their RWAT experience back into their school/ classroom contexts. For Vusi it was a very clear idea of now knowing 'what you are writing for', and the value (that he perceived) of introducing 'essay writing' 'in each and every learning area' in the Grade 7 classes. He took it upon himself to be 'a mentor there ... for creative writing', and though when they began, he couldn't say that the learners were very good at it, he considered it 'a start'. He also took the idea of conducting workshops 'from the university', as part of his school's Staff Development Plan, though to start with 'since I've been exposed to this at this moment, I'm the one who is always doing the staff development'. What Michelle learnt from the university was the value of group work. Previously, she used to 'feed my kids ... telling them everything', and while she was 'working hard for them', they 'were relaxing'. From her RWAT experience (and subsequent modules) it dawned on her that 'there's too much work for me' and that putting learners in groups and having them tackle work on their own, was the answer. By all accounts, Michelle's learners love this new way of doing things, and when the bell goes to end a lesson with her, they say, 'No, Ma'am, the bell mustn't cry'. So, unlike the 'olden days' when Michelle used to do 'most of the talking by myself ... not to include the learners' and they would sit there, passive and silent, they now play an active role in their own learning in her isiZulu mother tongue classes.

Zola went back to her classroom of Grade 1 learners strengthened by her internalization of the concepts of 'modeling, guiding and scaffolding'. She recognised how much more she should be helping her young learners 'because they come with their speaking and they don't have writing, so you have to help them and morning time you ask them ... so you assist their performance until she can do or he can do the work alone'. The RWAT module also taught her 'how to organise information'. Prior to that, 'wheee, I used to mix'. Now she knows that 'if

it is mixed and there's no logic how is your reader going to understand this?' In addition, the notion of 'logic' and 'order' in writing was something she saw as just as relevant to teach her Grade 1 learners as it was for her to learn it herself.

What Nothembu foregrounded with regard to what she had learnt from the RWAT module was that 'skim and scan method' of reading. As a principal, she has a lot of reading of circulars, policy documents, 'organisational books', curriculum documents and so on to read. Instead of reading each one closely, she skims and scans them – 'sometimes I read the topic, oh it's about home loans, and the aim of the circular, or the policy, and then read the first lines'. When necessary, once she has the 'gist of this then I read it through ... and then I get the information'.

As a result of his RWAT experience, Dick's 'students at school ... said something I like very much, they said you are now a changing teacher'. What this meant in practice is that he's 'got more examples' and 'using other lecturer's what ... ideas and so forth'. He was also placing greater emphasis in his teaching on words like 'furthermore', 'consequently' and 'so forth', after realizing from Hart's input in one contact session, that these are very important words to teach learners. In addition, the RWAT experience had 'opened some other avenues for me as a person who's involved in management at school'. So when Dick attended workshops hosted by the District Office, for example, 'the facilitators can see that this person is studying something because you've got an input on what they are saying. ... We'll be able to translate what has been written down because it's something else to translate what has been written on the book and something that will be said by someone else verbally'.

By the time the final interview with Folly took place, she had already begun her new job as a mathematics textbook representative for a national publishing company, and had clearly effected closure on many of her university experiences. On the matter of 're-situating' experiences from the RWAT module, however, two aspects came immediately to mind. The first was that in her new job she was required to write numerous reports, 'so you have to follow a structure' (and it has already been established that 'structure-as-formula' had resonated deeply with Folly early on in the module). The second was 'that issue of cohesion' which she now 'lives' in her SADTU meetings (another Secondary Discourse), and which helped her so much to recognise when she was 'not speaking on what ... on anything that is relevant to what is being said now'.

In finding ways to speak about what the participants 'did' with their RWAT 'learnings' i.e. how we might think into these 're-situating' moments more carefully, both Paxton (2007) and Gee (1996) provide some useful insights which could be applied. In a study in which she sought

to investigate the “intersection of academic discourse and student voice” (*ibid*, p.45), Paxton offers the concept of ‘interim literacies’ as “useful in a context of increasing cultural and linguistic diversity where students draw on a range of other discourses as they learn to make meaning in a new discourse” (*ibid*). In her study, this also term allowed Paxton “to understand language and meaning-making as a dynamic resource, constantly being adapted and transformed by its users” (*ibid*). Paxton’s focus was on those features of student writing that came *from* “previous encounters, other people, ideas, texts, institutions and discourses beyond the confines of the academic institution” (*ibid*), on which they drew strongly when they began to write within the academy. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these ‘interim literacies’ represented a “variety of spoken discourses and genres from a more oral tradition that revealed something of their social and historical roots” (*ibid*).

I see the relevance of Paxton’s concept of ‘interim literacies’ to this study, in terms of what the participants took *to* ‘institutions and discourses beyond the confines of the academic institution’. In other words, I am suggesting, that in their attempts to ‘re-situate’ aspects of the Discourse of the academy (which includes the ‘language bits’), the participants were engaging in a similar process to Paxton’s students viz. the adaptation and transformation of new ‘meanings’ they had internalised from their RWAT experience. That virtually none seem to relate to ‘writing an academic argument’ in the way it was taught in the module, is crucial to note, but then so is the evolution of ‘interim literacies’, as these indicate that their experience was lived as dynamic and change-inducing. It is possible, that over a period of time, depending on the function they serve, that these ‘interim’ literacies will metamorphasise into something more stable and permanent, or conversely, if unsupported, simply dissipate. Whatever they become will still, nevertheless, be reflective of one of more Discourses.

Gee’s notion of *mushfake Discourse* can also add to an understanding of the dynamics of ‘re-situated’ meanings. The term ‘mushfake’ comes from prison culture and means “to make do with something less when the real thing is not available” (Gee, 1996, p. 147). In a prison context, Gee gives the example of prisoners making hats from underwear to illustrate the concept. In this case, the hats are mushfake. In terms of *mushfake Discourse*, Gee means “partial acquisition coupled with meta-knowledge and strategies to ‘make do’” (*ibid*). Applied in the context of this study and the participants ‘re-situating’ of meaning, I would like to suggest that what the participants took ‘beyond the confines of the academic institution’, and perhaps even to other modules within the Honours programme, was *mushfake Discourse*. Positioned as they were still as ‘authentic beginners’ (even by the end of the module), they did not have ‘the real thing’ available to them and so ‘made do with something less’. They

had in most cases, acquired 'partial' acquisition, and some meta-knowledge, and enough strategies 'to make do', which I would infer as 'being able to pass' (except for Dick). Again, the point at which this *mushfake Discourse* becomes a 'real thing' – and at this point it is impossible to say what this 'real thing' will look like – will be determined by the degree to which opportunities to extend the acquisition process begun in the RWAT module, are afforded by the Discourse 'associations' they experience outside of the institution.

7.9 Conclusion

The fuse for this chapter was lit by the approximately 200 individual nodes of experience identified in Chapter 6 (and those found in **Appendix D**). By working to cluster and constellate these experiences of the participants in the study, it should be possible now to perceive the RWAT module as a 'living' organism. In other words, it is the myriad of perceptions, experiences and responses of the participants in this study (and of course every other student who takes the module), that infuses the RWAT module with 'life', that constitutes the 'is-ness' of it, and which becomes the 'reality' with which staff on the module are confronted. RWAT is not, in other words, a module that 'teaches the academic argument' or 'how to read and write academic texts', nor can a set of outcomes predetermine what will be taught and learnt. It is what the students make it, and as this chapter shows, students, under the influence of Discourses, can make it an extraordinarily fascinating, sobering and unpredictable life form.

In the next and final chapter, and based on the discussion in this chapter, the model of literacy pedagogy to which the RWAT module in actuality subscribed to will be identified. In addition, an alternative response to the 'literacy crisis' in the Education Faculty at UKZN will be discussed, as will possibilities for further research.

Chapter 8

Towards closure - and future directions

8.1 Introduction

In the light of all the discussions, descriptions, data presentation and interpretations that have gone before, it should now be possible to propose an answer to the main and secondary research questions, and comment on, amongst other issues, what they reveal about the model of literacy which the RWAT module 'as lived' reflected. To reiterate, the research questions were:

1. What is it like to acquire an academic literacy?
2. How is this experience influenced by the mode of delivery in which it occurs?

Thus, one of the purposes of this final chapter is to address these questions. Another is to sketch out the most recent developments within the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal with regard to 'Academic Literacy Development', as I believe it is a succinct way in which to illustrate institutional possibilities (and challenges) for moving forward in what is in fact a very complex dimension of teaching and learning, but, I would argue, fundamental to all pedagogic endeavour. Describing these developments is also synonymous with updating the reader on where the RWAT module now stands in relation to early findings of this thesis, and its future in the Honours programme. Finally, this chapter considers options for future research and the role that phenomenology can play in the South African research context today.

8.2 In lieu of literacy-as-social practice: The questions answered?

Working only with the data from the participants in this study, it is clear that acquiring an academic literacy (in the context of the RWAT module) was an experience fraught with unexpected, invisible and unspoken hurdles. Confronting these hurdles for the first time evoked fear, confusion and panic. In some cases this was so severe that it eroded identities and undermined existing literacy expertise, such that the latter was 'left at the door' on entry, and everything encountered constructed as 'new'. When a participant had had prior 'encounters' similar to those experienced in the module, the situation tended to be less intimidating. Secondly, 'academic literacy' was perceived by all participants in terms of a discrete encounter with 'language', thus all the 'moves' and 'stages', 'claims', 'topic sentences', 'this thing cohesion', were all just 'bits' that went to make up 'the academic argument'. The discreteness of this encounter was underscored by tutors' responses to

participants' work, such that Vusi's tutor told him, 'No, you don't have to write so many sentences, you need just to write maybe five or ten or whatever sentences'. It shows itself too, in Michelle's experience when she talks about that 'other *thing*' (my emphasis) 'coherence', and how she was 'failing at that', conveying the sense that 'coherence' stands as a single element of writing and that mastery of it would have ensured greater success all round for her.

The structure of 'the academic argument' itself, was perceived as a formula and could be learnt as such, making an engagement with it implicitly devoid of social-contextual considerations for all participants, despite them coming to recognise genres as 'different ways of writing'. When they spoke of 're-situating' what they had learnt in the RWAT module, they split-off aspects of their experience (skimming and scanning, 'writing essays', writing introductions, group work) and transported them in their original mould to a new context. And the reading intervention adapted from the work of Rose (2003, 2004) made little and in one case, no impact whatever on the learning process, being sidelined for reasons of 'time' and distraction from the main reading task. All these factors suggest that far from reflecting an ideological model of literacy, the RWAT literacy experience can now be recognized as closely reflective of an autonomous model of literacy. That is, participants engaged with 'language bits', not a Discourse or Discourses. The data shows no evidence of participants becoming consciously aware that the situated practices and activities, and related situated meanings which they encountered in the RWAT module, were reflective of, constitutive of anything but a 'new way of writing'. The literacy 'messages' conveyed by the RWAT learning materials, the activities students were forced to do, the type of assessment they engaged with (particularly, perhaps, the way in which criteria were experienced), seems to have been that here was a fixed body of knowledge that could be learnt, memorized and 'transferred' to any other 'similar' context. This is the 'de-contextualised' view of language that characterises autonomous models of literacy, and leads to students having their already entrenched assumptions about 'language' reinforced i.e. that 'language' is neutral and that simply by learning to read and write in a particular way, educational and social conditions will improve.

This is a very sobering finding but confirms that my own increasing discomfort with the pedagogic model of the module was well placed. In effect, therefore, though I would argue that it was done without malice afore-thought, the RWAT module as 'lived', ran counter to the ideology to which it claimed to subscribe (evidenced in the readings, learning materials and assessment tasks).

Participants' responses to the isiZulu translations are also critical to internalize. While the four participants who chose not to use them provided a range of different (and similar)

reasons for not using the translated texts, the bald fact remains that they abandoned their mother tongue (generally understood as a primary cognitive tool) in favour of English for all the teaching and learning demands made on them in the module. The two participants who *did* read the isiZulu translations and integrated them (partially) into their learning process, did so for yet another set of reasons viz. that they had both engaged in ‘the type of Zulu’ in the translated texts, in contexts outside of the RWAT module and Honours programme in general, prior to entering the programme. Yet, Folly expressed serious reservations about the relevance and value of academic isiZulu texts. She felt that it would ‘further widen the gap of the communicative isiZulu with the academic one and that ... will make those that doesn’t understand academic side of it further not understand it anymore’. She was of the strong opinion that ‘nowhere can they [isiZulu academic texts] be used in our society. We don’t get symposiums or things like that, that we need to talk about them in our own language’. Dick too, regarded the isiZulu in the Learning Guide to be ‘unfamiliar ... an academical thing ... unlike the Zulu that we speak daily’. He also felt that ‘you cannot talk about that thing to a man on the street, because he is not interested in that’, suggesting that the use of ‘elevated’ isiZulu discourse has the potential to drive schisms between members of particular groups and communities. When considering the inclusion of indigenous language texts in the formal curriculum, therefore, it is critical to accept that it is a far more complex matter than at first meets the eye, and may even undermine the goals and intentions of institutional language policy.

With regard to the secondary research question, findings suggest that the tensions that characterised much of the process of acquiring an academic literacy were fiercely exacerbated by the mode of delivery in which it occurred. ‘Loss’ and ‘sacrifice’ were constant motifs in the recounts of the participants – of self, family, friends, community ties, and impacted deeply on the quality of participants’ lives, RWAT learning experiences, and their experiences in the Honours programme in general. ‘Time’, therefore, as the data shows, is a critical element of the RWAT module as lived, and cannot be divorced from past, present or future action.

8.3 Pursuing the ‘academic literacy’ debate

In the previous chapter, the power of a phenomenologically derived approach to interviews and data analysis was combined with Discourse Theory (particularly) to show how all the findings identified above might be discursively interpreted. What needs to be considered now, is the extent to which ‘the ways of being’ reflected in this study, can contribute to the continuing debates surrounding the notion of ‘academic literacy’ and its relationship to student performance in higher education institutions. In other words, what can be learnt from

these participants' experience of RWAT as a 'lived module' that is worth bearing in mind when students' reading and writing practices are constituted as 'a problem' when next raised in programme and/or Faculty discussions?

A good starting point, perhaps, is to think more carefully into what it is exactly that we are 'doing with students' when we accept them into the university – at undergraduate or post-graduate level. Speaking from the perspective of Discourse Theory, and as discussed in the previous chapter, when students enter the academy they stand at the threshold of a Secondary Discourse. This is regardless of how many areas of overlap there might be between a student's Primary Discourse and Academic Discourse. In other words, for no-one is Academic Discourse a 'mother tongue'. So the challenge facing students is to "speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community" (Bartholomae, 1985, p.134). In short, as Bartholomae concludes, students have to 'invent' the university, but importantly, in 'our' image.

The extent to which higher education institutions construct students in their own image, is taken up by Haggis (2003). Several of the points she makes have bearing on the findings of this study, even though she speaks within the context of higher education in the United Kingdom. Thus, she argues that the historical emphasis on 'deep' and 'surface' approaches to learning (raised in the previous chapter), has resulted in an 'approaches to learning' model that now "appears to be seen as describing a kind of 'truth' about how students learn, in which research has 'identified' both the categories and the relationship between them" (2003, p.91). The consequences of this model being pervasively considered the 'truth', is that it equates 'deep' learning approaches with 'successful' students and 'surface' learning approaches with 'less successful' or 'weak' students, without regard for the fact that 'surface' learning can lead to very successful results (and is often culturally grounded e.g. The Chinese Paradox²³), and research that shows that changing approaches to learning is extremely difficult.

However, what the deep/ surface model reflects, in Haggis' view, "is a model of student learning which is based upon a set of elite values, attitudes and epistemologies that make more sense to higher education's gatekeepers than they do to many students" (*ibid*, p.102). Essentially, therefore, rather than working to expand the existing Discourses and literacies of students, academics in higher education are 'constructing images of ourselves' through the

²³ This refers to the way in which high achieving Chinese students appear to memorise in such a way as to 'understand', when 'understanding' is generally assumed to be the outcome of a 'deep' approach to learning.

(undisclosed) Discourse practices to which students are subjected. I suggest that the findings of this study support this view.

But, the global landscape is undergoing further change.

As Peters (2004) notes,

The new global knowledge economy is not just a universalization of capitalism after the collapse of actually existing communism, it also involves the rise of finance capitalism, supported by the emergence of new information and communication technologies, and a series of international agreements concerning the liberalization of world trade" (*ibid*, p.73).

Higher education institutions do not and cannot stand separate from such global shifts. After analysing The Dearing Report (1997) on higher education in the UK, Peters believes it is possible now to talk of the "*globalization of tertiary or higher education*, according to three interrelated functions: the *knowledge* function, the *labour* function, and the *institutional* function" (*ibid*). This is a far cry from the traditional university and the primacy of its knowledge function (and autonomy). New areas of academic work are emerging from these shifts, such that universities are now seen to be responsible for producing 'knowledge workers' (not 'students') for this globalising economy. In such a context, fixed notions of 'academic literacy' being the only 'legitimate' literacy of higher education are seriously under threat.

Furthermore, in the light of what is clearly emerging as a very real uncertainty about what approaches to learning are 'most effective', and the massification and diversification (in institutional and programme types) of the higher education system where a wide diversity of students must be accommodated, Haggis contends that "there is a need for investigation of, and explicitness about, aims and processes that have in the past been assumed as given" (*ibid*, p.97). She believes that "the elite value positions that underpin the current system are in danger of rendering it profoundly dysfunctional in this new context" (*ibid*). Of specific relevance to this study, and the finding that it is a matter of Discourse 'dissonance' that rendered the RWAT module so firmly 'autonomous' (and hence difficult to access, and limiting), is Haggis' view that the deep/surface learning model "removes the individual learner from the richness and complexity of his/her multiple contexts" (*ibid*, p.98). In addition, she makes the point that "what often seems to remain unacknowledged is that the attitudes and values which characterise the model's description of the ideal learner have in fact taken academics themselves many years to learn" (*ibid*). In short, this model makes it possible for academics to ignore the individual realities of students and the extent to which curricula betray student lives and aspirations. The pay-off for academics, however, is extremely

lucrative as it ensures the retention of the 'elite value system' which currently underpins the vast majority of higher education institutions across the world.

