

**THE CULTURE OF LEARNING
IN KHAYELITSHA SECONDARY SCHOOLS:
TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES**

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ABSTRACT

This research project focused on teachers' perspectives on improving the culture of learning in their schools. The 'culture of learning' is a term which has achieved widespread popular usage, serving as a catch phrase to describe the overall crisis in education. Broadly defined, the 'culture of learning' refers to the attitudes and behaviors demonstrated by members of a school which foster a particular orientation towards learning. This culture is critical to the educational success of students, who must be motivated before learning can occur. Within South Africa, the culture of learning has largely disintegrated in African schools. This project seeks to gain a better understanding of the culture itself as well as to identify strategies for its improvement.

The 'culture of learning' is a term which has received little or no critical analysis in the South African education literature, despite its frequent use. The first part of this thesis locates the culture of learning within a theoretical context, using international literature of school cultures which promote negative attitudes towards learning. Additionally, the history of South African education is reviewed to trace the events which may have contributed to the erosion of the culture of learning in African schools. On the basis of these theoretical and historical accounts, I conclude that structural inequality is fundamental to the deterioration of the culture of learning. Once these structural inequalities are resolved, however, the restoration of a learning culture does not necessarily follow. Instead, direct school-level interventions are necessary to facilitate changes in the attitudes and behaviors of students and teachers.

This thesis does not attempt to provide an overall analysis of the culture of learning, but focuses on the perceptions of one group of people: teachers. Teachers from four Khayelitsha schools were included in this study. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data was gathered, with 23 teachers participating in in-depth interviews and 56 teachers filling out questionnaires. All participation was solicited on a voluntary basis.

Teachers' perspectives on how to improve the culture of learning in their schools covered a wide range of issues. While both material resources and human resources were considered highly important to the restoration of a learning culture, teachers overwhelmingly stressed the importance of human resources, including the motivation of students and teachers. According to respondents,

the motivation of students, the defining feature of the culture of learning, is highly contingent on the motivation level of teachers. In this respect, the 'culture of teaching' is the critical component of the broader 'culture of learning' and one which warrants serious attention.

The low motivation and morale of teachers can be indirectly measured in many ways. Teachers reported high levels of absenteeism, truancy, 'laziness', substance abuse and subversion of assessments, as well as the frequency of leaving the profession, as signs of low motivation among their peers. Teachers offered varied explanations for this phenomenon, including the historical degradation of teaching as well as the present dilapidated conditions in schools. A number of strategies for improving teacher motivation were offered by respondents, ranging from improved working conditions to stricter discipline. The most commonly discussed strategy was an increase and improvement in the provision of in-service training and workshops for teachers. According to teachers, workshops would serve both to increase the skills of teachers as well as to provide a forum in which to support one another and revive their interest in the profession. If in-service activities are planned and implemented with active participation and guidance from teachers, the process can serve not only to *reform* current teaching behaviors but also to *transform* attitudes and capacities towards future upgrading. Based on the present findings, a participatory and democratic approach to all levels of education decision-making is recommended.

Teachers' views of the culture of learning do not mesh neatly with the understanding that underlies current policy initiatives. Major national and provincial policy to date has focused primarily on the organizational and administrative issues central to the restructuring of the national education system. These policies have not yet addressed school-level concerns beyond ideological commentaries. The major initiative focusing on comprehensive school-level reform, the RDP Culture of Learning Programme, has focused almost exclusively on the physical renovation of schools. If teachers are right, these material improvements will have little long-term effect on the overall culture of learning. The emphasis must be placed, instead, on human resource issues, namely, the upgrading and encouragement of teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

The severity of the South African education crisis has been well established in recent literature (Krige et al., 1994; McGregor, 1992; Nxumalo, 1993). While there is concern for the education system as a whole, African schools in particular demonstrate the immediate need for reform. Nationally, African schools have the lowest matric pass rate in the country, the fewest resources, the lowest proportion of qualified teachers, and the lowest paid staff (Race Relations, 1994/95).

The origin of these current trends can be traced to the system of Bantu Education, implemented in 1953, in which Africans were discriminated against in all realms of educational and economic opportunity. The quality and content of African education during the apartheid years was formally prescribed to prepare Africans psychologically and technically for subordinate positions in society. Rather than emphasizing academic advancement, schools became a tool for achieving social compliance and unskilled manpower. Within this context, the learning environment in schools was largely destroyed.

This system provoked widespread resistance against its oppressive control and formal schooling was largely discredited as illegitimate. Schools became a major site for political opposition, with the demand for equal education viewed as part of a broader struggle for political, economic and social liberation. Given these circumstances, African schools during the past 20 years have been characterized more by disruption than by learning, serving as a battleground for political resistance. The combination of these oppressive and disruptive factors in the recent decades of African education has led to what is commonly referred to as a disintegration of the 'culture of learning'.

Current discourse on educational reform has popularized the term 'culture of learning' as a catch phrase to describe the overall crisis in education. Used in various contexts, from newspaper journalism to academic writings to policy statements, the 'culture of learning' is clearly the popular target of reform initiatives. The inclusiveness of the term is advantageous for concisely summarizing the wealth of problems to be addressed within schools; at the same time, the breadth of the term poses difficulties in terms of clearly defining the issues to be addressed and establishing strategies which can adequately and effectively produce change.

The present study seeks to gain teachers perspectives on this issue. Teachers were chosen because of their role as practitioners in the educational process. Based on extensive experience with the conditions of African schools, teachers bring a reality to the discussion which experts, bureaucrats, and even union officials may not be aware of. A reality of what will work with their students, with their communities, with their facilities, and with their colleagues. What do schools need most and what do they need first? What needs to happen before curriculum changes will have an effect, before corporal punishment is abolished in practice, before pupils will feel motivated to learn? Accurate answers to these questions are essential to the success of future reforms.

Not only should teachers be involved in the discussion process because of their first-hand, expert knowledge of the classroom experience (substantive input), but also because the involvement of teachers in this process increases the likelihood that teachers will support the changes and work to implement them (legitimacy). Any changes which are to occur, can only do so with the endorsement and understanding of those expected to implement them. African teachers today are emerging from a past climate of oppressive control in which they were forced to accept decisions made by a closed and inaccessible government structure. In order to regain a sense of legitimacy and democracy, teachers must be included in representative decision-making processes. That teachers accept the decisions as rightful and realistic is critical to the success of proposed reforms.

In this transitional time of government reorganization and policy development, many opinions are being solicited and considered as a means of best addressing effective school reform. It is difficult, however, for members at the ground level to be directly involved in the policy process. Parents, teachers, and students, those personally affected by the current situation and those most affected by change, seldom have the forum for participation in the decision-making process. Thus the present study seeks to investigate the views of one such group: teachers. It is not my expectation that teachers should be the only group deciding policy priorities, nor is it likely that they have access to sufficient information to inform them of the range of options and possibilities. Teachers do, however, have extensive experience with the learning culture in African schools and therefore have an extremely valuable perspective on the nature of this culture and how it might be improved.

By gauging the perspectives of African teachers, this research is intended to clarify the abstract significance of the 'culture of learning' and to indicate possible strategies for improving this culture, according to ground-level standpoints.

In Chapter One, I propose a definition of the 'culture of learning' based on popular usage and international literature. In essence, the 'culture of learning' signifies the practices, attitudes, feelings, motivation, and ideas about learning held by members of a school. While this culture is manifested at the level of the school, it originates in reaction to the broader historical and structural conditions within society as a whole. Research from the United States and England offer complementary analyses of school cultures which promote negative attitudes towards learning. These international studies provide a theoretical foundation for our understanding of the 'culture of learning' and shed light on the social and economic conditions which foster its development.

While international research clarifies the broad phenomenon of cultural opposition to learning, the South African culture of learning needs to be understood in its particular historical context. Chapter Two brings the discussion to the South African context, with an analysis of the 'culture of learning' from a historical perspective. The history of African education over the past 50 years is discussed, with a particular focus on state repression and people's resistance. The ideological and structural oppression orchestrated by government control, in combination with the growing resistance movements rejecting the legitimacy of apartheid education, are considered the primary causes for the deterioration in the 'culture of learning' in African schools.

In Chapter Three, the methodology of this research is discussed, including issues of sampling, methods, access, resistance, language and generalizability. Teachers were selected from four Khayelitsha secondary schools for participation in interviews and/or questionnaires. This combination of qualitative and quantitative data was chosen to gain depth and breadth insights into the range of attitudes expressed by teachers.

In Chapter Four, an overview of the findings is presented. This overview suggests that teachers' responses can be classified into two general categories: material resources and human resources. The first includes examples of tangible issues in education, such as finances, facilities and curriculum. The second deals with more abstract issues, such as student and teacher motivation. Each of these categories is considered highly important to creating a culture of learning.

Chapters Five and Six focus on the material elements of reform: resources and the curriculum. The resources in African schools are far below minimum, with a shortage of classrooms, chairs,

teachers, laboratory equipment and textbooks, among other things. These shortages significantly affect the quality of education afforded to students by subjecting them to crowded, decrepit facilities which prevent pupils from fulfilling their academic potential. In addition to these resource issues, the curriculum is also in major need of reform. The current curriculum contains racist, biased and irrelevant material which bears little relevance to the lives or futures of most African students. In order to stimulate students with rich and meaningful material, the curriculum warrants serious revision. Both resources and the curriculum present major priorities for reform. In many ways, however, they are the most simple and straightforward issues to address.

According to the present findings, teachers believe that changes to these material factors will have little effect unless serious attention is paid to the more intangible elements of reform, namely, the motivation of students and teachers. Chapter Seven focuses on student motivation. According to teachers, the motivation of students is the most critical factor in improving the culture of learning. The low motivation of students can be attributed to a number of factors, namely, their home environment, their political history, and their economic future. But the most important factor in motivating students, based on the present findings, is the motivation of teachers.

Chapter Eight discusses the motivation of teachers. The historical conditions of teaching over the past 50 years have created a 'culture of teaching' which largely defines the learning environment for schools. Teachers who are demotivated and demoralized about their work play a powerful role in transferring those attitudes to other members of the school. Given this critical dynamic, perhaps our focus is misguided when we talk about the culture of learning. Instead, a more accurate view would be to focus more specifically on the defining feature of that broad school culture; to focus instead on the culture of teaching.

Teachers describe the crisis in the culture of teaching as manifested by a range of apathetic and unresponsive attitudes and irresponsible and delinquent behaviors. Teachers attribute this pervasive problem to the oppressive history of the African education system, the current working conditions, and the lack of discipline. The most commonly mentioned solution to the problem of low teacher motivation is an increase and improvement in the provision of teacher training and workshops. According to teachers, this is the most crucial prerequisite to motivating teachers, motivating students, and creating a culture of learning.

The findings of this report indicate that the importance of teacher training goes beyond the simple provision of information. Chapter Eight concludes with a discussion of the literature on effective teacher training programs, which indicates that they should be participatory, interactive experiences in which teachers have a role in both the planning and process of the training sessions. The importance of teacher involvement in the formulation and design of reform initiatives is discussed in terms of school-level decision-making. The following chapter extends this discussion to a focus on teacher involvement in national- and provincial-level decision-making.

Chapter Nine looks at teachers' perceptions of their participation in the education policy planning process. While most teachers would like to be more involved in policy decision-making, very few of them feel that they have access to a forum for participation. The lack of participation of ground-level stakeholders is detrimental to the education reform process for the reasons mentioned above. The substantive input provided by 'ground-level experts' and the resulting legitimacy of participatory decision-making processes can have a critical impact on the successful planning and implementation of policy initiatives. Teachers feel excluded from the current policy process, and it is therefore unlikely that resulting policy decisions will (be perceived to) meet the needs expressed by instrumental constituents at the ground-level.

Finally, Chapter Ten discusses current policy initiatives related to school-level reform. The Presidential Lead Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) Culture of Learning Programme sets itself the objective of improving the culture of learning in underprivileged schools within the next five years. While their charter includes a wide range of reform initiatives, including teacher upgrading and curriculum development, the actual implementation of the project (particularly within the Western Cape) focuses exclusively on the physical renovation of schools. My research suggests that these physical reforms will have little substantial or long-term effect unless concurrent attention is paid to the human-resource needs of the school.

The widespread application of the term 'culture of learning' to diverse problems within the field of education has led to a confused and at times misguided understanding of the issues to be addressed. The RDP project has related its definition of the culture of learning to the physical needs of schools; other studies on school culture, including the relevant international literature, focus exclusively on the experiences of learners. This study reveals a much under-researched perspective on the South African culture of learning: the role of teachers and the culture of teaching.

**SECTION ONE: HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF
THE CULTURE OF LEARNING**

CHAPTER ONE: DEFINING THE 'CULTURE OF LEARNING'

The phrase 'culture of learning' has emerged recently in the South African context to describe the degraded status of education in this country. Primarily the phrase is used in reference to African schools in which this so-called 'culture of learning' has profoundly deteriorated. The poor performance of African students in comparison with their white counterparts is attributed to this amorphous 'culture' which fosters a particular orientation to learning.

The phrase has achieved widespread use in South Africa, appearing in newspaper articles, journals, and policy documents. While the term has no academic or theoretical foundation, it has been incorporated into all levels of education discourse. Defined by popular usage, the 'culture of learning' connotes four primary issues relevant to schooling: the present status of education, the historical development of African schooling, the negative learning environment within these schools, and the psychological orientation of school members.

At its most basic level, the phrase is used to describe the present condition of education, in which many schools have lost their capacity to create learning environments. "Instead of improving in recent years, the learning culture in many African schools has continued to break down. The anti-academic and destructive attitudes and behavior found amongst many African youths are manifested in the chaos, lack of discipline and demoralisation found in many township schools" (Nxumalo, 1993:55). Here the 'culture of learning' signifies the current crisis in education demonstrated by the rebellious and/or discouraged students and teachers.

More often, however, the 'culture of learning' implies a set of attitudes and behaviors which have emerged from a specific historical context. It is generally held that the history of Apartheid education is largely responsible for the present situation. The massive subordination of Africans (through educational institutions) and the wide-scale resistance which emerged in opposition to this state repression can account for a significant proportion of the present attitudes towards learning. Thus the term embodies both the history of African education as well as the present conditions. "The South African situation during the past two decades had been characterised by a struggle for political liberation, with school pupils involved on a wide scale. Schooling was frequently disrupted by political protest action and this, taken together with poverty and overcrowding and damage to school buildings, and added to the factors mentioned earlier, has produced the

widespread decline of a 'culture of learning'" (Mehl et al., draft). The link between present conditions and their historical antecedents is thus implicit in common understanding of the 'culture of learning'.

A third defining feature of the use of the term 'culture of learning' is its universal application to contexts in which this culture is missing. The term seems to have emerged specifically to address the deficiencies in schools where motivation and performance levels are at their lowest. In countless writings which make use of the term, I have seen none which use it in reference to a school community which possesses this esteemed 'culture of learning'. Instead, educationalists employ this term to identify what schools *do not* have, without specifying exactly what schools *do* have in its place (e.g., culture of resistance, culture of opposition, culture of apathy, etc.). Many alternative terms could be used in a positive description of schools, in place of the '*lack of a culture of learning*' which frames our understanding in the negative. The purpose of this essay, however, is not to revoke a popular and well-used concept. This issue is brought up only for the sake of clarification-- when we speak of the 'culture of learning' in African schools, we are actually referring to that which is *absent* in these schools.

The fourth and final noteworthy feature of the popular use of the term 'culture of learning' is its emphasis on the intangible elements of education. While the legacy of apartheid has also left schools with severe material deficiencies, the emphasis on 'culture' rather than 'conditions' of learning implies a concentration on the attitudes and motivation levels of students and teachers. "The system of separate and unequal provision has alienated the majority of its users-- black youth.... During more than a decade of school upheavals, the arduous habits of learning and teaching have broken down. The result is a disintegration of the learning culture, especially in urban African schools. Indeed it is true to say that, while the extent of material deprivation of African education is considerable, some of the most negative effects of the education crisis are found in intangible areas-- in a loss of self-respect, tolerance, teachers' morale and students' will to learn" (Hofmeyr & Jaff, 1992:175). While the physical conditions of a school and the psychological orientations of its members are undoubtedly linked, the term 'culture of learning' emphasizes the latter, the human conditions of learning. In essence, it signifies the attitudes, feelings, motivation, and ideas about learning held by the members of a school.

By constructing a definition of the 'culture of learning' based on popular usage of the term, we can attempt to unify the various connotations associated with its use. Any such definition, however, has little theoretical value and cannot provide a paradigm with which to assess the specific causes and characteristics of a learning culture nor to propose strategies with which to revive it. As the South African literature does not yet contain a theoretical discussion of the 'culture of learning', it is necessary to look to international literature for academic discussions of this nature. While the 'culture of learning' is specifically a South African term, similar concepts have been employed in both the United States and England. Similar to the South African situation, these analyses demonstrate cultures among school pupils that are characterized by hostility or ambivalence towards educational success. A discussion of these 'cultures of resistance'¹ can serve to enlighten our understanding of the present South African situation.

Racial Stratification and Oppositional Identity

In the United States, John Ogbu (1978, 1985, 1992) has done extensive research on the nature of educational achievement of black Americans. In contrast to other research which focuses on individual characteristics (Jensen, 1961), family background (Coleman, 1969), or school quality (Jencks, 1969), Ogbu investigates the cultural determinants of school performance. According to his theory, studies which focus on micro-level issues neglect to acknowledge the potent effects of social structures and group cultures. He argues that research on minority education must "examine the historical and structural contexts of the education of minorities including the historically developed adaptations of the minorities which influence their perceptions of and responses to schooling" (Ogbu, 1992:8). According to Ogbu, the history of racial discrimination and stratification in American society has contributed to the poor performance of blacks in school. Beyond these structural issues, however, there is a more critical dynamic to be explored-- the perceptions and reactions of blacks to their historical and societal status. Here we examine the active interplay between structure and culture, specifically in terms of education.

First Ogbu demonstrates the historical inequalities in education and the economy which serve to discriminate against black Americans. On the basis of his research, Ogbu reports that blacks have been provided with poorer quality education than their white counterparts, as well as fewer job opportunities based on their educational achievements. "Our study of black experiences in school

¹'Culture of resistance', like 'culture of learning', is a term with no official theoretical or academic foundation. Within this essay, it will be used to describe a culture which promotes a primary set of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors oriented towards the resistance of structural and ideological subordination.

and in the labor market shows that generations of blacks were denied equal and adequate rewards for their educational accomplishments when compared with whites" (Ogbu, 1985:866). This history of discrimination, according to Ogbu, has led blacks to perceive few benefits from the education system. "This differential treatment forces the minorities to perceive and interpret their opportunities for self-improvement through schooling differently" (Ogbu, 1985:866). Because education promises few rewards, blacks have little incentive to concentrate their energies on schooling and instead prioritize alternative endeavors. Ogbu cites extensive ethnographic evidence to indicate that "black children divert their efforts into nonacademic activities, especially as they get older and become more aware of their limited future opportunities for mainstream employment" (Ogbu, 1985:866). At this level of analysis, the reaction of black students represents a simple model of cost-benefit analysis. The costs involved in achieving in school are not met by corresponding rewards in the job market, particularly in comparison to whites. The net effect, therefore, is a reluctance among blacks to exert energy or effort towards an endeavor perceived as promising little reward.

This simple model of motivation, as determined by the direct correspondence between education and the economy, is only the first stage in Ogbu's theory. Ogbu goes on to demonstrate the effect of these structural inequities on the cultural attitudes which develop among blacks in regards to education. He argues that because of the history of social and economic inequality, a culture has developed among black Americans which in fact opposes and rejects white middle class values, including those which prioritize educational achievement. In essence, blacks are rejecting 'white society' before it inevitably rejects them. The key element of this culture is the attitude that the education system, including all schools and teachers, is biased and therefore illegitimate. "The fact that for many generations black Americans have perceived their education as inferior and have 'fought' with the schools or the educational system for 'better education' has made them distrustful of the schools and of white people who run the schools" (Ogbu, 1985:864). Schools and their learning objectives are thereby discredited by this culture of resistance which rejects 'white institutions'.

Ogbu terms this culture of resistance as an "oppositional identity"; an identity defined by opposition rather than absolutes. Ogbu argues that, independently, black culture does not inherently oppose educational values nor any other measures of achievement. But placed in a context of subordination and discrimination, black culture has acquired, as means of a survival

strategy, a component of opposition to 'white society'. Within this culture, a black individual's identity is defined by his/her opposition to 'white values', thus rejecting the dominant structure which discriminates against involuntary minority groups².

It is this interactive theory of culture which differentiates Ogbu's argument from other anthropological research which focuses on minority cultures and educational achievement. For example, Bourdieu (1976, 1977) and Farkas (1990) talk about 'cultural capital'. Based on this theory it could be argued that black Americans do not acquire the necessary cultural capital (e.g., language structure, analytical styles, etc.) from their home environment to compete in a school environment defined by white, middle-class culture. According to this theory, there are independent characteristics of black culture which perpetuate failure (or, conversely, it is the unwillingness of the school system to incorporate a multicultural curriculum which would enable blacks to more fairly compete). Ogbu accepts that certain cultural differences may present stumbling blocks to initial school success. He uses immigrant minorities as an example, however, to demonstrate that these cultural differences can be accommodated so as to preserve one's original culture while simultaneously gaining competency in the culture of one's host country. Ogbu concludes that the reason blacks have not assimilated in the way that voluntary minority groups have is that blacks have developed an oppositional identity to white culture which discourages them from even attempting to succeed according to 'white standards'. Those who do attempt mainstream success are accused of 'acting white' or 'selling out' (Ogbu, 1978). The cultural pressure to resist assimilation is thereby a powerful deterrent from individual attempts at advancement.

Thus, black Americans demonstrate poor achievement in education not merely because they possess cultural nuances or values which are *different* to white mainstream educational values (as do all minority cultures); rather blacks in fact possess cultural values which are actively in *opposition* to

² Ogbu differentiates between voluntary and involuntary minority groups. Voluntary minorities (e.g. immigrant communities) possess their own culture which is different from that of mainstream America; because they have chosen membership within American culture, however, they are driven to assimilate as much as possible. While they may encounter discrimination, they view their subordinate status as a temporary position that with time they will overcome. Black Americans (along with Mexican-Americans and Native-Americans), on the other hand, are involuntary participants in American culture. Due to slavery, conquest, or colonization, they have been forced to participate in a culture which treats them as inferiors. Generations of discrimination have proven that this status is not temporary and there is therefore little incentive to participate willingly. Instead, involuntary minorities can either accept their subordinate status, give up entirely (dropout of school), or resist the system (actively or unconsciously). According to Ogbu, it is this latter form of resistance which is most responsible for the poor performance of blacks in school.

mainstream values. "Castelike minorities respond to their forced incorporation, subsequent exclusion from assimilation, and continued exploitation by the dominant group by developing a complex identity system in which the minorities see themselves not just as *different* from the dominant group but in most respects as *opposed* to their 'white oppressors'" (Ogbu, 1985:866, emphasis in original text). This culture of opposition, or 'oppositional identity', presents a powerful tension between black students and the schools they attend.

Ogbu's theory presents a view of black educational achievement as one directly reflective of broader structural conditions in society. According to this theory, individual- and school-level interventions will have little impact on black achievement; it is only through the elimination of social and structural inequality that blacks will begin to succeed (based on mainstream definitions) according to their potential. However, Ogbu does not terminate his argument with structural recommendations. Envisioning the possibility of eliminating caste barriers (institutionalized racism and inequality), Ogbu acknowledges that cultural change will not occur immediately. The oppositional identity found among blacks, based on generations of discrimination, will not disappear the moment equal rights are delivered. The cultural residue of this historical identity will take time to work through. Towards the acceleration of this process, Ogbu recommends a focus on community and school-level reform which can directly address the attitudes and feelings of blacks towards school. "While I believe that school reforms and the elimination of caste barriers will eventually influence blacks to develop new sets of attitudes, self-conceptions, learning habits, and other skills that promote success in school, I also believe that it is necessary to develop programs that will speed up the process. Unless this is done, there is likely to be a considerable lag between the elimination of caste barriers and the school reforms on the one hand, and changes in the influences of the home and community on black educational efforts on the other" (Ogbu, 1978:366). While the social and economic structure of inequity may have caused the development of this oppositional culture, the elimination of these structures will not necessarily translate into an (immediate) reversal of attitudes and behaviors. To directly address this cultural residue, Ogbu argues that school- and community-level interventions must target small-scale groups, providing encouragement to accept and strive towards the new opportunities available to them. I will return to this final recommendation of Ogbu in a later discussion of the South African context. First, however, we turn to a complementary set of studies based in England.

Class Stratification and the Counter-School Culture:

Paul Willis (1977) is known for his ethnographic accounts of working class students in England. Focusing his analysis on class rather than race, Willis has developed a similar cultural theory of resistance to that of Ogbu. According to Willis, the school system serves to perpetuate and reinforce existing class stratification. Rather than viewing working class students as victims to this system, however, Willis argues that these students actively produce a culture which maintains their working class status. Willis examines a "counter-school culture" which encourages working class students to reject educational values, thereby jeopardizing their (already minimal) chances of social mobility. The process of embracing the values of this counter-school culture ensures that these pupils end up with working class jobs, thus reproducing the class structure of society.

According to Willis, the 'counter-school culture' is not merely a product of rebellious adolescents who do not enjoy school nor that of an unsupportive family environment. Rather this culture has developed as a result of or in reaction to the specific class relations which constrain an individual's potential for mobility. While the counter-school culture refers specifically to the attitudes and behaviors of students, these cultural norms are by no means unique to the education system. According to Willis, the counter-school culture is derived from broader working-class culture which defines itself according to the perceived system of stratification in society. "Those who adopt the counter-school culture... are not simply conforming to a particular script learnt during childhood in a particular type of working-class family; their resistance to the school has important *class* significance in that it results from a form of cultural penetration" (Brown, 1987:21). The counter-school culture is thus a subset of the larger working-class struggle. The culture prepares students not only for their future economic role in society but also for their future cultural environment within the broader working-class community.

The historical origins of working class culture are grounded in the system of class stratification which has existed in British society since the turn of the century, imposing significant constraints on economic advancement. For the most part, individuals remain in the socioeconomic bracket into which they were born. Because there is little chance of upward mobility, the incentives to achieve in school are minimal. While education is idealized as a vehicle of social mobility, working-class pupils have little evidence to believe that it succeeds in its intended function. Rather education more often serves to entrench existing inequities, leaving little value or legitimacy in the eyes of the working-class. Instead of investing in a system which offers no returns, these students are more

likely reject and rebel against what they see as middle-class standards of appropriate behavior. "The counter-school culture is involved in its own way with a relatively subtle, dynamic, and, so to speak, 'opportunity-costed' assessment of the rewards of the conformism and obedience which the school seeks to exact from working class kids. In particular this involves a deep seated skepticism about the value of qualifications in relation to what might be sacrificed to get them" (Willis, 1977:126). Similar to Ogbu's discussion of black Americans, Willis demonstrates the effects of structural constraints on cultural attitudes and behaviors. The culture which develops in reaction to these constraints actively and dynamically defines itself in opposition to the mainstream. "The refusal to compete, implicit in the counter-school culture, is therefore in this sense a radical act: it refuses to collude in its own educational suppression" (Willis, 1977:128). As discussed above, members of the subordinate group reject 'the system' before 'the system' inevitably rejects them.

While the development of this counter-school culture originates in reaction to structural inequalities, the culture itself takes on an autonomous role in its social environment. Individual working-class students are not consciously protesting against class discrimination when taking on characteristics of the counter-school culture. Rather they are being socialized to accept the lifestyles (and school-styles) of their peer group. Thus the counter-school culture reproduces itself autonomously (as does any culture) by promoting certain norms, values, attitudes and behaviors. As with Ogbu's oppositional-identity, the counter-school culture is an independent and dynamic force which originates from a structural level and self-perpetuates on an individual level.

Criticism:

Ogbu and Willis provide insightful analyses into the cultures of resistance found among subordinated groups in relation to education. Their theories of structural oppression, perception of inequality, and development of cultural resistance shed tremendous light on the nature of minority and working-class achievement in school. It is important to note, however, that these theories represent group generalizations which cannot accurately account for the experience of all individuals within the specified group. Some black Americans experience school without feelings of opposition and strive to achieve according to mainstream educational values. Likewise, some working-class boys take their education seriously and do find opportunities for upward mobility through schooling.

Ogbu and Willis can be criticized for their sweeping theories which leave little room for individual or group variation. For example, Willis has been widely criticized for his assumption that the counter-school culture represents the normal working-class response to school. This analysis does not explain the wide variation in working-class pupils' attitudes, behaviors and achievement levels. "By identifying the counter-school culture as the *normal* working-class response, Willis is left with the problem of explaining why some working-class pupils do not develop an anti-school subculture yet still fail, and why some are academically successful" (Brown, 1987:25). Similarly, Ogbu pays little attention to the growing black middle-class in America and the increasing numbers of black students achieving in higher education. For these students who (strive to) achieve within the educational system, the 'oppositional identity' of black culture seems to have little effect.

A second major criticism of cultural resistance theories is their tendency to exclusively concentrate on the experiences of male students. Little attention is given to the potentially different attitudes and behaviors expressed by female students, despite the fact that much documentation exists suggesting that girls and boys experience school in different ways (Deem, 1987; Delamont, 1980). If half the population of black and/or working-class students demonstrates distinct orientations towards schooling, the theoretical validity of these cultural analyses must be called into question. The complex relationships between class, race, gender and education must be carefully examined to prevent over-generalizations and inaccurate conclusions.

The shortcomings of these theories must be acknowledged in order to assess the practical validity of these cultural constructs. These criticisms are not meant to deflate the importance of cultural analyses, nor to negate the significance of Ogbu's oppositional identity and Willis' counter-school culture. These concepts are extremely useful for our understanding of cultural reactions to structural subordination. In order to appropriately apply these concepts, however, it is necessary to acknowledge the potential limitations of broad cultural analyses.

In relation to the South African context, similar criticisms will be discussed. For our overall understanding of the 'culture of learning', however, Ogbu and Willis offer highly relevant insights regarding the interaction of discrimination and resistance within the educational arena. Acknowledging the breadth of individual experiences is necessary when attempting to understand the impact of group cultures. It is useful nevertheless to look at trends in group behavior based on common history and circumstance.

Apartheid Education and the Culture of Learning:

Ogbu's "oppositional identity" and Willis' "counter-school culture" provide an interesting and relevant paradigm within which to interpret the South African situation. The decline in the 'culture of learning' in South African schools has been widely attributed to historical (political and economic) factors which prevented Africans equal opportunities in education and the broader society. The poor conditions of education, including resources, curriculum and quality of teaching staff, all contributed to the demoralization of teachers and students and the resulting loss of a 'culture of learning'. While the term 'culture of learning' is used in the negative (as discussed above) and those of Ogbu and Willis are used in the positive, all three terms refer to the products of similar historical, structural and cultural dynamics. In order to provide a thorough comparison of the South African situation, a more in-depth review of its history is required.

Chapter 2: History of African Education, 1950-1995

A Two-Sided Story:

The history of African education in the last half-century tells a story of both repression and resistance. Each side of the story has played a critical part in shaping and defining the role of African education and each can substantially account for the historical deterioration of the culture of learning in African schools.

One half of the story demonstrates the state's efforts to gain total and centralized control over all aspects of the system. By instituting a universal policy of social, economic, and educational segregation, the government ensured that Africans would occupy only the lowest positions within this social hierarchy. The system of structural inequality (manifested by blatant disparities in educational and economic opportunities) guaranteed a large supply of semi-educated, unskilled workers to meet the capital needs of the country. Both ideological and structural domination served to increasingly subordinate the status of Africans within South African society. Within this oppressive context, the culture of learning in schools was largely undermined by the overwhelming emphasis placed on social compliance rather academic advancement.

The history of South African education, however, cannot be seen as an entirely one-sided story of domination. The other half of the story reveals a powerful struggle of opposition waged by African resistance movements, to resist and rebel against this oppressive state control. While the education system was intended to promote docile acceptance of the imposed social hierarchy, it concurrently provided an arena in which the oppressed could unite and rise against their oppressors. A culture of resistance flourished in African apartheid schools, with pupils fighting to end the social and political discrimination with which they were faced. The rejection of the illegitimate education system and the struggle to achieve broader political, social and economic liberty replaced traditional education values and the will to learn within the existing school structures. While central to the overall liberation movement, school-based political activities contributed to the deteriorating culture of learning in African schools.

This combination of state domination and popular insurgency created a climate in which the culture of learning in African schools was largely sacrificed in the midst of the larger political struggle.

Together, the stories of repression and resistance in the education arena reveal the historical conditions from which the present African culture of learning (or lack thereof) emerged. Starting with the implementation of Bantu education in 1953 and amplifying during the political protests of the 1970s and 80s, the neglect of the learning environment has been an increasing trend in African apartheid education.

The Origins of Bantu Education:

Prior to 1948, the state showed little interest in African schooling, and African education was primarily provided by mission schools (Molteno, 1984). When the National Party came to power in 1948 it made the centralization and control of 'native affairs' an immediate priority. The Eiselen Commission was appointed to investigate African education and to propose a more 'relevant and appropriate' education system. Its recommendations were incorporated into the Bantu Education Act of 1953 which aimed to further the aims of apartheid by creating a geographically, institutionally and ideologically separated education system for Africans.

The Bantu Education Act empowered the government to centralize control of African schooling in its own hands. All schools were required to register under the Department of Bantu Affairs, and approximately 90 percent of the 5000 mission schools were closed down for refusing to implement the new requirements of Bantu education (Christie & Collins, 1984:162). The state made little effort to preserve existing schools as black education in missionary and church schools was seen as "too academic to produce sufficient workers willing to labour with their hands" (WUS, 1986:2). All syllabuses were centrally prescribed and oriented towards an Afrikaner value system, in the form of Christian National Education (CNE), which emphasized a hierarchy of race and the subordinate status of Africans. For example, the primary school syllabus stressed "obedience, communal loyalty, ethnic and national diversity, the acceptance of allocated social roles, piety, as well as identification with rural culture" (Molteno, 1984:89). These values permeated the curriculum content, with an inordinate amount of time given to religious instruction and devotional activities, and the greatest amount of classroom time spent on manual training (Tabata, 1980).

Bantu education represented an explicit attempt to separate white culture from the realm of the 'native' by emphasizing a constructed Bantu culture which was essentially distinct from and inferior to white society. Introducing the Bantu Education Act of 1953, Dr. Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs, stated that "Natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with

Europeans is not for them" (WUS, 1986:2). While African education had been segregated for decades before the Nationalists came into power (Christie & Collins, 1984:165), Bantu education was the first comprehensive policy promoting an explicit political and economic agenda.

The Ideological and Structural Indoctrination of Students:

Politically, Bantu education was intended to secure the indoctrination and subordination of this majority population through control over curriculum, teacher-training, and governance structures. The previous system dominated by mission schools was considered potentially threatening, for it nurtured the 'African intellect' and created the possibility of a 'black political consciousness'.³ Bantu education sought to eliminate these dangers by discouraging autonomous thinking and imposing an official social hierarchy dominated by the white ruling class. "Dr. H.F. Verwoerd made it clear that his intentions were ideological, his aim to preserve the status quo and prevent black agitation" (Maree, 1984:149). The primary goal of education was no longer to increase the academic abilities of Africans but rather to teach specific social and cultural values and interests deemed appropriate for the 'native disposition'. This new ideological paradigm represents the first powerful strike to the culture of learning in African schools.

The ideological aims of Bantu education were further justified by the labour demands of the South African economy. Bantu education secured the existence of a cheap, unskilled and semi-literate labour force to meet the economic needs of capital in the mines, farms and factories. A large number of analyses of Bantu education focus on this aspect of apartheid education policy, demonstrating the labor reproduction process achieved through mass education (See Tabata, 1980; Hyslop, 1988; Molteno, 1984; Kallaway, 1984; Christie & Collins, 1984; Walker, 1991; Unterhalter et al., 1991; Wolpe & Unterhalter, 1991; Levy, 1991; and Gultig & Hart, 1991). "The reproduction of the capitalist class relationship, and hence of labour power, is essential to the capitalist accumulation process. The reproduction of agents, as capitalists and as workers, needs to be secured for the continued functioning of capitalism. Not only do workers need to be adequately trained and skilled, they need also to have the appropriate work ethic, attitudes, and willingness to participate in capitalist exchange relations. The state has played a significant role in the reproduction of labour suited to the needs of capital in general" (Christie & Collins, 1984:164). Bantu education gave Africans the minimal skills necessary to participate in white-owned industry

³These terms have dubious sociological validity in that they imply a causal relationship between mission education and the evolution of intelligence and/or political awareness among Africans. The terms are used to represent Verwoerd's perception that this causal relationship was both valid and threatening.

(basic reading, writing, and language competencies as well as vast familiarity with manual labour) along with the necessary ideological framework to legitimate their subordinate class status. Politically and economically, Bantu education represented one of apartheid's most powerful institutions for achieving absolute separation and subordination of the African people.

Successful Expansion of Bantu Education:

Despite its draconian measures, education under the Nationalist government was more popular than ever before. The first two decades of Bantu education witnessed a massive enrolment expansion of African students: By 1965, African primary school enrolment had increased by 100 percent to two million students. In the next ten years, this number had nearly doubled again (Hyslop, 1990:82). Secondary school enrolment showed a similar growth: by 1965, enrolment of secondary students had doubled and by the next decade they had increased six fold (RESA, 1988:1). Only a minimal percentage of this growth is as a result of compulsory education, which affected less than three percent of African students (Unterhalter, 1991:37). According to a report by RESA (Research on Education in South Africa), the massive growth in enrolments between the 1950's and 1960's is largely a result of parents determined to educate their children, often at great financial cost (RESA, 1988). Education was increasingly recognized as an important criterion for economic survival.

The financial cost of education for parents was no small amount. Despite massive enrolment increases, state per pupil expenditure in fact *decreased* during the first two decades of Bantu education (RESA, 1988). The state employed several tactics for reducing expenditures, enabling the vast expansion of school buildings and enrolments. By employing a greater proportion of the lowest paid teachers, the underqualified and female teachers, significant savings were made on salaries. By instituting the 'platoon system', in which teachers work double sessions during the day (basically allowing two schools to operate in one building, with one set of teachers and one set of facilities), the state minimized the need for additional buildings, staff and textbooks (though as a result, students were unable to take textbooks home to study). And by making students clean the schools, prepare bricks for new buildings and work on the roads (as a part of the 'manual' component of their curriculum), caretaking and maintenance costs were greatly reduced (Tabata, 1980). The most significant contribution to educational expenditure, however, was from African parents themselves. When the Bantu Education Act was passed, it was made clear that "native education should not be financed at the expense of the White system...."(WUS, 1986:2). Instead,

African communities financed the construction of Bantustan schools as a portion of their rent in the townships and raised funds for all other expenditures directly from parents. "Parents have to pay for the salaries of additional teachers engaged by the school, for the costs of erecting and maintaining school buildings, and, until recently, for stationary and set books [unlike their white counterparts who were issued stationary and textbooks from the state]" (WUS, 1986:6, Christie & Collins, 1984). It was not by chance that the most underprivileged communities were required to carry such a significant burden of their education. In retrospect, it seems absurd that African parents would be willing to invest so deeply in a system which sought to undermine African competence and autonomy. At the time, however, this was the only opportunity afforded to African children to gain even the most basic education. With the growing recognition that jobs in the European economy required education, this was their only chance.

Degradation of Teachers:

Bantu education did not limit its goals to the subjugation of African students; teachers were also heavily affected by the development of Bantu policy. Teaching had never been a well-paid profession (especially for African teachers); it was, however, considered a career of high status and respect among African communities. Members of the Nationalist government considered this status inappropriate for a 'native' occupation. Tabata (1980) gives an extensive account of the 'debasement of the African teacher', in which he describes the humiliation of experienced teachers and the overt measures used to undermine their professional status. Lodge (1984) further describes the changes in teaching mandated by Bantu education policy. "The profession was to be degraded. Teachers would have to work a double session day with larger classes, employment qualifications would be lowered, salaries (it was made quite clear) would remain at their existing (and inadequate) levels, and teachers would be reduced to the level of state employees. They would also be directly subordinated to the sometimes uneducated members of school boards which had the power to recommend their dismissal" (p.270).

The ideology behind these changes was by no means kept secret. Verwoerd made little effort to conceal his animosity towards African teachers who were charged with improper attempts at profession and social advancement. In his notorious 1954 Senate speech, he makes extensive reference to 'the problem of the Bantu teacher':

The Bantu teacher must be integrated as an active agent in the process of the development of the Bantu community. He must learn not to feel above his community, with a consequent desire to become integrated into the life of the European community. He becomes frustrated and rebellious when this does take place, and he tries to make his community dissatisfied because of such misdirected ambitions which are alien to his people. (p.15)

The desire (of teachers) to show off their knowledge of English culture and, possibly also, their inability to distinguish concepts from terminology, contributed to an irresistible desire to convey knowledge of their pupils in the same words in which they had received them. (p.17)

The salaries which European teachers enjoy are in no way fit or permissible criterion for the salaries of Bantu teachers.... the Bantu teacher serves the Bantu community and his salary must be fixed accordingly....new salary scales for newly-appointed teachers...will be possibly less favourable than the existing scales....an increase in the percentage of women teachers will bring about a considerable saving in funds. (p.19)

(cited in Hartshorne, 1992)

Thus through Bantu education policy, one of the only professional occupations available to Africans was consciously degraded to a low-skill vocation. African teachers were given less training, lower salaries, and less autonomy in their classrooms. They were required to work longer hours, while, given the large class sizes, their primary duty was more to supervise than to teach (Tabata, 1980). By undermining the competency of teachers, Bantu education policy accelerated its aims two-fold; the de-skilling process both eliminated the status of African teachers while also ensuring that the quality of education afforded to students remained at a bare minimum. Even teachers who wanted to reject the substandard Bantu curriculum were often unprepared or untrained to offer anything better. Both teachers and students were thus thrust into a system which had as its primary aim the subordination of and domination over the African people.

The degradation of the skills and status of African teachers greatly contributed to the deterioration of the culture of learning in African schools. Firstly, on a practical level, within the apartheid system, teachers were not prepared or trained to encourage learning activities beyond the most basic rote tasks. Coping with the heavy work loads and poor conditions, teachers had little time to invest in improving the learning environment. Secondly, on a psychological level, teachers were largely demoralized by the social and practical abasement of their profession (Hartshorne, 1992;

Hofmeyr & Jaff, 1992). The motivation to teach effectively (or to teach at all) was largely undermined by the overt degradation of their livelihood. The 'culture of teaching', or the attitudes and behaviors of teachers with respect to their professional duties, suffered serious injury as a result of Bantu education policy and the consequent treatment of teachers. As we shall see in later chapters, this 'culture of teaching' is a critical determinant of the larger 'culture of learning' within African schools and one which largely accounts for the current crisis in education.

Resistance:

Leaving few profitable alternatives for those unwilling to participate in the apartheid education system, Bantu education succeeded in affecting the lives of massive numbers of African students and teachers. It would be misleading, however, to imply that Bantu education was met without resistance. Even from the early years of its implementation, students, teachers and parents actively protested against the new regulations (Lodge, 1984). Ironically, this emerging culture of resistance became one of the most damaging forces in terms of the already weakened culture of learning.

The first organized resistance to Bantu education proposals came from "that group most directly affected and most sensitive to their implications-- the teachers" (Lodge, 1984:270). Activist teachers' associations, primarily centered in the Western Cape and the Transvaal during the 1940s and 50s, organized coordinated protests against the repressive policies, arguing primarily for a greater voice in educational decision-making (Hartshorne, 1992; Lodge, 1984). For the most part, the state responded to this opposition by withdrawing recognition from the involved teachers' associations and "having isolated the militants, ensuring their dismissal through the rural school boards (which were largely composed of Bantu Authorities personnel and their supporters) as well as redundancy through especially strict application of higher teacher/pupil ratios" (Lodge, 1984:271).

Opposition waged throughout the 50s and 60s was met with little sympathy. The state maintained firm and militant control over education using ideological and physical weapons to gain compliance. While parent groups, student organizations and teachers' associations continued to wage resistance against the education system (e.g., burning schools, withdrawing enrolment, rejecting the curriculum, etc.), little overall change was achieved (Hartshorne, 1992). The state was quick to silence such opposition by closing down problematic schools, firing activist teachers, and exerting strict (if indirect) control over school governance committees (Molteno, 1984).

At the same time, unification among other sectors of the African community was developing in opposition to state control. In a widespread popular uprising in the late 50's, African protesters demanded political rights, the eradication of imposed chiefs and Bantu authorities, and the elimination of pass laws and other repressive state measures. Once again, however, the state silenced the opposition, "imposing a State of Emergency, detaining thousands of people and banning organisations" (Unterhalter, 1991:59). While discontent bred amongst the oppressed, the state maintained its militant control over forces of rebellion.

It was not until the economy began to decline, spurring wide-spread protests among workers' unions, school organizations, and the unemployed, that the balance of power began to shift. The economy went into recession in the 70's, causing a decline in demand for the rapidly increasing numbers of low-skilled labourers (Hyslop, 1990; Chisholm, 1984). "Bantu education was exclusively and strategically targeted towards the middle and lower levels of the labour market, which by the mid-seventies could no longer absorb all the labour power that was generated by the successive waves of students filtering through the primary school system. Thousands, consequently, were annually destined for unemployment" (Levy, 1991:20).

These changes in the economy had profound effects on students' perceptions of the education system. While Bantu education had always been considered deficient, it had at least served to increase students' qualifications and their chances for obtaining employment. This function was no longer guaranteed and the legitimacy of the system plummeted. "Progress in the school system is inefficacious in obtaining employment, because of the great pressure on the job market.... Thus experience constantly undermines the faith of the student in the value of participating in school. In this way, economic, institutional and demographic factors have conspired to generate the student and youth movements" (Hyslop, 1990:80). Disillusionment with the value of education led to widespread rejection of the system. Students grew increasingly hostile about the conditions of schools (ineffectual teachers, lack of resources, and useless curriculum) and the lack of reward for enduring such conditions. In this way, "the state itself generated the culture in which rebellion grew" (Hyslop, 1990:83). Students were willing to sacrifice their valueless education to fight for reform, at the school and state level. Within this context of mounting opposition, the culture of learning was largely sacrificed in favour of these more pressing concerns.

The building frustration among students culminated in the Soweto uprising of 1976. The specific incident was triggered by state attempts to impose Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in African secondary schools (Walker, 1991). This new policy, however, was just one of the many repressive measures which had provoked such a powerful student rebellion. The Soweto riots were the first sign that forceful repression was no longer sufficient in maintaining quiescence and eliminating resistance among the oppressed.

The state response to the uprisings of 1976 was to pour money into the African education system (Morrell, 1988). The deficiencies in the system were apparent: the economy required a more highly skilled labour force which Bantu education was clearly not equipped to provide; and the social stability of the country would be threatened unless basic demands of the Africans were met. Thus in the decade after the Soweto uprisings, state investment in African education increased nearly tenfold (RESA, 1988). According to Morrell (1988), at least two basic motives were involved: "to produce skilled personnel for industry and the burgeoning bureaucracy, and to take the sting out of education grievances by materially improving education" (p.48). By this point, however, the legitimacy of the system could not be restored by monetary investment. A culture of resistance had developed among school-going youth which rejected all state attempts to pacify their discontent. This culture-- emerging from a repressive state, a failing economy, and an illegitimate education system-- rejected education values and embraced the mantra, "liberation before education" (Levin, 1991). It is here that we witness some of the most visible signs of the loss of the 'culture of learning'.

Riots, protests and boycotts increased into the next decade, causing much political concern over national stability. The state instigated the De Lange Commission of Inquiry in 1981 to investigate the general educational crisis. It was concluded that expansion and reform of the current educational provision was necessary "in order to provide for the 'needs of the economy' which were seen to be intrinsically linked with 'social stability'" (cited in Unterhalter, 1991:64). Once again, state spending on African education dramatically increased. By 1985 total expenditure on African education was more than ten times what it had been a decade before (though per capita expenditure for African students was still about one-seventh that for white students) (RESA, 1988, Race Relations, 1994/95).

It was readily apparent that the vastly deficient education provision for Africans was no longer acceptable. Based on the recommendations of the De Lange Commission, the state began efforts to reduce the disparities between black and white education and to bring about a system of equal quality education. In 1984, the General Education Affairs Act in fact made equal opportunities for education for students of all races a "national priority" (Morrell, 1988). In 1986, the government announced a Ten Year Plan with the aim of bringing about equality in education (in a separate but equal system). (Mcgregor, 1992). This dramatic change in policy represented complete transformation in the state's approach to governing its non-white population. According to Buckland (1987), the ideological discourse around education shifted in the 1980's "in order to transform the way students perceived their domination, and to ensure continued capitalist development with minimal disruption of the 'social order'" (p.56). The state shifted its policies from those aimed at racial supremacy to those which were likely to preserve class inequality. While race was no longer considered grounds for official discrimination, the state continued to perpetuate material and ideological inequality, altering only the means to achieving these ends. By offering 'equal educational opportunities' to Africans, failure to succeed could be framed as individual shortcomings rather than institutionalized discrimination (Chisholm, 1984).

Despite its grand attempts to reform the perceptions and outcomes of African education, the state achieved little success. Not only was it financially unable to achieve its stated goal of equal education (it abandoned the Ten Year Plan three years after its inception (Murphey, 1992), it was more importantly unable to re-establish legitimacy in the midst of the broader apartheid structure. Protests and boycotts increased to an unprecedented level in the 1980's, leading the government to declare a State of Emergency from 1986 to 1990 (Hartshorne, 1992). Neither military control nor spending increases were sufficient, however, to pacify protesters more than temporarily. The culture of resistance had become firmly ingrained and no amount of state intervention could subdue the struggle to end apartheid.

People's Education:

The 1980's was a decade of fierce resistance to state repression. During the same time frame, however, a movement emerged which called for the shift from resistance to reform. In 1986, the National Education Crisis Committee officially adopted People's Education as its strategy for reform. Instead of exclusively focusing on opposition, this movement sought to present a viable and legitimate alternative to Bantu education. People's Education called for a new ideological

basis for education, with the democratization of the system at its crux, the transformation of the curriculum, and the use of education as a tool in the wider struggle for political liberation (RESA, 1988). Leaders in the movement rejected the slogan of 'liberation first, education later' and adopted the slogan 'people's education for people's power'" (Wolpe & Unterhalter, 1991:10). This new movement represented a transformation in the struggle, from fighting *against* oppression to fighting *for* liberation. According to Levin's (1991) assessment, "there is now general agreement that the development of the slogan and practice of 'people's education for people's power' has constituted a decisive strategic shift in the education struggle. This has involved a departure from the education boycott as a tactic of struggle in favour of an alternative people's education" (p. 117). People's Education became a major element of the mass democratic struggle, explicitly linking education with other forms of political and social liberation.

The development of People's Education symbolized the realization that the rejection of education as a form of political protest was a self-defeating act. Education was undoubtedly a tool for building political strength and autonomy; towards this end, it needed to be nurtured and transformed rather than entirely abandoned. While reference to a 'culture of learning' had not yet originated, the philosophy of People's Education can be viewed as a direct attempt to address this emerging problem. The People's Education movement sought to restore the declining belief in the value of education and encourage students to embrace learning as a means of political emancipation (Levin, 1991). In essence, this philosophy represented an attempt to restore the culture of learning in African schools.

While People's Education unquestionably impacted on the education struggle, the overall strategy remained one of resistance. Despite the movement to build rather than destroy, protests, riots and boycotts continued to be the major tactic of students and teachers. While ideologically, People's Education was appealing, on a practical level it was difficult to implement. Those at the ground level of education faced high levels of disruptions, poor conditions, and increasing instability. For teachers, this environment was conducive only to 'survival teaching', offering little support for innovation or experimentation (Harthshorne, 1992). For students, the chaotic school environment offered formal qualifications as its only utility. Learning in schools, which had long since lost its legitimacy, therefore took a back seat in favour of official certification (which had at least some value for employment purposes). "There is another problem created by the large-scale disruption of schooling. It has placed an increased emphasis on obtaining any education at any cost rather

than on the development of a democratic people's education. As schooling becomes more disrupted, pupils and parents become increasingly concerned with certification and so place a higher premium on examinations than on what is learnt and how this is learnt. For teachers too, faced with the exigencies of the situation and pressures from both the [department] and pupils, it is easier to rely on tried and tested authoritarian methods. Debate about alternatives is seen increasingly as a luxury to be left until better times' (Gultig & Hart, 1991:225). Thus, even People's Education was unable to sufficiently combat the severely crippled learning culture in African schools. While ideologically commendable, it was unable to reverse the legacy of Bantu education. Teachers had no support for upgrading their skills, and students had little reason to regain faith in the value of schooling. A philosophy of democratic education was insufficient to restore the culture of learning in schools. Instead, the culture of resistance prevailed as the decade ended in the throws of massive political protest.

The Culture of Learning according to International Perspectives:

The history of education in South Africa demonstrates the steady decline of the learning environment in African schools. Active political discrimination as well as the more indirect effects of economic discrimination led students and teachers to lose faith in the value and legitimacy of the education system-- a system which had been overtly engineered to secure their subordination. Instead of serving as a place of learning, schools became the site of resistance and opposition to state repression. In place of the culture of learning grew a culture of resistance which encouraged students and teachers to abandon their futile educational objectives and channel their energies instead towards the struggle for liberation.

Comparing the experience of black South Africans with black Americans and working-class students from England, several obvious similarities emerge. First, in all three cases, the state structures of inequality are paramount in the development of the cultures of resistance. While individual acts of disobedience, disruption or apathy take place at the school-level, the broader source of these attitudes and behaviours is located at the structural level of society. Second, in all three examples, students demonstrate *active* resistance to the system rather than a passive acceptance of their ascribed status. The South African experience demonstrates a much more formal display of resistance, in the form of organized boycotts and protests. In contrast, in the American and English situations, opposition took more subtle forms, with individual and small-group acts of subversion, but rarely any explicit attempt to change the system. Regardless of the

degree of group resistance, the net effect in each scenario has been similar-- students have lost their faith in the legitimacy of the system and reject its values and behavioral expectations. In all cases, students actively refuse 'appropriate' participation in the system before it refuses them the opportunity for advancement.

Once again, it must be noted that the cultures of resistance in all three examples cannot be generalized to all individuals. There are countless examples of individuals who have succeeded in the system despite cultural and structural pressures to fail. On the whole, however, the level of achievement among blacks and the working-class is significantly lower than that of other sectors of the population. Of the many factors which affect this level of achievement, the overall inequality of society (including its educational institutions) and the resulting perceptions of illegitimacy, have had a profound effect on the groups' norms, behaviours and attitudes towards learning. The deteriorated culture of learning, the oppositional identity, and the counter-school culture, each describe the active and collective resistance to state and educational systems which deny equal participation and achievement.