Greasley and Ashworth (2007) also contest the simplistic distinction between 'deep' and 'surface' approaches to learning, supporting their argument through recourse to phenomenology. Since this study has been so deeply influenced by the phenomenological tradition, I think it is relevant to show how this particular study endorses Haggis' position above, the value of this study, and its findings. Although Greasley and Ashworth frame their argument for phenomenology by setting it against phenomenography²⁴ and other methodologies, I will not engage with that aspect of their study as it is not the main thrust of the points being made here.

Through giving emphasis to both the *noesis*, a term coined by Husserl (1954 [1970]) to refer to "the act of consciousness in adopting a particular mode (e.g. perceiving, thinking, imagining etc.) and directing this to an object" (Greasley and Ashworth, 2007, p.827), and the *noema* – "the intentional object to which the conscious act is directed" (*ibid*), in their study of approaches to learning, Greasley and Ashworth foreground both "the thing to be studied in its lifeworldly context" (*ibid*, p.834) for each participant (the noema), and "how students mentally oriented to the learning (noesis)" (*ibid*). This, they argue, is in contrast to other studies into approaches to learning, such as those related to 'deep' and 'surface' learning (predominantly phenomenographic, but psychometric too), where only the 'how', the noesis, is taken into account.

What Greasley and Ashworth's study illustrates very forcibly, and something which underscores the importance of this study, is that when one commits oneself to exploring the lifeworlds of individual students in order to understand better how they learn – or 'receive' what we think we are teaching them, then all manifestations, all lived aspects of that lifeworld must be considered as integral to that exploration. When Greasley and Ashworth, for example, applied their noesis/ noema distinction to their data analysis of six students' approaches to learning, they were able to demonstrate the power that resides in "the personal meaning of the thing to be learned" (*ibid*, p.836), and its relationship to the mental orientation of an individual. In other words, as they say, there is 'no noesis without a noema'. In this study, the same can be seen. The indissoluble link between a *personal* 'mental

²⁴ *Not* to be confused with phenomenology, phenomenography bears certain superficial similarities to phenomenology but is "a qualitative methodology in which each particular study focuses on a concept, entity, or situation and tries to map the various ways in which that thing is construed ... by people" (Greasley and Ashworth, 2007:821). The goal is a set of categories of description of a concept etc. whereby understandings can be ordered logically and hierarchically, and typologies established.

orientation' to 'learning' in the RWAT module, and the 'thing' to be learned' lies at the heart of the RWAT experience. The way in which Discourse Theory supplements this particular way of talking about this experience, is through describing 'the personal meaning of the thing to be learned' and the 'mental orientation' of an individual as discursively determined.

So, if cognisance is to be taken of the phenomenological and 'Discourse' findings of this study i.e. that the RWAT module can ultimately be described as having subscribed to an autonomous model of literacy (as opposed to an ideological model where literacy is understood as 'social practice'), the whole issue of student learning in higher education, and the role of academics in this, what should be done? Though a departure from the 'academic literacy debate', and the RWAT module, might seem imminent to the reader, it is not. Rather, it is at this point that all discussion around these matters coalesces. However, for the purposes of this concluding discussion, instead of constantly referring to 'academic literacy development', I will now speak of 'epistemological access' (Morrow, 2007).

Morrow makes a clear distinction between 'formal' access and 'epistemological' access. The former refers simply to 'letting students in' i.e. having university entry requirements that make it possible for as many students as possible to access higher education – particularly those previously disadvantaged by, in the case of South Africa, apartheid legislation. Having said that, Morrow also raises the issue of cost and the degree to which open access, in a country such as South Africa, is a realistic option. 'Epistemological access', however, is something quite different and of far greater importance when it comes to a consideration of the goals of a university and the scope for students to realise their intellectual potential within such a context. 'Epistemological access' is about "how the institution provides access to the goods it distributes to those it formally admits" (2007, p.39). And it is because the main 'good' a university distributes is knowledge, that "we might conveniently call [this] epistemological access" (*ibid*). Nevertheless, despite the importance of distinguishing between 'formal' and epistemological' access, Morrow argues that if emphasis is given only to 'formal' access – even if this is done in the interests of equity and redress – there are potentially formidable consequences for the development of the state and the individual from a long term perspective, *because resources in South Africa are limited*. And in his view, "where resources are limited, arguments in favour of expanding formal access ignore, or seriously underestimate, the problems of epistemological access" (*ibid*, p.41). Morrow continues his discussion on these two forms of access in order to arrive at a point where he is able to consider in some depth, the concept of teaching, and how, in the large classes that now characterise, particularly, undergraduate courses, epistemological access can still be given to students. I do not want to pursue Morrow to this latter point but want, instead, to re-

situate the concept of 'epistemological access' in debates around 'academic literacy', and establish its relevance to this study.

In Chapter 2, when discussing Gee's (2004) distinction between vernacular and specialist varieties of a language, and then the further distinction within specialist varieties between non-academic and academic varieties, the point was made that it is very difficult, in fact impossible, to separate reading and speaking a specialist variety of language from learning "the sorts of content or information that the specialist language is typically used to convey" (Gee, 2004, p.18). Gee sums this 'phenomenon' up by saying, "The content is accessible through the specialist variety of language, and, in turn, that content is what gives meaning to that form of language. The two – content and language – are married" (*ibid*). But 'specialist' varieties of language reflect the particular Discourses to which they belong, and the particular epistemologies that underpin them. Thus, to gain epistemological access, very much more is involved than simply attending to students' reading and writing habits. I would argue, therefore, that instead of talking about carrying 'academic literacy' debates forward, we should rather talk about what would most effectively facilitate epistemological access for our students. If we do this, there is a better chance that we will not get locked into tensions around whether our focus should be on grammatical accuracy and/or reading skills and/or specific genres and/or ... and so on. Instead, I believe, terms such as 'epistemological access' force us to think more holistically into what constitutes the Discourse of a discipline and how the 'language bits' of disciplines instantiates the Discourse.

Had RWAT been conceptualised from such a perspective, I now believe it would never have seen the light of day. The data from this study demonstrates all too clearly what can happen when such a perspective is not adopted. What can emerge is a stand alone 'academic literacy' module that, despite the best of ideological intentions, loses its way in a plethora of processes that ultimately work to undermine the very goal it sets out to achieve viz. the acquisition of an academic literacy. When this experience is combined with the threats and challenges of studying at a 'distance', the degree of epistemological access facilitated by such a module is inherently minimal.

This last point i.e. the impact of 'distance' on the learning experiences of the participants in this study also raises critical questions about how key terms related to 'distance learning' are used in everyday discourse and in the literature on open and distance learning. Gee and Lankshear (1997) argue that, in the context of globalisation and fast capitalism, it is crucial that attention is paid to the language that is used to paint "portraits of an enchanted future" (*ibid*, p.90). They identify terms such as 'empowerment' and 'self-directed learning' as examples of how language use instantiates a particular vision of a future. More decisively,

these words “cross discursive boundaries, spanning multiple world-views, interests, and value systems. ... The problem is that when matters come down to the level of lived social practice, these seemingly shared terms refer to very different ideals across communities” (*ibid*, p.90/1). Though terms such as ‘empowerment’ and ‘self-directed learning’ should, therefore, be responded to, in the context of higher education and distance learning, as socially contested terms, they seldom are – either by academics or students. Certainly within the Honours programme, we have never done so. However, as a result of this study and the new insights I have gained into the practices that have characterised the RWAT module and the Honours programme, it is clear that we should now do so, and against the backdrop of globalisation and fast capitalism.

With regard to ‘self-directed learning’, Gee and Lankshear ask very important questions viz. “whose self? Whose direction?” As they say, “the notion of ‘self-directed learning’ ... has become integral to visions of autonomous, motivated, self-activating students and knowledge workers operating in enchanted workplaces” (*ibid*, p.94). But by asking the questions Gee and Lankshear ask, it is possible to open new spaces in which ‘*alternative constructions*’ of established meanings can be entertained. Then, the question might be, “what kinds of framings would best capture *our* ideals for learning, knowledge and personal development” (*ibid*) [emphasis in original]. In their view, and I would agree, such questions “lead very quickly to deep philosophical, moral and Discourse-related issues – which, of course, are precisely the sorts of issues that should emerge from any critical awareness about language” (*ibid*).

At present, the concept of ‘self-directed learning’ is the axis upon which distance/ mixed-mode models of delivery (for which read ‘pedagogy’) turn, and the Honours programme described in this study is no exception. However, the data shows that participants’ ‘self-directed learning’ was not of the sort that would realise the vision of an institution that subscribes to the principles of the new work order, which I would contend the University of KwaZulu-Natal does. In Gee and Lankshear’s opinion, ‘self-directed learning’ poses deep issues for fast capitalists. In the context of teacher education through distance/ mixed-mode learning, I think the same issues arise viz. the paradox of wanting “workers [students] to experience in meaningful ways a sense of autonomous decision making, choice and self-directedness. At the same time, for organizational [learning] goals to be met it is necessary that workers [students] make the ‘right decisions/ choices’ and take ‘the right directions’ so far as their workplace learning is concerned” (*ibid*, p.95).

To sum up, I would suggest that because part-time programmes such as the Honours programme in this study (with the RWAT module being a particular exemplar of its modular

and 'distance'/ mixed-mode structure), play such a major role in teacher education provision across the globe, it is critical that academics *and their students* engage with terms and words that, on a clear day, can be seen to be seriously socially contestable. Taking the term 'self-directed learning', and the words 'empowerment' and 'freedom' would be a good place to start.

8.4 New directions

Just as this thesis was being brought to a conclusion and recommendations with regard to the future of the RWAT module, and ways to speak about 'academic literacy' had been formulated (see above), the process was overtaken by events within the Faculty of Education at UKZN. Thus, 'new directions' about which I personally might have spoken of, are now fortuitously and promisingly being spoken of by a wider forum within the Faculty, and are described below.

In mid October 2007, a small group of interested academics met to discuss the issue of 'academic literacy' in the Faculty and to consider how to mobilize broader interest in, and commitment to, this issue. A decision was taken at this meeting to send a short, online survey to all 145 academics in the Faculty of Education to ascertain: 1) how the term 'academic literacy' is understood by members of the Faculty; 2) what members of the Faculty believed the cause of the 'problem' of 'poor' student writing was; 3) what literacy development initiatives were already in place in the Faculty; and 4) how the Faculty as a whole should respond to 'the problem'.

The fact that only 28 staff responded to the survey is indicative, I believe, of the real problem facing *students* viz. that the majority of staff have no or little awareness of, or interest in, the role that they should be playing in inducting students into the Discourses of their disciplines and that integral to this induction are the 'language bits', the literacies particular to their disciplines. However, the fact that responses were received from members of all six Schools in the Faculty was appreciated.

The problems mentioned in the survey centered around three main areas viz. grammar, reading and writing. Each of these was specified further and were summed up for discussion as follows:

Grammar

- Rules, specifically re sentence structure
- Punctuation
- Vocabulary/ spelling

Reading

- Low comprehension levels
- Word recognition
- Understanding of questions set
- Reading of visual information e.g. bar graphs
- Little reading experience – weak knowledge base

Writing

- Plagiarism – poor referencing
- Little understanding of how to structure academic genres e.g. Argument
- Incoherent writing: signposting – predicting ahead and linking back
- Problems with structuring writing, specifically paragraphs
- Little understanding of critical analysis.

What should be obvious, is that all these ‘problems’ largely reflect an autonomous view of texts and literacy which would probably explain why so many staff find it difficult to recognise their role in their students’ literacy/ discipline Discourse development and assume responsibility for it. But the staff in the Faculty of Education at UKZN are not alone. In a study, conducted by Boughey (2002), into the language-related discourses identified in Senate and Faculty documentation, and language teaching material at a historically black South African university, findings show that “by far the most dominant set of discourses at the University are those related to autonomous models of literacy and text and which construct language as an ‘instrument of communication’, (Christie,1985)” (Boughey, 2002, p.298). Thus, when addressing students’ language ‘problems’, “traditional, adjunct ... language development initiatives” (ibid, p.299), were put in place. Learning materials too, reflected the autonomous model, emphasising, for example, “component parts of the sentence and an analysis of sentence types” (ibid).

In another study conducted in a South African technikon, McKenna (2004) examined lecturers’ discourses on the relationship between language and learning. Her findings echo those of Boughey (2002) i.e. they show just how deeply entrenched autonomous views of language are and how they find expression in the discourses and practices of lecturers. Thus, one trend in the study was the view (of lecturers) that if only “students had control of English, the medium of communicating ideas and thoughts, they would not encounter problems in engaging with study at tertiary level” (2004, p.281). Another was tied to the ‘Received Tradition’ discourse. McKenna explains that “this very prevalent discourse calls for the remedying of grammatical problems by the direct instruction of those rules. It implies that

conscious knowledge of the surface rules of language is what students lack and that if these rules were made available to students their problems would disappear” (*ibid*, p.282).

Having illustrated just how pervasive an autonomous view of literacy is, it is to be commended that the Faculty of Education at UKZN resolved to pursue the process begun with the survey, and its results (summarized above). To this end, and so as to create a platform where the results of the survey could be discussed openly, a second meeting was set up for 6 November 2007. There were approximately 35 staff at this meeting – still a very small proportion of the total number of staff in the Faculty. Nevertheless, fruitful debates were held and there was clear evidence that at least those who attended this meeting left with new insights into how ‘literacy-as-social practice’ might be understood, why such a view is a very tenable view to hold, and how this position on literacy will impact on curriculum planning and implementation if it is taken up. Importantly, the terms ‘epistemological access’ and ‘essayist literacy’ found a footing in the discussions as perhaps more ably describing two critical aspects of our work, and simultaneously releasing us from the tedium occasioned by the over-use of the term ‘academic literacy’.

It was also possible at this meeting for me to make the point that has been made in numerous other contexts (even within our Faculty) that one-off ‘literacy’ modules, such as the RWAT module, represent the least effective model of development possible. I argued that if we are to take a Discourse (‘epistemological access’) approach seriously, then it is a contradiction in terms to pursue this line of curriculum structure. There was strong support for this position, although some staff who are currently invested in one-off modules which address ‘students’ reading and writing needs’, resisted the suggestion that these modules no longer be offered once pipeline students were through. Rather, they said, construct them as introductory modules and attend to an integration of literacy and Discourse development in the remaining modules of a programme. Which is, of course, a possibility. And as I write, it seems likely that the RWAT module will run for the last time in 2008. Thereafter, with a process of re-curriculation beginning in 2008, specialisations within the Honours programme will take responsibility for inducting students into the literacy practices specific to the Discourse of their disciplines. Thus, no stand-alone modules addressing ‘academic literacy’ development will form part of the Honours programme from now on. In the final section of this chapter, I turn my attention to phenomenology, my relationship to it, and its role in research contexts in South Africa.

8.5 Phenomenological research in South Africa: Possibilities and challenges

My first encounter with phenomenology was unplanned. A visiting lecturer to the School of Education was participating in a series of seminars aimed at staff research development and I decided to attend. At the time (early 2004) I was still floundering about in terms of methodology for the research which underpins this thesis and experiencing a great deal of stress as a result. When this particular seminar turned out to be about 'phenomenology', with the emphasis on the suitability of 'phenomenology' to research studies interested in 'lived experience', in perceptions and feelings, in finding answers to research questions that begin with 'What is like for you to ...?', I was irresistibly drawn to it and instantly made the decision to 'do' phenomenology.

As Ely *et al.* (1992) caution, however:

There is an element of wonder in the discovery of theory. We can become dazzled by the fresh insights it provides in those 'Eureka!' moments and by the power of its interpretations in situations that had previously seemed random or puzzling. ... A particular theory or model may be seen as *the* one explanation rather than as one of several possible explanations that open a series of questions. It can also happen that the theoretical perspectives we first learn – and more particularly the mentors that open the door to these insights – may take on an aura of invincible certainty (1992, p.263).

And so it was for me in this seminar. I made a naive grab at phenomenology on the basis of that first encounter and leapt right in. A throw-away reference in this same seminar to a *philosophical* tradition in phenomenology made no impact on me, mainly I expect because it was followed with words something like 'but that is not what we're concerned with here' i.e. in a seminar on qualitative research in educational contexts. The reality of my engagement with 'phenomenology', however, turned out to be very different from what I anticipated, hence the relevance of my story to this closing section of the thesis. Coming to a level of understanding of the philosophical tradition and its relationship to applied phenomenological research contexts, particularly with regard to the methodological implications of this relationship, proved to be a slow, often confusing and tortuous, often stimulating and exciting, almost entirely self-directed experience. Nothing of the simplicity implied at the moment of seduction – the seminar – was mirrored in the reality. However, what I came to see was that without an intensive engagement with as much of the philosophical phenomenological tradition as I could manage, insights into the use of phenomenology-as-methodology would have remained superficial and unquestioned.

But even engaging with literature on phenomenology-as-methodology does not prepare one for the reality of conducting 'the phenomenological interview' or the handling of data.

In reality, accessing people's 'lived experiences' and their perceptions is far from simple, particularly in the South African context at this point in our history. Being white, middle-aged, middle class, a woman, and an English first language speaker, positioned me starkly as 'the Other' in relation to my participants. In addition, there were the hierarchies of power implicit in my position within the university and the research, with which all the participants in the research had to contend. But having committed myself to 'phenomenology', and steadily becoming more and more immersed in the kind of thinking and reflection the field demands, I reached a point where, despite the difficulties I faced, I knew it that it truly was the 'right' approach for this particular study. The participants and I crossed numerous established cultural and identity boundaries, and did so in what was a relatively short period of time. We connected as real people with real lives. We shared experiences, laughed, ran in the rain together, drank coffee and ate biscuits together, wiped children's noses, and went into each other's homes. Each of us honoured the terms of the research contract to the letter, and 'stayed in' for the agreed upon duration of the study. In short, despite our differences (language, educational background, gender (in two cases) race), we managed to create and live into a 'third space' in which "new articulations of perspective" (Ely *et al.*, 1997, p.40) emerged. And this, I would argue, is where the value of phenomenology as a *research orientation* lies.