An important difference between the Ogbu/Willis accounts and the South African experience is that, in America and England, teachers were considered part of the 'system'. They were agents of the state whose role it was to enforce hierarchies and assist in the process of reproducing racial/class stratification. In South Africa, on the other hand, African teachers were as much a victim of state repression and discrimination as were pupils. Their subsequent demoralization and loss of motivation is a highly significant factor in the loss of the culture of learning (Schofield, 1995). In the following analysis of South African schools, therefore, the loss of the learning culture implies a phenomenon inclusive of students as well as teachers. Both constituencies have been profoundly affected by apartheid education and both will need a great amount of attention before the learning culture can be restored.

Avoiding Over-generalizations:

As with the theories of Ogbu and Willis, it is important to point out that the discussion of the declining 'culture of learning' in African schools represents a broad generalization. Without a doubt, there are severe problems in the provision and outcomes of African education, much of which indicates an absence of a learning culture. It is important to note, however, that this 'learning culture crisis' may not affect many or even most of the African student population.

For example, thousands of African students continue to pass matric and an increasing number go on to higher education with each year (Edusource, 1995; Race Relations, 1994/95). While this could be an example of 'credentialism' as discussed by Gultig and Hart (1991) (suggesting that students are merely getting through the system without digesting the content), it could indicate that a significant proportion of Africans do value education and promote a culture of learning through their determination to succeed in school.

Another confounding variable is the rural/urban school divide. Much of the political protests against apartheid took place in urban locations, where the mobilization of masses was more easily achieved. With rural schools being less at the forefront of resistance movements, it is possible that these schools have suffered less of a decline in their culture of learning. Within the present study, several teachers commented on the higher standard of learning in rural schools, in spite of inferior material conditions (Interviews 10, 13, 15). According to one teacher, "*in the country there is a seriousness about education which is not in the city schools*" (Interview 10). Regional differences are therefore likely to be a significant variable in our understanding of the culture of learning in African schools.

As a third point of caution, I refer once again to the gender issue. Little research exists to document the relative participation of male and female students in school protests, boycotts and strikes. It is possible to speculate that different levels of involvement in this culture of resistance would translate to a differential decline in the culture of learning among male and female students. While a dearth of research on gender issues exists in the literature on South African education, there is a growing body of studies which suggests that substantial differences exist between the learning cultures of girls and boys (Lemmer, 1987). Once again, we must be aware of such group diversity to avoid over-generalizations.

Finally, a more precise investigation of teachers would likely reveal great variation in attitudes and behaviors towards schooling. The motivation level of teachers has been found to have a significant impact on the motivation of students and thereby the overall culture of learning (see Chapter Eight). Attention to the various attitudes of teachers is therefore highly relevant to any investigation of the culture of learning. While apartheid education has undoubtedly taken a severe toll on the morale and motivation of African teachers, it would be unrealistic to presume that all

African teachers have subsequently become demoralized and disinterested in education. Participation in the People's Education movement may have influenced teachers' sense of value, encouraging them to maintain positive attitudes. Additionally, many other individual and environmental conditions may have caused teachers to develop differing orientations towards their work. A thorough investigation of teachers' attitudes and behaviors would enable us to assess the extent of motivational and performance problems, thereby giving a more precise view of where exactly the problems of the learning culture exist.

Documenting the incidence and extent of the 'culture of learning crisis' would require a major research project in itself. Comparing the differences between achievers and non-achievers, rural and urban schools, and male and female students in terms of their attitudes and behaviors related to learning would require extensive research nationwide. This valuable information would help us to target the specific populations most in need of assistance and intervention. Unfortunately, this information is not currently available and falls well beyond the scope of this project. Thus, for the purposes of the current research, I will maintain a crude definition of the culture of learning (focusing on overall impact), despite the many potential specificities of its relevance. As an initial investigation into a largely unexplored field, this broad focus serves its intended purpose. It is my hope, however, that future research will go further by including a more sophisticated analysis of the culture of learning in African schools.

The above discussion is not intended to discount the problems with the culture of learning nor to imply that these problems have little significance. While the limitations above apply, we must also acknowledge the overall crisis in education which has become apparent in recent years. National statistics concerning African education (high number of dropouts, low numbers completing matric, etc.) present a bleak picture (Race Relations, 1994/95). While these quantitative indicators share only an indirect relationship with the *culture* of learning in these schools, they do suggest a serious breakdown in the educational process in African schools. Further, there is a significant amount of evidence to demonstrate that many African students and teachers are highly demoralized and unmotivated towards schooling (Nxumalo, 1993; Schofield, 1995). The combination of poor performance and negative attitudes suggests (as a generalized phenomenon) a deplorable culture of learning in African schools. With the awareness that certain exceptions may apply, we can be fairly confident that the overall culture of learning in many African schools demands serious

attention. To further demonstrate the present conditions, we continue our historical discussion with a focus on recent trends in African education.

Post-Apartheid Education: The Present Situation

In the first half of the 1990's, the level of political violence and opposition decreased. Broad political changes were taking place and the state was making substantial concessions to African leaders. With the end of apartheid clearly in sight, political activity was focused less on the opposition of existing state policies and more on the formulation of new ones. Even in the midst of political transformation, however, there has been little change in the learning culture of African schools. As recently as 1993, African schools on average lost the equivalent of one term of schooling due to strikes and boycotts (Race Relations, 1993/94:692). Even in the face of national reconciliation, a culture of resistance still exists on the ground level. These students are not yet willing to accept (and have little evidence to prove) that distant political changes have meaningful relevance to their lives and to the relevance of education. In fact, the 1995 school year (one year after the decisive national election) produced an overall decline in matric scores by at least five percent for African students (Mail & Guardian, 1996). The use of these figures as an indicator of a unsuccessful culture of learning is further corroborated by reports in the present study that standard 10 students were less motivated in 1995 than those the year before and were putting less effort into their studies (see Chapter 7). These findings are ironic in light of the expected improvement in attitudes based on national changes. As Ogbu said, however, the culture of resistance does not change immediately following structural reform. There still exists a cultural residue which will require direct attention at the school level in order to catch up with broader political change.

The awareness that change operates at (at least) two distinct levels of society is important to the present analysis. South Africa has achieved extraordinary change at the national level; within schools, however, the same dilapidated conditions prevail. Levin (1991) adds clarification to this point in his discussion of the types of repression which operate within an education system. According to Levin, "repression within education takes two primary (and not necessarily unrelated) forms. The first relates to direct repression within educational institutions through headmaster/teacher/pupil relations on account of the absence of democratic structures and procedures informing educational practice and learning situations. The second refers to the 'social reproductive' dimension of education: the reproduction of dominant ideological forms and practices

and of skills in order to fill spaces within the social division of labour" (Levin, 1991:122). As for the second level, it can be argued that the end of apartheid symbolizes a dramatic change in the dominant ideology of education, such that the reproduction of existing racial and class stratification should significantly decrease. Emerging policies, such as affirmative action legislation, represent an attempt to reverse historical and structural inequalities and guarantee equal opportunities.

On the first level-- that of the school-- the mechanisms of repression have not yet been affected by the end of apartheid. The same students, teachers and principals are operating within schools based on attitudes and behaviours learned during apartheid. Additionally, African schools continue to struggle with roughly one-third the per-capita spending, more than twice the pupil-teacher ratio, achieving one-half the matric pass rate of their white counterparts (not to mention the many un/underqualified teachers and the high student dropout rate) (Race Relations, 1994/95; Edusource, 1995). On a material and motivational level, African schools remain vestiges of the apartheid system. For political and ideological changes to filter down to the school, active interventions at the ground level are required to reverse the effects of the previous regime. While legitimacy has been achieved at the state level, there is little legitimacy in schools with decrepit resources and unqualified teachers. In order for a culture of learning to develop in these schools, much attention must be given to increasing the quantity and improving the quality of material- and human-resources.

A teacher interviewed in the present study concisely expressed the nature of these inter-related levels of repression and change. *"Contributions made toward school facilities, teacher qualifications and development have traditionally been a political means used to give the impression that change has occurred. The culture of learning and student-teacher relations have deteriorated due to the pupils lack of prospects in the world of work and teacher demotivation. Changes will occur from now onward"* (Interview 6). Within this passage, this teacher addresses problems of legitimacy, economic opportunity and motivation. The first two have been successfully addressed at the national level. No longer are the political motivations of the government in question and no longer will Africans be officially denied employment opportunities based on race. As for the last factor, however-- teacher motivation-- change is still to come. It is here (at the level of the school) that direct intervention is needed and here that the culture of learning will emerge. It is for this reason that the present study focuses on school-level perceptions of reform.

The Aims of the Present Research Project:

The present research seeks to gauge African teachers' perspectives on how to build a culture of learning in their schools. By focusing on teachers, we can gain insights from a group which has been directly affected by apartheid and which will be directly involved in future reforms. Teachers have a critical role to play in the reform process and their perspectives can provide valuable information concerning effective strategies relevant to their needs.

Many strategies have been proposed for improving the overall conditions of African schools and creating a culture of learning. A fresh coat of paint and new desks and chairs may make students and teachers feel more positive about their learning environment. Motivational workshops may encourage students to make learning a priority. It would be unwise, however, to invest huge sums of money on any such intervention programs until those directly involved in the school community have been consulted about what they feel they need.

Transforming an education system is no easy feat. It requires a complex set of changes, at the national, provincial, community, and school level. Much attention is being focused on the higher levels of negotiation, where policy decisions are being made. This project seeks to investigate some of the ground-level concerns. Through the voice of a group of teachers, we can gain a better understanding of the main issues facing certain African schools today.

SECTION TWO: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Sample:

This study focuses on the perceptions of teachers and principals from four Khayelitsha secondary schools concerning the culture of learning. These four schools were chosen at random from a possible five established high schools in the area⁴. An additional four secondary schools had been opened in Khayelitsha during the year of my research (1995). These schools were not considered for this study, however, because of their unfamiliarity with an apartheid culture of learning. Thus the sample of four of the five established high schools represents a fairly complete investigation of Khayelitsha secondary school teachers in schools that were established within the apartheid education structure.

My study of "teachers" includes the principals from each of the four schools (two of whom concurrently teach). Principals were included in the study more by default than design. Their powerful role as gatekeepers to the rest of the school make them an integral part of the research process (Maruyama & Deno, 1992). On the whole, principals were eager to discuss their views on the research topic and, over the course of my data collection, principals contributed much information. Rather than discard these valuable perspectives, I chose to include them in my sample. While principals constitute a potentially distinct grouping, for the purposes of the present study no differentiation was made. The four principals included in this study are insufficient to represent a distinct sample. Additionally, in terms of the present research topic, their responses were not significantly different from those of teachers⁵. Therefore in the body of my essay, I will be conflating the two groups and referring exclusively to "teachers" as my sample.

All contact with teachers and principals was solicited on a voluntary basis (see below). The sample therefore is not a random selection of teachers, but rather a self-selected group of willing and/or interested teachers. This sample method prevents a generalization of findings to all teachers in township, or even Khayelitsha, schools. While representative samples are important for bolstering the external validity of findings (Allyn & Bacon, 1991), a growing body of research indicates that 'purposeful' or 'judgmental' sampling techniques (for which random sampling is not the goal) is

⁴At the time of the project's initiation, the fifth school was unable to be contacted by phone.

⁵The only observed difference was that principals demonstrated a greater awareness of education issues beyond their specific school. Principals were more likely to know about changes in other schools as well as current departmental initiatives.

often more appropriate for ethnographic or qualitative research (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Allyn & Bacon, 1991). These techniques advocate the selection of individuals who can best contribute a deep understanding of the topic under investigation. In the present study, this sample comprised teachers who were willing and interested in participation. Under the present circumstances it would have been highly unrealistic to expect full compliance from a randomly selected group of teachers. Indeed, many of the teachers whom I approached, declined to participate. Efforts to persuade these resistant teachers to participate for the sake of an ideal sample seemed both unethical and unproductive. Soliciting opinions and insights from those disinterested and/or averse to participation in the research has been demonstrated to be an unsuccessful strategy for obtaining useful data (Maruyama & Deno, 1992). It was therefore preferable to obtain the input of those teachers who had opinions to offer, rather than to seek information from those disinterested in this topic.

A total of 23 teachers participated in interviews and 56 teachers filled out the questionnaire. Of a total of 177 teachers in all four schools, this indicates an interview sample of 13 percent and a questionnaire sample of 32. The interviewees included a wide range of subject, with the greatest proportion being English teachers, followed by History and Afrikaans. Respondents were fairly evenly distributed across standards, with slightly more standard nine teachers represented in the interview sample. Of those teachers included in the questionnaire sample, an even more extensive list of subject teachers was represented. Again, English and History teachers were the most often represented, followed by Xhosa, Mathematics, Geography and Biology teachers. Questionnaire respondents were fairly evenly distributed across standards, with the higher standard teachers being slightly better represented. Teaching experience varied from less than one year to more than ten years, with 70 percent of teachers having taught for five years or more. A majority of teachers had spent between three to six years at their present school. All teachers in this study had formal qualifications, ranging from teaching diplomas to Masters degrees. The highest proportion of teachers in this study had HDE's (Higher Diploma in Education), a one year degree which follows the completion of a Bachelor of Arts or Science. More detailed information about the teachers included in this sample is provided in Appendix A.

Choosing a Method:

During the course of my research, several methods were used to gather data: observation, interviews and surveys. During the initial stages of my research, participant observation served as

a very effective method for achieving familiarity with my new surroundings. Sitting in on classes, attending staff meetings, and socializing in the staff room were useful for my overall understanding of the school environment. For specific information about the culture of learning, I solicited information directly from teachers.

In order to gauge the perceptions of teachers, a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques was used. Open-ended interviews and multiple-choice questionnaires (with a few open-ended questions) were the primary tools used for data-collection. The use of multiple methods has been shown to provide a more accurate examination of the subject under investigation (Cohen & Manion, 1994). While exclusive reliance on one method is particularly vulnerable to bias or distortion, the use of two or more methods allows for triangulation and thus serves to corroborate findings and decreases the likelihood of biased data. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is particularly effective for attitudinal research (Griffin, 1985). While qualitative data provides rich, in-depth material, quantitative data allows for general trends to be easily identified. These identified trends, however, are generally restricted to superficial conclusions based on the highly controlled data-gathering techniques. The combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques is ideal in that, together, they can produce fairly conclusive results, high in internal validity (through qualitative depth) as well as external validity (based on quantitative breadth).

Interviews:

Four principals and 19 teachers were interviewed (23 total) from four secondary schools in Khayelitsha, the largest township outside of Cape Town. A majority of the interviewees came from Matthew Goniwe (13) while fewer came from the other three schools (five from Bolumko, three from Joe Slovo, and three from Luhlaza)⁶. Appendix B lists the interviews in chronological order, including each teacher's school, subject(s) and standard(s)⁷. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing teachers to discuss topics of importance to them. The initial question asked in each interview was, "What do you think is the most important thing that needs to change in your

⁶ The number of interviewees per school was not strictly controlled because this research seeks to understand the perceptions of Khayelitsha teachers as a whole. No comparisons were made between schools.

⁷ Two additional interviews were conducted at the end of this study with members of the RDP Culture of Learning Programme. These interviews were conducted to gain supplementary information regarding provincial and national efforts to address the culture of learning in African schools. These interviews are also listed in Appendix C and the findings are discussed in Chapter Ten. The interviews are not, however, considered a part of my official sample of interviewees.

school in order to improve the culture of learning?" Teachers were allowed to offer their own definitions of "culture of learning" and focus on any aspect of schooling in their responses. There was no incident in which the improvement of the culture of learning was questioned as a priority.

Interviews were recorded by written notes. The use of a tape-recorder may have created a reluctance with teachers and rapport was more immediately created in its absence (Walker, 1985; Keeves, 1988). In terms of recording exact responses, in most cases note-taking was facilitated by the relatively slow speech of those speaking a second language. Quotations listed below have, in some cases, been paraphrased in my reconstruction of the interview.

The questionnaire:

Two principals and 54 teachers filled out the questionnaire. Many of the same teachers participated in both sections of the research (interview and questionnaire). Respondents who filled out the questionnaire were evenly distributed across the four schools: 15 respondents came from each of three schools and 11 came from the fourth.

The items of the questionnaire were informed by initial responses to the interviews. The questionnaire was administered after approximately two-thirds of the interviews had been completed. The questionnaire included items to be rated according to a Likert-scale, multiple-choice questions (including an "Other" category), and a few open-ended response items. Two pilot tests of initial versions of the questionnaire were used. The first test indicated that a long survey (five pages) including a large number of open-ended questions was an unsuccessful tool for gaining voluntary teacher participation. The second and final version was found to be much more accessible by teachers (see Appendix C). Further discussion of the administration of the questionnaire is included below (see "Resistance").

Access:

Initial contact with the schools was made by telephoning each principal to explain the intent of my research and to request a meeting. In all cases the principal accepted and a meeting was held, after which the principals notified/discussed my presence with the teachers (on a separate occasion). In the first school, my presence was not eagerly accepted. The acting principal insisted that permission for my presence come from a uniform agreement from the teaching staff. Apparently a few vocal teachers felt that at that time they were too busy with their work to host me and

discouraged the use of their school as a research site. While I was thereby denied free-range of the school, one teacher who was particularly supportive of my research offered to serve as a liaison between myself and the other interested teachers. I was thus able to conduct several interviews and obtained a sufficient number of completed questionnaires from this school, thanks to my in-house coordinator. It would have been easy for me to drop the school altogether from my sample, however, this school is known for its exceptional results and I considered it a highly useful model for successful township schools.

The second school was much more receptive to my research. The principal had a warm, well-established relationship with his staff and his presentation of my project was met with no resistance. He indicated that many of the teachers (himself included) were working on research projects of their own (as a part of continuing education) and thus they would understand my needs and objectives. From this school I received the greatest participation by teachers. I was allowed to observe classroom lessons, but for the most part I remained in the staff room and approached teachers for interviews during their free periods.

The principals at the third and fourth schools were supportive of my project and introduced the idea to their teachers. The teachers at these schools, however, were fairly reluctant to take part in interviews. They seemed to greatly value their lunch time and free periods and did not want to be burdened with extra obligations. For this reason, fewer teachers from these schools participated in interviews as compared to the second school.

Resistance:

In all schools, teachers were generally reluctant to volunteer to participate in my research. Because interviews were conducted during their free periods, teachers were unhappy about giving their free time up for 'work-related' activities. Teachers themselves cited this as a problem for their own schools' functioning. Meetings and staff workshops are difficult to plan because teachers are unwilling to stay after school or to meet during lunch.

While the interviews evoked a small degree of resistance (more like inertia) the questionnaire was extremely difficult to administer. Though the questionnaire took between 7 to 10 minutes to fill out (less than a third of the time for most interviews), teachers seemed averse to the idea of more

paperwork. Additionally one teacher commented that such forms tend to have associations with the oppressive evaluation efforts of inspectors during the apartheid years.

The initial attempts to administer the questionnaires were failures. My first pilot sample was handed out to approximately fifty teachers. One was returned. This was useful feedback: the questionnaire was too long and contained too many open-ended questions. The second draft of the questionnaire was much more successful. I personally administered the questionnaire and received oral feedback on its content and format. The responses were positive. The questionnaire was given to the principal to hand out to all the teachers (I thought this might give it more legitimacy or importance). A week later two teachers had filled them out. I was told by a few of the teachers that the principal had not in fact handed them out but had given them to the deputy principal who had left them in a pile in the staff room. I personally handed out another set to teachers at this school, several of whom claimed to have filled them out already (while only two had been turned in).

Similar experiences occurred at three of the four schools. Asking the principal to hand them out apparently had no effect on compliance, either because the principal neglected to give them to everyone, or because teachers ignored them anyway. After several copies of the same questionnaire were given to each teacher (they tended to lose them, forget them at home, claim not to have ever received one, etc.), finally teachers began to fill them out. Towards the end of the project I discovered that the most effective way to successfully administer the questionnaires was to give them to each teacher personally and wait while the teacher filled it out on the spot. A majority of the final sample of questionnaires was obtained using this method.

Surprisingly, the school which had been most difficult to access for interviews (due to the staff's decision not to participate full-scale in the project) was the simplest in terms of obtaining questionnaire responses. With the help of my in-house coordinator, I did not need to pester the teachers at all. She personally gave copies of the questionnaire only to those teachers she thought would be receptive to the project. In the end, she obtained as many respondents in two weeks as I had from the other schools in almost two months.

Ironically, once teachers had filled out the questionnaires, their feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Several teachers commented that they found the questions to be very interesting and

thought-provoking. After filling in the questionnaires, a great majority of the teachers (60 percent⁸) indicated that they would like to discuss the issues at greater length in an interview, offering their name and times available. This seems to indicate that teachers are not altogether unwilling or disinterested in research participation; rather there seems to be a large force of inertia which must be overcome to initiate participation and arouse teachers' intrinsic interest.

Language and Rapport:

Approximately 99 percent of the school staff spoke Xhosa as their first language, but interviews and questionnaires were conducted in a second, and at times third, language. I recognized this factor immediately as a handicap to effective research within the school, and the limitations of myself as a "research tool", being unable to understand but the most basic Xhosa. Bernard (1986) urges researchers to gain fluency in the language of one's research site as a prerequisite to accurate interpretation and access to important information. Language, according to Bernard, is a key factor in developing rapport and in establishing credibility with individuals being interviewed. During the course of my research, I sensed that the language barrier had much more of an impact on my ability to participate in casual interactions than it did during formal interviews. During the interviews, teachers were more than capable of expressing themselves articulately in English. At break times, however, as teachers sat in groups chatting casually, it was almost impossible to join in, as this would require the whole group to then switch to English for my sake. Thus I was unable to spontaneously engage in more casual, personal conversations with teachers. While many (particularly those I had already interviewed) made an effort to talk with me, I was limited in my ability to initiate such exchanges.

The consequence of conducting interviews and questionnaires in English may have also affected my sample. While a range of subject teachers participated in each section of the research, the greatest proportion were English and History teachers. Presumably these teachers are the most proficient in the English language and this may have increased their willingness to participate in the research. Conversely, subject teachers who were not as comfortable communicating in English may have been more reluctant to volunteer. While the complication of language was beyond my control, it is important to keep in mind for future research. Research conducted in respondents' primary

⁸The actual percentage of teachers willing to be interviewed is much higher than the number reported here. Many teachers had already been interviewed before filling out the questionnaire and they would be likely to answer "No" or "N/A" to being interviewed again.

language is more likely to elicit voluntary cooperation and may succeed in reaching individuals who would otherwise not participate (Bernard, 1986).

Generalizability:

For the purposes of the present research, data from all four schools will be collectively analyzed and reported. The scope of this research project and the distribution of respondents does not permit accurate conclusions about individual schools. While this study does not include this level of analysis, it is important to note that individual differences between schools certainly do exist. In the present sample, the four schools varied greatly in terms of academic achievement (as measured by matric pass rates). Further research comparing the specific dynamics within schools would provide valuable insight into the subtle differences which makes certain schools more successful than others.

While it is important to acknowledge and respect the specificity of individual schools, there is great value in exploring and highlighting the commonalities across groupings. Beneath individual differences, there exist experiences common to all teachers. The present study attempts to represent the attitudes of teachers in Khayelitsha. The experiences shared by teachers working with relatively similar conditions (in terms of resources, curriculum, discipline and morale) provides important insights into the nature of African education. Where possible, data from Khayelitsha studies is supplemented with studies on other African schools across the country. While the sample size and concentration of this study prevents generalization to other African school regions, it is my expectation that the experiences and attitudes presented from this research will share some relevance with the broader African teacher experience in South Africa. While generalizations should be made cautiously, certain commonalities will emerge. According to Delamont and Hamilton (1984), "Despite their diversity, individual classrooms share many characteristics. Through the detailed study of one particular context it is still possible to clarify relationships, pinpoint critical processes and identify common phenomena" (p.19). Khayelitsha teachers may be a unique grouping in themselves; comparatively, however, the experiences of these teachers share a great deal with those of African teachers from the whole of South Africa. The culture of learning has deteriorated in African schools throughout the country. It is my hope that this study that Khayelitsha teachers can help us to understand why.

**SECTION THREE: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES
ON THE CULTURE OF LEARNING**

Chapter Four: Teachers' Perspectives on Improving the Culture of Learning

Organizing the Responses:

At the start of this project, I had several preconceived notions about what teachers would say about improving the culture of learning. Based on my impressions of the effects of apartheid education, I expected that the material issues of resources and the curriculum would be top priorities for change. On the other hand, the 'culture of learning' obviously covers a very broad terrain and I anticipated (and received) a wide range of responses to my questions about school improvement. It became obvious from my initial interviews that, in addition to the variables I expected to find (regarding resources and the curriculum), teachers were highly concerned about motivational issues in their schools. These two sets of variables represent very distinct categories. School resources and the curriculum are part of the tangible elements of reform, while motivational issues are a part of the more abstract human-resources of the school. While the two categories are undoubtedly interdependent, it is interesting that such contrasting issues were raised. In order to make sense of the numerous relevant variables, I have classified them in two general categories: material resources and human resources.

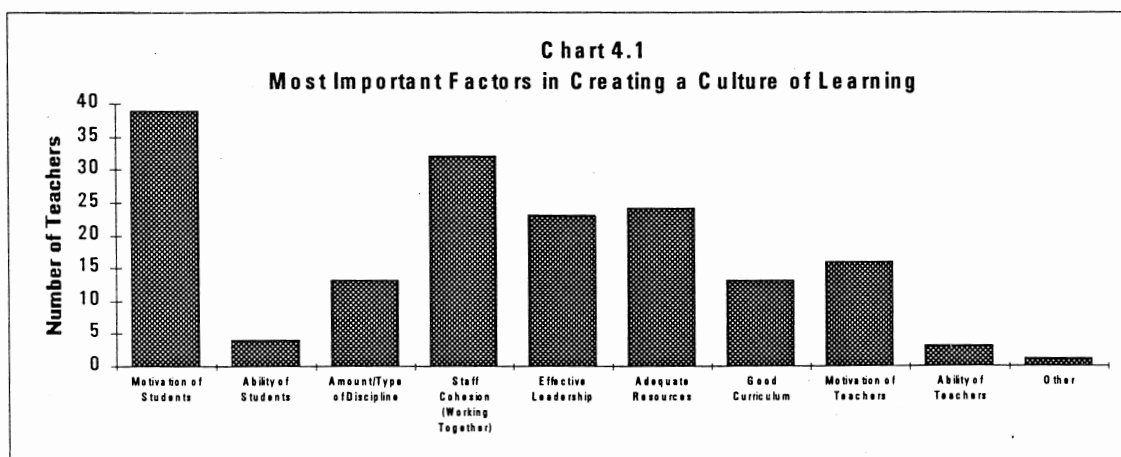
This organizational structure is not meant to imply that the two categories are mutually exclusive sectors of education. To the contrary, there is a high degree of interaction between the two. For example, teachers reported that one of the most important ways to increase teacher motivation is to improve their working conditions (see Chart 8.2). Thus the physical can have a profound effect on the psychological. At the same time, however, it is important to recognize the independent dynamics associated with each set of variables in order to understand the fundamental elements of the learning culture. The following discussion is intended to demonstrate the relative impacts of material and motivational changes on the culture of learning, as seen by teachers.

Overview of the Findings:

The questionnaire was useful for providing a broad overview of teachers' perspectives. Information from these questionnaires can serve as a framework for a more in-depth analysis, substantiated by interview data.

As a general summary of teachers' perspectives, respondents were asked to identify (up to three of) the most important factors in creating a strong culture of learning. Seventy percent of respondents

indicated that the motivation of students is the most critical element for improving the culture of learning (see Chart 4.1). It is interesting to contrast this finding with the category beside it. While the *motivation* of students considered crucial to the learning culture, the *ability* of students was not prioritized at all. In fact, this category was rated the least important, compared to the other choices. Regardless of inherent ability, the motivation and effort of students is seen as paramount to a successful culture of learning.

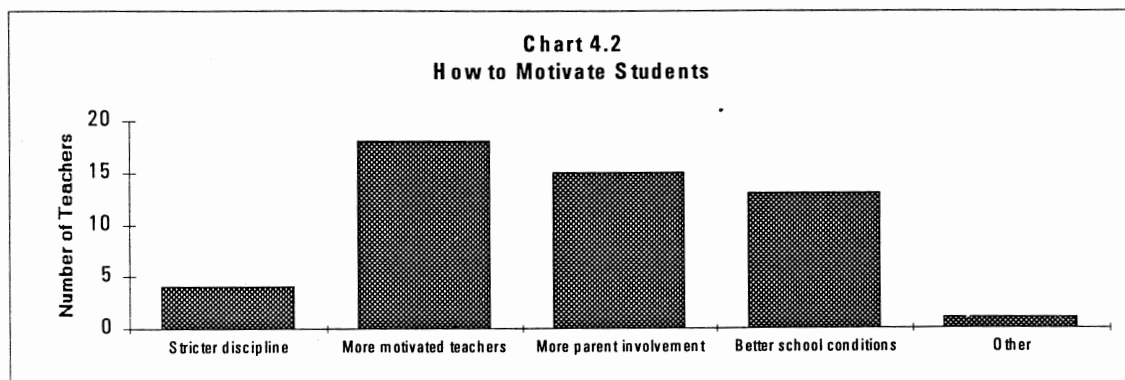


Similarly, the motivation of teachers was seen as far more important than the ability of teachers. According to these findings, the attitudes and approach to learning issues are considered as central to the culture of learning, while the objective ability levels (of students and teachers) are seen a far lower priority. These results are partially substantiated by interview responses. In interviews, teachers expressed a similar emphasis on motivational issues; in addition, however, they also referred to a number of skill-building interventions (i.e., improving abilities) that were considered crucial to the development of a culture of learning (see Chapter 8). Perhaps the 'inherent' ability levels of students and teachers is a low priority compared to the orientation towards learning which allows for an improvement in baseline abilities. Regardless of initial abilities, if students and teachers are not motivated to learn, little achievement will be possible.

Overall, the findings of this chart reveal a general prioritization of human resource issues over material ones. Of the top five categories chosen, four relate to human resource development: motivation of students, staff cohesion, effective leadership, and motivation of teachers. Each of these factors represent the attitudes and behaviours of individuals within the school. The attitudes of individual school members as well as the relationships between individuals are seen as crucial to the development of a culture of learning.

Of the material resources listed, only 'adequate resources' was chosen within the top five. Resources are undoubtedly an important basic requirement of overall school reform. It is by no means, however, considered the most important nor the only important issue to be addressed. As we shall see in the discussion below, resources can only create opportunities for school improvement; they cannot alone improve the functioning of the school.

Based on this questionnaire item, we begin our discussion of the culture of learning with a focus on the importance of student motivation. In a second question, teachers were asked to indicate the most effective means of raising the motivation of students. Once again, teachers chose motivational issues over material ones. According to Chart 4.2, we see that the motivation of teachers is the most relevant factor to improving the motivation of students. Through their effect on students, teachers are thus seen as highly important in the creation of a culture of learning. And rather than tightening the reins of student activity (imposing stricter discipline), teachers are important for encouraging enthusiasm and excitement about learning.

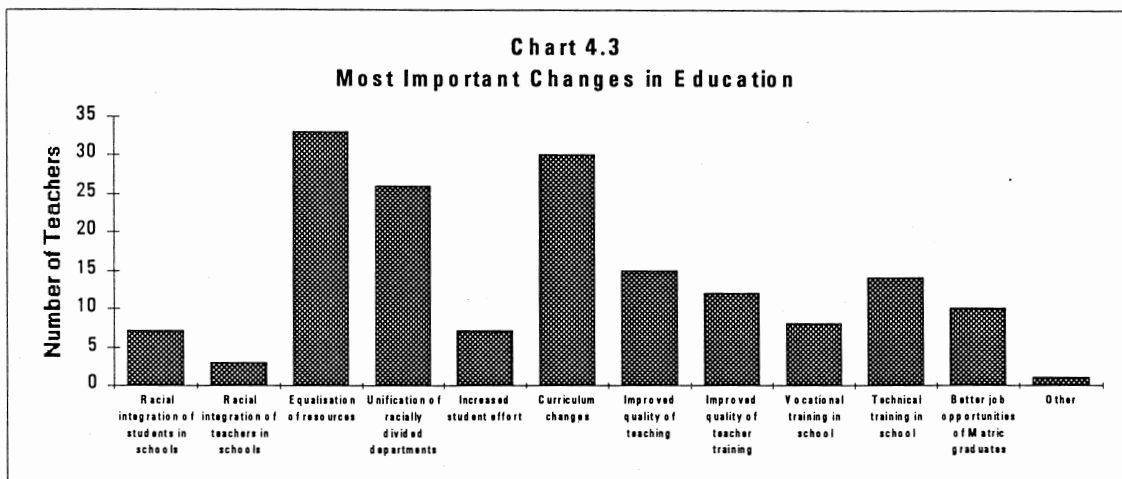


Second to the motivation level of teachers, parental involvement was chosen as an important factor in motivating students. It seems that if both teachers and parents demonstrate an interest and involvement in the educational process, students will feel more motivated to get involved themselves. More important than the physical conditions of the school, students must witness a human investment in their schools-- in essence, a role model for appropriate attitudes and behaviours towards education.

While this questionnaire item does not have a sufficient sample size or distribution to warrant firm conclusions, these cursory findings provide a useful demonstration of potential trends in teachers'

perspectives. A more in-depth analysis of interview results will serve to substantiate or discredit relevant questionnaire items.

As a final overview of the survey results, teachers were asked to identify (up to three of) the most important current or proposed changes in education. Contrary to the findings above, responses indicated that teachers prioritized very tangible elements of reform, namely the equalization of resources, curriculum changes, and the unification of racially divided departments (see chart 4.3). In response to this question, it is interesting to note that teachers focused on broad systemic changes rather than aspects of student/teacher motivation and performance. Items such as "increased student effort", "improved quality of teaching", and "improved quality of teacher training" were rated much lower than were items relating to material change.



These findings seem inconsistent with Chart 4.1 and 4.2 in which motivational issues were rated most important. Further, interview data indicated that teachers were as much, if not more, concerned with motivational issues than with material ones. Two possible explanations for this dissonance in results are considered. First, what is important to improving the culture of learning is not necessarily an important overall change in education. Possibly, motivational issues are most important for improving a school's culture of learning, but on a national level material changes are more significant. If this is the case, improving the culture of learning is perhaps not as significant to overall education reform as is popularly believed. Based on teacher interviews, however, this is not an accurate assessment. Teachers equated improvement in the culture of learning with the overall priorities for school improvement, making no distinction between changes in the culture of learning and other education reform priorities.

A second possible explanation for this dissonance in results relates to the specific wording used in this question. "Changes in Education" can be interpreted to indicate very broad, national issues in education. It is possible that rather than focusing on issues specific to their schools, or even to African schools in general, teachers looked to broader issues which affect all school categories. While motivation of teachers and students is critical to the improvement of African schools (see Chapters 7 & 8), these issues would not likely be translated into national policy initiatives. Instead, concrete reform issues such as the equalisation and integration of education would more likely represent major priorities for national change.

Interestingly enough, while the unification of racially divided departments was a top priority, integration at the level of students and teachers was seen as the least important changes. While the unification of departments is perceived as an improvement in existing state administrative services (Interviews 9, 15, 19), student and teacher integration would more likely result in less favourable change. Integration of students will almost exclusively take place in formerly White or Coloured schools, thereby drawing motivated/competent students away from African schools. Similarly, integration of teachers would lead to open competition for teaching posts, leaving the predominantly less qualified African teachers at a disadvantage (Male & Guardian, 1995). Whatever the case, these integration issues were considered low priorities compared to other educational change. Of primary concern, teachers focused on resources and the curriculum as the most important changes in education. These issues will be discussed in the following chapters.

Overall, our summary of the questionnaire data leaves us with inconclusive information. The relative importance of material versus motivational change warrants further investigation in terms of the culture of learning and overall educational improvement. An attempt will be made to clarify these issues in the subsequent chapters. In order to gain further insight into teachers' perspectives, an analysis of the qualitative data is necessary. First, we examine the material issues of resources and the curriculum in chapters five and six. As illustrated by Chart 4.3, these issues represent some of the most important changes in education, in the perception of these teachers. Subsequently we move to an assessment of student and teacher motivation in chapters seven and eight. These human-resource issues are more difficult to measure than are material resources, but equally important to school reform. As demonstrated by Charts 4.1 and 4.2, the motivation of

students (achieved through the motivation of teachers) is paramount to creating a culture of learning.

The relative importance of material versus motivational reform is discussed throughout this paper. While the findings of this research give precedence to motivational issues, it is important to recognize the high degree of interdependence between variables. Rather than attempting to discount certain issues in favour of others, this report seeks to shed light on individual material and human resource variables as well as to examine the relationships between various reform initiatives. Based on teachers' perspectives, this report will examine the potential effects of these initiatives on the overall development of a culture of learning.

CHAPTER FIVE: MATERIAL RESOURCES-- FINANCES AND FACILITIES

Throughout the history of African education in South African, the most salient indicator of inequity between blacks and whites has been the lack of resources afforded to township schools.

Nationally, African schools are the most poorly resourced, with a shortage of basic facilities (classrooms, desks, chairs, textbooks) and a virtual absence of more sophisticated resources (overhead projectors, microscopes, computers) (NEPI, 1992:26). According to Dhlomo (1981), "African education is short of everything except pupils" (in McGregor, 1992:23).

As discussed in Chapter Four, teachers were asked to identify the most important current (or proposed) changes in education. The greatest proportion of teachers indicated the 'equalisation of resources' as the top priority (see Chart 4.3). Interviews confirmed this trend with nearly all teachers referring to the lack of facilities as a major impediment to the culture of learning. This attitude is reinforced by the national indicators which suggest that "repetition rates and matric pass rates are closely related to per capita expenditure" (Department of Education, 1995). While good results are not the only goal of education reform, they are useful in providing a quantitative indicator of the overall effectiveness of a school. Regardless of which indicators we look to, clearly African schools are greatly handicapped by basic material deficiencies.

Teachers referred to a wide range of specific facilities needed. Basic necessities such as classrooms, desks and textbooks were at a shortage, as well as important overhead projectors, laboratory equipment and extracurricular facilities. Science and home economics teachers reported that they were unable to implement sections of their curricula due to a shortage of necessary materials. One school had four available laboratories, but none of them were functional. *"We are supposed to do experiments with our students, but there are no apparatus. As a group it is not challenging to the students because they just watch"* (Interview 21). At another school, an interviewee reported the level of facilities to be insufficient for even one group experiment. The science teacher was thus forced to lecture about the experiment, with no visual illustrations. *"There were no study materials, especially in the science department-- our laboratories are empty-- as a result our teachers theorize everything"* (Interview 5). Similarly, the home economics teacher had access to a stove, but no refrigerator, cook books, ingredients or crockery.

She relied on private donations from parents and companies to enable her to conduct basic class lessons (Interview 13).

The second major resource issue noted by interviewees was the excessively high pupil-teacher ratio. Eight of the 23 teachers interviewed (35 percent) specifically referred to the pupil-teacher ratio as a major problem.⁹ While the pupil-teacher ratio has steadily improved over the past ten years (McGregor, 1992:23), classrooms in African schools remain unacceptably full. Compared to the overall Western Cape average pupil-teacher ratio for secondary schools of 19:1 (Edusource, 1995:10), African schools face an average ratio of 50:1 (Bridgman et al., 1992; Smit & Hennessy, 1995). Teachers felt that this size class was unmanageable.

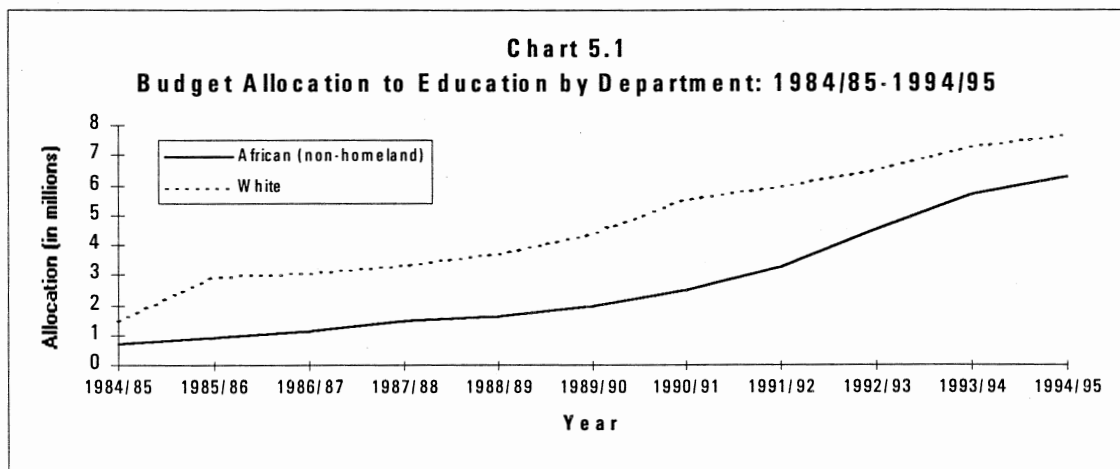
Respondents indicated that class size has a profound impact on the nature of instruction and discipline. In terms of teaching styles, most teachers employ a system of straight lecturing, dictation and memorization. While this is often a result of teachers' own experiences and training, attempts to intervene with more innovative techniques are largely hindered by the number of pupils (see also NEPI, 1992). Teachers are currently being encouraged to use interactive styles of teaching, whereby students discuss ideas and actively participate in the lesson. With a class of 50 students, however, it is extremely difficult for teachers to encourage participation, much less offer individual attention. One teacher commented that in some of her classes, the number of students was so high that by the end of the year she still did not know some of her students' names (Interview 19).

The nature of discipline is also affected by the high pupil-teacher ratios. Corporal punishment has been (officially) abolished in schools since the Constitutional Court ruling of June 1995 (Mail & Guardian, 8/95). In all four schools from this study, however, corporal punishment is still in effect, though slightly more regulated as we shall see below. Teachers maintain that corporal punishment is an essential means of control and discipline, given the large class sizes. If teachers had more manageable numbers of pupils, other strategies for discipline may be more effective (Ngcobo, 1988).

⁹While this percentage is not a majority, the responses emerge from un-prompted open-ended questions about the culture of learning. Thus the fact that 35 percent of teachers referred specifically to pupil-teacher ratios (amidst a whole range of possible responses) is indeed significant.

According to these teachers, the shortage of material resources was a major impediment to the creation of a culture of learning. Teachers seemed to be operating on a 'survival strategy', trying to make do with the little they had, rather than actively building an atmosphere for learning (see also Hartshorne, 1992).

It is not surprising that teachers referred to the lack of facilities as a major problem in their schools. Nationally, African schools receive the lowest level of funding of any former racial grouping in South Africa. While historically, funding to African education has increased dramatically, compared to other racial sectors of education, it remains pitifully low. "Per capita expenditure on education under the Department of Education and Training increased by 445 percent from 1985 to 1994, compared with an increase of 72 percent in per capita expenditure on education under the former House of Assembly. Nevertheless, DET per capita expenditure was 44 percent of per capita expenditure under the House of Assembly" (Race Relations, 1994/5: 239). Spending allocations to white and African schools over the past ten years is illustrated by Chart 5.1. As shown in the chart, despite significant increases in spending on African education, relative disparities between racial groupings have remained constant.



Concern over the pupil-teacher ratio discussed by interviewees is consistent with national and provincial trends. The lack of school structures, classrooms and teachers available to African students has resulted in an overcrowding of existing facilities. In 1993, African secondary schools had a shortage of places for 153,140 students. In contrast, there was an excess of 474,304 places at white senior schools (Race Relations, 1994/95: 245). In the Cape Peninsula (in 1991), there was an estimated shortage of 5,000 places in African schools, while there were an estimated 7,000

empty spaces in White schools (Vergani, 1992, cited in Smit & Hennessy, 1995:10). In some areas, the only way to cope with the dire shortage of facilities is by operating on a "platoon" system, where one school uses the building during the morning periods and another school uses it during the afternoon (Smit & Hennessey, 1995). One of the schools in the present study was under the platoon system until 1992 when they were finally given a building of their own.

The disparities in resources between African and white schools deserve and are receiving immediate attention. Reallocating such massive amounts of moneys, however, is not a simple process. White schools need time to secure alternative sources of funding or to prepare for cutbacks so that the reallocation does not serve to cripple one set of schools in repairing another. According to Education Minister Bengu, "it will take five years to bring about equal per capita expenditure" (Edusource, 1995:8). Even this estimate may be optimistic. While there are many legitimate reasons for the delay in equalization, those at the ground level feel they have waited long enough. *"The minister says it is not possible to equalise funding overnight, that it will take time. I am just a man on the streets, but I ask, why does it take time?"*(Interview 10). The initial excitement experienced by many African teachers when the ANC came into power has been deflated by the delays and deletions of campaign promises. These delays do not help to restore faith in the educational system or to rebuild the culture of learning.

Some movements towards to the physical upgrading of township schools have already begun (see Chapter Ten). In order for these schools to near parity with their white counterparts, however, a great deal of time and money will have to be invested. From the findings of the present study, it is not certain that this target would be the most effective use of limited resources. While a minimum level of facilities must be made available (basic materials such as classrooms, chairs, textbooks, laboratory equipment and teachers), a more comprehensive approach to reform is necessary before such physical improvements can have any effect. The National Committee on Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools cautions against an exclusive focus on resource issues, encouraging a greater emphasis on quality concerns. "It is simply not sufficient to ensure that resources are distributed more equitably: such movement toward equity must be focused on achieving a visible and measurable improvement in the quality of learning experiences...." (Department of Education, 1995). New classrooms and better equipment will change limitations of access; but more important changes must occur *within* the classrooms for a meaningful culture of learning to emerge.

CHAPTER SIX: MATERIAL RESOURCES-- CURRICULUM

Curriculum is one of the most marked indicators of the racist and irrelevant material students were forced to digest as a part of Bantu education. Based on the tenets of the Christian National Education Act, the South African curriculum is designed to reflect the particular perspectives of Afrikaner nationalism (NEPI, 1992: 8,16). Subjects such as history, biblical studies, and geography are rife with Eurocentric lessons and tales of Afrikaner achievements. Limited references to African culture or peoples are made using derogatory stereotypes and unfounded generalizations (WUS, 1985; NEPI, 1992). As discussed in Chapter Two, the curriculum was used both as explicit ideological propaganda (legitimizing the existing social hierarchy with 'proof of European superiority) as well as for labour purposes (providing a supply of workers with a level of education to meet employers' needs). The blatantly discriminatory content of schooling caused a massive decline in the perceived legitimacy of education and undoubtedly contributed to the decay of the culture of learning.

On the questionnaire, teachers indicated that curriculum reform was one of the most important 'proposed or current changes in education' (second only to the equalisation of resources) (see Chart 4.3). In interviews, however, teachers spoke surprisingly little about the curriculum. Except for responses to explicit questions (which I aimed particularly at history teachers), few complained about or made suggestions to change to current curriculum. I can only speculate as to the reasons for this inattention to curriculum issues: teachers may have felt more strongly about and therefore concentrated on other school issues; or teachers may have felt that curriculum changes were a guaranteed reform initiative and needed no further promotion.

Of those who did comment on problems with the curriculum, responses were pointed at evidence of the curricula being sexist, classist, racist and culturally biased. In history, the students study about Bismarck and European civilization.... "*Nothing is said about Africa*" (Interview 23). One history teacher commented on the biased curriculum: "*There is a great emphasis on the Great Trek. But we don't feel it was a Great Trek. Much of our curriculum is written by Afrikaner nationalists. Black people were also agents in history--not only the recipients of history*" (Interview 23). Another teacher sat with a textbook on her desk entitled '*Objective History for All.*' (emphasis added). She commented that it was full of racist and biased information. "*All of history [in these books] is painted to make whites look like heroes and the blacks look like fools*" (Interview 11).

Dhlomo (1981) elaborates on the slanted version of history provided in schools. "When one reads history textbooks, one gets the impression that South African history began in 1652 when Jan Van Riebeeck landed here in the Cape. From then onwards white settlers in South Africa are portrayed as subjects while the black inhabitants of the country are portrayed as objects (p.7)". In at least two of the four schools studied, history teachers were not using the assigned textbooks at all. Instead they made use of worksheets, newspapers, and a collection of articles/chapters from various history sources (Interviews 4, 8, 23). Other subjects contained more subtle elements of discrimination. A home economics teacher complained that teaching students about the salad fork and the dining room furniture arrangement had little relevance to her students who live in shacks. Further, the emphasis on panties and bras made her male students feel uncomfortable (Interview 20). The NEPI report (1992) sums up the overarching discrimination which exists in the South African curriculum. "The curriculum itself embodies the social relationships of its historical context. The racial divisions and identities of apartheid permeate the current curriculum in all its aspects: gender discrimination prevails; decision-making is undemocratic; and in a context of profound historical inequalities, current resourcing policies favour whites, who are already the most privileged group (p.88)."

According to those teachers who commented on curriculum issues, the existing biases which pervade the syllabus have a serious impact on the culture of learning. Students reject the illegitimate information being given to them, both forcibly and internally. "*Students don't feel like school serves them for their future. Not until the curriculum changes*" (Interview 21). The rejection of apartheid education is manifested in the frequency of school boycotts, the high drop-out rates among African students, and the great number of failures among matrices (Race Relations, 1994/95). Undoubtedly, in order for schools to develop a culture of learning, a curriculum must be in place which interests students with relevant and high-quality information.

Beyond the massive problems related to content, respondents indicated that changes to South African curricula must also address method (Interviews 2, 19, 21). Historically the classroom syllabus has encouraged rote learning, emphasizing memorization rather than analysis. "South African classrooms show strict adherence to prescribed syllabuses, a heavy reliance on textbooks and other forms of 'received knowledge', and an emphasis on factual information and rote learning" (NEPI, 1992:24). This approach to education provides simple and straightforward objectives and easily measurable outcomes. Teachers must closely follow prescribed syllabuses, which are

detailed and prescriptive, allowing almost no room for teacher initiative (NEPI, 1992). The style of education encouraged by the Nationalist government perpetuated a particular set of learning outcomes. In combination with the biased content, these instructional techniques prepared African students for their future positions in society. "Black education, or gutter education, domesticates. It prepares pupils and students for subservience and docility. Children learn to follow instructions accurately. For this reason there is more emphasis on discipline and obedience. In African schools children are subjected to the most stringent discipline. This serves as a preparation for work in the mines, factories, and on farms" (Curtis Nkondo, of the National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA), in WUS, 1985:8). In order for education in the new South Africa to achieve its intended objectives of democracy, equality, and competency (ANC, 1994), students must be encouraged to think critically, to write analytically, and to communicate articulately. In order for this to occur, provision must be made within the curriculum to encourage such modes of thought.

The inadequacies of the existing curriculum received immediate attention after the national election of 1994. Three months after the election, an interim curriculum revision commission was appointed and began work (Edusource, 1995). By the start of the 1995 school year, schools were using what was termed the 'interim syllabus', which was intended to suffice until a thorough curriculum review could be completed. While the interim syllabus is in place, little has changed of the original curriculum. The revisions focused on the deletion of outdated or controversial material; adding new content which would require the printing of new textbooks was to be avoided. Support material for the new syllabus was to be in classrooms by the end of February 1995 (Edusource, 1995:5). According to most of the teachers interviewed, however, few new materials arrived. Most teachers were, as of the end of 1995, still using old textbooks.

It is unclear when teachers can expect a new national curriculum. A complete syllabus revision has been postponed until 1997, if not later (Edusource, 1995:5). The creation of an official syllabus seems to have been postponed due to controversy over participation and content. It remains undecided as to who should have the major role in designing new curricula, including those within the government/ministry and outside NGOs and members of the public. Unfortunately, this means that changes in the curriculum may take years to be finalized.

To add complication to the already controversial issue of curriculum reform, it is important to keep in mind the overarching context of change. Acknowledging the many facets of education in this

country which require attention, it would be useless to tackle any one in isolation from the rest. For this reason, the successful implementation of a new curriculum cannot be achieved in isolation from other key reform initiatives. Specifically, resources and teacher training will significantly impact on the potential effectiveness of any new curricula. Resources, for one, affect the feasibility of certain elements of the syllabus. As discussed in the previous section, the dearth of textbooks, laboratory facilities and the overcrowding of classrooms limits the ability of teachers to implement innovative techniques. According to NEPI (1992:14), the deficiency of resources in African schools has further exacerbated the already plentiful curriculum-related problems. "Even where curricula are similar on paper, the different setting and resources of schools in different departments mean that students do not experience the same curriculum-in-use." Thus in order for a new curriculum to achieve its intended impact (of both quality and equality in education), concurrent upgrading of the facilities available must occur.

Similarly, the implementation of a new curriculum is highly dependent on the ability and willingness of teachers to teach the new material. If teachers are not informed and enthused about its content, the development of a new curriculum will have little impact. High quality learning and innovative teaching styles will only be implemented if teachers receive support and training towards these new practices. "There can be little doubt that teaching and learning practices in South African schools need revitalizing, and that pedagogical issues need to be considered as part of the development of a new curriculum. Since curriculum renewal is unlikely without the involvement and empowerment of teachers, changes in curriculum policy need to include measures to improve classroom practices. In particular, INSET [In-Service Education and Training] needs to be planned together with a new curriculum" (NEPI, 1992:25). In order for the culture of learning to improve in African schools, the content and approach to learning must change. At their heart, these changes require simultaneous attention to the curriculum and teachers. A more comprehensive discussion of teacher training will be included below (see Chapter Eight).

The past two sections have discussed the tangible elements of school reform. Resources and curriculum are defined categories which facilitate articulated goals for change. According to this and other research, however, these tangible changes cannot on their own effect transformation. While they are important elements of the reform process, it can be argued that the central focus must remain on teachers. "Eliminate the finest buildings and the most wisely devised curricula but leave the pupil with an intelligent, cultivated and humane teacher and the educational process may

continue satisfactorily. Provide all the material necessities without the teacher or with the wrong kind, and the results will be catastrophic" (Murray, 1964, in Dhlomo, 1981:8). The importance of teachers in the reform process, and the challenges facing teachers in African schools, is discussed in Chapter Eight. For now, we turn to the real target of educational change: students.

CHAPTER SEVEN: HUMAN RESOURCES-- MOTIVATION OF STUDENTS

The success of all efforts towards educational reform will ultimately be measured by the achievement of students. As schooling is ultimately for the benefit of students, a successful culture of learning must have positive and measurable effects on students' attitudes and achievement. Each aspect of the culture of learning, while including a broad range of issues, must somehow affect the interest and performance of students in school.