8.6 Conclusion

Thirteen years after the collapse of apartheid rule, racial, gender, language and class tensions are emerging as social forces with all the potential to undermine the vision and principles of South Africa's new democracy. Unless efforts are made to 'know the Other' in profound and committed ways, our future looks bleak. Phenomenological research offers possibilities for getting to 'know the Other' in ways that I believe, would be hard to match through other approaches. The fact that 'language' must be conceded as a problematic in studies such as this one, does not mean that phenomenology is unsuited to a multilingual and multicultural contexts. What it does mean is that the issue of 'language' must be put high on a phenomenological research agenda so that very much more about its role in articulating perceptions and experiences within a context characterised by diversity, can be understood.

I would also recommend, in terms of further opportunities for research, that as the 'new directions' described above, become inscribed in new curricula in the Faculty of Education, that they be constituted as research projects. This is a watershed moment in the history of

the Faculty and to capture the change and transformation process that emerges from it would make a critical contribution to the higher education research agenda in South Africa.

As a final statement, I would argue that the research community in South Africa would be enriched by not only more studies derived from phenomenology, but also by a continuing engagement with phenomenology-as-a-movement in order to both challenge and expand its existing framework.

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Appendix A

Extract from Reading and Writing Academic Texts Learning Guide, Part One (Thomson, 2003, p. 8).

A scaffolded reading process

Drawing on the work of Rose (2004) we have provided you with the following scaffolded reading process for Readings 3-8. There are FOUR steps to follow. Follow these steps for each reading. They appear at the start of each one.

Step 1: Working with the title. Do whatever tasks are set for you for each reading.

Step 2: Previewing the text. This is a special technique for quickly working out what a reading is about. It is important to do this for a number of reasons:

- It gives you a broad understanding of the text which then helps you understand it better with more detailed readings.
- It also helps you identify which sections of the reading are most important for the task you are reading for, namely to write an assignment.

When you preview a text think of the pre-reading questions you have been given for each reading, and try and jot down what answers you get from a pre-reading. Keeping these pre-reading questions in mind while you preview the text read the synopsis and the full text in detail. You should always be thinking about the essay topic and the pre-reading questions while you are reading because this makes your reading more active and purposeful. You should jot down in note form what you have learned from each reading process: previewing; reading the synopsis and the detailed reading of the actual text.

When you *preview* a text, you do the following *in this order*:

- a. Read the title
- b. Read each subheading
- c. Read the whole of the Introduction/ opening paragraph
- d. Read the first sentence of every paragraph in the body of the text. These sentences are the ones most likely to contain the topic or controlling idea of the paragraph. By reading these sentences, you should get a good idea of what the rest of a paragraph is about without having to read it all yet.
- e. Read the whole of the Conclusion

Step 3: Reading the synopsis of the text. This is a comprehensive summary of the text in 'everyday' language. In *Issue 1: Reading 5* (by Mgqwasha) we have introduced a slightly different process. When you get to this reading, follow the instructions.

Step 4: Reading the complete text in its original form.

Note making (All students)

Of course note making is one of the most important activities you must do in all the steps we have given you if you wish to become an *active reader*. All contemporary reading research points to the central role that 'active reading' plays in becoming a 'good' reader. You should, therefore, have a pen/pencil with you at all times so that you can actively engage with the words in front of you.

Notes can take different forms. They could be in the form of any or all of the following:

- Questions about points you still want to be clearer about. These questions can be put to your tutor at a contact session, and/ or discussed with colleagues/ fellow students.
- Mindmaps and/or spidergrams etc i.e. visual representations or 'word pictures' of different points. You could make mindmaps of the key ideas contained in each paragraph of a reading to get a 'picture' of all the main points in a text.
- A list of key ideas and/or words/ terms that you want to be sure to remember. Some people's memories work better with lines and lists - instead of diagrams and mindmaps. If this is the case for you, then making notes in this way is also fine.
- Summaries of paragraphs/ key points/ concepts etc

The notes that you make when you work with a reading text will be central to your essay writing process, so we will be constantly looking for evidence of you having done this. For each of the reading texts in this book, make notes. Use the reading steps described above i.e. the previewing process, your reading of the complete text, and your discussions in contact sessions to do this. Write all your notes either in this book and/or your workbook.

Appendix B Sample

Dear Student

The main purpose of this letter is to introduce you to a research project I am setting up as part of my Ph.D studies. The aim of this research project is to find out more about students' experience of the *Reading and Writing Academic Text (RWAT)* module. As this is a core, compulsory module in the present Honours programme, it is important to constantly research the value and relevance of the module. Your role in this research is critical as unless the module serves *students* well, we cannot claim that it is relevant to your academic and professional development.

The questionnaire below consists of three sections: A, B and C. *Please complete all sections.* When you answer the four main questions in Section B, please do so as honestly as possible and write as much as you can – *in the language of your choice.* And remember, **there are no right or wrong answers.** *Every* answer is valuable.

Your tutor will give you enough time in this contact session to do this properly. In Section C I ask you to indicate whether you are prepared to be interviewed so that we can talk further about the RWAT module and its effect on student learning and professional development. If you say you are happy to let me interview you, the interviews (approximately 3) will take place between April and July this year. They will always be at a time and place which suits you, and will not cost you any money. If you are selected for the interviews, you will notified by the end of April.

When you have completed all three sections please give them to your tutor. S/he will place all responses in an envelope and seal the envelope in front of the class. This is to ensure that your responses remain confidential during this contact session.

Thank you very much for your time and interest.

Kind regards

Carol Thomson (Ms)
Project Leader

Section A: Personal and professional details

Student number:

PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE YOUR STUDENT NUMBER OUT AS IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND YOU AGAIN IF YOU DO!

I teach in the: (TICK whichever applies to you)

Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3)

GET Junior Primary Phase (Grades 4, 5 and 6)

GET Senior Primary Phase (Grades 7, 8 and 9)

FET Phase (Grades 10-12)

My contact details are:

Home phone:

Work phone:

Fax:

Cell:

Section B: Describing your experience of the RWAT module

Please answer the following questions as honestly and openly as you can. Write as much as you can - in whichever language you feel most comfortable. Your answers will be kept confidential.

a. How did you find the RWAT module? Do you think you learned anything useful in the module? Give some examples of what you feel you gained.

.....
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.....
.....

b. Mention one incident/ experience (or session, or assignment) that you really enjoyed, and describe in some detail what happened there to make it so enjoyable.

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c. How did learning take place in the module? Briefly describe a typical contact session.

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d. How did the students in your tutorial group feel about the isiZulu translations in the RWAT module? Give some examples of the things students said about these translations.

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PLEASE WRITE ON THE BACK OF THESE PAGES IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE TO ANSWER ANY OF THE QUESTIONS.

Section C: Participation in the project

I would like to participate in this research project if possible. Yes No

I am happy to be interviewed between April and July 2005*: Yes No

**Please note: If you agree to participate in this project, all confidentiality and ethical issues will be discussed and negotiated before any interviews begin.*

Thank you again for your time and interest.

My contact details are:

033-2605567 (W)

0844003354 (Cell)

Office: Room 49, School of Education and Development

Cnr Golf and Ridge Roads, Pietermaritzburg

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to know more about any aspect of this project.

Appendix C

Informed Consent Document

Dear Participant

I would like you to read this 'Informed Consent' document. It explains details about the RWAT Research Project, and your rights as a participant in the project. When you have finished reading it, please sign in the space indicated to show that you have read, understood and agree to the terms of your participation. When you have signed, please put the letter in the stamped, addressed envelope provided and return it to me as soon as possible.

Project title: The RWAT (*Reading and Writing Academic Texts*) Project

Project aims: The aim of this research project is to find out more about students' experience of the *Reading and Writing Academic Text (RWAT)* module. As this is a core, compulsory module in the present Honours programme, it is important to constantly research the value and relevance of the module. Your role in this research is critical as unless the module serves *students* well, we cannot claim that it is relevant to your academic and professional development.

Project Leader: Carol Thomson

Participant Selection: The final six participants in this project have been selected on the basis of their responses to the broad questionnaire given to all students attending contact sessions at the Pietermaritzburg centre. Although 85 questionnaires were completed, only ... students indicated that they would like to be in the project and that they were willing to be interviewed. Of these, ... were men and ... were women. Since the majority of students on the Honours programme are women, it is important that this study reflect that weighting. As a result, I would like to have two men and four women in the study.

You have been chosen to be part of this project because of a) the way in which you responded to the big questionnaire i.e. your answers showed me that you have given RWAT a lot of thought, and b) because you indicated that you would like to participate, and c) because you indicated that you are available for interviews.

What is required of you?

I would like to interview you at least 3, but not more than 4, times for 60-90 minutes each time. Each interview will be at a time and place that suits you and will not cost you any money. If you have to travel on public transport, or use your own car, to meet me, I will pay for your taxi fare/ petrol .

Potential benefits to you

It is always difficult to say how people will benefit from participating in this kind of research. However, I am hoping that, through our collaborative investigation into RWAT, and the conversations we have, your understanding of issues related to, for example, education, writing, literacy, power and identity will grow, and that you will leave the project empowered through your participation in it. With a deeper knowledge of all these kinds of issues, it is possible that you will feel more powerful as an educator and keen to make changes in your school and/or in your teaching. In addition, if you are planning on studying further, then your participation in this project will give you a research experience which should help you in the future.

Use of tape recorder

All interviews will be taped. Each interview will then be transcribed by me and given back to you for checking and comment *before* we have the next interview. We are doing this because each interview builds on the one that went before. In other words, there are no ‘fixed’ questions set for each interview. You may also bring any questions that you would like discussed to the interviews about the RWAT module.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

All interview transcripts will be kept under secure lock and key in my office, and will be protected by a password (known only to me) on my computer. I would, however, like your permission to let me show sections of the transcripts to my supervisors, as I need their guidance and support in the process of data collection and analysis.

At no stage will your real names appear in any document that is made public as a result of this research without your permission. This will ensure that no-one recognises you if they ever get to read the thesis, or any publications that I write as a result of this work. You may request copies of the transcripts of all your interviews should you so wish.

The right to withdraw

Your participation in this project is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from it at any point. If you decide to withdraw, you will not suffer any kind of punishment/ disadvantage. I would like you to notify me as quickly as possible, however, if you suddenly do want to withdraw so that a replacement can be found.

I, (Full names in block letters), have read, understood and agree to the terms of my participation in the RWAT Research Project as set out in this document.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix D

Individual Nodes of Experience for Michelle, Vusi, Zola and Nothembu

a. Michelle: Individual Nodes of Experience

1. “I was trembling like this”

When asked how she felt on the day Michelle got her RWAT materials, she confessed that, “Ooo... I was trembling like this [showing hands shaking]” (1.2.127) and her heart was “like that – du .. du .. du .. du .. [thumping the heel of her hand against her chest] ... and I didn’t know whether I would manage ... (1.2.149-50). The first thing Michelle and her friend Thabisile²⁵ (who registered with her) did was that they showed the RWAT books to the person who inspired them to do the Honours programme in the first place. They said to her, “these are our books” but when Michelle “paged out at home”, she was intimidated by all the demands – like “when we are supposed to do things”, and so they asked their mentor, who answered that, “No, you must read, go ahead”. And we said, ‘Hau weh ... these readings, there are too many’, and she said, ‘No, read those readings, there is more information in there, you must read, read’” (1.2.131-4).

2. “And we struggled with some of the words”

So Michelle began reading ‘those readings’. She described the way in which she read them as follows: “I just jumped .. jumped .. page .. page .. page .. page .. page .. page .. page ... [mimicking rapid page turning]” (1.2.159), but then she showed Thabisile and together they tackled the readings and at the same time “helping each other because we are having the same subjects so we are having the same problems” (1.2.163-4). When asked what these problems were, Michelle replied, “These English words. Sometimes we come across a big word. We used to take this ... borrow this English dictionary from this Thabo²⁶ [a colleague] so we can work out the meaning of that word. And we struggled with some of the words ... we didn’t understand” (1.2.166-8).

3. “Everything was new to me”

A sense of ‘newness’ clearly permeated Michelle’s initial engagement with the RWAT module. In her initial questionnaire she had, for example, said that when she began the RWAT module, “everything was new to me”. When asked in an interview, ‘what is

²⁵ A pseudonym

²⁶ A pseudonym

everything?’ she replied with, “The new terms ... the academic thing. If you are writing this thing ... hey I was ... I was dark ...”. Pushed to respond to a question such as, ‘So, in your previous training, no-one ever tried to show you how to write in the way we were trying to show you?’, like the virginal lover she could only answer “it was my first time”. Her husband, however, got no inkling of these feelings. When showing him the materials for the first time, her response to his comment that “Oh, ei, that is hard work” was, “No, it is not hard ... if I can read it maybe I will understand it ... what’s going on” (1.2.155-6). But faced with so many ‘English words’, Michelle was scared: “Weh ... this ... the new thing, maybe I will fail.

4. “Eish, it was difficult to do those readings”

For the first two contact sessions, Michelle battled to keep in touch with what was going on. There was “so much English as I was doing this ... hey but it was difficult for us” (1.1.583-4). When asked whether it was difficult to understand the English in the RWAT readings because it was *academic* English or just because of the general conversations held in contact sessions, it seemed that both posed problems: “Ya, the conversation ... and the words when we are reading ... came across difficult words then we used a dictionary” (1.1.576-80). Though she tried to do her “learning but eish, it was difficult to do those readings ... [thus] it was the readings” that proved to be one of the greatest hurdles.

Even when nudged into speaking about ‘giving one’s own opinions’ in the RWAT module and the possible pedagogical reasons for doing this, Michelle directed us back to the readings: “Yes...yes. Sometimes she likes us to put our own opinions about ... maybe the ... what we’ve got ... what we ... maybe we are reading in some of these readings ... how we can put it in our own thoughts ... opinions. [And did you find that easy?] Ya ... it was easier as time went on but heh, it was difficult. But as time went on when she [the tutor] showed us ... because eh, we’ve got problems with this reading and writing ... and she tried to explain it to us” (1.3.229-236).

5. “Am I *dom*?”

The consequences of not understanding the readings fully were serious for Michelle. She said, “It was ... it was ... eh ... near the exams. I think it was the last assignment ... or the second assignment ... I got 40 something ... eh ... I was shocked. The others ... when I looked at their scripts ... How come? Am I *dom*? [Tapping the side of her head. And then laughing.] I’m *stupid*”.

6. “These politics ... eh ... like these political groups”

As to which readings proved more of a hurdle than others, Dudu immediately identified Johnson (1994) as particularly difficult. The reader might remember from Chapter 1 that this reading was included in the RWAT module, and selected for isiZulu translation, because it efficiently encapsulates the full ideological thrust of the RWAT module i.e. that it was both 'a political and pedagogical project', with its 'political' leanings lying strongly left of centre, and its pedagogical choice of the Genre Approach, reflective of these leanings as well. When asked if she could remember what was meant by the 'pedagogical and political project', Michelle replied, "Ah ... those things were confusing ... eish! ... Ya, because we asked that lady who was teaching us ... because we didn't know ... how to use those words. ... She tried to quote us some ... eh ... some of the points relating to those things ... political ... heh heh ... we were confused" (1.2.520-8). Taking her into the present moment i.e. one year after engaging with Johnson's ideas, and by implication, those of the RWAT module, I said to her, "If I say to you *now* that teaching writing is a political project, does that make sense to you?", there was a very long pause before she answered, "It's including politics". I put the ball back in her court by asking, "Yes, but what kind of 'politics'?" There was another long pause - of about ten seconds. "These politics ... eh ... like these political groups ... like the ANC". At this point I elected to drop the topic.

7. “He make us clear about how education ... in those years”

The reading by Hart (1995), however, was differently received. Though it was an equally long period to think back to as per the Johnson text, Michelle could easily remember 'Hart'. "We liked Hart," she said. "Ya ... it's a long time. But ... eh ... he make us ... clear about how was education in those ... in those years. Teachers didn't explain to the learners nicely ... they just give you a topic to write and ... maybe ... eh ... a journey by train, you don't know how to." (1.2.200-5). Thus, Hart's focus on Thulani, a Grade 10 black learner, and the latter's reading and writing experiences in a township school in the 90s, resonated with Michelle.

8. “There was no explanation ... just copying”

Asked to describe some of the differences between the kinds of experiences Michelle's present learners have, and those she (and Thulani) had at school, the following came up: "Eh ... like when we ... when we ... when we are doing this thing ... this novel thing ...like I was doing it ... the teacher just give you maybe ... just give you the book to read at home, and then no explanations ... sometimes she can write the questions on the board not

explaining what I'm going to do ... all those things. There was no explanation ... just copying" (1.2.212-6).

9. "I don't have enough time"

But finding the *time* to do the prescribed readings and assignments was a consistently difficult challenge for Michelle to try and overcome. "Eh," she said, more than once, "I don't have enough time". This was always because "I've got many chores to do here at home, during the weekends my husband is here at home and I take care of him. What I can say is sacrifice because I can wake up in the morning and I'm not even ... I'm sacrificing if I can wake up at 2 o'clock, I can study maybe for just one or two hours. Two o'clock!" When, then, does Michelle sleep? "No sleeping. At times I usually sleep at nine and then I wake up at 2 o'clock. ... Yes, I must do that. I must sacrifice so that I can pass because there is a lot of work" (1.4.203-226). On what would be a regular basis then, Michelle seems to have only about five hours sleep a night.