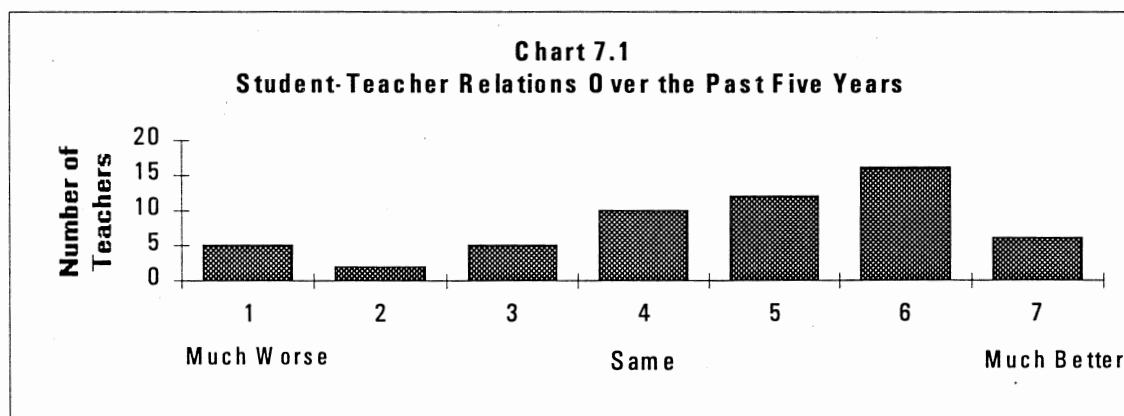
As discussed earlier, African schooling over the past ten years has been characterized by massive disruption, due to political protests, boycotts and rallies. Students grew accustomed to school as a site of political struggle, rather than as an arena for learning. The frequent disruptions in schooling, in addition to the quality and content of African schooling, has resulted in a population of students largely disinterested in their school education (Nxumalo, 1993; Gultig & Hart, 1991). Teachers in the present study discussed a wide range of issues related to students' attitudes towards schooling. Based on their comments, the following sections will focus on indicators, explanations and solutions to the problem of low student motivation.

Indicators of student motivation:

According to a majority of teachers who filled in questionnaires (70 percent), the number one factor in creating a culture of learning is the motivation level of students (see Chart 4.1). Similarly, in interviews teachers unanimously cited the low motivation of their students as a major problem in their schools. Simplistic depictions of students characterized them as "lazy". Several teachers indicated their perception of students as wanting to be "*spoon-fed*" and lacking "*intrinsic motivation*". Other teachers cited more specific indicators, such as the frequent tardiness of students, poor attendance rates, and high number of drop-outs (Interviews 2, 9, 16). This trend has been confirmed by countless studies of African schools in this country. For example, a study of students in Kwamashu schools found "high absenteeism and latecoming [to be] major problems. There is also irregular attendance where some students are at school but do not attend some lessons-- they simply stand outside the classroom, talking, playing dice and cards, smoking and idling" (Nxumalo, 1993:55). A similar study of students from Pietermaritzburg found a "disturbing lack of interest in schooling in an increasing number of students. Absenteeism is high, pupils start late and many come and go as they please" (Gultig & Hart, 1991:225). The indifferent attitude with which students approach their education is a major indicator of the absence of any

culture of learning. It is these simple issues of attendance and participation which must be addressed before any major reform efforts can be attempted.

Further problems with students cited by teachers included student-teacher relations. Over the past ten years there has been a major deterioration in the relationships between students and teachers (Gultig & Hart, 1991). While recent years have shown an improvement in that relationship (see Chart 7.1), teachers still confront difficulties in managing their politically demanding students.



According to one interviewee, *"they bully the teachers"* (Interview 1). The student councils in these schools were actively informed about and involved in school proceedings. According to some teachers, however, this involvement extends beyond reasonable limits. *"Students demand their rights in schools. They must know everything that is going on. It ends up that students are bullying the teachers-- they want to tell teachers what to do"* (Interview 20). The rejection of a standard student-teacher hierarchy has been noted in the literature on African students. "Students appear to want to control the schools, yet reject education values. It is not uncommon for students to demand to see test papers before the test is written and to answer questions 'collectively' during examinations" (Morrell, 1988:55). While students have demanded participation in school decision-making for justifiable reasons, in certain cases their demands have crippled very necessary chains of command. Their pronouncements, at times, go beyond basic governance issues to the point of threatening fundamental education values. In some cases, this activism represents a continuation of the culture of resistance, or, conversely, a crippling of the culture of learning. Interested in control rather than learning, rebellious students create a climate of lawlessness. Teachers, unable to control their students or to enforce schools policies, are left with little authority or legitimacy. Attempts to impose discipline on students are discussed below.

Explanations of low student motivation:

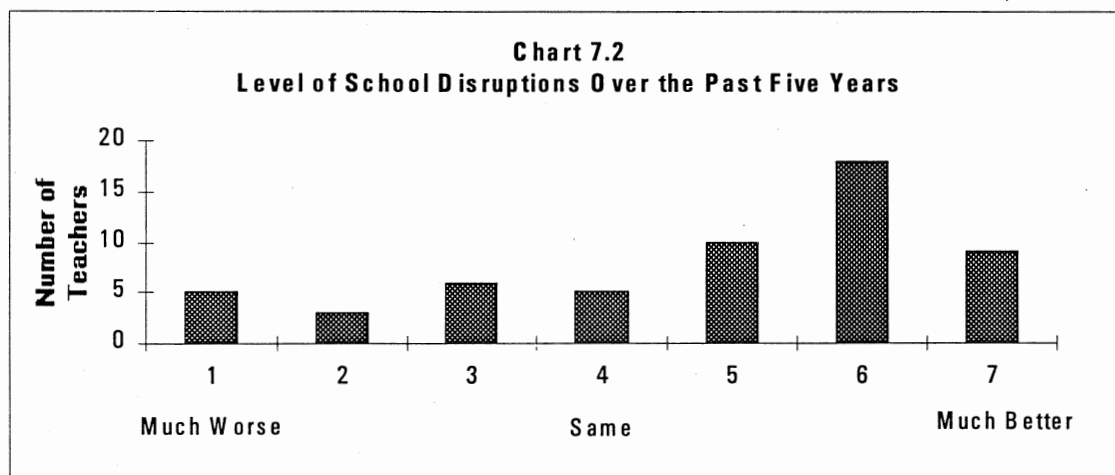
Several explanations were offered by interviewees as possible causes of the low motivation and achievement of students. Firstly, several teachers pointed to the home lives of their students as explanations for their poor performance. According to these teachers, most of their students are living in conditions that are not conducive to learning. *"There's no one to push them. They don't stay with parents--their parents work and live in white areas as maids or gardeners and only come back on weekends. Most have no electricity, most live in shacks, some have to go fetch siblings after school and cook for them-- they can't do their homework"* (Interview 13). While it is unclear how true this generalization is of all Khayelitsha students, there is clearly a relationship between students' home environment and their attitudes and performance in school (Dale & Griffith, 1970). More pressing concerns of food and shelter overshadow schoolwork.

Beyond the pervasive problems of poverty, other teachers pointed to specific problems at home which affect students' performance. *"One problem in our school is that we don't have anyone in charge of guidance. There are many students who are having very serious problems here with abuse, even sexual abuse, but we do not have anyone who is professionally equipped to deal with these problems"* (Interview 23). While these problems exist regardless of race or class, they are potentially more problematic in African schools because of the lack of social service resources in the schools and beyond.

The significant effects of poverty and abuse are well documented in international literature on education (Ribich, 1968; Berrick, 1991). Beyond these general psychological issues, the specific socio-political context of South Africa provides some very plausible explanations for low student motivation and achievement. The lives of a great number of African students have been characterized by severe disruption of their schooling and personal lives. According to one teacher, *"Students have been raised as political tools, not for learning. It started with the rejection of Afrikaans in 76-- Sharpville and Soweto. Since then the culture of learning was never developed in our schools"* (Interview 6). Secondary school students today have completed a majority of their schooling during the height of political unrest in South Africa. As recently as 1993, African schools lost the equivalent of one term of schooling due to strikes and boycotts (Race Relations, 1993-94: 692). This climate of instability has unquestionably affected the mentality of youth toward their schooling. A study of secondary school students in Pietermaritzburg found that the atmosphere of extreme political unrest (centered in the arena of education) left students

disillusioned and hostile. A majority of students reported feelings of hopelessness, fear, and anger as a result of the disruptions and violence. Others focused on the lack of future job prospects. Very few indicated feelings of determination or ambition (Gultig & Hart, 1991:221). The instability of schooling over the past decade has undoubtedly taken a toll on students' motivation to learn. "Amongst those students who have suffered constant disruption there is a growing danger of disenchantment with schooling" (Gultig & Hart, 1991:225). The deterioration (or prevention) of a culture of learning in African schools is inextricably linked to conditions of political turmoil which have existed until recently.

According to teachers, this element of schooling is perhaps the only one which will be resolved without intervention. Respondents indicated that the level of school disruptions has significantly declined over the past five years. According to Chart 7.2, the majority of teachers (66 percent) feel that the level of school disruptions over the past five years has become "better" or "much better", indicating a decrease in the frequency and/or severity of student protests and boycotts.



Specifically since the election of 1994, student protests dramatically decreased. Surprisingly, however teachers in the present study claimed that students were actually performing worse despite the increasing stability. "Last year [1994], teachers and students were in crisis. There were lots of protest and strikes, and yet still students did well. Students were much more motivated last year. This year [1995] they are not doing their work" (Interview 10). According to teachers in all four schools, motivation and performance levels of students have surprisingly worsened in 1995, after the last national election. This decrease in student motivation reported during the 1995 school year is further demonstrated by the decline in the matriculation rate of students that year. The overall matric pass rate (including passes with university exemption) showed a drop in all four

schools between 1994 and 1995 (Department of Education, 1996). This decline varied between 6 and 33 percentage points, with an average drop of 19 percent (see Appendix D for individual results). National results also show an overall drop of matric results in 1995 by 2.7 percent. This figure implies a statistical drop of at least five percent in the results of African pupils nationally (Mail & Guardian, 1996). It seems that while the level of disruptions may have contributed to the decline in student motivation, its resolve is not sufficient to reverse such a trend. A great deal more than political stability will be necessary to restore students' will to learn.

The background of students provides an important explanation for their attitudes towards learning. Similarly, the anticipated futures of students may have an equally demotivating effect. Given the prior socio-economic situation of South Africa, most skilled jobs were inaccessible to African applicants. Thus the incentives for dedicated learning and the completion of school were limited. According to one teacher, "*the culture of learning and student-teacher relations have deteriorated due to the pupils lack of prospects in the world of work*" (Interview 6). Similarly, ANC Director of Education John Samuel indicated that the turbulent history of South Africa, "has destroyed the will to learn in many students because, in addition [to the many other harmful effects], the system of education does not ensure access to a job. It has meant a whole generation of the youth of this country has grown up believing that education and learning are of no value" (Samuel, 1992: 112). For students who see little connection between education and their financial future, it is not surprising that the attendance and achievement levels are so poor. As discussed in Chapter One, the relationship between education and employment opportunities have direct effects on the cultural attitudes which develop. Both Ogbu (1992) and Willis (1977) demonstrate similar phenomena to a 'decline in the culture of learning' which they attribute to active resistance against social and economic discrimination. In South Africa, this dynamic has been explicitly demonstrated since the inception of apartheid education (see Chapter Two).

Even now that the racial restrictions on employment have been eliminated, the current economic picture is not optimistic for recent matric graduates. While the employment opportunities are undoubtedly better for matriculants than for non-graduates¹⁰, the overall level of opportunity has declined in recent years leaving few jobs for a large pool of applicants. "Overall, South Africa has

¹⁰Employment opportunities are much better for African matriculants (73 percent) compared to those who are merely literate (47 percent). Here, 'merely literate' is defined as having completed standard 6 or above without matriculation. Compared to whites, however, a lower percentage of Africans at all education levels find employment (Krige et al., 1994)

one of the highest unemployment rates in the world: 32 percent in 1994 and ranging from 6 percent for whites to 41 percent for Africans. In the late 1960s, 74 percent of new labour force entrants were able to find jobs, a figure which has now dropped to 12.5 percent" (NCHE, 1996).

According to literature on school achievement, the level of economic opportunity is strongly related to the 'sense of purpose' and relevance with which students view their education (Levy, 1991; Hyslop, 1990). While the status of the economy is outside the scope of education reform, it is necessary to appreciate the significant links between the two.

The family, the history, and the economic opportunities available to students each play an important role in defining the level of motivation with which students approach their studies. While these socio-economic variables operate independently of school processes, teachers indicated that various interventions at the school-level could potentially counteract the demotivating influences of external society. These intervention possibilities are discussed below.

What Can Be Done to Motivate Students?

Respondents suggested several strategies for increasing the motivation level of students. The two issues which received the most attention from teachers related to the effective discipline of students and the role of the teacher in motivating students.

Discipline:

The issue of discipline was frequently brought up by interviewees. The disruptions and instability of schooling over the past 10 years have led students to take their responsibilities lightly. Teachers felt that the laxity with which students approach their studies must be dealt with by enforcing strict standards of discipline. According to some, only by maintaining order and control over students will they grow to take their studies more seriously.

In all four schools, corporal punishment was the most common means of discipline. While corporal punishment was officially outlawed in June of 1995 (Mail & Guardian, 8/95), teachers continue to use caning or belt lashes in order to punish students. According to one teacher, "*we need to resort to corporal punishment. In the townships, it's one of the motivators*" (Interview 8). The discussion of corporal punishment as a necessary tool for the control and motivation of students was prevalent in interview and questionnaire responses. An overwhelming majority of

teachers felt that corporal punishment should be preserved, claiming that other forms of discipline are ineffective and futile.

Several teachers mentioned attempts to introduce alternative forms of discipline in their schools. Firstly, standard detention was ruled out for the simple fact that teachers were unwilling to remain after school to monitor the delinquent students (Interview 17). A second school attempted to encourage student promptness by locking the school gates at 8am and again right after lunch. Interviews revealed that, while successful in certain cases, many students remain unmoved. *"Students then come at 8:45 instead of 8. They don't care if they miss first period"* (Interview 2). This subtle form of control was not enough to motivate students to change their behavior. A third example of attempts at alternative discipline was found in the enforcement of student uniforms (to keep out gangsters). Teachers responded to students not wearing uniforms by sending them home for the day. The strategy, however, proved to have little success. *"You chase them home for one day, but after that you act like you don't see it"* (Interview 20). With the already poor attendance ratings, it would be counterproductive for schools to send students home repeatedly. It is difficult to use suspension from school as an effective motivator when students are already apathetic towards attending.

According to most teachers, corporal punishment is the only reliable and effective means of discipline. Without it, teachers anticipate that the students would lose the little motivation they currently have. *"You need to have caning. Otherwise kids from good families start adopting the ways of kids from bad families"* (Interview 20). Corporal punishment is seen as an arbitrator of morality necessary for positive socialization.

While corporal punishment is still pervasive, not all teachers support its use. Some view it as a necessary but unfavorable means of achieving discipline. Until effective alternatives emerge, however, it will remain the dominant form of control. *"I don't believe in corporal punishment but funny enough I use it. To stop it the way you shut a tap would be disastrous. You must take into account the background of students. Do away with it in phases, in stages; save it for extreme cases and only one lash. In essence we should not use it; at the same time, we must have social workers in schools and guidance teachers. We must make the kids know 'I must do my homework even if I will not be punished'. And we must come up with other methods of discipline and motivation"* (Interview 10). This teacher brings a great deal of insight to the issue. Once again,

we find it is impossible to address this specific concern in isolation from the associated variables. If corporal punishment were abolished (in practice) with no alternative forms of assistance, motivation and discipline for students, the effect could be calamitous.

Three of the four schools had made moves towards reforming their corporal punishment policies. This entailed limiting the number of lashes teachers were allowed to administer, and reserving the serious discipline cases for the principal's office, in which case the parents would be notified and/or the incident would be recorded. Ironically, this reformed approach (no longer allowing teachers free rein over punishment) is almost identical to the DET policy statement issued in 1981 (Interview 10). Fifteen years ago, DET was urging schools to limit or regulate their use of corporal punishment. Perhaps in fifteen more years, this most recent abolition of corporal punishment will be heeded by the schools.

Before the complete abolition of corporal punishment can be effected, some significant changes must occur. According to teachers, there must be social workers and guidance counselors available at the school site to deal proactively with discipline problems; there must be alternate incentives to motivate students; and, there must be cooperation from parents. According to one teacher, high school is too late to ingrain an ethic of discipline. Instead it must be fostered by parents from the beginning. *"It must begin at home from an early age-- tell them what's wrong-- they must learn from an early age that they don't need to be punished to know it's wrong. If they grow up with violence they use it and expect it"* (Interview 10). According to this teacher, the early home environment is critical to later discipline. Several others noted that because children grow up in homes where there is no discipline at all, or where there is predominantly physical discipline, by the time they get to high school corporal punishment is the only thing that works. According to most interview and questionnaire responses on the topic, a majority of parents actively support the maintenance of corporal punishment in schools. Some teachers, however, resent the implication that teachers should be responsible for disciplining their children while the parents do nothing.

The above criticisms of corporal punishment represent an in-depth analysis of a small number of comments. While there are many arguments against corporal punishment (Gluckman, 1990; Sloth-Nielsen, 1989), and several of the teachers support its abolition, a majority of the teachers interviewed believe that it is necessary and should be maintained. According to interviewees, most

teachers and parents support corporal punishment. The issue is being hotly debated between these constituencies and the Student Representative Councils. Student organizations maintain that corporal punishment is a violation of their rights and even one lash must not be permitted.

While student organizations are firmly and officially against the use of corporal punishment, interviewees indicated that many individual students are, in fact, in favor of it. *"Students don't think corporal punishment should be stopped. They say corporal punishment must be there. The school would be a mess if there's no corporal punishment. They say they won't listen to anybody"* (Interview 15). According to teachers, students expect to be punished physically; they have grown up with it and are accustomed to it; they would find it difficult to take school seriously if there was no threat of a thrashing. *"If you don't beat them, the students are becoming relaxed. Even they will tell you themselves, 'if you don't beat me I will not be able to work'"* (Interview 18). While this viewpoint could easily be an exaggerated justification of the teacher's viewpoint, these findings are confirmed by additional research focusing specifically on the use of corporal punishment in the Western Cape. Gluckman (1990) found that students viewed corporal punishment as a legitimate and appropriate form of discipline within their schools. It seems that students have been "trained" to work for punishment rather than reward. This form of negative reinforcement may be effective in maintaining control, but it is certainly not conducive to creating a culture of learning. Teachers acknowledge that strict discipline is a means of coping with the present school conditions. In order to move beyond the present conditions, students must be motivated by positive examples rather than by threats.

The Role of Teachers:

While corporal punishment is seen as an essential means of discipline and a crucial tool for motivating students, strict discipline was not considered the optimal solution. In fact, the largest number of teachers accepted the motivation of students as their own responsibility. Rather than blaming the students for their lack of effort or need of discipline, more often teachers attributed low motivation of students to low teacher morale and effort. According to one teacher, *"you can't blame the students who are demotivated and don't do their homework-- we must also blame the teachers who don't work hard"* (Interview 12). Another teacher echoed her comment in saying, *"I would not blame the students-- if teachers are not serious, students will not be serious. Teachers must know they are liberating students when they teach them. There must be working together of teachers, parents, students; an absence of chaos; and fulfillment of all duties"* (Interview 10).

Rather than blaming the students for their lack of effort or interest, it is interesting to note that these teachers themselves feel responsible for the work ethos of their students.

These findings are particularly interesting in light of literature on teacher evaluation and training (in South Africa and beyond) which indicates a tendency for teachers to articulate their problems in terms of students' deficiencies (Walker, 1991; Stuart, 1991; Buswell, 1988). These studies found a great reluctance among teachers to take any personal responsibility for classroom difficulties. It is unclear why Khayelitsha teachers accepted so much accountability for their students. Perhaps the self-selected sample of teachers were those particularly motivated towards self-improvement, recognizing the need to change their ways. Or perhaps the current changes in education (motivated by the change in government) have shifted teachers' perspectives from an emphasis on distancing and blame to one of collective responsibility for upliftment. Whatever the case, I view these teachers' responses as a positive sign for the possibility of change. If teachers are willing to accept responsibility for the state of the culture of learning, they may be more likely to invest in its improvement. As the success of reform initiatives depends largely on the commitment of the school staff, this would indeed bode well for the renewal of the learning culture.

According to this study, teachers see themselves as critical agents in creating a culture of learning and recognize the need to upgrade their skills and renew their spirits. *"We [teachers] must be in good spirits, make a positive atmosphere, work hand in hand with the students, know what we're here for, and that the child is the most important thing-- it starts from the top"* (Interview 9). Thus while the motivation of students was rated (in the questionnaire) as the most important factor in creating a culture of learning, the motivation of teachers is a crucial prerequisite. Chart 4.2 shows teacher motivation as the number one means of motivating students.

CHAPTER EIGHT: HUMAN RESOURCES-- INVESTING IN TEACHERS

While a whole range of factors interact to create a learning culture, none outweigh the importance of teachers. Over the past decade, the number of dropouts in African schools has decreased, the level of funding has increased, and the student-teacher ratio has improved. Despite these statistical improvements, however, the quality of African education continues to decline (McGregor, 1992). Evidence from the present research, as well as from the relevant South African education literature, indicates that the major determining variable is teachers. "Although there have been considerable quantitative gains in African education during the last ten years, the quality of African schooling has suffered..... Many of the problems of inequality centre on the inadequate supply, low qualifications and poor morale of the African teaching force" (Hofmeyr & Buckland, 1992:24). While the factors discussed above-- curriculum, resources, and discipline-- all play a substantial role in the learning culture, research indicates that the importance of the teacher is supreme. "In the end, the quality of learning in the classroom is closely related to the enthusiasm, commitment and understanding of the average teacher working under much less than ideal circumstances" (Lewin, 1985:132). The importance of the teacher is magnified in economically deprived conditions. International research shows that the quality of the teacher is much more significant in developing countries than in those of the Western world. "The poorer the country, the greater the effect of school and teacher quality on achievement" (Hartshorne, 1992:218). The evidence from the present research has dramatic implications in reference to our understanding of the culture of learning. While the 'culture of learning' by definition implies an emphasis on students (as they are the ones who must learn), the present findings suggest that teachers are in fact the central component of the culture of learning. In this sense, the 'culture of teaching' should be our primary concern in working towards comprehensive school reform.

The critical role of teachers in successful education reform will be examined in the following discussion. First, the problem of low teacher motivation and morale will be discussed, with a focus on the various manifestations and possible explanations for this problem. Subsequently, potential strategies for improving the motivation of teachers (based on interview and questionnaire responses) will be examined.

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Teacher Motivation:

The low motivation level of teachers, or the lack of a 'culture of teaching' was seen as a major problem by respondents. Teachers were described as having little interest in or enthusiasm for their work. Put simply, *"Teachers don't like the work they are doing. They lack motivation"* (Interview 20). Many of those interviewed expressed frustration with the lack of effort on some teachers' parts, even with regards to simple duties. *"Some of them [teachers] are cooperative. Some of them don't care. They are just here to collect paychecks. You ask them to do the slightest task and there is resistance"* (Interview 6). Administrative duties, attendance, and school organization all suffer, according to those interviewed, as a result of teachers' callous approach for their work. Of greatest concern, however, is the impact these teachers' attitudes have on their students. *"The main problem here is that teachers are not motivated. As a result, students are not motivated. Teachers don't care. They don't pay attention. They disappear after lunch"* (Interview 17). The problem of low teacher motivation and the corresponding disregard for their work responsibilities was one of the most pervasive themes discussed by teachers. For this reason, an extensive discussion of the indications, explanations, and solutions to this problem will be included in the following sections.

Indications of Low Teacher Motivation:

The low motivation of teachers was most commonly illustrated by examples of irresponsible behaviour and minimal effort with which teachers approached their work. The extent of teacher apathy and delinquency was well covered during the course of interviews with teachers.

Teacher Delinquency:

Teachers were surprisingly candid about their colleagues', and in some cases their own, misconduct. It was as if they acknowledged that the situation has gone much too far to be ignored and that teachers must take responsibility for their actions if reform efforts are to be successful. Various examples of teacher delinquency are examined within the following discussion.

During school, delinquent teachers have a number of strategies for avoiding their responsibilities. Firstly, there is the basic problem of attendance. One of the most common problem reported by teachers is their colleagues' (and in some cases, their own) tendency to arrive late for school, cut classes, and leave early. It is not surprising that students have low motivation levels when their

teachers clearly view the work as a low priority. *"Even after lunch the principal has to come and tell the teachers that the bell has rung and they have to go to class. This is not supposed to happen. People don't really take their jobs seriously. There is no culture of learning or teaching"* (Interview 23). It was not uncommon to find teachers in the staff room after their period had started, or to see a class full of students with no teacher present. One teacher illustrated this point clearly by asking me, *"Do you hear all the noise out there? That is because teachers are not there"* (Interview 17). Not surprisingly, it is rare to find teachers present after school. Teachers leave as soon as the school day is over, leaving no time for meetings, staff workshops, or extracurricular activities. *"When the bell rings at 2pm, the teachers all run home. You cannot even call a meeting after school"* (Interview 23). This leaves school time as the only available period for school business to be conducted. This was one of the commonly mentioned issues of teachers. In terms of extramural activities, once again teachers placed motivation obstacles above physical ones. The resources available for sports and recreation are limited-- however there are basic facilities which are available yet under-used. *"No one will stay after two. The availability of facilities is not such a problem-- they can share or ask for equipment. It's that there is no one to avail the facilities"* (Interview 20). Along with the empty libraries (empty of people, not books), these examples indicate that an increase in resources and facilities is pointless without a concurrent focus on motivational issues. Potential solutions to this issue are discussed below.

Beyond the attendance issues, delinquent teacher behavior extends well into the classroom with teachers unwilling to go beyond their bare minimum duties. For example, *"A big problem now is that teachers have finished their syllabus and don't want to go to class to revise and review"* (Interview 17). This issue was apparent from my own observation. Towards the end of the year, teachers were often out of their classrooms, marking and writing exam papers during school time. They had finished the basic curriculum and felt that their own time would be best spent completing work they would otherwise be obliged to do at home.

The instance of teachers using class time for their own purposes was not restricted to the end of the year. Teachers use class time for paper-work, marking, and to pursue their own studies. *"One reason why we are cheating our students is because teachers are attending studies part time and they do not attend to their students. They give the students notes so the teacher can do their assignments or study. In primary school they tell their students to sleep"* (Interview 12). Another

teacher verified this trend, "*We Africans have not yet understood that the only liberation is through education. There is still no change in attitudes of teachers or students after the election. Instead they're abusing their opportunities-- it is common for teachers to enroll part time [in tertiary education] and neglect their basic duties in school. Even principals don't work hard*" (Interview 10).

Other instances of "laziness" relates to the teaching methods used by many teachers. While there are a range of factors which hinder creative pedagogical techniques (e.g., the curriculum, class size, etc.), teachers exacerbate poor learning conditions by making use of only the least time-consuming methods. "*What encourages rote learning is if you didn't prepare. Teachers don't give essay questions because it takes their time to mark. Now they give multiple choice-- it takes less to mark. They don't want to work after school*" (Interview 20).