10. The Scheme for the Academic Argument – "Hhayi, hhayi ... Heh! ... it was difficult"

Another central pillar to the RWAT module (in addition to the readings) is the 'Scheme for the Academic Argument' (Martin, 1989). This 'scheme', as indicated in Chapter 1, constitutes the entire 'structural' thrust of the genre of the academic argument the module teaches, and as such is an imperative for students to internalise. Yet this was another aspect of the module Michelle declared very difficult to grasp. In her own words she said, "Hhayi, hhayi [laughing, but indicating difficulties]. ... Heh! Most of us – it was difficult. ... It was new to us" (1.3.487). When asked what was particularly new there, there was a long pause before she answered, "Heh, that background. I struggled with that thing, background and then, I started with background ... how to relate these, hey ... hey ... hey, it was so difficult for me" (1.3.495-6). The rest of the diagram was apparently equally challenging, especially the demand that claims should be formulated. She said of this: "... ayi .. ayi .. ayi ... claims, if we are doing these claims, the topic sentence ... ayi .. ayi .. ayi ... (1.3.499-500) Yeyi, we were struggling in doing that. I can remember the last assignment, wee ... wee, the whole day ... [Cutting....and.....?] Yes, yes, correcting the mistakes ... taking the thing to the lady to correct it. Yeyi [So how did you feel that day?] I didn't eat, everything was so difficult for me and then I can take what I've written to [my tutor] and she said "No you should have done this, go *back* (emphasising) (1.3.525-531) The notion of coherence too, was a challenge: "... the other thing was that coherence ... eh, I was failing that ... coherence" (1.1.945).

11. The isiZulu? “Ai ... it wasn’t a problem to me”

Unlike the other participants in the study, Michelle made substantial use of the isiZulu texts, even reading them *before* the English ones. In her view, the isiZulu used in the translations was ‘good’, “it’s good - although the learners said some of the words are not translated right” (1.3.665-6). Unfortunately, too much time had passed for her to give examples of some of these words. But as she said, “Ai ... it wasn’t a problem to me. Because I can understand these words they were using ... Even in school ... academic words I can have an understanding because I’m a Zulu teacher ... maybe they [other students] are not Zulu teachers. [And so] ... I didn’t have a problem when reading those things because I’m used to it. Others have got a problem” (1.4.408-433).

12. “I was a little bit hurt ... they don’t like Zulu”

Michelle reacted strongly to other students’ negative reactions to the isiZulu texts. She told me that “They didn’t [use the translations] because it’s confusing, but I’m doing Zulu. I was a little bit hurt. ... They don’t like Zulu (1.3.1160).” Encouraged to talk more about this, Michelle felt that when one reads the isiZulu version of one of the translated texts, and then the English version, then the former ‘makes sense’. But as far as the other students were concerned, it seemed to her that it is “as if they don’t know Zulu now. They know English better. They are degrading our Zulu – but I kept quiet I didn’t comment. I just ... ya ... listened” (1.3.1174-6).. When invited to say what she would have liked to say to them, it was that, “They must like Zulu. They mustn’t be negative in Zulu” (1.3.1184). When nudged again at the next interview to think about why ‘they’ may not ‘know Zulu’ they way Michelle knows isiZulu, she offered; “Maybe they don’t get the time to teach that Zulu in higher classes, I don’t know. Because I was also studying Zulu at UNISA ... I was doing it in Zulu not in English” (1.4.423-4).

13. “We think in Zulu”

When asked to describe what happens when she reads an English text, Michelle explained that; “We think in Zulu and then we tried to translate it because we are mainly Zulu speakers” (1.2.415-6). But making these constant changes from one language to another was “hindering” Michelle. So “when I read something I can understand it and then try to ... put it also in Zulu” (1.4.386-7), describes only half the process when it comes to *writing* about what one has read. The other half, as she says, “... goes back English”. At certain points, however, this is not a problem to her especially if “maybe if we are discussing these things maybe some of the work, we can discuss it in English with the Zulu so that we can

understand better. If you can understand in Zulu it's not so difficult to translate it to English. We can" (1.4.396-8).

14. "I can read aloud if I'm alone"

Michelle also described a particular strategy she uses when confronted with difficult English texts, namely that, "What I can sometimes do is I can read aloud if I'm alone so that I can be assisted. Maybe there is a difficult word, I must go quickly and look in the dictionary so that I can find the meaning. ... English ... English dictionary, so that I can have a clear understanding of what it means because if you don't understand the word, you end up reading not understanding" (1.4.342-4).

15. "Now we are used in Zulu, not well enough in English"

Michelle attributes much of her struggle with English in the Honours programme to the lack of exposure to English as a result of being an isiZulu first language teacher. "Eh," she said (laughing), "I was talking with Zandile²⁷ about teaching this language because we have taught this language for so many years, now we are used in Zulu, not well enough in English. That thing is hindering us. Yes, because we are using Zulu words now. There is little of English with us. It's better if you can get another subject with English ..." (1.4.355-362). But, despite this sense of linguistic inadequacy, it turns out that Michelle "used to check her [Zandile's] work ... her draft ... check her ... yah, the tense" (1.4.369-73). A solution to the sense that an isiZulu-only subject teaching environment was inhibiting their success in the Honours programme was that it would be "better if you can get another subject with English ... like I was thinking of HSS²⁸ down there ... they can give us" (1.4.362-3).

16. "When we were mixing with the other races ..."

The contact sessions that characterise the mixed-mode model of delivery of the RWAT module and all other modules in the Honours programme discussed in this thesis, are, as the reader might remember, the main source of 'formal' support offered to students. Thus accessing their experiences and perceptions of this aspect of the phenomenon was critical. Although the majority of students on the programme are black, English second language speakers, there are usually sufficient numbers of whites, Indians and coloured students to allow for some degree of racial and linguistic integration in at least some of the tutorial

²⁷ A pseudonym

²⁸ Human and Social Studies, one of the five learning areas in the General Education and Training Phase

groups, though this is always on an absolute minority scale. Michelle, for example, was a member of a tutorial group that included a minority number of Indian, English first language speakers. She says of this experience: "Sometimes we ... when we were mixing with the other races, maybe we are four Zulu speakers, and two, we end up speaking Zulu. They can tell us no, you mustn't talk among you, try to speak the language we can understand all. Eish ... it was a problem. Sometimes we ... like ... I was in the same class as Zandile ... maybe when they said we must mix with the ladies ... Indians ... (mm..mmm) there are many Indians. The white lady she was one. But she was open ... she can mix with any group of ladies ... but I don't see her anymore ... she is ... And these ladies ... these Zulu speaking ladies they are shy ... they want to be in one group ... they are shy of these Indian ladies because they like to talk too much... (mm...mmm) but if we are in a group, we can help each other ... each other ... with the suggestions or opinions. Maybe when you are trying to put some of the opinions or some points, they don't take your point ... they just ignore it and we feel inferior and we think maybe we don't know ... they knew better".

17. "Eish, you feel inferior because you didn't read"

But coming to contact sessions un- or underprepared, also played a role in an evolving sense of inferiority. In response to a question that specifically asked, "What happens to *you* when you get there and you haven't done the readings?" Michelle answered, "Eish, you feel inferior because you didn't read. Other people can talk and talk and talk. Even in a group you contribute just a little and when you are supposed to do the activity, maybe it's the first time ... you didn't have a room for it at home ... it's against time you see" (1.4.284-7). Prompted by the experience of such a paucity of time, and another tutor's warning that "if you don't read you won't make it in the ... during the exam. ... if you can manage your time properly and you are supposed to do all this work and even the activities"" (1.4. 309-10), Michelle went to him "and I told him ... I told him the truth [that she had not prepared], but told him in that future "yah, I'm going to take all these readings because there are maybe four of them ... and I've read them" (1.4.311-2).

18. "The other lady saw me ... and I like that lady"

Paradoxically, the contact sessions were also the place where Michelle experienced the greatest sense of affirmation from an unexpected quarter viz. another student from another race group. At the same moment as Michelle read the failing mark referred to earlier, and registered such shock, "the other lady saw me. I was frustrated and ... I was sitting like this [Head in hands]. I didn't eat that day ... I was looking at this script ... I nearly cried. And she came to me ... it's an Indian lady - she stays in Pietermaritzburg. We were doing with her

Psychological Perspectives²⁹ ... and I like that lady. She looks like ... proud ... lovely lady. And then she saw me. And I told her, 'I'm frustrated with this thing. I got 46%. How come? Am I stupid'. And she said, 'No. Maybe this thing is true ... but I will help you'. And she started looking at my thing and she said, 'You must correct this'. And she read it ... she read it. She said, 'No, you must put it like this'. And I started to be open ... I told her everything ... I've got problems with Psychological Perspectives. I showed her those problems and she said, 'Oh, I can help you ... anytime, even in ... during contact session ... maybe during lunch'. I eat quickly and then I go to her ... and she helped me ... and as from there I felt positive. And she said, 'You will pass it. Ask me if you've got problems, even at home. You can buy the airtime' and when I've got problems ... how to do those essays ... I can phone her. Maybe I can read my ... what's that - introduction. Heh, it was difficult to me ... background. Hau, I've got problems with that thing. And I can read it to her and she can listen to me" (1.1.880-900).

19. "The Zulu speaking ladies, they scolded me"

The presence of this same student encouraged Michelle, on occasion, to talk "... a little bit ... because they wanted me to talk and also I can talk. I can talk, I don't know how. But usually I can mix with them ... I can make friends with them. ... and these other ladies ... the Zulu speaking ladies, they scolded me, 'Why are you going to that group?' ... and I want something. And what I have learnt ... is to share with other peoples ... you can ... you know better to share information with somebody else ... not to be alone. I've gained" (1.2.449-454). Michelle was thus particularly pleased about the racial mix of her group "because you can share the knowledge. Maybe if you are unsure with your point, they can help you" (1.2.464-5).

20. "This assessment it's so difficult for us"

Michelle volunteered that "this assessment it's so difficult for us" (1.3.922). When asked why, she answered that, "Uyazi ngendlela abathi asenze ngayo besiyenza thina I assessment ngendlela ebesiyenza ngayo kodwa manje these terms they are using." (They had their own way of doing the assessment but now they have new terms that they must use which are difficult.) ... These terms they are using are confusing us. Abawasebenzisi amagama a direct." (They don't use direct words.) (1.3.930-3). But the two essays which constituted the examination Michelle only found difficult at the assignment stage. Once preparation for the

²⁹ Psychological Perspectives: the other module that ran concurrently with RWAT during the first semester of 2004

examination began, she "tried to be positive and start afresh reading the whole thing - and then I understood" (1.3.968-70).

21. "It was painful ... your heart *beat*"

In order to provoke memory and response, for the purposes of accessing students' perceptions of the nature and quality of assignment feedback from participants in this study, a marked student Assignment 3 essay was included as an 'artefact' in the second interviews. The particular assignment chosen had many tutor's comments on the pages, and was in fact, a failed assignment. I asked each participant how they might have responded to receiving such an assignment. Michelle responded that, "It was painful. ... if it was *me*, I would read all what is written here and then read my thing and try and rectify my mistakes" (1.3.1035-41). I wondered if she might be angry about the comments and the mark, and asked if she would read all the comments immediately or put the assignment aside. "I usually go back," she said. "Maybe I will leave it some time [laughing]. Maybe tomorrow I will take it and look at it nicely - *alone!* With *no-one!* [laughing again]. Ya, usually I do that" (1.3.1040-56). What would she do *first*, however? "I will be shocked about the writing, lots of comments. Bheke kuqala ukuthi uphasile yini. (Check the mark first)". And if you failed, "your heart *beat!*".

One of the tutor's comments on this particular assignment read, "Background information not organised" - that's all. I asked if this kind of comment would be helpful to Michelle. Her response was: "Ngoba mangabe I background yakho ayikho oganayzdi akasho kodwa ukuthi iyiphi indlela okumele uyi oganayze ngayo. (Because if the background is not organised but the marker doesn't say how you should organise it.) [then] ... I must go to somebody else to help me, maybe she can read what I have written and then she can correct me. ... Ya, because if the marker said background is not organised, then *how* am I going to organised it? So, which means I must go and ask somebody" (1.3.1089-92).

22. "In the other modules, we can apply that knowledge"

The issue of 'transfer' i.e. the learning and experiences in the RWAT module that had relevance for contexts other than the RWAT context, was evoked in the interviews with Michelle on several occasions. There were differing situations in which she either directly or inadvertently inferred an RWAT 'influence'. For example, to the direct question, "Do you feel there is a difference for *you* ... about reading and writing [since completing the RWAT module?], her reply was "Ya, there is. There is that difference ... I can say ... Ya, there is that difference. Like what I've learnt ... this academic writing ... because we are applying it even

in the assignments ... in the assignments [in the other modules?] ... yes, in the other modules, we can apply that knowledge." The kind of knowledge that Michelle identifies in this instance, as that which is being transferred is, "Like ... eh ... or ... the intro ... background ... the introduction ... and then ... that style ... this essay will discuss ... those things. ... Ya, it helped us ... even those claims". This knowledge also included "structure ... how can we plan an essay". (1.2.307-24) A year later, she also identifies 'scanning' as a reading strategy that "they said you must ... this thing of scanning ... you must do in your reading", though "Ooo ... I've forgotten" (1.2.330) was her immediate response to being asked to explain what scanning entailed. However, after a moment's thought, she described it as: "You can read a little and take the most important ... eh ... the most important points ... then you can write it ... on the other side of the page so that you can summarise" (1.2.332-3). Did she still do this herself? "Ya ... ya ... if I've got time I can do that. I can read and read and read and just write down the main points of that thing and go to the other side ..." (1.2.335-6).

23. "I've learnt something from the university"

23.1 "Then I did find it was groups"

Another very important learning, from Michelle's perspective, that she carried from 'the university' (which included the RWAT module), was a new way to approach her own teaching practices in her classroom. In response to the question, "What did you learn that you thought you could take to your learners?" she said, "During the previous years, what I did, I used to feed my kids ... telling them everything. I was working hard for them ... and they were relaxing like that [demonstrating lounging back in a relaxed fashion]. And I went there and I said, No, I must get them ... I must give them instructions on how to do this thing, and then I must do examples, and then other work I must group them. I must make group ... then give them other poems. Maybe I did four or five, and I showed them. Because I was reading with Grade 11 ... [self corrects] ... Grade 12. There were three sections ... there were many ... and the poems we are supposed to do - usually 20 poems, and then a drama book, a novel. There were four books. Ya, and the folklore ... and the folklore. And then I said no, there's too much work for me. I've learnt something from the ... the university, I must use it. Then I did find it was groups. And then I demonstrated. I showed them. And I started to group them ... this group will do this one, this group will do this one. And then the other day I told them they must present ... eh ... the day ... so and so it's your chance. I've been demonstrating ... it's your chance to demonstrate. They must demonstrate how you can teach it. And they were ... it was interesting" (1.1.981-1005).

Despite what must have been a radically new experience for Michelle's learners, they have, according to her, accepted it very positively. "Ya! ya!" Michelle answered in reply to my question about this, "They go like this [snapping fingers]. And ... eh ... one day the lesson was so interesting ... it was poetry. The other group ... and that poem ... the one who was doing it ... in front ... he got into emotions with this thing he is doing, and the bell cried, and they said, 'No, Ma'am, the bell mustn't cry' [Now laughing with a great sense of achievement]. Grade 12s! Doing those poems ... themselves, in that way. I showed them" (1.1.1009-17).

23. 2 “He or she can prepare for that subheading”

"How to do ... to do with these subheadings" (1.2.51-2) was another 'learning' which Michelle introduced into her classroom. And sometimes she takes "one of them [her learners] to be a teacher in front of them because it maybe it is easier if somebody like ... tell them something ... it's easier sometimes'. When asked whether this was something she learnt specifically from her RWAT experience, she replied, "Ya ... ya. Because in the olden days I was used to do the talking ... most of the talking by myself ... not to include them ... the learners ... they remain passive sometimes. But if I can take one of them ... and then ... maybe ... eh ... if I can ask him maybe before time if he can or she can prepare for that subheading so that she or he can present in front of them" (1.2.52-62).

24. “I have forgotten some of these things”

In response to a thoroughly direct probe as to what Michelle thought she had brought to her *school* - as opposed to her *classroom* - from the RWAT experiences, there was another very long pause before she answered that, "I think the educators that I teach [with] ... they know that the learners must be divided into groups ... but the main problem ... the main thing is that you can show them ... maybe you can show them first how to do that thing, and then give them that chance so that they can express themselves" (1.2.670-3). With regard to reading and writing and anything that might be appropriately shared about that, Michelle struggled to marshal her memory at this point: "I think so ... if I can go back to this book [the RWAT Learning Guide on the table between us] ... if I can go back because I've got some of these and I think I will get something ... must remind myself ... I have forgotten some of these things" (1.2.701-4), she said.

b. Vusi: Individual Nodes of Experience

1. “We couldn’t understand ... there were so many”

When Vusi was asked whether he had "any memories of how you felt when you got all those [RWAT] books?", he answered that, "Mmmm. Part 1 and Part 2 were somehow giving us ... what can I say ... we couldn't understand ... well, we had to page through, but since we were given time to look at them after we were given, then we get used to them, but somehow ...". [So they were quite complex?] "Yes, yes. Definitely. It was difficult ... it wasn't that easy to interact. ... Because there were so many and you know, like when you wanted to refer ... you know sometimes you are confusing Part 1 and Part 2, you know (2.2.17-27).

2. It opened us, our eyes ... then we noticed our mistakes”

Although RWAT, as the very first module in the Honours programme, Vusi found to be "very much time demanding, it was time demanding and ... but it was good! You know it ... what can I say? ... it opened us, our eyes ...". (2.2.67-9). When asked to what it had opened his eyes, he replied, "To understand our mistakes as teachers, of ignoring ... of ignoring some of the writings the children should do, or maybe even not ... or maybe to highlight them" (2.2.71-2).

The *reading* that sprang immediately to Vusi's mind when he was recounting how the RWAT module had 'opened us, our eyes', was the one by Hart (1995). Again, the ethnographic study involving Thulani, the Grade 10, isiZulu first language learner with whom Michelle identified so closely, found resonance. Voluntarily Vusi began, "There is an ethnographic by one of the lecturers here on the history life of some of the students. ... Ok, what I've noticed there is that the learner complained about something that we did ourselves", and when asked what that was, it was "like ... maybe spoon-feeding writing for the children ... let the children write after us, because we did that ... encouraging them to write ... yes, just to give them the topic and let them write. So it was difficult for them. ... Yes. So through those life history, through those readings or through those extracts then we noticed our mistakes that we ... actually my mistake that I should have done this and that and that and that. I shouldn't have done this because some of my students really have been copying ... because I thought it would help them if they copy. I would read for them and then they read on their notes and I can explain in Zulu ... so that they will understand" (2.2.76-102).