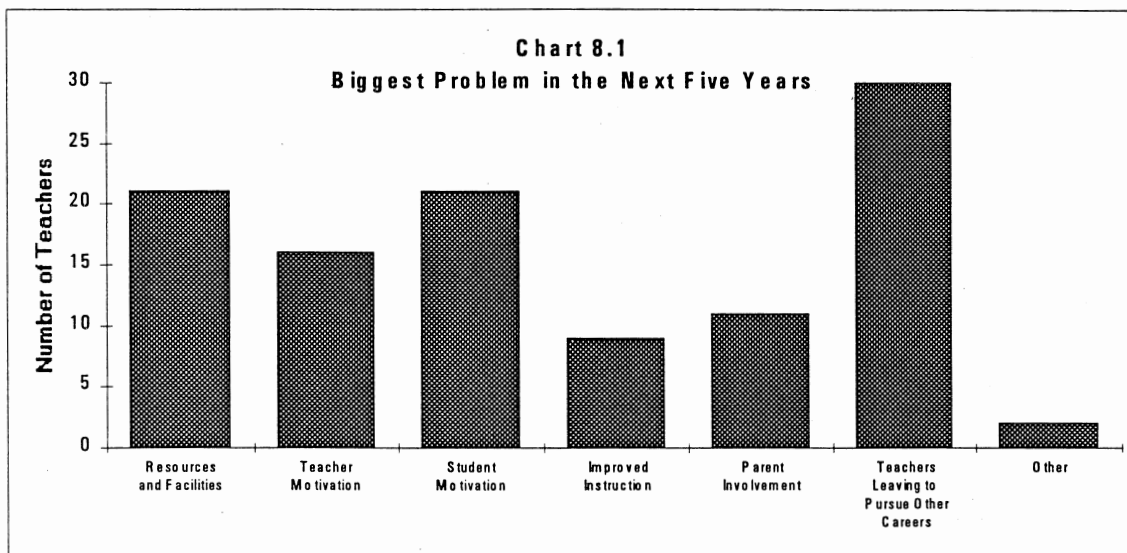
Perhaps of greatest concern is actual "cheating" of teachers during exams. Teachers being evaluated by the performance of their students feel pressure to demonstrate high levels of achievement. This at times results in teachers giving unfair preparation or assistance during the exam. According to one teacher, "*Teachers drill students with the exact questions on the exam*" (Interview 19). This phenomenon was reported by several teachers and extended beyond unfair preparation to actual assistance during the exams. "*They give clues-- it's supposed to be the subject teachers in the matric exam only for 10 minutes, then another subject teacher should come in, but it doesn't always happen*" (Interview 2). Another teacher attributes many of the problems to the teachers' own difficulties in understanding and explaining the information. "*If they can't translate the question into simple English, they might just give the answer. Sometimes even by mistake because its difficult to translate-- then rumours start that the teacher gave the answer*" (Interview 20). It is not clear to what extent this type of teacher-malpractice occurs, however it was acknowledged in each school surveyed. "*It's a bad habit that's accepted. Everyone understands that it happens*" (Interview 20). According to teachers, there is a variety of reasons for this subversion of exams. Teachers feel pressure to demonstrate student achievement; they are attempting to compensate for the unfair disadvantage of the language medium; or they do not view the current curriculum and examination process as a legitimate assessment system. However justifiable the explanation for this misconduct may be, the exam preparation and

invigilation must be carefully monitored if their students' exam scores are to be taken seriously in a national context.

A final example of teacher misconduct comes from my own observation. During an informal conversation with a teacher I had already interviewed, it became readily apparent that he had been drinking. His breath smelled strongly of alcohol and his words were at times slurred. This conversation took place before lunchtime on a school-day. The broader extent of this one example was discussed by several teachers. According to one, "*Black teachers are irresponsible. Because that is the type of education that they were prepared for. Some of them are drinking. They need to be advised to see a psychologist if they have problems. It made them not to produce good teachers. To go beyond just being a teacher to be a mother*" (Interview 18). Alcohol abuse and other forms of delinquent behavior among teachers has been further cited within the literature on African education in this country. "The Carnegie investigation into poverty in South Africa [in 1984] revealed 'disturbing insights' into the loss of teacher morale which often manifested itself in drunkenness, absenteeism and assaults on pupils" (Walker, 1991:146). The extent of teacher demoralization is made obvious by these blatant examples of irresponsibility and impropriety. The behaviors adopted by teachers as strategies for coping with the degraded working conditions can only further exacerbate the feeble culture of learning.

Teachers Leaving:

For some teachers, coping strategies are not sufficient for tolerating the bleak conditions of African schools or for dealing with their own disillusionment. While positive reforms are expected within the near future, many teachers are losing faith in the government's promise of change and are seeking alternative professions. Questionnaire responses indicate that teachers foresee the biggest problem in their school over the next five years will be teachers leaving to pursue other careers (see Chart 8.1).



This finding was backed up countless times during interviews where six out of the 19 teachers (32 percent) indicated they would no longer be teaching in five years time, and seven teachers (37 percent) discussed the frequency of their colleagues leaving or considering leaving to pursue other career possibilities. *"Many teachers want to leave because of frustrations- it is not nice to teach now. People just stay because they have their post and jobs are scarce"* (Interview 20). Most teachers saw themselves moving into the private sector for work. They viewed these positions as favorable in terms of salary, work-load, and work-conditions. *"Many teachers are leaving teaching. Many say, "If I could get another job....". They're taking classes like public relations, computers to get the opportunity to leave. Salary is the basic thing. They need to improve working conditions (facilities and students, benefits for education loans for kids, houses, cars, etc.)"* (Interview 13). Some teachers feel that the low salary is the major issue pushing teachers out of the profession. *"If teachers were paid more they would be more motivated. Many teachers are looking for better jobs. The government is discouraging teachers. I am teaching because it's my job. It's my profession. Otherwise I do not enjoy teaching. There is too much overcrowding in classrooms; it's stressful (the talking business). Most teachers feel the same way"* (Interview 21).

While money may be a priority issue, the working conditions in these schools seems to be equally, if not more, distressing to teachers. The highly demanding responsibilities of teachers in combination with little recognition and minimal compensation makes the profession fairly unattractive (particularly in comparison with the growing opportunities for educated blacks in the

private sector). *"I don't think I'll be teaching in five years. I'll do something busier than this. I've been through a lot here. There's a lot of stress teaching. The fact that you are giving information and not getting a response. A lot of teachers are feeling that way-- especially higher levels. The stress is a bigger factor than the money"* (Interview 14). Whatever the reason, the sentiments towards leaving are vividly expressed. One teacher was so fed up with her work that she would be satisfied accepting a lower level position. *"As long as I'm not teaching, I'm prepared to work anywhere-- I'm even prepared to make tea somewhere....."* (Interview 11). Another teacher echoed this strong negativity towards teaching by saying simply, *"I hope I won't die a teacher"* (Interview 10). Clearly the extent of teacher demoralization is pervasive and serious. Many teachers no longer see value in their efforts and are actively pursuing alternative careers.

This trend could pose serious problems for the upliftment of schools. The national shortage of teachers (102,000 in African schools) is dire (Johnson, 1991:186); should a significant number of current teachers leave, this problem will only be compounded by losing critical experienced professionals. Instead, efforts to retain existing teachers should receive serious attention. Evidence from the present study indicates that an increase in teacher salaries will *not* be sufficient to re-create a positive culture of teaching (see "Salary Increases" below). Instead, other means of addressing the pervasive dissatisfaction of teachers must be investigated and implemented immediately and effectively.

Explanations of Low Teacher Motivation:

A number of explanations for the current 'irresponsible' behaviour were offered. At a most crude level, a common statement made by teachers and principals alike was, *"African teachers are lazy"* (Interview 10). This expression seemed to sum up their frustration with their working environment, in which teachers often come late to class, do not show up for class, refuse to participate in extramural sports or other after-school activities. Motivational problems can be attributed to a variety of factors, including historical and present conditions. Respondents focused at length on the lack of discipline and the historical demoralization of teachers as major explanations for the current lack of motivation among their colleagues.

Discipline of Teachers:

According to interviewees, the "laziness" of teachers is closely related to the issue of evaluation and discipline. In the past, inspectors, principals, and other education officials were known to victimize teachers. Their power was used to control schools rather than to assist and guide teachers. In reaction, teachers in African schools around the country fought to rid their campuses of white inspectors and principals and rejected all tools of evaluation. Workbooks with syllabi, worksheets, lesson plans, and teaching aides were abandoned and teachers refused to be monitored. "Political conflict and the consequent breakdown of a learning culture have ravaged teaching in much of the country, thoroughly undermining the motivation and morale of teachers. This climate of conflict and mistrust has brought about teachers' widespread rejection of the evaluation of their work" (NEPI, 1992). One teacher expressed her ongoing frustration with assessment attempts, claiming they were inappropriate and unnecessary. "In 1988-89 we toyed to abolish record books-- all townships except Khayelitsha have gotten rid of them-- they contain prep lessons, tests, memorandum, teaching aides, meeting minutes. Why should we use this big book with unrealistic timetables and syllabus?" (Interview 12). At one time, this was a worthwhile struggle, necessary to ensure teachers autonomy in their classrooms. According to those interviewed, however, a necessary form of discipline has been lost and not replaced. "Because of our unfortunate past, before if the principal didn't like you he would victimize you; so teachers organizations fought against this-- but unfortunately this resulted in teachers feeling they are immune from expulsion" (Interview 23). On a similar note, another teacher commented, "During apartheid, inspectors acted more as policemen, only to humiliate teachers and as a result they were chased away-- so they stopped coming. But we need inspectors, full time stationed in the school" (Interview 10). Now that a new era in education has begun, many of the traditional mechanisms of teacher evaluation are being reintroduced. These changes are met with resistance by many teachers, both because teacher evaluation is still associated with racial domination as well as the more basic reason that these changes imply more work for teachers. "Change causes much confusion-- people think the government is bringing back workbooks in disguise. During the struggle they did away with the workbooks and now they bring it back.... People don't understand that it was done away with not because it wasn't useful-- it was used as a weapon. Teachers don't think they should have to do outside preparation (after 2pm); so teachers are reluctant to do it-- makes it difficult for controlling body, for HoDs to know what the teacher does in the classroom" (Interview 20).

According to respondents, the elimination of all teacher-evaluation has led to a laxness in schools which cannot be tolerated. Teachers know they will not be punished for irresponsible behavior and thus have little incentive to be conscientious in their work. Teachers have grown accustomed to these working conditions and are highly resistant to change. *"If the principal tries to enforce rules strictly (e.g., being prompt), teachers will begin developing a negative attitude towards him"* (Interview 10). Similarly, if HoDs or the principal monitors teachers by observing their classroom lessons, *"teachers say they are being harassed"* (Interview 4).

It is difficult to change the orientation of teachers towards discipline. Because of their past experiences, evaluation and feedback is seen as an entirely negative experience, rather than as having potential benefits for the quality of their work. *"The problem is in black schools if you criticize teachers you create problems-- we have not learned that being criticized is good, is important"* (Interview 19). The possibilities for re-introducing a structure of discipline will be discussed in below. First we must acknowledge the remaining range of factors which contribute to low motivation levels among teachers.

A History of Demoralization:

The history of these schools has done more than destroy the discipline in teaching. The manipulative control exerted by the Nationalist government, the severely underresourced working conditions, and the unstable climate of political opposition has resulted in the extreme demoralization of teachers. *"Pressured and criticised from all sides often for inadequacies for which they are not to blame, treated often by departments not as professionals but as instruments of policy....it is not surprising that the morale of many teachers is low"* (Hartshorne, 1987:5). The pervasive demoralization of teachers has undoubtedly had a profound effect on the culture of learning. Not surprisingly, respondents emphasized how the low morale of teachers seriously impedes their ability to function effectively in the classroom. *"Teachers are broken down, financially, their esteem This country has done teachers no justice. I think their form of rebelling is to lose interest. They are transferring this lack of motivation to the students"* (Interview 16). It is highly important to recognize the psychological status of teachers in attempting to initiate reform. Teachers have been made to feel like accomplices to racist indoctrination and have thus removed themselves emotionally from their profession (Hartshorne,

1987). In order to re-engage teachers in their work, it will be necessary not only to introduce a new and revised curriculum, but also to provide support for teachers, including opportunities to discuss their past experiences and develop strategies to move beyond them.

One interviewee told the story of her first teaching experience in 1985. After working for less than a year in a nearby township school, the white principal retrenched her in order to hire a similarly qualified white teacher. The harassment and humiliation she felt throughout this ordeal and the repercussions she incurred after the loss of her job (extreme financial and emotional distress) left her with a distaste for teaching which she maintains to this day. *"I came here with that attitude-- teaching is just teaching-- I'd lost interest. I want the department to write a letter to me to apologize for what they did and pay me for expenses I had to compensate. These years, the thing that made me keep teaching is the love of the children... you know, I love children. [She starts to cry] I am frustrated you know but the frustration is taken away by the love of children"*

(Interview 11). This teacher's experiences are not uncommon (Morrell, 1988; Nxumalo, 1993).

While she continues to teach for the sake of her students, her frustration has only deepened since the elections have come and gone with no signs of change. She goes on to explain, *"What's frustrating now is you know I thought in this time of change I thought that for people like us that have suffered in the past there would be a commission or something which could voice our complaints. You know the people that frustrated us in the past are still there-- they are inspectors and in higher positions in the new department. I'm sure there are teachers like me who are just keeping their frustrations- I want to help those teachers. Make teaching interesting, not dull. Some kind of workshop, to talk about these problems"* (Interview 11). It is unrealistic to expect that, with the end of apartheid, all negativity, anger, hurt and frustration towards the education establishment would be erased. The slow process of reconciliation between the government and its employees must be driven by communication and support. Rather than leaving teachers such as this one to heal her own wounds, opportunities to discuss such experiences and vent her frustration should be provided.

While it is impossible to retrospectively gauge teacher sentiments just prior to the national elections of 1994, interview responses seem to indicate that teachers' frustrations and negative attitudes towards their work have in fact increased since the ANC came into power. *"A lot of teachers are not motivated to teach. Most of us are disappointed. We were highly motivated last year"*

because we knew things were going to change-- now we're expecting that nothing will ever change" (Interview 13). Prior to the elections and just after, teachers were aroused by the expectations of change. After more than a year with little or no signs of improvement, however, many teachers seem to be resigning themselves to their present conditions or abandoning the profession altogether.

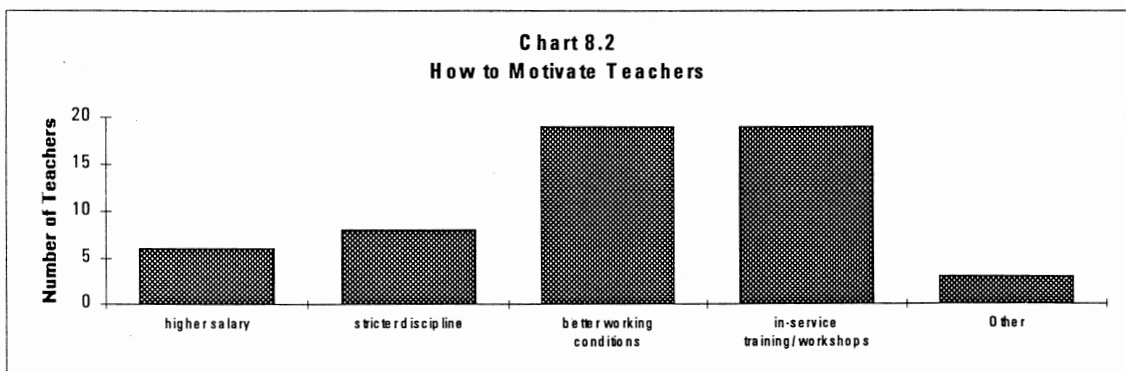
What can be done to motivate teachers?

Respondents were asked their opinions about how to overcome teachers' low levels of motivation. Interviews and the questionnaire provided various responses, ranging from improvements in material resources to investment in human resources.

Working Conditions:

According to the questionnaire, teachers indicated that an improvement in working conditions was one of the most important factors in improving the motivation of teachers (see Chart 8.2).

Working conditions refers to the number of students per class, the facilities available (including desks, chairs, chalk, overhead projectors, laboratory equipment, teaching aides), and the overall condition of the school site (vandalism, broken windows, functioning toilets). Poor working conditions have taken an obvious toll on the motivation and performance level of teachers in these poorly-equipped schools.



The physical status of the school provides the most obvious sign of deprivation. At the same time, however, the renovation and restoration of schools is one of the most straightforward and simple issues to address. Buildings need repairs, classrooms need furnishing, teachers need supplies, and laboratories need equipment. These priorities are simple to achieve. Obviously financial constraints prevent the possibility of limitless renovation; the implementation of these reforms,

however, are perhaps the most straightforward to achieve. Current efforts to address the physical restoration of schools will be discussed in Chapter Ten.

The issue of resources and facilities was a consistent priority of teachers in both interviews and questionnaires (as discussed in Chapter Five). Upgrading of the physical work environment is a necessary and urgent prerequisite to other significant elements of reform. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the improvement of working conditions, while a top priority, is not a panacea to school problems. "While new structures and increased provision of facilities and equipment are imperative, of themselves they will not bring about a transformation of the education system..... The quality of what happens there, given reasonable physical conditions and class size, depends on two major factors-- the commitment and competence of teachers and pupils in a learning situation" (Hartshorne, in McGregor, 1992:6). Alone, new buildings and better facilities will not solve the problem of low student motivation and teacher morale. A concurrent focus on human resource issues (specifically targeted to address low motivation) is a necessary complement to physical renovation. The challenge remains to determine exactly what type of human resource approach will be most effective in motivating teachers-- the critical factor in building a culture of learning.

Salary Increases:

Surprisingly, very few teachers cited financial benefits as an important motivator for teachers. In fact, on the questionnaire, the category "increase teachers' salaries" was the *least* often chosen item in the relevant question (see Chart 8.2 above). Interview responses verified this finding. While a few teachers did cite money as an important factor in teachers' current dissatisfaction (see "Teachers Leaving" above), more often than not, teachers maintained that higher salaries would *not* help to motivate teachers, at least not until other issues have been addressed. "*Money: I wouldn't say that would solve the problems. It wouldn't make teachers better. You cannot run away from the fact that some of us are not doing are jobs..... [To motivate teachers:] Not money, not at this stage. It will aggravate the situation. If I don't do the job right now, then I don't think more money will help that*" (Interview 14). Another teacher voiced a similar sentiment with simple advice: "*Motivate them with words of encouragement not physical things*" (Interview 6). There seems to be a fairly large consensus that monetary incentives for teachers, at least at this point in time, will not serve as a powerful motivator for teachers. In fact, some teachers would go so far as to say that higher salaries, before other substantive reform is effected, will only serve to make the

situation worse. According to one teacher, the highest rate of absenteeism among teachers is on payday and the few days following, because teachers are out spending their salaries. In her opinion, higher salaries would only encourage greater delinquent behavior among teachers. *"Money is not the motivation-- higher salaries will just make it worse. They will have to go to town to spend it. After the end of each month there is a very high rate of absenteeism. Same with parliament. They have higher salaries and must go out and spend it. They don't have a chance to work. They must change first and then give them more money"* (Interview 20). While financial incentives for teachers will have to be addressed in upcoming education policy discussions, particularly with regard to enticing new and highly qualified candidates to understaffed schools, clearly this issue is not the most crucial in terms of motivating existing teachers. According to respondents, attitudes towards work must change before higher salaries can effect meaningful change. Here again, we are confronted with the issue changing attitudes. If money is not the answer, what is?

Discipline:

Not surprisingly, one of the major suggestions made by teachers was to increase the level of discipline in schools. *"There needs to be strict discipline of teachers to maintain order-- stick to rules and regulations. Students and teachers need to know that from the top rules and policies will be enforced"* (Interview 12). This advice is straightforward and logical; in practice, however, the situation is much more complicated. Given the history of oppression in African schools (see "Discipline of Teachers" above) teachers have a highly negative attitude towards evaluation and criticism. To overcome this legacy of domination and resistance, a new discipline policy must be sensitive to the historical context of schools while maintaining effective order and control-- a difficult combination to achieve.

The successful re-introduction of teacher evaluation is a complicated endeavor. According to some teachers, the process must be achieved through extensive discussion and consensus decision-making. A study of the culture of learning in Kwamashu schools found that democratic forums would encourage accountability among teachers. *"There is low accountability amongst the teachers because there is no functional authority which monitors teacher behaviour and responsibility in the schools. The departmental structures, the teachers felt, do not operate on the ground and are unrepresentative. The formation of such a body would also provide teachers with a*

forum to discuss their problems and possible ways to deal with them" (Nxumalo, 1993:59). A related study of secondary school teachers from Soweto found that teachers' working relations with their seniors was "strained by the fact that they declared that inspectors are not to be allowed in the schools. They were aware of the opinion that democratic ways should be implemented so that all could be involved in the maintenance of discipline and order" (Moller & Maimane, 1992: 412). This democratic approach has advantages in terms of encouraging teachers to take responsibility for self-discipline as well as to accept and support the external monitoring of their work. Others, however, feel that expecting teachers to personally invite evaluation is unrealistic and impractical. Instead, these more militant teachers feel that discipline must be imposed, not discussed. *"There needs to be a good foundation from the outset. Very strict leadership-- no democracy, but the principal would force teachers to work hard"* (Interview 23). This type of approach may appear to be the most efficient means of imposing order and control over the teaching staff. Given the history of the African education system, however, it is unlikely that the teaching staff would respond favorably to such means. Creating antagonism among school staff will hardly be conducive to an improvement of the culture of learning.

One teacher was not confident that disciplinary measures would be effective in motivating teachers at all. According to his perspective, stern regulation would only create a more hostile attitude among teachers. Instead, he offered a more extreme solution. *"I don't want to say stricter measures should be applied. People might rebel. Nobody likes to be told or to be forced what to do. I think we must fire bad teachers and hire new ones"* (Interview 14). While this suggestion may be unrealistic, particularly in light of the current teacher shortage, it presents an interesting alternative for creating a renewed culture of teaching.

More practically, schools have been experimenting with a variety of methods for upgrading discipline. One of the schools included in this study implemented a system of mandatory testing throughout the year so that school staff would have a continuous measure of students' performance as well as an indirect measure of teacher effectiveness. *"Teachers now write monthly tests, quarterly tests, half year exams, and end of year exams. They [the control staff] must see that the teachers are teaching their students"* (Interview 9). Additionally, all four schools have now changed their classroom plan so that teachers stay in their rooms while students rotate each period. This procedure was implemented to stop teachers from arriving late. It has been quite effective in

this regard; unfortunately now it is the students who arrive late. Finally, two of the schools have been experimenting with locked gates. At the beginning of school and after lunch, gates are locked against both students and teachers. According to one teacher, "*people don't like the gate policy but apparently it has helped*" (Interview 2). Teachers feel embarrassed being forced to wait outside until the next period has begun; they now more often make the effort to arrive on time.

Despite the pervasive resistance to strict evaluation, interviewees were not entirely negative about disciplinary measures in their schools. In fact, those interviewed indicated a preference for principals who were firm and demanding leaders. Teachers frequently complimented their principals on his strict means of discipline (particularly in two of the schools). Comparing them to previous principals who imposed little discipline, these principals evoked greater respect and contributed to the more effective functioning of the school. "*There has been a tremendous change with the new principal. Before he came, we had a very bad principal. There was a large absenteeism of teachers and complete chaos. The new principal has managed to push teachers to go to their classes and has made a compulsory quarterly test for all teachers*" (Interview 10). Similarly, responses to the questionnaire indicate that 'effective leadership' is one of the most important factors in creating a strong culture of learning (as noted in Chart 4.1). It seems that teachers do recognize the need for strong leadership and professional accountability. While the level of discipline is nowhere near sufficient, the positive reactions to principals who are considered "strict" bode well for future and more extensive upgrading of discipline in their schools.

It seems that in order for discipline to be reinstated in schools, there needs to be a careful combination of authority and democracy. "One of the challenges of future policy and practice will be to develop a set of procedures for teacher evaluation which is compatible both with democratic principles and with professional accountability" (NEPI, 1992). Teachers need to understand why discipline is necessary and they must be encouraged to participate in a new system of teacher evaluation. At the same time, it is important that teachers recognize that there are limits to their democratic freedoms. "Democracy is not about 'doing what you like' without regard to others or to the concerns of the community or society of which one is a part" (Harthshorne, 1992:11). A certain baseline of authority must be established and accepted as a legitimate system of control.

Clearly discipline is an important tool for regaining order in schools and ensuring that teachers are sufficiently performing their duties. It is unlikely, however, that strict discipline alone will be successful in evoking any long-term substantive change. *"If someone is not motivated himself, it is not going to help for someone to push him"* (Interview 14). In order for monitoring and feedback to be effective in these schools, there needs to be a concurrent shift in the attitudes and accountability of teachers.

Teacher Training and Workshops:

According to respondents, a shift in attitudes and approach to teaching can be most effectively addressed by the provision of teacher training opportunities and workshops. Teachers need a forum in which they can express their frustrations, communicate their difficulties, and seek assistance for their instructional approach. An increase in effective teacher training programs and workshops was both a top priority on the questionnaire (see chart 8.2) as well as the most frequently mentioned suggestion offered in interviews for an improved culture of learning (mentioned slightly more often than even resource issues). *"Teacher development and better teacher qualifications-- these are the most important for the development of culture of learning"* (Interview 6). Workshops were prescribed both as a means of upgrading teacher competency with regards to the present and upcoming curriculum, as well as a means of increasing teacher morale.

In-service training for teachers in South Africa is most commonly referred to as INSET (In Service Education and Training). This umbrella term includes a wide range of teacher services, all varying in focus, duration and quality. Thompson (1982) offers an expansive definition which helps to clarify the many facets of teacher education. His definition of INSET includes,

"The whole range of activities by which serving teachers and other categories of educationalists (within formal school systems) may extend and develop their personal education, professional competence and general understanding of the role which they and the schools are expected to play in their changing societies. INSET further indicates the means whereby a teacher's personal needs and aspirations may be met, as well as those of the system in which he or she serves" (in Hofmeyr & Jaff, 1992:184).

Thompson's definition is useful in that it highlights the potential for comprehensive assistance to teachers, including both personal and professional concerns. Particularly with respect to African teachers, many of whom are struggling with classroom issues as well as their own low morale, this holistic emphasis for in-service training is crucial.

In terms of upgrading teachers, the need for quality INSET programs cannot be overstated. Due to the background of most African teachers, educated under a system of Bantu education and equipped with only the most crude techniques of drill and rote memorization, an improvement of the quality of education being delivered can only be possible after the education practitioners themselves have acquired the necessary skills. *"When most teachers were trained in this country-- during apartheid, during Bantu education, we didn't receive training that was up to standard. It still continues because those teaching now were studying/receiving training during those times. There needs to be in-service training colleges. These are the most important things"* (Interview 10). The acquisition of new skills is fundamental to the success of parallel reform efforts. While it is easy to think that all will be cured once schools receive more facilities and a better curriculum, Walker (1991:5) points to the "resilience of existing teaching practice to continue undisturbed by structural changes, such as the syllabus and the resourcing of schools." Much more is needed to transform African schools than the resolve of material deprivation. Without attention to the human factor, the bridge between education and the student will remain frail and ineffectual.

The current provision of INSET in African schools is far from sufficient. According to Dove (1986), most developing countries spend between 5 and 15 percent of their budgets on teacher education. DET's allocation falls at the bottom of this range, at 5.37 percent (in Hofmeyr & Jaff, 1992:176). Given the current status of most DET teachers, this level of spending is unacceptably low. *"Because the vast majority of all African teachers are under the age of 40 and most are underqualified...the DET should be allocating a far bigger percentage of its budget to renewal and upgrading in order to meet the changing needs of those teachers who theoretically are able to render another 25 years of service"* (Hofmeyr & Jaff, 1992:176).

Teachers participating in the current research project expressed a strong need for professional assistance. The low performance of their students can be excused away by a range of factors, but teachers accepted the major responsibility for their students' achievement. *"Sometimes you think the kids are stupid, but it is actually you who has the problem-- your approach is wrong. There must be experts. We must be able to go for a course and discuss our problems with experts"* (Interview 19).

Interviewees were candid in discussing their own shortcomings in teaching. While all teachers in the four schools in this project had sufficient formal qualifications, their actual competence in their subject areas was often below standard. This led to situations where teachers would give insufficient or inaccurate information to their students. *"Some teachers by-pass chapters in books because they cannot cope themselves"* (Interview 10). This type of omission is unacceptable; students cannot be expected to demonstrate command over material which their instructors do not understand. In the course of my own observation, three English teachers were found making mistakes or stumbling over basic material (field notes 24/8, 12/9). It is possible that teachers refrain from essay questions or tools for in-depth analysis (see section on "Teacher Delinquency" above) not because of generic "laziness" but because the teachers themselves do not feel prepared to instruct or evaluate these assignments.

These examples clearly demonstrate that official qualifications do not necessarily translate to practically qualified teachers. "Improving the paper qualifications of teachers does not necessarily give them the required expertise." In fact, "a 'rather tenuous relationship may exist between an effective teacher and a teacher with formal academic qualifications' (Mehl, in Unterhalter et al., 1991:195). In many cases, this is the result of PRESET (Pre-Service Education and Training) credentials which have little relevance to classroom needs. "The DET has emphasised the upgrading of teacher qualifications. However, it does not necessarily follow that further qualifications will result in improved classroom proficiency. Teachers under pressures to improve their qualifications, often take 'easy options'-- criminology, biblical studies, mercantile law-- which are not school subjects" (Hofmeyr & Jaff, 1992:177). For the training of future teachers, the alignment between PRESET and teaching must be carefully assessed. For the immediate situation, however, it must be acknowledged that even qualified teachers are in serious need of in-service training.

The present inadequacies of teachers will only become more pronounced after the new curriculum is introduced. "It is widely agreed that teachers, even those with upgraded training, are not adequately equipped for teaching in the current system of 'gutter' education, let alone in a transformed education system" (Unterhalter et al., 1991:195). The proposed syllabus will focus on critical thinking, rather than on rote memorization and simplistic multiple choice (Hartshorne, 1987). As these reforms are introduced, teachers will need even more training to help them

understand the changes and make the most of them. Currently, the interim syllabus, which also emphasizes higher-order learning, has been put into effect by the department. Teachers, however, have been given little guidance towards its implementation. In many cases, it is therefore unlikely that the curriculum changes have had a significant impact. *"Teaching styles are changing to a 'communicative approach'. Not rules and dictation and question-answer. Now the students work it out more themselves-- they are meant to explore. This is hard with the background of teachers and with the numbers of students in each class. There's no assistance-- teachers are just told to try their best. I stick to one I was taught because it is the best for the situation. Most teachers are not changing to use the interim syllabus"* (Interview 13). The failure to pair significant reform efforts with concurrent workshops to communicate changes and discuss their impacts with teachers can only result in much weakened implementation phase.

Teachers undoubtedly require guidance for the implementation of new curricula or changing instructional techniques. Assistance, however, should not be reserved for times of transition. In order for teacher training to be effective in the long-term, INSET should be designed as a form of on-going support. Too often INSET programs offer single weekend workshops which are useful in the short-term, but have few lasting effects. *"We discuss the problems, come up with suggestions, but it lasts only three days. Then things are back to normal"* (Interview 20). Newly learned skills and techniques will not be sustained unless they are reinforced with regular workshops and assistance (even if facilitated by members of the school staff). Research on INSET programs in South Africa confirms this recommendation. *"Sustained support for teachers and follow-up in the schools must be provided. Policies should make provision for INSET programmes that involve ongoing, active social learning processes and address the job-related needs of teachers"* (Hofmeyr & Jaff, 1992:192). We must shift our orientation of training from a discrete package of information to an on-going learning process. School-based capacities for teacher support must be developed so that teacher-training need not only occur at officially designated times. The emphasis on "life-long learning" emphasized by the White Paper on Education and Training should apply also to teachers (Department of Education, 1995).

The provision of effective INSET programming is essential to the upgrading of teacher skills. Perhaps equally important, however, is the need to focus on teachers' psychological orientation to their work. As discussed above, teacher motivation is a crucial factor in creating an effective

learning culture. Offering teachers skills and techniques for working with the syllabus will only be implemented if teachers feel that their effort is warranted. For teachers who have been demoralized and deflated over the years of teaching a watered down curriculum to disinterested students in disrupted schools, it will take a great deal of effort to renew their enthusiasm for teaching. "The challenge that lies ahead of INSET organizations is not only the development of professional competence, but more importantly the restoration of confidence, changing attitudes and the acceptance of new democratic approaches to the issues of authority and leadership" (Hartshorne, 1992:283). As discussed earlier, teachers need a forum in which to vent their frustrations and discuss their personal orientation towards their work, in a non-threatening, non-evaluative setting. *"Workshops should start talking about how things were before the struggle-- like what happened with workbooks and why its back"* (Interview 20). In order for teachers to reconcile their feelings about past, present and future conditions in their schools, these opportunities for discussion are essential. Motivational workshops in combination with skills training are crucial to the redevelopment of a culture of teaching, and thus, a culture of learning.

Planning Effective INSET:

Teacher upgrading is far from an unknown priority. The ANC framework for education and training, the RDP white paper, and the proposed national and provincial legislation each have sections devoted to this topic. The need is recognized. The solution is still not quite clear. Retraining thousands of teachers with relevant and accessible assistance is far from an easy undertaking. Current INSET policies are clearly not succeeding in their intended impact. Walker (1991) sums up much of the present discontent with in-service programming. "Little official encouragement is presently given to teachers who work for the DET to improve their work, apart from short courses organised by the education authorities themselves. Such courses, which teachers are 'instructed' to attend, are largely perceived as useless and irrelevant by the teachers, and disruptive and divisive by principals, who neither have a say in the timing of such In Service Teacher Education, nor a voice in which teachers attend" (p.4). In order for future attempts at teacher upgrading to be more accepted and useful, a number of obstacles must be worked out.

Logistics:

Teachers had a variety of suggestions for how workshops should be conducted. In order for these trainings to be effective, a number of basic logistical issues must be resolved. First of all, the issue

of participation needs to be addressed. Given the history of oppression and strict hierarchical control, to force teachers to attend workshops would create a great resistance to the program (Interview 17). On the other hand, if attendance is completely voluntary, it is likely that only the teachers who are least in need of the training will attend, and those who need it the most will decline participation. *"Most people attending workshops are those that see the light"* (Interview 20). Given the nature of school based reform, change will not be significant if it takes place at the level of the individual. It is already evident that the motivated, dedicated teachers currently in schools feel isolated and at times resented by their colleagues. *"The big problem in trying to evoke change is that when you do something, other people will criticize it, so you get demotivated"* (Interview 2). Instead, the locus of change must be located beyond the individual to the ethos of the school. Towards the creation of a culture of teaching and learning within the school, all members of the staff (and students) must be committed to effecting change. For this reason, it is necessary that all teachers participate in staff trainings and workshops. In order to avoid autocratic orders, teachers should decide when, where, what, and how INSET should be conducted.

A second logistical problem concerns when INSET should occur. Finding time to have staff meetings, workshops or trainings would seem like a minor concern. According to those interviewed, however, teachers are highly resistant to sacrificing their own time. *"When the bell rings at 2pm, the teachers all run home. You cannot even call a meeting after school. It's going to take a long time...."* (Interview 23). Lunch time and after school were off-limits according to teachers. Even in the course of my own research, I found teachers reluctant to spend their free-time being interviewed. Currently, teachers attend much of their training during school hours. While this is acceptable on an infrequent basis, if we attempt to implement regular and on-going training sessions, this amount of in-class time cannot be sacrificed. Teachers and principals alike have expressed great concern that "teachers involved in upgrading spend more time outside their classrooms than inside (Mkize & Gounden, 1990:15). Given the amount of teachers in need of additional training, it would be unreasonable to expect INSET should take place during school hours. An alternative arrangement must be devised.

Some teachers suggested that intensive staff training and planning workshops should occur during vacations and/or while students are writing exams (Interview 15, 19) Several other teachers suggested more radical changes to the work day as a means of securing staff time. These teachers

proposed that the school day for teachers be extended until 4 or 5pm. During this time, teachers would attend meetings, workshops, prepare lessons, mark tests, write exams, and participate in extracurricular school activities. This system would reduce the incentive for teachers to use class time for such duties, and would provide regular opportunities for staff to meet and discuss their progress. *"Teachers should be required to stay at school until 4pm. The first afternoon I'll be bored. The second day I'll be bored. Then the third day I'll say, 'Hey, I could be doing my planning right now..."* (Interview 20). A teacher from another school came up with a similar suggestion, elaborating that *"teachers should stay for meetings or workshops or staff development or sports. Teachers want to go to workshops during school but this would completely disrupt school!"* (Interview 23). This system could be extremely beneficial to the cohesive functioning of the school. It is unclear, however, how feasible this proposal is in reality. If teachers are resistant to sacrifice even one afternoon, it is unlikely they will be happy to give up all their afternoons. According to one teacher, however, the idea is feasible, given (once again) it goes through the necessary democratic processes. *"If this is discussed through teachers organisations, principals, schools, etc., teachers will accept it. As long as it is not imposed"* (Interview 23). Whatever the decision, ultimately schools will have to agree on regular staff meeting times. All of this must be resolved before we can even turn to the question of content.

Content:

While logistical concerns are critical to the successful implementation of INSET programs, they provide only the foundation for teacher training. Too often efforts towards teacher training are measured by such administrative statistics (i.e., the *quantity* of sessions and participants). Instead, much more attention should be given to the *quality* of programs and the satisfaction of participants.

Many interviewees criticized their previous experiences with INSET, claiming it to be largely ineffectual and a waste of time. *"Workshops should be done. And they should be effective. Sometimes you go to these workshops and you come back having gained nothing"* (Interview 15). This type of workshop can accomplish little more than a waste of class time and state funds. Unfortunately, this criticism is not uncommon with regards to African teacher training. According to Hofmeyr and Jaff (1992), DET has paid little attention to the effectiveness of their programming. *"DET's concentration on quantitative achievements has ignored the qualitative issues which are central to effective INSET"* (p.177). Being that even the quantitative achievements

of DETs in-service provision is insufficient, little can be said for the quality of these programs. Particularly given the backgrounds of most African teachers and the deprived conditions in which they work, the importance of quality training programs cannot be overstated (Fuller, 1986:491). In order for these trainings to be beneficial, they must address the relevant needs of the specific teachers being served.

Present and Future INSET Needs of Teachers:

While much change is expected in African schools over the next few years, at this point teachers must still make do with deprived working conditions, limited facilities and an absence of teaching aides. In many cases, the reason for failure of the PRESET was its unalignment with the realities of African teachers' environments. Teachers were trained in colleges and universities to make use of innovative teachers' aides when the later reality of their school did provide such opportunities. *"We don't do what we are taught in colleges. Because the colleges have all the materials but when you come here you don't have any of that. In our schools there are no teaching aides"* (Interview 18). Similar criticisms have been made of INSET programs. Their method of encouraging sophisticated teaching techniques makes use of facilities which are simply not available in most African schools. "An overwhelming majority (96,9%) of Black teachers state that resources in schools are insufficient to implement what INSET has taught them" (Mkize & Gounden, 1990:13; see also Walker, 1991:170). The obvious solution to this problem is to ensure that better resources and facilities are available to African teachers (see Chapter Five). Parallel efforts must be directed towards the upgrading of both teachers and their work environment. "The outcry for more resources to implement classroom strategies gained from upgrading courses has to be heeded. Otherwise the exercise of INSET will be partly futile. Money has to be invested in teaching resources, both material and human" (Mkize & Gounden, 1990:16). This solution, however, is not likely to occur overnight. In the meantime, in order for INSET to serve teachers' needs, it must be designed to work with the existing conditions of their schools.

Now this is not to say that all teaching aides are expensive and out of reach. A few teachers reported using pictures from magazines and songs to liven up their lessons and make learning interesting to the students. *"I try to use pictures, songs, fun stuff, magazine pictures to make learning interesting"* (Interview 12). Overall however, this type of innovation is difficult and time consuming to develop on one's own. Even given better resources, many teachers are not currently

equipped to integrate these materials into their present teaching style. *"Teachers need to be guided how to use the little they have--as of now they abuse it, waste it"* (Interview 2). Teachers need training both to make better use of their present conditions as well as to be able to take advantage of their future opportunities

The Role of Teachers in Planning INSET:

Once we assess the needs of teachers, it would seem like a simple process to provide the necessary information. There is much evidence to suggest, however, that the basic provision of information is insufficient to change teachers' techniques. Much of the recent literature on effective teacher training programs indicates that they should be participatory, interactive experiences in which teachers have a role in both the planning and process of the training sessions. "Democratic and participatory forms of INSET, in which teachers are participants in change, rather than the users or implementers of 'teacher-proof' curricula, should be developed" (Walker, 1991:7). Particularly in South Africa, democratization of education is a priority which extends to the education of teachers. In order for teachers to feel committed to and motivated about new teaching techniques, it is important that they have a sense of collective ownership of the changes. "There are thus two powerful reasons why INSET strategies in South Africa should be based on the active involvement of teachers. The first, quite simply, is that such strategies have been shown to be most successful. The second is more important: within an autocratic society those who are concerned about INSET and who also claim to support the democratisation of South African society must be committed to the empowerment of teachers and not their continued subjugation" (Van den Berg, 1987:26). Thus teachers should be asked to contribute to the substance of workshops, identifying their needs and cooperatively working towards solutions.

The achievement of democratic participation, however, is not a simple process (see Chapter 9). The transformation of a system from a strict hierarchy to an egalitarian community could be met with resistance from both ends of the spectrum. From the department's side, a major change in orientation is required. Until this point, the state education officials have viewed teachers "as employees, not as professionals, and [have claimed] total ownership of their thoughts, actions and behaviour" (Hartshorne, 1987:9). In order for department officials (many of whom were active in the former government) to reorient themselves to new democratic practices will require major organizational change. It is beyond the scope of the present research to advise the nature of this

transformation; suffice it to say that in order for teachers to inherit greater professional responsibilities for their work, a reallocation of power from all levels of the education hierarchy must be achieved.

From the side of teachers, a surprising amount of resistance can also be expected before they embrace a participatory role. Walker (1991) gives an interesting account of the struggle to create a participatory teacher training program. While it was her intention to facilitate a program where the input and suggestions came from teachers, she found that teachers expected explicit directions in lecture-format. They wanted concrete skills and instructions on how to improve their teaching, finding little value in interactive discussion amongst themselves. In her dissertation, Walker describes the difficulties in finding a balance between "democracy and direction; and how to ensure teachers take control" (Walker, 1991:204). She goes on to discuss the nature of change in a "culture that views teachers as uncritical receivers and implementers of an official curriculum" (Walker, 1991:206). These views have permeated the mentality of teachers themselves, who now approach their own professional development as a top-down process in which they simply listen and absorb.

Walker's experiences highlight an interesting dilemma in teacher training. She was confronted with a group of teachers eager to improve their pedagogical techniques. She was also confronted with a group of learners trained to passively receive knowledge. Walker had two options available: She could have lectured the teachers, giving them concrete methods for improving their instruction. Undoubtedly, teachers would gain from her insights and improve their own instruction as a result. This she refers to as 'reform'. Walker's second option was much more challenging. Here, she could have struggled with the existing hierarchy and insisted on working towards the slow development of a participatory learning environment. This she refers to as 'transformation'. In the first case, positive change would have occurred. Teachers would have had new skills and more advanced techniques. They would not, however, be prepared to continue the upgrading process on their own; as new problems would certainly emerge, it is unlikely these teachers would have the necessary strategies to cope self-sufficiently. The second strategy would work exactly towards this ideal of self-sufficiency. By building the support capacities within the school, teachers would be better equipped to tackle new issues as they emerged. The differentiation between reform and transformation presents an interesting paradigm with which to view educational change. Many of

the 'answers' to existing problems could be easily and efficiently addressed by 'experts' in the field. This type of reform, however, will not strengthen the capacity of schools to progress on their own. A transformation in decision-making hierarchies is necessary to accomplish comprehensive, systemic, and on-going reform.

Other studies on South African in-service training provide ample evidence for the claim that participatory school-based training is the most effective in motivating change. A review of 97 studies on INSET activity concluded that school-based INSET, in which teachers were actively involved in the planning and implementation of INSET activities, was "more effective in influencing complex behaviour changes and teacher attitudes [than were pre-established teacher training courses]; that the collaborative involvement of teachers in course planning led to greater success" (in Schofield, 1995:160). Specifically with regards to township schools, in which the training of teachers is closely linked to broader reform initiatives, successful implementation of school-based INSET can contribute to an overall improvement in the culture of learning. A case-study on teacher in-service training in Sharpville found that school-based INSET resulted in "improved teacher morale, the initiation of broader programmes of school change, and improved teaching and learning environments" (Schofield, 1995:163). Achieving the active participation of teachers in the planning and provision of INSET can be a time-consuming and difficult process. When implemented successfully, however, the results can extend beyond improved instruction towards the revitalization of the teaching and learning culture.

The present study gives ample evidence to indicate that changes at the school level must be decided and implemented through a process of inclusive consultation with teachers. This democratic process, though time consuming, is necessary to inform and enthuse teachers about the proposed changes, leading to more effective implementation. Grassroots consultation, however, is important not only for school-level transformation. According to those interviewed, teachers should also have a much greater role in planning national and provincial policies.

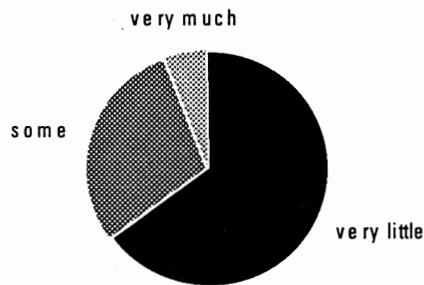
CHAPTER NINE: DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION:

The democratization of public policy issues is complex and highly contentious, particularly in the present South African context. In the formulation of a new national education policy, there has been a great emphasis on the participation of a broad range of stakeholders, including those from the grassroots level. Prior domination of policy-making by academic "experts" and high-level bureaucrats has come under deep suspicion by education practitioners and the general public. In order for the legitimacy of new legislation to be achieved, it is essential that the greater population perceives these policies to be representative of their own needs and interests.

The ANC has repeatedly acknowledged the need for widespread democratic participation. Within the ANC Policy Framework for Education, this priority is clearly expressed. "Education and training policy and practice shall be governed by the principle of democracy, ensuring the active participation of various interest groups, in particular teachers, parents, workers, students, employers, and the broader community" (ANC, 1994:4). Clearly, the nature of policy-making in South Africa is expected to undergo a massive transformation, establishing forums for participation by the public at large.

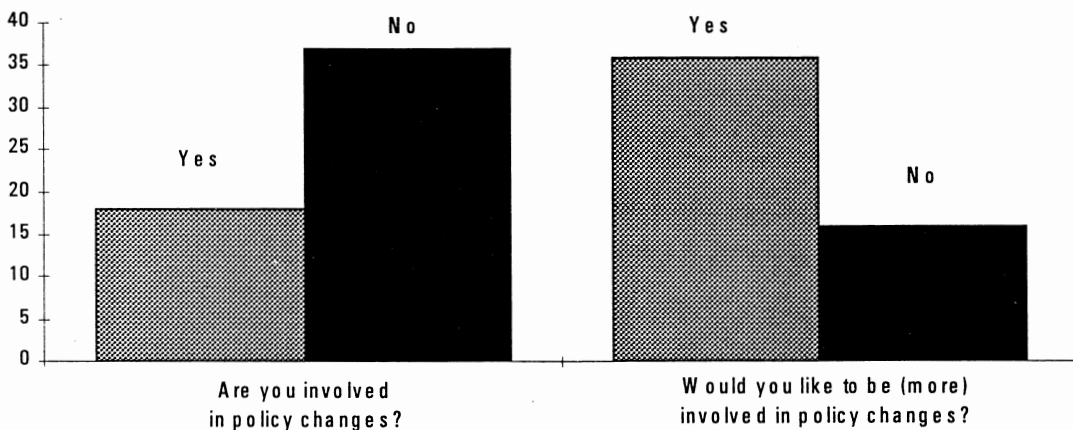
Based on the present research, however, these changes have not yet extended to Khayelitsha. According to respondents, there is a significant amount of evidence to indicate that teachers continue to feel excluded from the policy process. At the basic level of awareness, very few teachers considered the national and provincial departments to be very effective in communicating recent policy developments. Thirty-five out of 54 teachers (65 percent) indicated that they had received "very little" information from the departments, while only 3 out of the 54 (0.05 percent) felt the departments had provided them with "very much" information (see Chart 9.1). It is unclear from the present data whether teachers found other sources to be more informative.

Chart 9.1
How well have you been kept informed by the National and Provincial Education Departments about policies being developed?



Beyond basic knowledge, actual participation in policy decisions was also uncommon. A majority of teachers who are not currently involved in policy-making expressed a desire to become involved, and many of those already involved would prefer to be more involved. Only 18 out of 54 teachers (33 percent) claim to be involved in policy changes while 37 out of 53 teachers (70 percent) expressed a desire to be (more) involved in policy decisions. (see Chart 9.2). *"I would like to be more involved in changes. I am a Sadtu member-- they keep me informed about changes, but I am not personally involved"* (Interview 23).

Chart 9.2
Involvement in Policy Changes



Reasons for the lack of involvement are unclear from the questionnaire responses. Comments from the interviews on this issue are varied. Some teachers feel excluded from the policy process altogether; they view the policy process as closed to grassroots participation and see no margin for

their involvement. *"In order for any policies to be effective for improving schools, people need to consult with organisations in schools. Formulation of policies must involve these organizations (teachers' unions, SRCs, governing bodies). It's not happening now. There's not much link between policy makers and schools"* (Interview 10). Several teachers expressed similar concerns. According to these criticisms, democratic participation is essential to the success of any policy process. Given that the fight to end apartheid was waged at the grassroots, these teachers feel that the ongoing battle to liberate education should maintain its reliance on 'people's power'. *"Now that the main struggle is over, they fail to involve the people in decisions. They have no time to come down here. But what they have time for is to fly to America and study their education system and to Zimbabwe. They are appointed officials, not even elected. There are only 'experts' making decisions. No local people. They forget that the people of South Africa are very politically literate. A guy in a shack could give Mr De Klerk a lecture on democracy"* (Interview 22). This teacher makes the very strong argument that the general South African public are highly capable of sophisticated political decisions. Aside from issues of democracy, this type of exclusion results in the sacrifice of some 'expert' opinions based on practical experience. A third teacher echoes this sentiment, criticizing the assumptions of current policy development as having little connection with real school issues. *"Policies are not going in the right direction because there is not enough consultation with people at the ground level, such as teachers, parents, and students. Policies are being developed by MPs-- members of the ANC, etc. They are politicians, not educationalists"* (Interview 13). These perspectives leave little ambiguity as far as their dissatisfaction with the continuing system of closed policy-making. Accordingly, the state should be making a great effort to solicit the active participation of teachers and other ground-level constituencies.

Other respondents seemed to accept partial responsibility for their lack of involvement. They acknowledge the opportunities for participation but have not made the effort to get involved. One teacher hinted at the possibility that her lack of initiative may be responsible for her lack of involvement. *"No one comes in to ask teachers. One woman came from the publishing company, but that's it. The failure may be mine for not getting involved, but no one has come to initiate my involvement either"* (Interview 2). Another teacher made the point more strongly, by relaying the formation of the recent curriculum planning team. According to this interviewee, teachers were given the opportunity to participate, but they chose instead to remain detached critics. *"All*

teachers were called together to put their input into the interim syllabus, but there were none from our side. The MEC appointed a certain number of people from all former departments but very few from DET. The guy organising it said that some DET teachers were called to participate and they never came-- now they are throwing stones, but when it was time for their involvement, they were reluctant to come" (Interview 6). This teacher summed up the situation by explaining, *"It's easier to dismantle than to build"*. Essentially, teachers were eager to participate when it came to criticizing the department or opposing state decisions. When they were given the opportunity to contribute to improving policies, however, they refused the offer. If this perspective is accurate, it will be extremely difficult to accomplish the democratic ideal embraced by the ANC.

While some respondents indicated the lack of participation was the fault of individuals, others rejected the notion that individuals (teachers, parents and students) should be involved at all. While this perspective was held by a minority of those interviewed, the viewpoint merits analysis. The comments presented primarily relate to school-level control. The arguments, however, can be extended to the provincial and national policy processes. Primarily, criticisms against democratic (grassroots) participation focused on issues of efficiency, uniformity, and quality. First, one teacher explained the contrast in governance between African and Coloured schools. While according to his perspective African schools undoubtedly have a more successful democracy, it is questionable whether this system ultimately benefits the school. *"In Coloured schools the principal has much more power--he makes more decisions. Here it is much more democratic between teachers, parents and students.... I am not raising hand to say which I would like; but it is more efficient over there"* (Interview 16). This teacher raises the valid and essential problem with democratic control. While the participatory approach strives towards equality and inclusiveness, it is impractical for swift, bold decision making. This complaint has been raised on countless occasions with respect to government policies (Weiler, 1981). Because of the number of commissions and public approval forums each policy must go through, the policy action cannot be effected until much much later. As the negotiations process can require a great deal of time, there develops the growing perceptions that 'nothing is being done'. While on a national level, it is unlikely this teacher would prefer to return to an autocratic leadership, he makes a valid point in questioning the effectiveness of participatory governance at the school- (educational-) level.

A second teacher focused more on the outcomes of decentralized (democratic) decision-making in terms of uniformity. Focusing on choosing required school reading, this respondent argued that if teachers around the country all participated in choosing texts for their schools, the result would be a highly differentiated curriculum across regions¹¹. While this may allow for an expression of regional preferences, it would fragment the education system across the country. *"It is not wise to let teachers choose textbooks. A unified national department should choose textbooks so there will be a standard together across the whole country"* (Interview 9). While the pros and cons of school-/regional- choice could comprise a lengthy argument, suffice it to say that some teachers view the uniformity of textbooks across schools as essential for educational parity.

Similar to the above arguments, a third teacher took up the issue of quality. Using the example of school governance committees, this teacher argued that while representative participation may be the most equitable, it does not guarantee the greatest quality of input nor outcome. Given that a majority of teachers, parents and students have no training in governance nor school leadership, it is unclear that their contributions will be beneficial.

"The majority of parents are illiterate-- they are just there [in the PTSA] but they're not in a position to make very good suggestions. They have no school background so they can't say what they want to see happen in schools. So it's easy for parents to be manipulated by teachers who are lazy. We must ensure that parents of the PTSA are literate. Not to elect but to select. People complain it's not democratic" (Interview 10). According to this perspective, rather than ensuring representative participation via democratic elections, schools should appoint individuals who have proven qualified to fulfill the necessary obligations. This selection policy may result in more relevant and productive decisions and a more effective leadership body. This teacher did not, however, elaborate on who should select the leadership committee-- surely if that National Party was in control, she would not support the appointment of their selections.