3. It becomes difficult for me to get close to grasp it ... that is political er ... in pedagogic

Vusi assured me that he found all the readings enjoyable. " ... with all the readings, let me see [taking the RWAT learning guides], looking at here ... because this was David Johnson ... David Johnson was looking at ... what can you say ... [if] I had brought mine it was going to be easy, because what David Johnson said differs from what Reppen wrote about" (2.2.353-356). When asked how he saw that difference, Vusi replied, "That's what I'm thinking about, but I don't have what is here with me [his own books], but some ... let me just say some authors were defining genre as such, whereas some authors focuses on the approach, genre-based approach" (2.2.358-360).

Vusi rightly identified Johnson as focusing on 'the approach' but when I asked how he understood the 'political and pedagogical project' (as per the Johnson reading), he said, "It was very difficult at first, but it was ok at the end. Though I didn't have much time to ... what can I say? ... to grasp it, to assimilate and all that, because of the time constraint, but at the end it was ok for me. We couldn't ... you know ... we could draw ... I could draw some colours, write about this is what Johnson say, this is what Ken Harley ... [corrected - Hart] ... yes, Hart says, this is what ... there is another one ... I don't know ... [is it Reppen, or Hyland?] ... Yes. We can just draw reports and write what he says etc. etc. etc. Because I remember in one of the assignments we have to compare - this is what someone's saying, while this one is saying this and this and this about genre. This one is saying this, this, this, but the other one looks at genre as this" (2.2.372-91).

I took Vusi back to writing as a 'political and pedagogical project' and his perceptions of what this meant. "Well," he said, "the way he [Johnson] explained political ... that is political er ... in pedagogic. But it becomes difficult for me to get close to grasp it". Nevertheless, I asked him to try. After a long pause, he answered, "What can I say ... what can I say? I'm not sure what ... but what I've realised is that whilst she [the tutor] was focusing on the pedagogy, that we ... according to us [teachers], pedagogy is a school thing ... yes, it's a school thing while maybe he also talked about adults. He did also mention adults and all that, which also ... which also has to do with the politically, trying some redresses and all that ... redresses and all that ... all those things" (2.2.395-406). Perhaps unfairly, I held us on the 'political and pedagogical' perception track by asking yet again, "But why 'political'? What do you understand now if I say that teaching writing in schools should be understood by educators as a political project?" Vusi responded by saying, "Mmmm ... I think maybe it should ... it had to do with the politic ... politic ... being involved, or maybe being taking part in as far as maybe directing ... I don't know". Could I assume then that English was proving a barrier to

his understanding? No, it would seem I couldn't: "It doesn't prove a barrier but it take the politic above the education so that it is politic then education in reality it is something that is taking place, but sometimes you don't want to look at it as a top-down approach all the time. Because it leaves us not having alternative on the ground, because you always think that things will come from above" (2.2.421-34).

4. “He or she wanted to associate a genre approach as the approach that redresses”

Holding the above conversation in mind, Vusi's responses to my later request that he assist me with figuring out exactly what the student meant in the following extract (quoted verbatim) are interesting. The extract is taken from the sample assignment script (*not* one of the participant's) made available to participants in the interview: *'The genre approach has a comprehensive influence and criteria in both political pedagogical, it also influence and challenges other approaches i.e. traditional progressivist. The genre approach as a political it help the disadvantaged student to the access of social, economic cultural community and society. As a pedagogy it helps the learners with the access of addressing the question of equity in education. The genre approach is the most effective and influencial as it provides the language skills and how to use language in a different institution. This approach also helps the learners to be creative when writing (Hyland 1984). The genre approach also has a explicit methodology for teaching effective writing for different purposes'*. Vusi's immediate response was that it confused him and "I ... also here, I just have some assumptions here. That he wanted to ...he or she wanted to associate a genre approach as the ... as the approach that redresses or maybe trying to develop those who have been disadvantaged ... gave them access ..." (2.2.904-7).

5. The Scheme for the Academic Argument – “Ai, this was very difficult ... very very very difficult for me”

Vusi remembered the diagram of the 'Scheme for the Academic Argument' well. His reaction to it was, however, "Ai, this was very difficult ... very very very difficult for me" (2.2 181). When asked if had known what a thesis was before he began the RWAT module, he answered with a flat, "No". When defining a 'thesis statement' a year later, he said, "I think a thesis guides the writer to ... or, ok, can I say thesis ... let me say thesis summarises each and every aspect that the writer will be writing about because whenever you write you should refer back to the thesis". (2.2.189-91). He took us back to the diagram, repeating that, "This was very very difficult, I'm telling you. You know, finding out whether this should be optional or compulsory, why it should be compulsory, it was difficult because ... for me at first I didn't

know how to compile it, so that it would show that ... ok, it is given this ... what is expected to give, like giving the background information or maybe like providing ... um ... support and all that for the writer's point of view. I might ... I had some point, but only to find that I didn't support myself, I couldn't support myself now, so I would find myself being pointed out when I write assignments - 'that's ok, but you must refer back to the assignment, keep on referring to the ... I mean thesis'. Yes, and all that. Because what we ... what we were taught is that we form a thesis then we form the list of contents ... and then from the list of contents the claim statements or maybe the ... can I say, the sentences that were placed before each and every paragraph, those sentences should refer you back to the thesis, now only to find that whenever we were writing our other paragraphs, we just forget about the thesis ... it's like I normally did" [laughing] (2.2.197-214).

6. "Maybe I lack information or maybe the link"

I tried to evoke further perceptions of Vusi's related to the difficulties he experienced when working with the Scheme for the Academic Argument - as a prescribed structure students were told to follow - only after what was considered adequate tutorial induction to the concepts and diagram, of course. "Well, I can't really say," he said, "but in my case it was because maybe I lack information or maybe the link. Yes, linking ... what shall I use that will link, so that means I needed more information which would be related to what I've said. Like ... let me say for example, if my topic would be um ... maybe I will be talking about learners or maybe educators in rural areas. I will write and have all ... everything ... my introduction or thesis and all that. But only to find that now according to the claim statement, I'm not now referring to what I've said earlier. Because I'm lacking the information to link [to expand?]. Yes, yes, to write about it" (2.2.218-231). That might be the cause of lack of vocabulary. ... I think it's very much important because once you understand the introduction you know how it's put, how it's placed. If you can master it and know all the stages then I think it is easy from there" (2.2.231-237).

7. "You have to understand all this together"

Though mastery of the various stages would have made it 'easy from there', this did not come quickly. In fact so difficult was it for Vusi, that "we ended up not reading here, just listening to the tutor" (2.2.240-1). It was the "unfamiliarity and the grouping, you know, because here we are looking at stage 1 which is introductory. Ok. Then you have to understand all this together, these [all the 'Moves'] should work together actually ... should work closely. With the development of argument is where you are now developing what you there when ... which as time goes on get used to it, and coming back to the concluding stage

you find that you'll write the full paragraph or maybe the whole page, but trying to sum up and all that, and then the tutors or maybe the lecturers would say, 'No, you don't have to write so many sentences, you need just to write maybe five or ten or whatever sentences' ... you know ... but looking at this you think you must ... [there's so much more to do?]. Yes, yes, yes. There's a lot to be done" (2.2.254-65).

8. "I wasn't better as I'm doing now"

Despite the difficulties Vusi had with mastering the 'Scheme for the Academic Argument' diagram, he asserted that before doing the RWAT module, "I wasn't better as I'm doing now". What this meant in practice was that "I can now write my thesis ... I try to write them academic. I try now to understand how to relate the paragraphs, how to link and all that. Something that I wasn't aware of ... and I was just writing ... someone who was just fine. Now I know that ok ... like ... Psychological Perspectives also helped us ... helped me to write from the mind-map ... I will do a mind-map first. ... And then I'll have to prioritize now ... I'll have to ... if not prioritize, maybe just to give my sentences ... my sentences name ... the numbers ... the sentences that will be claim sentences in the paragraph ... then I'll give them the numbers. It's easy for me now. I'll have to see that ok, before this, let's say my topic as I was doing Symbolism inside southern Africa. Ok, I will have to do a mind-map ... everything that pertains to symbolism. That definition should come first. So I think it has ... it has eh ... eh ... gained me the idea how to write logically ... how to follow, what should come first etc. etc. etc." (2.2.444-76). When I asked if any of what he had just described he applies now to his writing, he assured me that "Yes, I'm ... whatever I write now since I passed the RWAT I'm writing according to it" (2.2.479-80).

9. "It's difficult, managing time is difficult"

Within the RWAT module itself, and the Honours programme in general, 'time' was a central and multifaceted motif in Vusi's story as the following five nodes indicate.

9.1 "Time is really really really hard to secure"

In the first instance, trying to balance all the *literal* demands on his time was not simple for Vusi as the following shows: "Well I ... I would say it's difficult, managing time is difficult, but as ... if you are a student and you know that you are registered and you have to cope with ... with whatever stuff is in front of you, like in our case ... when I ... I have to manage time, because I'm also ... a full time teacher, permanent teacher, and in ... and as a principal of school my work doesn't end [ok] at the school. I work even at night. Sometimes I have to do some other things, I have to do some other meetings, I have to meet other peoples.

Saturday wise, sometimes I have to drive to Durban to secure some sponsorship [ya] and all that, so that means time is really really really hard to secure. Sunday I'm also a minister of the church, [yoh!] I also go to the church service [ok] sometimes you know I really have to say, please guys give me a time just to finish up. Like ... this past weekend [ok] I had compile all my stuff, journals and assignments because I have to take them down to Pietermaritzburg. [yes yes] Well, I have to ask for an apology, please just do whatever and I will be with you next week. And then we have got some assignments that we have to do and with these ... with the program that we follow from the University, [ya] the first program actually, not the one ... not the second one ... not the specialization [ya ok]. We normally have two modules ... [ya ya] yes, in a term, so though there are contact sessions we go there hoping that when we come back we will just come back and embark on what we will be studying on that day, [ok] but only to find that when we come back with ... on Monday, we have to finish the previous contact session's work - assignments and all that stuff [ok] (2.3.21-43).

9.2 "It time consumed actually"

Having to work with no fewer than three books was not only confusing (as indicated much earlier), "... it time consumed actually" (2.3.27). "Yes definitely. I remember I wanted this ... I think it's this [reaching for one of the yellow guides], I think it is in this book ... how to write ... to follow the structures ... this ... yes, this one ... introduction to ..." (2.2.782-4), so 'mixing it up' didn't help. "We wanted this actually [finding the diagram of the Scheme for the Academic Argument] because we knew that it might come from the exams and all that. So we would page through, looking this [laughing] ... we would page through these two books, Part One and Part Two until we get tired and then to say, ok, let me look at what you are doing here etc. etc. And when you are at home you see that oh, this is the one, this is what I've been looking for. Because sometimes you forget which to indict [sic] or which programme exercise because [this is also called the Student Guide?] ... Yes. Even if we knew that this is a Student Guide problems and exercises, but we find it hard because this also has some exercises, activities ... which one? ... They had some activities that we had to write for portfolios and all that. ... Yes, all those tasks. So it would give us a hard time. So my suggestion would just be combining maybe the two, and combine that one and this one. Then you can ... it will be fine. And even if you don't reduce work or maybe ... it's all right. But just have two books ... it would be ok. It won't waste time because we know that you are paging through it" (2.2.786-811).

9.3 “It needed ‘at least maybe two terms’”

Then there was the sense of an *inadequate allocation of time* (by the university) to accomplish the outcomes of the RWAT module itself. His sense of what it meant to try and master the Scheme for the Academic Argument, for example, was that "really this needed more time ... on its own" (2.2.272). His perception of the module as a whole was it needed "at least maybe two terms" [semesters] ... yes, two terms, yes" (2.2.276). Because we couldn't finish ... do all this". Having said this, however, he quickly added, "... but these were good actually" [referring to the RWAT learning guides] (2.2.278-9).

Doing all the readings also took time, time which Vusi often did not have. When asked how much he managed to read 'in the end', he said, "Well, because of the due date, because of the date that we have to meet and all that, we have to read at least almost the book though sometimes some of the readings are not clear to us because we were on our own at that time". [And for you personally?] "Only few readings that we do in the class and get some explanation, then later you have to do it on your own, so sometimes it was difficult, but we tried" (2.2.341-4).

9.4 “It added on what you are expected to do”

What complicated the burden further as far as Vusi was concerned, was "maybe having *more* examples sometimes looks like it's work that you have to read, you have to do, and all that. So it add on what you are expected to do" (2.2.291-3. In other words, examples included in the text, which were intended to *elucidate* concepts and processes actually undermined Vusi's efforts, representing simply more reading rather than assistance, and hence taking up valuable time *which could be better spent doing something else*.

9.5 “The isiZulu translations? “It’s given me a hard time ... it was time to constrain us”

And then there was 'time' in relation to engaging with the isiZulu translations in the RWAT Learning Guide (Part One), which revealed itself as having a punitive dimension to it which Vusi took pains to try and describe. I started by saying, "... I wanted to ask you about ... these Zulu translations", to which Vusi immediately replied, "It's given me a hard time" (2.2.594). I asked him to explain why this was the case, but penetrating the layers of experiences and perceptions in relation to this particular issue itself took time. So as to allow the reader to share in the intricacies of the process, the following extract from the second interview with Vusi, is offered in its entirety. In this moment, as the reader will see, Vusi

chose to use the title of the first article in the learning guide, 'Genre Analysis: Just another fad?' by Randi Reppen, as an exemplar of the point he wanted to make. And so he began:

"You know, it was time to constrain us. Ok. That's the first thing. But I tried to read and tried to let it link ... it was very difficult to link it. [Why?] You know it was ... it was like Zulu and Greek. Yes. Because now whenever you are talking about ... like here [pointing to the title] they say genre is another fad, just another fad. [Yes?] So that means it is ... is it a fashion? [Ok, and what does that say?]. Here it says isimanje. [Means what?] It means ... isimanje ... what can I say ... it's a modern, modern thing. [And what word ... can you just translate that for me?]. Like here 'Ucwaningo Lohlobo lombhalo: Kungabe isimanje esidlulayo?' ... because we don't have ... I don't know whether we do have a word for 'fashion', but I think that some people who are dealing with languages can have another one, but not isimanje. You see, because isimanje, it is a fad, as I've said, it's clear with a fad ... it's a fashion, something that you ... if you ladies ... like ladies now, they wear trousers. Normally the trousers used to have bottoms ... [Yes] big bottoms, you know, so once that is in the fashion then we call that ... maybe we call that fashion, what everybody wants to buy that, but it's not isimanje. Ok, because what is happening in when people dress they refer back to what other ... what older generation people wore, you know, like short skirt and all that . It did happen, so it's not isimanje. This isimanje is something is coming now and passing. [Ok] But when these ... but looking at it contextually there you can find ok, it means fashion, for now, but you cannot relate it ... relate this later, and say isimanje is a fashion, [Ok] " (2.2.598-630).

9.6 "You thought why now reading in Zulu?"

So as to sustain the perceptual energy generated by this unexpected engagement with the meaning of 'manje' and the link to the notion of 'time' which initially framed his response, I quickly went on to ask Vusi, 'What else about including these [the isiZulu translations] were problems?' He answered, "Well, you know because once you read in English you would then have to do the task. You have to do the activity or assignment ... you thought why now reading in Zulu? - because I don't have enough time with me. So let me just do this and at a later stage you say, 'No, I'll look at it later, later, later'. But once you do an assignment and submit it, and then you go on with something else ... yes, that's what is happening. Because it's like repeating what has been said already" (2.2.638-42).

9.7 “I have to look at the dictionary and find the meaning ... yes, it does take my time”

When explaining how he went about reading the English texts (after clarifying that what I was talking about was what he did when he had ‘to get some meanings and all that stuff’), Vusi said that “I have to look at the dictionary and find the meaning but, yes, it does take my time. ... And I ... I have to contextualize the word, the meaning [ok] with what I’m reading ... maybe to my situation ... so that it would be easier for me to remember. [ok] You see ... something like that. So, it does mean that I have to read and find out so and so did this, when ... he thought maybe ... he suggested that we can do teaching like doing this and that and that and that. But at the end of the day as an adult, I’m a teacher, I know what I [yes] I need back to school, I need what I ... I must utilize from the material in my office or maybe in [yah] so ... we work like that [ok] I read like that so it does take time” (2.3.102-115).

9.8 “I think it was only time constraint on my side”

Vusi saw the inability *on his part* to create sufficient time to read, write assignments and prepare for contact sessions, as the primary reason for the difficulties he faced in the RWAT module and the Honours programme in general. And he knew this "Because I was a learner so I came ... ready to learn. Yes. I came ready to learn, I came ready to accept ... consume whatever is brought to me. So even though I ... there were difficulties involved, but to me I think it was only time constraint on my side that made me ... gave me problems in as far as studying ... you know, because of time constraints in between work to be done and all that ... yes, that's all. Otherwise I was willing to do whatever was put forward ... yes" (2.2.1022-33).

9.9 “I have to say now, please, just borrow me this time”

In as much as ‘time’ infiltrated and impacted on Vusi’s RWAT module experiences in the ways described above, it changed his home life too. When asked which part of his life suffered the most because of his studies, he answered, ‘Ei! ... I can’t really say because sometimes you have to you ... they have to understand that you are studying. [yah] You have to tell your family. And fortunately enough with the ... with the contact session that we used to have, we always at home, you are always at home so [ok] you are not that much ... [ok] yes, lost. So it’s easy then, it’s only that they know that you have to study sometimes. But in most cases I used to study late ... late at night. So they have to sleep and then start, because if they are there they want to talk. [ahh yes] Yes, I have to talk to them ...most ... more especially in my case, I still have the little ones. [oh no] Sometimes they would like to watch TV with me. Yes, I have to wait to discuss ... we have to share what we are watching

and all that stuff, but sometimes I have to say now please, just borrow me this time, let me just do this - [ok] which is very strenuous" (2.3.58-69).

10. "It's very good Zulu"

Despite all the problems raised here by Vusi, however, he felt that the level of Zulu used in the translated texts was not difficult, in fact "It's very good Zulu. It's very good Zulu. I perused it through ... yes I did. That's why I've noticed that some words here are ... have no alternative but to be put to suit the English. Couldn't be translated to fit in the Zulu - the correct Zulu. But it's a very good accepted Zulu. This one that's accepted" (2.2.705-12).

11. "Eish, he was great!"

Vusi's learning experiences were greatly enhanced "because of my tutor, Mr Hlatshwayo³⁰. Eish, he was great! Ai, he was great, he was great. You know, I know he's younger than me and all that, but you know ... the way he wanted his work to be done, you could put away your age, away your experiences, everything and listen to him. Yes, he was very good" (2.2.820-5). When I remarked on the energy levels of this particular tutor, Vusi agreed wholeheartedly. "Yes, yes! Very much energy, very active. And impatient sometimes. Words of encouragement, you know. We would laugh while he's teaching and you know, he wouldn't ... um ... he wouldn't nurse you because you have got that problem. He would just tell you straight - this is what you must do! So he was very very good" (2.2.829-835). Vusi attributes his passing of the module hugely to this tutor even though he, Vusi "didn't pass the RWAT the way I wanted".

12. "Whether we like it or not, this is what is wanted"

When asked how he experienced assessment in the RWAT module, Vusi responded with: "Well, at first I noticed that it was ... hai, what can I say? ... it wasn't easy for us students but ... [to write an essay?] ... to write the essays, yes. But as time goes on we noticed that whether we like it or not, this is what is wanted. Because I remember when we were ... we went to re-write Assignment 3. Yes, it's ... so we had to re-write it after we have written it and have it just to submit, and they ... our tutors would read it and Mr Hart³¹ was also there that day, so we start afresh and re-write it again ... some of the paragraphs and all that. So it was like eh ... we don't have the alternative, we have to do what is expected. [How did you feel that day?] It was ... what can I say? ... it was not good. [Laughing]. It wasn't good, but do you

³⁰ A pseudonym

³¹ Mike Hart: The co-author of the RWAT learning materials

notice that we ... since we are students, we have to oblige! We have to." (2.2.999-1014). But "at least it helped us because we knew that ok, now we pass our assignments" (2.2.1018-9).

13. "That means now you know what you are writing for"

When asked how he would respond to a statement made by another student that the RWAT module had taught students to write 'in the correct way', Vusi answered, "I would totally agree with that statement because you know writing recipes and all ... it didn't come to our minds that something should be taught" (2.2.155-7). And when pressed to say more about what was meant by 'the correct way', he answered: "Well, that means now knowing what you are writing for and what you are writing ... and what you are writing for and what you are writing like ... writing a letter ... in our case usually we used to teach learners to write letters which were formal letters. So now there's a difference, it's different between writing for a friend and writing to the Editor of a newspaper. Writing for our friend and writing a recipe is something different. So that's where we have noted that ok, we are trying to develop here, this course is exposing us ... and we went through all the other genres of writing" (2.2.161-172).

14. "I've also told the other educators"

Another area where RWAT had proved useful to Vusi, in his view, was in regard to the 'essay writing' his learners do at his school. As principal, he has taken it upon himself to be "a mentor there ... for creative writing. So ... um, I'm not teaching language. Last year [2003], I was teaching the Life Orientation in Arts and Culture (put footnote), but my learners were writing essays on Arts and Culture. They were writing essays on Life Orientation, yes, exactly. Something that I learnt from RWAT. Yes, and I've also explained ... I've also told the other educators about that. Fortunately there was a teacher who also did this course [RWAT], so when I brought it at school she say, 'Oh yes, we remember this ... we remember this' and ... so it was very very much easy for us to ... so learners are now writing essays in each and every learning area in our class, that is Grade 7 so far. Yes, it's easy now. We try, though maybe we can't say they are good ... that they are much good, but for the start, for the basic ... because through that they have been ... they've been able to write some books ... their books about stories and all that (2.2.500-514).

15. "I'm the one who is always doing staff development these days"

The way in which Vusi introduced his *staff* to the ideas he got 'from the university' was through "seminars. "I conduct workshops. Yes. Sometimes we ... in our action plan, in our school development plan, we do have what we called Staff Development. So everyone who

has got some input ... we have asked that he or she would come forward and let us arrange a date ... a day and all that. So he will do so, but fortunately since I've been exposed to this at this moment I'm the one who is always doing the staff development these days" (2.2.541-8).

16. "It's very much relevant"

When discussing the general relevance of the RWAT module for him, Vusi said that "... in my case I have the idea, I've got ... I've also quoted ... I've also quoted some words like ... like er ... writing to the Editor, doing this you know ... corporation programmes and all those things, those also form part of the journey. Recipes ... all that, you know, writing a recipe. Someone can even earn money just by writing a recipe, developing a recipe. Someone can even develop something like a menu and all that ... can do that for their local restaurant, and all that. So I can't say it's irrelevant. It's very much relevant. It depends on the context that you want to utilize it in" (2.2.563-73). So strongly did Vusi feel about the relevance of the Genre Approach that he was prepared to "even argue with them" i.e. other students who dispute its relevance. "I don't even mind [arguing - amicably though] because if you look at writings, each and every writing you know once you understand the word 'genre', then you know that, ok, you have to know, if I write for my lecturer it's not the same as I'm writing for my friend" (2.2.581-4).

17. "This is what is helping me now"

One of the other areas, according to Vusi, in which his RWAT experiences stood him in good stead, were in the subsequent modules he was obliged to take in his second year, as part of his Education, Leadership and Management specialisation [ELM] (in 2005). "Yes. Now I think ... it is coming up now that ok, this is what I was supposed to do, this is what ... this is helping me now. Yes. Some of the ... some of my assignments are ... I know, they are good ... they are good though I'm not getting maybe 70% or 80%. But I'm getting at least more than 60 - 65 and that's good. Just because of the structure that I ... Yes. I might be poor in language and all that, but the structure, wording and all that, I know I'm good. [And that's just because it makes sense to you?] Yes, definitely. Because now like the last assignment that we were given, um ... usually we used to look from our assignments here [in the RWAT Student Guide] ... if you look at them, they have got the criteria, you know, this is what you will be assessed. And then looking at that you know that those should be our claim sentences, so you should put more focus on those and then you'd develop them to form sentence claims. So it was easy for us, but now [in the ELM modules] we don't have something like that, you know. Whenever we look at the assessment criteria we know that

there is something else. It just talks about ... [content?] ... how you understand the readings that you have read and all that, and all that, and all that. How you strategise and all that. It is not associated with the topic. So now that means being able to formulate my claim ... my sentence, my topic sentences, shows that I had a good background with RWAT. [Because you know that they are looking for structure and logic? They expect it?] Yes, highly academic ... yes, highly academic structured essay. Why they said that then you know that ok, I have to formulate paragraphs, and then my paragraphs should be formatted like this, I need a sentence like this and that, and then I read. Because I have to read ... I have to put many books in the table sometimes. And then refer from the sentence and what I've read from that book and then put it ... sometimes I'll end up putting Modala here, putting Jansen ... and Jansen within the paragraph! (2.2.1045-83).

c. Zola: Individual Nodes of Experience

1. “I had a problem of understanding. Which one must I start with?”

In December of 2003 i.e. 3 months before the first contact session, Zola made a concerted effort to engage with the materials but “then I had a problem of understanding ... which one must I start with? Because there were three, and it was difficult to read it alone. [Was it?] Ya, very difficult” (5.2. 18-24). ... the very first few days when I received that, I said ... I had a problem of reading this book. Which one am I going to start with? Because I was reading this one [pointing to Learning Guide Part One], and someone said, you must start with this one [pointing to Student Guide] [laughter]. And then I started being confused. And I didn't know ... you see, when you were reading this one [Student Guide], this one refer us to this one [Learning Guide Part One] [Pointing from one book to the other]. [Ok, ok.] I used to be confused, which one is that? Which page is that? Because I used to look at this one [Student Guide], and didn't know whether it is this [Learning Guide Part One] one or this one [Learning Guide Part Two]. You see, when you open this side [Learning Guide Part One], [Ya] If this one refer you to this one [Learning Guide Part Two], and you open this one [Learning Guide Part Two], you won't find what you are looking for. [No [laughter] no.] So it was ... and even when we were supposed to ... I mean, the first assignment, that was about how we learnt, how we start ... that one was difficult because we didn't know to ... where must we start looking back? Where must we ... Which information must we put? Which one must we take out? So we didn't know. Then we'd go out – I don't know ...” (5.2.652-68).

2. “I went to the library ... just went there to give myself time to read this”

Zola found making sense of the materials “very difficult. So I went to the library trying to read it” (5.2.23). When I asked what she did in the library, she said that she “just went there to sit

down and give some times ... [Oh, ok] and give myself time to read this. So that I can know what is going on here" (5.2.25-7).

3. "We are doing the same thing! Can we come together?"

Grappling on her own, however, did not have to last very long. While Zola was reading in the town library, she met a friend who came to her and said, 'We are doing the same thing! Can we come together?' (5.2.36-8). This was all said in whispers so as not to disturb the other library patrons. A snowballing process soon began whereby Zola met another "certain lady ... she saw me and she said, 'Can we come together because we're doing the same thing?' And then when she was in the library the next day, when she was in the library and I was not there, she saw another one! [Oh no!] Reading these books! ... Then they spoke, and then they came together. [Ok] When they ... that one was a lady ... she saw another lady. And she also saw another guy and then they spoke about this. When I came the other day they told me that they had been meeting with a discussion group, and then we came together and formulated the group. [Ok!] Before our first contact session, we had a group!" (5.2.42-8), and it was as a result of their group processes that she "got the understanding how am I going to use these three books" (3.2.60).

4. "We used to help each other"

The group to which Zola belonged from the outset used to meet on a very regular basis, particularly on weekends in order to prepare for the next Saturday's contact session. They found rooms in what was previously the Natal Training College (but which are now government departments) to meet. This venue is in town and close to the one of the main taxi ranks facilitating ease of access. To prepare for these meetings, "we used to ... we used to read before we came to the group. But if we ... if we didn't get a chance to read it before we used to make others catch up. We used to help each other so that we did the same ... [at the same place?] ... at the same level, ya, at the same place. And then we discussed the tasks, we do the tasks together, we used to discuss what we don't understand. And then we attend" (5.2.63-8).

5. "Because eh, you see, we were not the same"

The problem Zola and her fellow students encountered, however, was that all members of the *study* group were not in the same *tutorial* group. When I probed how they handled this and whether it meant that 'everyone came with different stories', she said, 'Ya, we used to bring out different understanding about what we read in the books, what we got in the books. ... and I saw it was useful to have a group" (5.2.80-1/83). Slightly further on, Zola returned to

this issue saying, “You see, when we came back from the contact session we used to come with different things. Because eh, you see, we were not the same. [No, quite!] So we don’t teach the same way. So that is why ... so that is why ... so that is why we used to come with different ideas (5.2.130-4).

6. “All of us come with different stories. Different instructions”

But having ‘different ideas’ is one thing. It is another when what each member of a study groups brings from a tutorial i.e. ‘stories’ and ‘instructions’, differs. In her own words, Zola said, “And even if we get an instruction for doing the task, we used to come with different stories! Ya, we used to come with different stories” (5.2.135). ... “Ya, so when you come back to the group from the contact session we used to have different information. In such a way that you end up using ... I mean, you end up following what is said by your tutor, because you become confused. You see we were um, about five, and then the other one is going to come with a different story and other come ... and other one comes to ... all of us come with different stories. Different instructions. You see” (5.2 129-33).

7. “You choose which one you take”

I was keen to know ‘how do you decide who has the ‘right’ story?’, to which Zola replied, “I just, I mean, I used to listen to all the stories. If I see that the other stories are confusing, I just leave those stories. And do the ones what my tutor told me to do”. And did all members of the group adopt the same approach? “Eh, I don’t know but we used to share. And then you choose which one you take” (5.2.136-40).

8. “A study group is very helpful”

Despite some of the problems attached to the workings of the study group, Zola still found that “... a study group is very helpful. Because you ... when you read at home you sometimes find yourself not understanding the content, but when you go to the group you’ll find that someone has understood the content very well. And then share with the group” (3.2.193-6). In Zola’s group “there’s a guy who was ... I don’t know who was his tutor, who ... he was good in this thing, very good. Very good. He was very good in this thing” (3.2. 198-9), and so he was usually able to keep every on track.

9. “If you are mixed you get a chance of learning”

Zola’s tutorial group was also multiracial with a mix of English first and second language speakers, an element of her RWAT experience that pleased her. When I asked how she felt about being part of such a group, she said, “I felt great, because I ... that’s where I see that I

am going to learn a lot. You see, we as the second-language speakers we don't practice this language. [Ok, ok – enough?] Ya. But if you are mixed you get a chance of learning it's more than before. [Ok, so you enjoyed that?] Ya, I enjoyed it. Because we were also coming from different schools, so we are going to be able to share a lot" (5.2.212-8).

10. "You must ask that person did you give yourself time to read?"

In the context of exploring Zola's experience of the Scheme for the Academic Argument (to which I shall return shortly), I told her that many students had found it confusing rather than helpful, she responded with, "Ya, it was confusing, but sometimes we ... we say ... we are always saying we are confused [laughing]. But we *don't do the readings*, we don't make sure that we *understand!*" To clarify the point she was making I said, 'Ok. So when somebody keeps telling me they are confused, it's ...', she interrupted with, "You must ask ... you must ask that person did you read ... did you give yourself time to read?" (5.2.445-50).

11. "These modules ... I mean, we were well organised"

When it came to going back to which readings impacted significantly on her, Zola faced some difficulties and it took time for memories to resurface. She took the Learning Guide with the prescribed readings and began a search for "whose this man? Ei, who are these men? Reppen, Reppen ... Reppen talked about He talked about something which was different from others men that are here. He also talked about things that other men talk about there" (5.2. 231-8). While I tried to fathom this ambiguous response, Zola's memory continued to nag her. Suddenly she remembered, and made links – "Um, I think he's the one ... he spoke about ... I can't remember whether he spoke about the assisted performance. ... Ya, ya. Ya. This man spoke about ... he also spoke about modelling. ... And it's where I understood it very well. And this is where also said these modules ... I mean, we were well organized because the information that you get here, you also use it in the Psychological Perspectives ... Psychological Perspectives ... and then the information that you get there, you can use it here" (5.2.248-57).

12. "Looking at the pedagogical project ... I linked it with reading and writing"

I asked Zola how she had understood Johnson's notion of the Genre Approach being both a political and pedagogical project. She said, "And the political project ... um, the ... in looking at the political ... I mean pedagogical project, the way I understood it, I linked it with reading and writing. [Ok, ya.] Including speaking, all those things. So if these ... if the learners are able to read *and* write ... [so] ... so they are able to participate in the community" (5.2.397-403).

13. “If they can read and write ... they can be able to raise their voices”

When asked her about the ‘political’? she answered, “You see, if these people are able to ... you see, they say that politics is power” (5.2.407). On reflection, my follow-up probe to this comment was probably ‘leading’, but Zola’s expanded response reassured me that I had not led her to anything she was not going to say herself. Thus when I commented, ‘Ya. And their knowledge is power too’, she added, “Knowledge is power, politics is power. So these things go together, because if they are able to ... they can be able to ... if they can read and write they can be able to participate in the community, they can be able to raise their voices, they can do a number of things, in the society. They can also bring about change in the society” (5.2.408-11). Zola was able to demonstrate her own point by reference to her own ‘lived experiences’ – “You see, what we did, I also took that thing back to us. [Ya?] What we did with my friend, we were both doing B.Ed [Hons], what we did we went to the Department of Education, and talked to them to open the Adult Centre for us ... in our community. [Really?] And we succeeded” (5.2.415-21). I was interested to know whether this had been done before or after she started the Honours programme. As it turned out, “We started to canvas before ... before we started the Honours. The centre is opened in er, 2003, September. But we started in 2002. And then long ago, other people started and failed. And then we came. So this thing is working, it’s because we can ... we can read, we can speak, we can understand, that’s why we bring things back to our community” (5.2.423-8).

14. The Scheme for the Academic Argument: “This thing helped us when we were writing the essay”

Even though, as indicated earlier, Zola had experienced some confusion when *first* confronted with the Scheme for the Academic Argument, her overall response was, “Oooo ok. This thing helped us when we were writing the ... the essay” (5.2.440).

14.1 “Your introduction must show the whole essay”

The structure of an introduction depicted in the Scheme for the Academic Argument was something completely new to Zola, but once encountered, it made good sense to her. She said, “You see, I didn’t know how to write an assignment ... [ok] when I came here. [ok] I didn’t know how to write an assignment but I understood that your introduction [ok] must show the whole essay (5.3.559-61) “So even if you see before I came here there was a guy ... there is a guy I’m working with. [yes] He did his B.Ed Honours before. [ok] When he completed his B.Ed Honours, the following year I had to start the B.Ed Honours. So he said, one day he said when you write, you will see that when you write an assignment the

introduction must tell everything [ok] in such a way that a person who is reading or who is marking it can just end in the introduction. [And know exactly what's going to come.] Ya, what is going to happen. Even the books ... when you read the books, I don't know whether I was addicted to that, because even when you read the books, you just find that structure. [Same thing.] You find that the ... other paragraphs links with another up to the end. [ok] Even the conclusion" (5.3.565-81).

14.2 "I had a problem here of ... extracting the claims"

But understanding how one should do something and being able to execute this process in practice, is not always a synonymous event. Zola encountered, for example, immediate problems when it came to tackling Assignment 2 – the first 'proper' academic argument essay assignment. She said of it, "I had a problem here of ... of extracting the claims from the topic. But because we had a group we tried, we tried and tried to work together. To take out the claims" (5.2.682-5).

15. "Another thing which was a problem was this plagiarism"

In the same breath as describing the difficulties she had with extracting claims, Zola said, "Another thing which was a problem was this plagiarism". I asked Zola to talk more about this. "Hai!" she said, "I didn't know how to reference within the ... within the essay. That was my big problem, because the tutor said to us, if you write without acknowledging, you will be ... it means it is plagiarism". Coming to terms with how one can avoid accusations of plagiarism took Zola time, but she feels she is improving. "Now I understand that I have to ... if I say something which is said by someone, ... [ok] ... else, I must ..." acknowledge that (5.2.684-98).

16. "The cutting and pasting was very nice"

Assignment 3 was remembered by Zola as "Oh the ... cutting and pasting" exercise which she said "was very nice". It was particularly so "... because ... we were, we were also sharing ideas. We used to sit in groups and then, on that day, we were taking our ... for an example, um you take ... we used to take our paragraph and then you go to your neighbour then you ask how did that compare, write this ... then the person says you must change this and this and this, and then you change it. And then when you read it and you ...[Ok.] Ya, it was nice" (5.2.715-21).

17. “I knew that I know Zulu”

Zola did make use of the isiZulu translations, “But not too much. I did it, I read all those things. It’s where I found that it is the same thing that I was reading before, in this book [Learning Guide Part One]” (5.2.579-83). She told me that she “started with the English one because I knew that I will understand this one [indicating the isiZulu texts] easily than ... than the English” (5.3.326-331). I was surprised by this reason for starting with the English and said so. However, Zola was adamant: “No. I knew that I know Zulu, so [ok] it won’t take a lot of time for me to understand it ... it will be easy for me because it’s my language” (5.3.336-7).

18. ‘For English ... I have to *read* it ... look for the meaning’

Grappling with the English texts involved a range of complex processes. As Zola explained, “Then for English - English is not my mother tongue so ... so English I have to *read* it, try and understand it, try and look for the meaning, and look for the word that I don’t understand. Maybe if I don’t understand it I go to someone else [ok] to help me to understand, to try and get the meaning” (5.3.335-340).

19. “You try and visualize it”

The process of extricating ‘meaning’ from the English text was taxing and time consuming for Zola. She described what she did: “I mean you try and visualize it and you try and make it ...” (5.3. 354). By way of example, she said, “When you look at this now, there [in the text in front of her] is a word ‘look’, so you try and *look* [ok] and then think of what it is that you are looking at” (5.3.360-1). ... You just try and translate it, you understand it in your own language then you go back” (5.3.371-2). And all this takes “a lot of time” (5.3.377).

20. “It was written by someone who knows it”

Though Zola did not make much use of the isiZulu translations, when I asked her to describe her experience of the *kind* of isiZulu that was used in them, she responded, “... you mean the richness of the ... [yes] the words that are used? [yes] What I can say is this. It was written by someone who knows it ... who knows it. She didn’t use the..... I mean the word that does not fit exactly (5.3.392-3) ... about the topic, about what was said ... on the English side” (5.3.402).

21. “Everywhere. It’s the kind of Zulu we are used to”

22. “You see English is not my mother tongue. But I love to learn it”

Not only did Zola not articulate any problems with the nature of the isiZulu translations, she, like Michelle, was surprised to hear some students had had negative reactions to the them, on the grounds that RWAT module (and the Honours programme as a whole) was an ‘English’ course. “Ooooh,” she said, “but for other people to learn. You see English is not my mother tongue. [Mmm]. But I love to learn it. Even the English first language speakers may love to learn the Zulu!” I indicated then that this was part of the curriculum planning rationale for including the isiZulu translations. “You see,” she went on, “when I ... when we are in the contact session I used to speak Zulu with a certain group of Indians. They say, ‘What is that?’ and then I explain it. ‘What is that?’ [So you’re teaching as well?] [Laughter]. We say that ... if the lady called Vijay,³² Vijay used to say, now she knows how to same “come here” in Zulu ... and then if she doesn’t understand a Zulu word she comes and asks” (5.2. 595-600).

23. “If you failed ... ei, you become more confused!”

As with Michelle, Zola would always look at her assignment results “*alone*” in the first instance. “And then you check the marks. If you failed ...ei, you become more confused! If you failed the assignment. ... Confused, and you feel the other people’s ... you have to ... it means we have to work harder than before!” (5.2.740-1/743-4). She would then take the assignment home “and you read it again. And check where you made mistakes” (5.2.766-7). An assignment looking like the sample essay which I showed interviewees, were it hers, would have made Zola feel “bad, if they are bad comments” (5.2.753).

24. “When you are studying at a distance ... you change ...”

Studying at a distance for Zola was “... difficult but it’s good on the other side because it teaches you other skills ... [ok] like time management. Now you ... when you are studying at a distance you change ... you change ... because you have to leave other things and do the things that you think are the most important things” (5.3.10-13). The following four nodes capture some of the things Zola left. As the nodes emerge, so too does evidence of Zola’s reactions to, and reasoning, in relation to the changes she had made.

³² A pseudonym

24.1 “I’m a busy person, except that I started the B.Ed Honours”

She started by saying, “You see, if you are not doing ... let me say if you are not studying ... I’m a busy person, [yes] except that I started the B.ED Honours. I’m a busy person I do a lot of things [ok] like I used to make doilies, sew pinafores a ... [Really?] ... a lot of things ... cut pants for the men and [ya] sew them ... a lot of things. [ok] But when I started my B.ED honours it means I had to leave that”. When I asked what this meant for her, her response was pragmatic and non-emotive: “...not too bad because I knew I will do it later [ok] ...even though it used to give me some money [ya] but I said no, this one too is ok because it is going to improve my job. [ok] Ya. You also ... if you are not doing ... as I have said, that if you are not doing anything, you tend to move around ... you go to the shops, you end up spending money that you were not going to spend if you were busy with something else” (5.3.34-39).

24.2 “One of my friends even said I’m boring”

With the shift in how her time could be spent, came other sacrifices for Zola. She told me that “You don’t see your friends anymore”, and that “One of my friends even said I’m boring her”. [Why? What were you doing?] She said I’m taking everything serious. You see with B.Ed Honours, you didn’t have time to play. [mmh]. You had to focus and do your ... because with the B.Ed Honours I had lot of things, my work, myself, my family”. As far as Zola was concerned, however, the ‘friend’ who said she found Zola boring “doesn’t like to read. [Oh ok] You see she completed her diploma in ... because she started working in 2000 ... in 1993. So she completed her diploma in 2000. She is still M+3. And when you tell her to go and register, she says, ‘Oh I’ll see’. She doesn’t like. She wants to ... I don’t know what life ... [Ya] that kind of life which is not, which is nice time. [Nice time - without any hardship or sacrifice?] Ya, but they also want the post. When they ... and then when they are employed, they fail to face the challenges. Because how can you ... if you don’t develop yourself, how can you say you want to be in the formal structure?” (5.3.229-240).

24.3 “My mother was angry”

When I probed a bit further as to how her family responded, it turned out that “Ei, they were affected. My mother was angry ... asking me why are you studying because you are working?” When I asked how she answered her mother, Zola said, “I didn’t know how to answer her but ... I tried to explain to her why am I doing it ... why am I ... she was saying it’s too much whereas I didn’t feel it was too much” (5.3.44-60).

24.4 “So sometimes I arrive home at 6 or half past six or sometimes at 7”

... “You see sometimes I used to come home late ... late at 6 or seven ... everyday [mhh] because after work I go to the library, then the library closes at 5 ... [In town?] ... the one in town, ya. It closes at five and then I go for the taxi. I wait. So sometimes I arrive home at 6 or half past six or sometimes at 7 if it’s a busy day ... like month end or ... [ya] then when I arrive at home sometimes you find that I’m tired. Then I sleep [Sure]. I don’t see them [her mother and sister] in the afternoon then ... I see them in the morning” (5.3.172-184).

25. “The weekend is yours ... whereas I have to work very hard in the weekend”

During the week, Zola’s mother and sister take responsibility for most household chores because she usually comes home so late. She told me that, “because I’m working and I come home late, they cook during the week and they say, ‘the weekend is yours’. Whereas I have to work very hard in the weekend. ... So in the weekend I used to come here at the varsity and ... maybe at 10 or half past nine, and then leave at three or four. [Really?] And cook on Sunday [For the week?] Ya. On a Sunday I wake up in the morning, I clean, I wash, I do the ironing, I prepare the work for the ... for Monday, I cook ... I do ... I used to sleep at 11 on Sunday” (5.3.192-209). When I remarked that Sunday was clearly then not a day of rest, Zola declared that “I used to have a blue Monday. [That’s terrible.] I used to have a blue Monday (5.3.214/218). And those who see me, they used to say you are used to this. You still like to work. The ladies whom I was with at the college, they used to say you are still like that. I didn’t know that at the college I was also active. [Well now you know hey!] I didn’t know ... they keep on telling meooh, you are still like that ... now it’s after 10 years” (5.3.217-25).

26. “This Reading and Writing. It also taught me ...”

Zola described how the RWAT module had impacted on her in different contexts and in different ways. The following nodes aim to capture these.

26.1 “I just came back to my classroom ... and then I have to make some changes”

Internalising the notions of ‘modelling, guiding and scaffolding’ were significant learnings for Zola and led her to immediately view her own classroom practices differently. Of course, here we are speaking of a combined influence of RWAT and Psychological Perspectives but such perceived coherence is both important to register and applaud. So when I asked what she had used from ‘here’ (meaning the RWAT module), she answered, “You see, when I

started this module (RWAT) at the university [starting to laugh], I just came back to my classroom and I look at the work that I'm doing here, and then I have to make some changes". And what were these changes? "You see, when I came to the JP [Junior Primary], I was coming from high school. ... So you see it helps ... you don't ... you don't start from the beginning as you do with the Grade 1s because the Grade 1s come with their speaking and they don't have the writing, so you have to help them and morning time you ask them ... so you assist their performance until she can do or he can do the work alone" (5.2.278-83).

26.2 "It also taught me how to organise information"

Zola described her earlier writing practices in this way: "Wheeee, I used to mix and ... you see, I used to say, I don't know ... but this module taught me how to organize information" (5.2.321-2).... For an example, if you ... if you write something, you're not writing it for yourself, you must consider the reader. [Ok, ok] For that information. So if it is mixed you can't ... if it is mixed and there's no logic how is your reader going to understand this? Even our learners, we need to teach our learners to organize their things" (5.2.333-40). To illustrate her point, she went on: "If I had been taking my Grade One's ... [What do you tell them?] You see, they start by writing the date as you can see there [pointing to a chart on the wall of her classroom, the site of the second interview]. And then they skip two lines. Others forget to skip the lines. If they have finished writing the date, they skip two lines, and write their names. They skip two lines and write the weather. Skip two lines and start writing what they are going to write for the day. And then the other boy said, Why Ma'am must I write this like this? [Mmm?] And I explained to him. And I also told him that when you write your work, someone must be able to read it. So I have to teach them from Grade 1 so that when they go to Grade 2 they know how to do their work until ...[Matric!] Until Matric or until Grade 7 and then they move up to high school" (5.2.342-54).

26.3 "I'm becoming more organised"

Owning the notions of structure and organisation have also spilt over into the way Zola conducts herself as a teacher now. In her words, "Ya, I'm changing, I'm improving! I'm becoming ... you see, I'm trying to ... I'm becoming more organised. But I'm ... [Organised in what way?] ... You see, to make sure that things are done in order. Records are kept and other things" (5.2.552-3), contributing as she sees it, to being a better teacher.

27. "You need to know what you want"

Given the way she conducts herself, it is perhaps unsurprising that Zola has firm views on what makes a student 'successful' (understood here as passing modules). "First of all", she

said, “you need to know what you want. [Pause]. And secondly, why ... why ... why did you study? Why do you want to study? [mhh] Because. even when I was at the college I used to see when I came ... for my first year, [mhh] I used to see people during the learning time, ... [Ya] I used to see people in ... in the Res³³, [ok ya] and I used to ask myself what are they doing at this time? Because sometimes if you forgot something you will go back and take it, then it’s the time when you see them [Ya] and ask yourself why? Why? And we left them at the college. We completed our diplomas ... we left them there. And they have nothing today ... because they didn’t know what they wanted ... (5.3.116-124) ... You know what you want ... you know why you are doing it. Because even now when I ... I used to hear people say, ei, why must I do B.Ed Honors? I saw one lady there by the corner - on the 24^h when I submitted my ... when I submitted my last assignment ... she saw me carrying a brown envelope and she said were you submitting or were you ...? Then I tell her the story [Ya] then she said ...weeeeh ... why must I do a B.Ed Honours? Then I said to her, ‘If I was the minister of education, Naledi Pandor, I was going to say every educator who is entering the system must have the B.Ed Honours’ (5.3.129-136).

d. Nothembu: Individual Nodes of Experience

1. “I tried to open these books, I tried to read them”

Nothembu had little recollection of whether her RWAT materials were posted to her or whether she collected them from the SED offices herself. What she did remember, however, was that, “I tried to open these books, I tried to read them” (6.2.21). Of the three books, she began with the ‘little’ one (the Student Guide) because “I thought that maybe everything has been summarized there. With simple language. Yaa” (6.2.38-9). When I asked if her expectations had been met, she replied, “Ya, there were clues, I get something out of that. And then I started with the Learning Guide, yes. I read this book [patting LG Part One]. When I try to open this [LG Part One], it was difficult, this one. So I went back to this one [SG], I get some explanation here, and I was referred to these, to the Learning Guide, then I start reading this [LG Part Two]. [After this one?] Yes, I ... [So you actually started with Part 2 ...] (6.2.42-8). I asked what looked so difficult about Learning Guide Part One. Nothembu answered, “Ya, when I was reading the ... the ... these reading things inside here, yaa ... ei, it was difficult for me! Ei, ei, ei” (6.2.52-3).

³³ The residence halls

2. “The word genre was new to me”

Finding her way through three books was not the only difficulty Nothembu encountered. There was also “The language that was used ... the terminology, genres, I was confused. [Were you?] Ya! The word genre was new for me” (6.2.22-5). Once she and her tutorial group had got used to the word ‘genre’ through discussions, however, she said, “We are all laughing when we are reading this in our group. I said, we even called our tutor “Mrs Genre”. [laughter]. And Mr Hart, we said, oh, the Big Genre” (6.2.116-8).

3. “The only thing I found out with this Zulu translation was that it was a *direct* translation”

Given the immediate difficulties she had just described on getting the RWAT materials, I asked Nothembu if there was anything in the materials that *did* help her. She replied, “Yes, yes, I read this ... these readings, reading text, then when I page through I found out that there was something of the Zulu part here. Then I read it in conjunction” (6.2.56-7). ... “it helped me a little bit. The only thing that I found out with this Zulu translation was that it was a *direct* translation (6.2.63-4). It was just like in court when people are just putting the words as they are without knowing that they are ...” (6.2.90-1).

As with previous profiles where a particular node revealed itself as more nuanced and layered than might have at first glance appeared to be the case, so it is with Nothembu’s experience of the isiZulu translations as being ‘direct’ translations of the English. Thus I have grouped the following nodes under 3 above.

3.1. “You don’t get the real thing in the Zulu part.”

I asked her to explain what she meant by this. “Like, er,” she started, “when they say most teachers will agree [reads a sentence out in isiZulu] – exactly as it is in English part. You know what ... [And explain why that is a problem] Er ... it is a problem because the Zulu language and the English language are not exactly the same. When you are talking in English grammar – grammatically – it’s different. So when the thing is translated as it is in this one, you don’t get the real thing in the Zulu part” (6.2.66-72).

3.2. “When you are talking in Zulu and you are talking in English, they are two different grammatical ...”

She tried to explain further what she meant by this. “Ya, I don’t know how to explain it, but like when you are talking in Zulu you don’t add a lot of what ... verbs, auxiliaries and everything ... sometimes you summarise the thing – I don’t know how to say it, but when you

are talking in Zulu and you are talking in English, they are two different grammatical ... [And when you are reading in Zulu and reading in English?] When reading in Zulu and reading in ... if like it ... this thing was just like getting the explanation of a word in Zulu, but ei, the content ...” (6.2.82-7).

3.3 “The person who doesn’t know English at all, cannot read this Zulu”

In fact so ‘direct’ did Nothembu experience the isiZulu translations that she made the (mistaken) assumption that they had been done by an English speaker. She tried to explain her sense of this. “I don’t know what to say, but exactly it’s not like a clear Zulu-speaker who is translating this one. [Really?] Really, ya. A little later she tried to put it another way, saying, “Ya, but the way it was translated was as if it was an English speaker who knows a bit of Zulu (6.3.41-2) ... I don’t know how to put it, but what I’m trying to say is that ... it was just direct direct direct, just word for word from English to Zulu like a dictionary you know. [yes] Ya, like a dictionary. A dictionary explains a word in Zulu and then in English, but when we are talking the word, we have to put something on ... yes. It’s too different (6.3.46-50) ... Ok, engifuna ukukusho ukuthi ene, la, lesiZulu esibhalwe-la sithathwe exactly kwi English, aku ngingathini? aku-Interpritwanga, it was just a translation. [Ok. Without Interpretation?] Interpretation no. It’s exactly in English, everything exactly in English. In other words the person who doesn’t know English at all, cannot read this Zulu, cannot get a meaning out of this Zulu.[oh ok] Ya, ya” (6.3.66-73).

3.4 “It’s something else when you are reading in Zulu”

Nothembu raised the issue of the translations with the students in her tutorial group. “I asked them, guys have you seen that there is a Zulu part of the explanation – of this text? They said, we didn’t understand, it’s something else when you are reading in Zulu. They discouraged me a lot, and they say, no Nothembu, forget about Zulu. It’s other thing – just go back to English. So you get it really when you read it in English and then maybe sometimes when you do find a paragraph that is difficult then you go back to ... I went back to the Zulu part, but I don’t get it in the Zulu way of putting things. Yaa” (6.2.96-101).

3.5 “I was using it as a dictionary”

Since the isiZulu texts were of little ‘working’ use for Nothembu, for all the reasons captured above, it meant, she said, that “... I was using it just as ... I was using it as a dictionary [mh] to get the meaning of the terms that I didn’t understand. [yes] Ya, that’s only the thing ... but out of the meaning it’s too difficult in Zulu) (6.3.103-5).

4. “I read it through, I read it through, I didn’t get anything”

When Nothembu first opened the Learning Guides, she “just started reading. I didn’t follow the instruction that was given to us, because of time. I didn’t have enough time to read these through, because I had to do the assignment as well. So I started doing this one, I read it through, read it through, I didn’t get *anything!* And then I started again, I read it through, I read it through” (6.2. 652-4).

5. “... the way it was written, so little words, tiny one, ei, this thing is difficult”

Nothembu really struggled with actual typographics of the readings. So in addition to trying to make sense of the meaning of the readings – “I tried to ... they said ... they encouraged us to write like this [i.e. in the margins], when you’ve got something. [Yes ...] Eibo, I didn’t get anything!” (6.2. 653-5), it was “The language, the way it was written, so little words, tiny ones, ei, this thing is difficult. Ei, I didn’t have time then” (6.2.657-8) that also contributed to her problems.

6. “I don’t know whether I rely mostly on the group”

Belonging to a study group, and being part of a tutorial group, were important to Nothembu and played a significant role in different contexts of the RWAT module, as the following nodes show.

6.1 “We went to the group, and we read the thing”

Having tried to make sense of the readings on her own, Nothembu explained that, “The best way for me ... I don’t know whether I rely mostly on the group. We went to the group, and we read the thing and we discussed the thing, aaaw ... this is what they want us to do! When we are in the group, hau, then now I started to see, oh this is what was talking about there, talking about this, talking about this” (6.2.652-7).

6.2 “When we got our assignments back, then in a group we share ideas”

In the context of telling me how difficult “this thing of writing claims” was, and that “even now I’m not sure how to get the claim”, Nothembu remembered that “When I was writing my Assignment 2 I got something like this, ‘this is not a clear claim’” (6.2.290-2). ... “As I said, we had a group. When we got our assignments back, then in the group we share ideas. And then ya, sometimes we would take the other person’s claim, like this genre approach, ya, maybe when the comment from the lecturer said ‘this is a good claim’, oh, we all are going to take your claim now – and then we have to write it in the exam [laughter].

6.3 “When we’re preparing for the exams, again we got another big group”

And once exam preparation began, her study group played its part too. “When we’re preparing for the exams, again we got another big group at Thembaletu, that’s where we were discussing this thing, people were just moving with this thing - oh, this thing is not so difficult!

7. “Then I bulge and I use my own language”

Once she had a handle on the gist of what she was reading about Nothembu said that she “used to pick up the main theme, the main sentences and then I know when the writer was talking about these, or this I should add, she is ... he is talking about this, then I bulge [a reference to making a bubble on the side of the page and inserting ‘own’ comments] and I use my own language.” (6.2.273-6). The tutor too, guided her in her understanding.

8. The Scheme for the Academic Argument: “It was just maths in Afrikaans to me!”

Though this node also reveals Nothembu’s reliance on the ‘collective mind’ for support, the strength of her description of how she first experienced the Scheme for the Academic Argument made me decide to accord it its own identity. She said, “we were in class our tutor tried to explain this thing, ei, but it was just maths in Afrikaans to me! Because it was a new thing. [laughter] And when I came to my group I said, hey, people, please help me. What was this? [And what did they say?] We had one in our group, one student who was at Qua Qua University, maybe they did these things, he should try to explain to us, but it took me a long time to understand what she was trying to say also” (6.2.330-7).

9. “When we are writing before, we don’t write like that”

Working now from the premise that this was indeed the first time she had encountered writing instruction of this sort, I asked where the differences lay between RWAT and her previous experiences. She replied, “Um, the manner in which this is written, the way of introducing this. I remember my ... the first time when I write the first assignment, I didn’t write background information, everything, I simply start by writing what is in the topic. Summarising in my words. [Ok.] And then er, this thing, the theme ... what we call it? [Thesis?] No, not the thesis ... where you say I will start by doing this, and writing ... [Oh, I think Mike called it the list of contents, or something like that?] Yes, when we are writing before, we don’t write like that. That was our first, my first I should say, it was my first experience of writing an introduction like that. So as I said in my first day, assignment, there

wasn't any background information, anything, I only got that when everything was discussed in class, *back* (6.2.312-23).

10. "Everything comes from somewhere"

The purpose of providing background information in an opening paragraph subsequently made a great deal of sense to Nothembu. As she said, "I think it is necessary because there should be ... nothing is coming out of nothing. [Ok.] Ya, I think something started way before and then you have to move it with the ... and push it through" (6.2.351-5). I asked if that idea only applied to writing. "No, oh no," she said, "not when you're writing, it's always – everything comes from somewhere. Ya" (6.2.359). An example of this idea, provided by Nothembu, would be "when you are delivering a speech, to an audience. [As a principal?] Even as a principal, you don't just say – kids must wear uniform! Da-da-da-da ... you have to start from somewhere! Make them understand where it was, and move with them to the situation, and move again to where you want them to take the school to" (6.2.383-5).

11. "... the information should make a coherence from the last one to the new paragraph. Nobody have ever told me that".

Nothembu went on to say more about what this 'new' way of writing meant for her: "And this thing of ... this one, when they say we have to write the word – the claim, and the ... the ... the information should make a coherence from the last one to the new paragraph. Nobody have ever told me that, I was simply writing, writing, writing, writing, writing – when they say six pages or whatever - and submit" (6.2.405-8). Despite the difficulties she experienced with writing this way, Nothembu felt that "this is better because I can now read that – and know that the person is moving from this part up to this part, or now what is going to follow or and so on and so on, is ... [Ok.] Ya. There is coherence. [Which you didn't experience ... you are saying which you didn't experience before?] Oh, no, no. If I wanted to write about windows, and then move back to the stones, move back to this flower, I would simply write. Mixing the things" (6.2.411-8).

12. "... pedagogically ... politically I think it's ... mmm-mmm, I'm not sure"

When Nothembu was talking about the practice of 'bulging', she told me that "... our tutor said you must write anything that you've got out of political, something that you got out of pedagogical. Oh, then when he talks to the classroom, the teacher, teaching, then I wrote 'pedagogical'; when it was writing about these cultural things, the way things were happening, 'political'. Oh, now I ... I went back again, and then write it." (6.2.665-9).

From the *content* of this example that she volunteered, I made the immediate assumption that Nothembu had internalized Johnson's description of the Genre Approach as a 'political and pedagogical project'. However, later when I took her to the concept directly, through the same sample essay which all interviewees were shown, she said she had "learnt about this political and pedagogical thing of the genre approach" (6.2.559-60), but when it came to explaining it then, she ran into difficulties: "Mmm ... hmmm ... the political aspect of genre? Er, I can't remember what information was there, ... and pedagogically ... politically I think it's ... mmm-mmm, I'm not sure. Her response to the student's efforts to explain this concept in the sample essay provided, was simply, "Ei, I think she just took that thing as it was – the thing is, it was in the wrong kind of thinking, mixing the things – ya [laughter]" (6.2.571-2). With so much else to still try and access and with time running out, I decided to let this particular issue go.

13. "The text I liked well was that one ... of the Thulani group"

Of all the readings, Nothembu liked the Hart reading best. The following nodes try and capture the nuances of how the 'Thulani' story impacted on Nothembu. Again, in or two instances the 'name' of the node is speaks for the experience.

13.1 "It was just simple language ... maybe that is why I understood it very well"

13.2 "And the situation which was that ... was happening in us, or with us in classes"

13.2.1 "He was just given tasks ... without knowing *why* they are taught these things"

I asked Nothembu for an example of what she and Thulani shared. "What I can remember," she said, "is that Thulani ... the way Thulani was taught, he was just given task like saying, you have to write notes, you have to write a composition, without having been taught before, and without knowing *why* they are taught these things ... those things.

13.2.2 "I didn't realize really the importance of giving the learners the outcome of the lesson first"

Nothembu went on. "And when I was teaching again, I didn't know that ... I didn't realise really the importance of giving the learners the outcome of the lesson first before I teach them. I simply taught taught taught – because I was ... maybe it was because I was taught that the simple to complex, those things that we regarded as ... [Mmm, mmm] That the topic should come at the end. And when I read this thing it was vica versa. So the topic should

start first, the learner should know what you do first, and why they are doing the thing, and how it is done. So I was happy about that. And I saw it was very important that we should apply as well in our classroom situation. Being the learner like Thulani confused as he was, I was also experiencing the very same thing when I was a learner, and also ok, that's where the problem lies with us when we are teaching the language, so I have to go back in my class and practise the right thing out of this" (6.2.196-210).

13.2.3 "They must know why am I teaching them to ... When are they going to use this?"

I asked Nothembu to explain what she now saw as the 'right thing'. She said, "It's like when I'm teaching the thing, the learners must know that like when I'm teaching them ... mmm ... plus, addition, they must know that at the end what I am expecting of them, why am I teaching them to add? When are they going to use this thing of addition, and so on. Why is it important? And ... and also in poetry, fortunately I taught English in Std. 8 at that time, Grade 10 – ya, when I was teaching them the only thing that I gave the learners there was really the content part of the poem. [ok] Not knowing that some other days these learners might be interested in writing poems themselves. [ok] Ya. I only discovered that when I was reading that ... because Thulani had that er, feeling of becoming a writer. But if ... if this Thulani had been prepared beforehand he should have been the good poet. [Mmm, mmm.]

13.3 "We just want them to reproduce what we have taught them"

One of the main things that Nothembu learnt from the Thulani reading was that, "Sometimes when we teach, we don't cater for the kids to practice. We just want them to reproduce what we have taught them, [mhh] without giving them a chance to say whatever they like to say to us. Even now ... from that one I even introduce the journal writing in my class, but it's not so strict. I say to them "you must write what ever you want to tell me". [mmhh] It's either whatever we have read or whatever yes, that you want me to know about you. [ok] Ya, they do (6.3.634-40).

13.4 "It was a real situation. And I learnt from them"

The similarities between Thulani's situation and her own schooling experience, made Nothembu reflective of the past. "Ya," she said, "but the things are lacking ... I don't know ... I don't know what happened. Maybe the teaching that we got in our schools, wasn't really the same as the whites got in their school. Ya, maybe that's the thing" (6.2.213-24). So as far as Nothembu was concerned, she *knew* Thulani, "It was a real situation. And I learnt from

them. It was difficult for ... oh ok, this is what Thulani is experiencing, oh, we're supposed to do it like this and like that, and then I tried to change my teaching as well" (6.2.257-9).

14. "So when you learn, you've got that interest of learning to know how to speak English"

Nothembu thinks "it's interesting to learn English. I don't know whether we have grown up in the place where English was used ... is used everywhere [ok] so when you learn, you've got that interest of learning to know how to speak English so that you can communicate freely with other people everywhere ... you know? That's the thing" (6.3.154-7).

15. "I must learn to understand it in English and do it in English"

To make it clearer for me how she went about 'doing the readings' and preparing assignments, Nothembu explained that "... I read, I use the dictionary to get the meaning of whatever I read, ... sometimes I do write summaries like these so that I make it more clearer than what I've read, and then I understand. What I've understood, I write it down here and then get out in my own language rather than exactly in this one (6.3.162-5). I assumed from this description that Nothembu's notes would be in isiZulu but they are not, they are in English. "No. You know why, maybe it's because I know that when I'm going to write this thing I won't use Zulu,[mhh] so I'll learn ... I must learn to understand it in English and do it in English so that when I have to be ... I'm asked to answer this, again I will be answered in English. So when I put the Zulu words, it will be difficult again to think back and get the English word so that I can write it down" (6.3.199-203).

16. "When I'm reading it in English, in my mind ... I understand it in Zulu"

isiZulu nevertheless plays a critical role for Nothembu "because when I'm reading it in English, in my mind ... I understand it in Zulu. [In Zulu?] Yes, then I write it down again I take it back to English. It happens just like that" (6.3.173-9). According to Nothembu, this is now a fully automated process. However, she does still dream and laugh in Zulu, and "even if you pray when there are multilingual people, [ya] it's difficult even to pray in English. [ya] It's better to pray in Zulu because sometimes when you pray something comes on it's own, so the thinking is in my language so it's better for me to pray in my language" (6.3.187-190).

17. "We were told before that we should start a new paragraph on a new page"

The fourth contact session stood out in Nothembu's memory – as it does in most students' memories – because it is framed by such a practical approach. To remind the reader, in this session, students bring a draft version of Assignment 3 (the essay that carries the greatest

weighting in the coursework), but with each paragraph written on a clean sheet of paper. They also come armed with scissors and glue. They then work on each paragraph in the contact session, and 'cut and paste' their revised paragraphs in the order they ultimately decide they should be, conferring with peers and their tutors while doing so. Because it is such a unique process, it tends not to be forgotten.

Nothembu remembered it thus: "Assignment 3, rewriting it. Mmm. They said we should cut and paste, and then we were told before that we should start a new paragraph on a new page" (6.2.612-3). Unfortunately for her, however, she applied the same principle to her essay in the Psychology module – "And then my introduction was just so small, like this, and then I cut the page here, and my comment was 'this is not a good practice for an academic assignment'. I said [laughter] ... and then I learnt from there that oh, which means that when a paragraph is come up to this, I shall start with another one" (6.2.613-7).

18. "You must do what you did in RWAT, you must do what you did in RWAT"

Much is made to students, by other module co-ordinators on the Honours programme, of the RWAT module. Students are told on a regular basis to 'remember what you did in RWAT'. Regrettably, many of these co-ordinators have never appraised themselves of the detail of the RWAT module, as this node of Nothembu's experience bears out. She said, continuing from where she left off in the above node, "... That was confusing me really. I said oh, maybe sometimes when we are doing the other thing, the other stuff, we don't have to do. I didn't know. Because people were cutting pages at RWAT when we were doing that assignment, and then when we came to psychology part, I said oh, maybe [You did the same things?] Yes. I did the same thing, because they used to refer us back to RWAT. Yes, when writing an essay you must do what you did in RWAT, you must do what you did in RWAT, and then I experienced that. From there I started writing – when the paragraph comes here, I start another one here, and carry on and carry on. [Sho, it's hard learning!] Mmm. Even now I don't know which one is good or is right" (6.2.627-37).

19. "We are running ... we don't have time to study"

Studying, and at a distance, means for Nothembu that she must juggle time and relationships. She said of being a distance, part-time student, "I don't know how can I say it, but it is a bit difficult ... it's difficult time really, to do part-time" (6.3.229-30). The following nodes aim to convey the range of contexts in which Nothembu experiences the stress of always having too little time at her disposal. As before, in some instances node and name converge into one.

19.1 “Ya because number one, there are two dates set for you”

The ‘two dates set for you’ refers to sets of dates allocated to the two modules that run concurrently in any one semester. It works out that students attend a contact session for one or other module virtually every second or third weekend. For Nothembu, this schedule was hectic and compromised a heavy work schedule. “We have to do it by this time. If I’m telling you the truth, I used to do my assignments the last Friday when we were going to submit the following Saturday - [ya] because of time. We are running, we don’t have time, we’ve got stress at work, too much work to do, we don’t have time to study” (6.3.230-4).

19.2 “When we come back in the afternoon our kids are waiting for us, [mhh] we have to help them with their homework” (6.3.234-5).

19.3 “The only time we get is during the weekend and how many weekends do we have? Little.”

Nothembu made the point that “... the only time that I’ve got for reading is only on the weekend, and on the weekend we have to come to the School [SED] and attend. And then they say, have you read the the ... the ... the ... I simply keep quiet. ‘Take out your activities that you are supposed to do’ ... I don’t have anything. Maybe that was my problem with all my studying!” (6.2.681-92).

19.4 “I tried to push it ... maybe at school sometimes”

I asked Nothembu then when how she did get around to doing her assignments etc. She said, “I tried to push it ... maybe at school sometimes, when I have to do something that I have to submit, sometimes when I, ... during break I don’t have much time to talk with my friends, I just stay alone and do my work. Sometimes as I’m the principal, [mhh] during break I can even see the parent is waiting for me outside I have to talk to her, the teacher has a complaint ... you know it’s ... it’s strenuous ... it’s strenuous ... but we have to” (6.3.229-46).

19.5 “Even at night sometimes you have to sacrifice for the night”

Nights too, got shorter for Nothembu. “During that time,” she said, “that short time that you get, you sit. Even at night sometimes you have to sacrifice for the night, not to sleep or to sleep late. Sometimes to wake up very early and do a bit of reading in the morning before I wash ... and get off. I used to go at quarter to six for the kombi to take me to Impendle” (6.3.250-3).

19.6 “I don’t have time for myself”

And the sacrifices touched her at a deeply personal level: “I don’t have time for myself. [mhh] As a human being I have to have time for resting, relaxing, [mhh] having fun with my family. There is no time when I study, there is no time. [So what happened through these two years? What has changed?] My life? Mmm ... stressful. I don’t have free time, spare time. [Do you still have friends or did they all go away?] You know when you come to a friend, just around the road, just around the road, [ya] oh where have you been? That’s all. You can’t visit ... I can’t go to my friend and sit like this. When I sit like this, even if I’m visiting my mother at home, I’m thinking about my assignment, it’s due, [mhh] I have to study” (6.3.263-76).

20. “There are a lot of circulars ... I used that skim and scan method”

Finally, when thinking into how RWAT had helped her outside of the module context itself, Nothembu remarked that, as a principal, she has to do a lot of reading of circulars and “you’ve got also the Guides that the Department send to school that we have to read and have to implement them, or maybe take something that will suit our schools from those booklets. [Ok]. Like organizational books, curriculum or what you call them, organization and everything concerning the school” (6.2.448-53). She acknowledged that “Sometimes I don’t read everything. [Laughing] I used that skim and scan method, sometimes I read the topic, oh it’s about home loans, and then the *aim* of the circular, or the policy, and then read the first lines”. Or when I see that this one – the gist of this then I read it through. ... And then get the information. (6.2.462-8).