The argument over democratic participation in education governance, whether at the national or local level, warrants serious consideration. The trade-offs between efficiency and democracy, quality and legitimacy are not easily decided. The three viewpoints discussed above present serious flaws in the effectiveness of participatory governance. The arguments, however, are inconclusive as to whether these flaws are endemic to democracy. Particularly with regards to

¹¹The existing policy proposal established a uniform core curriculum and then allows for remaining sections to be chosen by individual provinces.

quality issues, the existing limitations of ground level participants (with respect to their education and experience) are not unchangeable. In fact, it can be argued that by rejecting representative participation on the basis of low skills, a perpetuation of existing deficiencies will occur. NEPI articulates this position with regards to curriculum planning. In a discussion of centralized versus decentralized decision-making, the argument of non-expert participation emerges. "Policies for teacher involvement in the curriculum relate to policies for centralization and decentralization. Centralization of curriculum decision-making and development may seem to be a viable strategy when teachers' skills are low, but in fact it may help to perpetuate low skills. Decentralization, on the other hand, may encourage the development of teacher professionalism and 'ownership' of the curriculum, but it would require greater teacher support to implement equitably" (NEPI, 1992:25). According to this perspective, ground-level participation is easily dismissed on the basis of low knowledge and training. Rather than submit to existing conditions, however, it is possible to use broad participation as a *mechanism* for training and experience. If discussions can be facilitated in such a way as to inform *and* include participants, their capacity for self-sufficient governance will develop. Here we return to the paradigm of reform versus transformation. Expert bureaucrats could easily come up with policies to sufficiently 'reform' the education system. The long-term impact of these policies, however, would be small. Instead, if the policy process is included as a portion of the entire process of change, comprehensive and systemic transformation may be possible. Efforts to build school-level capacities in terms of leadership and governance have been a major priority of current reform initiatives (National Education Bill, 1995; RDP White Paper on Education, 1995).

A focus on transformation rather than reform encourages us to view the *process* of change as equally important to the outcomes themselves. It is through the process of inclusion and participation that abstract policies can be accepted and understood by those at the foundation of change; namely, teachers. As one teacher articulated, reform agendas too often remain at the level of educational jargon. "*The terms 'redress' and 'empowerment' are big out there but they have not impacted the school*" (Interview 2). It is only if teachers feel involved in and informed about policy decisions that the jargon of educational reform can become a reality. Teachers are the ones who will interpret policies and integrate them into their instruction. The more teachers understand about the changes and the more they actively contribute to the decision making, the greater impact these changes will have in the classroom-- where they are needed most.

Particularly given the history of South African political control, there is a great need for present policies to demonstrate an overt commitment to democratic and egalitarian ideals.

"An important consideration for those who design policies is not only what outcomes these policies will achieve (greater equity, more efficient schools, more employment of graduates, etc.) but also how these policies will affect the search for added legitimacy" (Weiler, in Badat, 1991: 21). This legitimacy of policy is critical to gaining a broad base of support for its enactment. Thus, while the process may in itself be less efficient than non-consultative decision-making, the legitimacy which results from democratic inclusiveness will guarantee more acceptance from practitioners and therefore more successful implementation. "These processes...can only take place, certainly if they are to be effective, if the initiative comes from teachers themselves, or at least if they have the active support and commitment of the teachers involved" (Hartshorne, 1992:283). Thus it can be concluded that for reasons of *legitimacy* of the process, *effectiveness* of the implementation and *transformation* of existing capacities, democratic participation in all levels of educational change is crucial.

SECTION FOUR: POLICY IMPLICATIONS

CHAPTER TEN: CURRENT POLICY INITIATIVES

While this research project was not intended for policy purposes, the perspectives of African teachers hold certain important policy implications which warrant discussion. In light of the present findings, an analysis of current policy initiatives could indicate the degree of accord or dissonance between the priorities of teachers and policy makers. While the teachers in this study represent only Khayelitsha secondary schools, this comparison can alert us to potential disparities which would warrant more extensive investigation.

Current national and provincial education policy primarily addresses broad structural changes within the education system. Given the transitional state of government affairs, the major national policy focus has been on organizational and administrative issues such as governance, finance, and access. While these issues are undoubtedly a major priority for planning the foundation of the new educational system, there have been few efforts thus far to address comprehensive school-level change. The National Education Policy Bill (National Assembly, 1995) establishes a unified National Department of Education and defines its role within in the newly decentralized state. The second major piece of national legislation addresses The Organization, Governance and Funding of Schools (National Assembly, 1996). As indicated by the title, this bill establishes the management structure for schools, redefining school categories (public and independent schools), determining governance responsibilities (of provincial- and school-level structures), and establishing a finance plan for national and local expenditure. The bill does discuss school-level concerns of quality and renewal; these comments, however, remain at the level of principle, however, without establishing specific policy mechanisms with which to effect change.

At a provincial level, a similar concern is displayed for organizational and administrative issues. The Western Cape School Education Bill finalizes the unification of departments by combining old legislation from the former departments and defines the new provincial responsibilities (Provincial Assembly, 1996). This legislation represents a reorganization of existing structures within the new education framework. In terms of education reform, this bill does not establish any new guidelines or objectives.

The current trends in national and provincial policy are understandable given the massive restructuring in all levels of government. It is cause for concern, however, that no attempt has been

made to address comprehensive school reform. Despite overt commitments to addressing the 'crisis in education' and rebuilding a 'culture of learning', these statements remain at the level of principle rather than policy. According to Jacklin and Kruss (1995), "current education policy is concerned with symbolic rather than substantive change, with changing form and structure rather than content, quality and contextual factors" (p.1). Substantive change is more time-consuming, costly, complicated and more difficult to achieve. Despite these obstacles, an improvement in the quality of the learning environment is critical to the future success of South Africa's education system. Unless these issues receive direct attention, the status of African education will remain a relic of apartheid engineering.

While most current education policies are absorbed in the process of national and provincial restructuring, one major initiative is targeted directly at the learning culture in schools. The Presidential Lead RDP Project on the Culture of Learning was established in 1994 to address school-level reform issues. According to its mission statement, the programme seeks to "restore the culture of learning in educational institutions through quality improvement initiatives which target the physical learning environment, community involvement in governance, and other key initiatives related to quality, such as management and school-based reform"(Culture of Learning Programme document, 1994:1). This document goes on to emphasize the importance of a 'holistic' and 'systemic' approach to school reform. As an RDP programme, this project is meant to further the established RDP education goals as well as those of the national education white paper.

A Culture of Learning project team has been established in each of the nine provinces to allow for decentralized planning and implementation. Each local team has drafted its own business plan based on the national Culture of Learning framework. In order to facilitate community participation, project teams (comprised of parents, teachers, students, and the headmaster) are established at each targeted school to decide on priorities for reform, within the scope of the province's overall plan. Implementation of the programme began at the end of 1994 (Interview 24).

The Western Cape proposal was one of the first to gain approval. In its first year of operation (1994), the Western Cape Culture of Learning Programme reached 80 Coloured and African schools; by 1995 this number had increased to 280 schools. According to the Western Cape Project Manager Francois Joubert, the focus of this programme thus far has been exclusively on

physical renovation of the schools. The primary objective articulated by the Western Cape business plan is to "restore the culture of learning in state primary and secondary schools through the restoration and repair and standardization of existing physical facilities" (Business Plan, 1/95). According to Joubert, himself an architect, an emphasis on physical upgrading of schools guaranteed the most efficient and observable signs of improvement. Better looking schools, claims Joubert, will give the public the perception that change is happening and encourage community support of further school reform. By actively involving community members in the planning and implementation of these reforms, Joubert expects attitudes concerning education will improve, leading to a more positive culture of learning (Interview 24).

While the community is invited to participate in every aspect of their school's renovation, they are not at liberty to divert funds towards other (non-physical) reform initiatives. In this way, their participation is severely restricted to the final stages of planning and implementation. Joubert acknowledges this as a problem. Overall project goals remain in the hands of a small group of national and provincial officials, with few opportunities for community input. Several conflicts have arisen surrounding this issue, with communities arguing for a greater role in the redevelopment process. There are no current plans, however, to change the current decision-making hierarchy. According to Joubert, their office does not have the current capacity to cater to the wide range of needs expressed by each individual community. Instead, priority issues were chosen on behalf of communities which are likely to be reform priorities of all underprivileged schools (Interview 24).

Physical renovation is not the only priority issue identified by the Western Cape Project Team. In a draft document, the team has established 12 project objectives, including an emphasis on teacher upgrading, curriculum development, support of school management and administration, and other school-based initiatives related to quality reform (project document, draft). Little effort, however, has been made towards the implementation of any of these school quality initiatives. Instead, the major focus remains on quantitative improvements in school facilities. Within the programme's five year time span, the major goal of the Western Cape project is to get 800 schools involved in the renovation process (Interview, 30/1/96). Thus the Cape has chosen breadth over depth in its strategy for school reform.

Nationally, a similar emphasis has been placed on physical reform by each of the provinces (Interview, 6/2/96). According to a document from the national programme committee, provinces were expected to spend the first year addressing physical reforms, with funding for subsequent years being used to "broaden the focus of the RDP activities in the school sector to **quality issues**" (Report, 31/1/95, emphasis in original text). Most provinces have in fact added a school governance component to their project objectives, working on capacity building and management training to enable broad community participation in school governance committees. The Western Cape is the only province not to have taken on a school governance initiative. Other 'quality' issues have yet to be addressed by any province.

According to Zolile Siswana, a member of National Culture of Learning Committee, substantive reform initiatives have been delayed by the structural and administrative changes occurring within the department(s) of education. It has not yet been possible to collaborate with the necessary department officials, whose guidance and participation would be crucial for the planning and implementation of substantive reforms (Interview 25).

Whether a result of conscious planning or due to logistical complications, the total emphasis on physical renovations to the exclusion of quality reform issues is highly problematic as a strategy for improving the culture of learning. The underlying assumption of this strategy is that the improvement of material resources of a school will have an indirect impact on the attitudes and morale of the members of that school and the surrounding community. While it is reasonable to assume that physical renovations do create immediate positive impressions, it is unclear that this impact will be substantial or long-term. In fact, according to the findings of this study, physical improvements without concurrent attention to the motivational and skill levels of the staff will create little sustainable change in the culture of learning. "It will be comparatively easy to create the structures that will be necessary, but to create 'new' teachers...and to transform their values, attitudes and behaviour, to step up quality and relevance in the classroom, will be much more difficult and demanding. (Hartshorne, in McGregor, 1992:13). Changing the culture of a school involves much more than new buildings or more textbooks. The RDP Culture of Learning Programme seems to ignore these complexities, addressing only the easily emendable deficiencies.

The Culture of Learning Programme has been further criticized by policy analysts for its emphasis on symbolic-- rather than systemic-- change. According to Chisholm and Motala (1995), the national commitment to the 'culture of learning' has been primarily aimed at bolstering legitimacy though increased access and democratic governance; these initiatives, however important, do not address the nature of learning within the classrooms nor the context or culture in which these schools operate. "The call for the restoration of the culture of learning and teaching has been the most potent symbol of the commitment to quality in education..... Because the restoration of the culture of learning has become a Presidential Lead Project and an RDP programme, it has been interpreted as a means to increase access through the building of schools and the establishment of democratic governance structures.... However, it raises the questions about why expanded access is seen as the principal route to improving the quality of education, when the conditions inside...classrooms are also so critical to quality" (Chisholm & Motala, 1995:20). This focus on quantitative advances such as access and infrastructure are hardly sufficient to comprise an effective strategy for improving the *culture* of learning. Rather these tangible, external aspects of school improvement must be paired with an attention to quality issues, including the attitudes and behaviours of those operating *within* the school context.

Based on the findings of the present research, current education policy has not yet attended to the priority issues identified by teachers. It would be possible to conclude that teachers have a limited perspective on the education system and thereby focus exclusively on school-level concerns, ignoring the important administrative and structural issues. On the other hand, unless education policy has an impact on school-level effectiveness, it can hardly be considered an adequate strategy for reform.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has covered a wide range of issues relevant to our understanding of the culture of learning in Khayelitsha schools. The theoretical and historical basis for the culture of learning was examined, followed by strategies for improving this learning culture in African schools.

Ogbu and Willis argue that the initial deterioration of the culture of learning is caused by institutionalized social and economic inequalities which lead oppressed groups to reject dominant value systems (i.e., education values). This argument implies that the elimination of structural inequalities is paramount to the revival of a learning culture. Ogbu additionally qualifies this position by predicting a cultural lag, during which attitudes and behaviors will remain constant despite structural changes. In order to facilitate cultural change, direct interventions are necessary at the level of schools and individuals.

This perspective was found to be highly relevant to the South African context. Many structural inequalities have been eliminated since the end of apartheid, but the culture of learning remains at a minimum level, with students and teachers maintaining attitudes of apathy and/or animosity towards the system of education. There is an obvious and immediate need for school-level intervention.

In order to investigate strategies for improving the culture of learning, the attitudes and opinions of teachers were solicited. Teachers were chosen because of their positioning within the education structure. African teachers were educated and trained under the Bantu education system and have extensive personal experience with its shortcomings. Further, their experience teaching in the poor conditions of African schools gives them a first-hand perspective on the learning process and the major obstacles which hinder its effectiveness. Finally, teachers' perspectives were solicited because their viewpoints are critical to the successful rehabilitation of schools. In order for reform initiatives to be successful, teachers must understand and support the given changes, attitudes which are more likely given participation in the decision-making process.

The above reasons were important for selecting teachers' perspectives as the focus of this study. During the course of the research, an unanticipated issue was revealed which further verified the

importance of teachers in this process of change. Aside from having an important perspective on the overall school culture, it was found that teachers see themselves as the substantial determinant of the school culture. The 'culture of teaching', or the attitudes and behaviours with which teachers approach their work, was found to be the critical factor in a school's overall culture of learning. In order for students to be motivated about their work, teachers must first demonstrate an interest and enthusiasm for the learning process. Currently this enthusiasm is lacking among a significant proportion of African teachers. Levels of motivation and morale are extremely low, and consequently the learning culture is virtually nonexistent. In order for widescale school improvement to be possible, serious attention must be paid to needs of teachers.

These findings are particularly significant in light of the fact that the emphasis on teachers as the critical determinant of the culture of learning was an outcome of the study rather than an intended focus. While teachers were asked to comment on a wide range of variables, including material resources, curriculum, and discipline, among others, they overwhelmingly accepted personal and collective responsibility for the major crisis in the culture of learning. Without using this forum as an opportunity to promote higher teacher salaries or easier work loads, teachers called for support and training to enable them to work harder and to work better. These respondents maintained that unless they invested personal effort into building a culture of learning, school reform would achieve little success.

These findings are striking given past research which indicates opposite tendencies among African teachers. As discussed in Chapter Eight, teachers were found to blame students or external circumstances for the poor status of teaching and learning, rather than to accept personal responsibility. This comparison lends credibility to the present results, suggesting that the group of teachers interviewed were convinced of their personal responsibility, despite tendencies to deny culpability. This comparison is not intended to implicate teachers as blame-worthy for all school deficiencies. To the contrary, teachers should be commended for moving beyond the many legitimate excuses for the poor learning environments in schools, to envision their potential capacity for improving the situation.

Thus the study largely became a look at teachers' perspectives on themselves. In order for the culture of learning to develop, they said teacher motivation is of critical importance. As a means of

improving teachers' motivation, respondents called for an increase in discipline and evaluation (of teachers), better working conditions, and, above all, an increase and improvement in the provision of in-service training and workshops. This final recommendation received the majority of attention. Teachers discussed the deficiencies in previous training experiences, the massive need for moral-raising and skill-building workshops, and strategies for implementing relevant and successful training sessions.

Because teachers were as concerned with the workshops' impact on teacher *attitudes* as with their impact on *skills*, the process of the workshops became an important focus. Rather than serving exclusively to provide information, workshops were found to be more successful if they included teachers in the planning and problem-solving stages of the training, thereby encouraging them to take an active role in their own upliftment. Particularly given the history of African education, during which teachers were given no voice and no control over their own profession, attempts to involve teachers in the decision-making processes which affect their work and demonstrate an appreciation for their contribution could be critical to improving the motivation levels of teachers; an achievement which would profoundly affect the redevelopment of a culture of learning in their schools.

The overall picture painted by these findings illustrates the complexity of the culture of learning and the variety of material and human resources which come into play. The presentation of these findings could be interpreted as a hierarchical ranking of factors, with resources at the lower end and teacher training at the top. This emphasis was intended less to imply an empirical preeminence of human resources than to demonstrate or compensate for the lack of attention given to these critical components of the learning culture. While material resources are highly important to the overall process of school improvement, too often this is where the activity ends. The RDP Culture of Learning project is one such example. While initially this project was intended to address extensive systemic concerns, it has been reduced to a focus on physical renovations to the exclusion of quality reforms. This shift seems to indicate a move towards the 'easy way out', emphasizing visible change rather than the more complicated dynamics operating within schools. This approach has little chance of effecting its intended goals, a challenge which would require a much more substantive commitment.

Without degrading the significance of material reforms, this project strove to demonstrate the profound importance of human resources. This sector of the school environment is much neglected by research and policy because it is difficult to identify measurable criteria for assessing the depth of the problem and the impact of responses. The level of student and teacher motivation is not amenable to quantitative indicators and it is therefore difficult to demonstrate marked improvement following intervention. Coupled with the fact that human resource interventions are, from the start, difficult to implement successfully (as discussed in Chapter Eight), investment in this area is considered risky and unreliable. Compared to investments in material resources, which are much more easily assessed, ameliorated and have the added advantage of receiving more public recognition, human resources are considered the less profitable investment. The difficulties involved in measuring and achieving human resource improvements is a reasonable explanation for the lack of attention given by policy initiatives such as the RDP Culture of Learning Programme. This does not, however, imply that human resource issues are not a critical and substantial component of comprehensive school reform. If anything, these findings indicate the significant need for additional research to investigate the potential for human resource improvements and propose practical implementation plans for policy-makers. Rather than suppressing human resource needs in favour of more easily achievable reforms, we must work harder to make comprehensive school reform a possibility. Given the history and the current status of African schools, there is a tremendous need for "approaches which necessitate changing school cultures, a more difficult process than the simple imposition of politically popular *structural* solutions to educational change" (Schofield, 1995:156, emphasis in original text). It is the school culture, not the school buildings, which promotes an interest in or apathy towards learning. If true educational reform is to be achieved, we must go beyond simple material renovations to address the human and cultural resources within schools.

The results of this study do indicate a (compensatory) prioritization of human resource issues over material ones. More importantly, however, it is essential that we recognize the high degree of interdependence between each of these variables. The successful improvement of the culture of learning can only be expected given a concurrent focus on each of the major material and human resource issues identified by teachers. As discussed above, teacher upgrading is closely linked to the availability of facilities (i.e., teaching aides) and the content of the curriculum (i.e., encouraging critical thinking rather than rote dictation). The use of corporal punishment and 'lazy' teaching

methods is closely related to material issues such as pupil-teacher ratios. And the motivation of students is affected by the relevance and quality of the curriculum content. Conversely, more textbooks, new sports facilities, and an advanced curriculum would have little impact if teachers were not motivated and trained to make use of them. Each of these factors is related to the others in complex ways. It would be impossible to expect comprehensive reform given attention to only one segment of the overall conditions.

One of the most important lessons to be learnt from teachers' perspectives is that the problems in schools (as well as their corresponding solutions) cannot be reduced to simple nor independent variables. Schools represent complex interactive systems which can be defined by their structural, cultural and individual components. Recognizing the complexity of schools enables us to move one step closer to recognizing the complexity of school change. While this realization presents a daunting challenge in terms of reform efforts, it is the most realistic and responsible approach. "Few individuals in schools [or beyond] appreciate how multidimensional change is.... It has the effect of unsettling people and leads to resistance to change" (Steyn & Squelch, 1994: 190). This reaction is understandable; change is a difficult process, both for those implementing it as well as those experiencing it. Attempting to reduce the task by focusing on limited and measurable outcomes, however, will only result in superficial or fragmented change with little effect on the overall system. If our goal is to improve the culture of learning in schools then we must attend to the entire context of that culture, including each of the variables identified above.

The final major lesson to be learnt from the findings of this study concerns the process of change. Whether establishing a new code of discipline, planning teacher in-service training, or contributing to national policy, the process of change is in many respects as important as the outcomes. Particularly when focusing on the dynamic culture of a school, rather than its more fixed structures, a great deal of attention must be given to the human process of change. It is difficult to change attitudes or modify behaviors with an imposed policy or an abrupt decree. Even if this decision has been researched by the most knowledgeable experts and approved by the top political officials, the external imposition of such a policy is likely to achieve only superficial compliance. Rather than treating school-level individuals as the mere recipients of change, they should be encouraged to participate throughout the planning processes. With respect to teachers (future research could extend this argument to students, parents and other community members), inclusion

in relevant decision-making processes can have a great impact on their understanding and support of the final resolution. Given the crucial role teachers play in the implementation of education reform initiatives, their knowledge and enthusiasm for these initiatives is critical to the successful realization of the intended policy. Currently teachers feel excluded and distant from the policy-making process. They have little voice in planning in-service activities or deciding priorities for RDP funds, and they therefore have little reason to actively commit themselves to the reform process. If, on the other hand, teachers were given greater responsibility (along with technical and financial assistance) for personal and school improvement, they would develop both the capacity and the will to promote effective change. It is difficult for policy-makers, or even researchers, to understand the complex dynamics which operate within school cultures. Teachers, on the other hand, have intimate knowledge of these issues. It therefore makes sense that teachers should be actively involved in the overall process of change, from inception to implementation, particularly in reference to school-level reform.

This thesis solicited opinions and attitudes from teachers in order to gain their perspectives on improving the culture of learning in their schools. While teachers are not the only group with valuable insights concerning effective school reform, they are one such group which tends to receive little attention or recognition. Without being specialists in one particular sector of schooling (i.e., curriculum development, teacher training, etc.), teachers have experience with the overall and interactive impact of each of these domains. Based on the nature of their experience, teachers can offer a perspective on school-level change which takes the entire school culture into account.

The findings from this study represent the viewpoints of one group of Khayelitsha teachers. Future research would be instrumental in expanding this sample in order to provide a more extensive understanding of the culture of learning and potential strategies for its improvement. The inclusion of teachers from other regional areas would be one important extension of the present study, in order to gauge potential provincial and/or urban-rural differences. Further, the representation of other school populations could provide important complementary insights to the present findings. Students and parents are two such groups who could provide further clarity on the improvement of the culture of learning in their schools. These school-level perspectives can play an important role in explicating the complex and dynamic school culture. Based on these perspectives, a realistic and

representative strategy for improving the culture of learning could be developed; a strategy which includes both expertise and legitimacy based on the broad consultation of relevant stakeholders.

APPENDIX A: PERSONAL STATISTICS OF TEACHERS

INTERVIEW SAMPLE:

Distribution of Subjects Taught:

Subject	Commerce	English	History	Geography	Math	Physical Science	Afrikaans	Xhosa	Home Economics
#Teachers	1	7	4	2	1	1	4	1	2

note: many teachers teach more than one subject

Distribution of Standards Taught:

Standard	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine	Ten
#Teachers	7	8	4	12	6

note: many teachers teach more than one standard

QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLE:

Distribution of Subjects Taught:

Subject	Economics	English	History	Geography	Math	Physical Science	Afrikaans	Xhosa	Home Economics
#Teachers	2	12	12	7	9	5	5	9	3
Subject	Biology	Guidance	General Sci	Accounting	Art	Computer studies	Needlewk	Typing	
#Teachers	7	3	2	4	1	1	1	2	

Distribution of Standards Taught:

Standard	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine	Ten
#Teachers	21	22	29	30	32

Total Teaching Experience:

Years	< One	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine	Ten	> Ten
#Teachers	2	4	1	6	4	8	5	5	7	3	4	7

Teaching Experience at Present School:

Years	< One	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Nine	Ten	> Ten
#Teachers	3	5	4	9	3	10	11	3	3	4	1	0

Education Qualifications:

Highest Qualification	Diploma	Bed	HDE	BA	Honors	MA	total
#Teachers	14	6	22	8	3	3	56

APPENDIX B: List of Interviews

<u>Number</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Subject(s)</u>	<u>Standard(s)</u>
1	15/8	Luhlaza	Principal	---
2	15/8	Luhlaza	English, Guidance	6, 10
3	17&24/8, 5&24/10	Matthew Goniwe	Principal	---
4	24/8	Matthew Goniwe	History, Xhosa	6, 9
5	6/9, 20/9, 18/10	Joe Slovo	Principal	---
6	7/9, 12/9, 3/10	Bolumko	Principal	---
7	11/9	Matthew Goniwe	English	10
8	11/9	Matthew Goniwe	History	9
9	11/9	Matthew Goniwe	Afrikaans	9
10	11/9	Matthew Goniwe	English	6
11	19/9	Bolumko	English & History	6, 7
12	3/10	Bolumko	Afrikaans	7, 9
13	3/10	Bolumko	English & Home Ec	7, 9
14	5/10	Matthew Goniwe	English	9, 10
15	5/10	Matthew Goniwe	Geography	7, 10
16	5/10, 24/10	Matthew Goniwe	Geography	6, 9
17	5/10	Matthew Goniwe	Afrikaans	6, 9
18	17/10	Matthew Goniwe	Afrikaans	7, 8
19	18/10	Joe Slovo	Commerce	7-10
20	18/10	Joe Slovo	Home Economics	6, 7, 9
21	24/10	Matthew Goniwe	Maths & Phys Sci	8, 9
22	8/11	Bolumko	English	7, 8
23	14/11	Luhlaza	History	9, 10
24	1/2/96	Francois Joubert, Project Manager of the Western Cape RDP Culture of Learning Programme		
25	6/2/96	Zolile Siswana, member of the National Committee for the RDP Culture of Learning Programme		

APPENDIX C: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Statement of Intent

The purpose of this research is to find out what teachers feel are the most important issues in education today. Policy is rapidly being developed at both the state and provincial level, directing school reform for the future of South Africa. Concerns have been raised, however, that this process of developing policy has involved very few individuals who have direct contact with problems facing schools. Teachers are rarely asked to comment on the direction they feel education should progress despite their most familiar grasp with the challenges at hand. This research seeks to compare the needs expressed by members of particular schools with the needs assumed in developing policies. More attention needs to be given to local concerns; this research is intended to contribute to a growing number of studies focused on those individuals most directly involved.

This research is part of a Masters Thesis for the University of Cape Town. The work has *no* affiliation to the Department of Education or to any governmental organisation.

It must be stressed that the purpose of this research is *not* to evaluate schools or teachers. The questions asked are not meant to judge the experiences or problems of schools; they are merely intended to promote an understanding of the changes and get to know the experiences of individual schools.

All information concerning individuals will be kept confidential.

Personal Information:

What is the name of your school? _____

What subject(s) do you teach? _____

What standard(s) do you teach? _____

How many years have you been teaching (total)? _____

How many years have you been teaching at your present school? _____

What are your educational qualifications (HDE, BEd, diploma, BA, etc.)? _____

3) What do you anticipate will be the biggest problem in your school over the *next five years*?
(choose *one or two* items):

- a. Resources and facilities 1. _____
- b. Teacher motivation 2. _____
- c. Student motivation
- d. Improved instruction
- e. Parent involvement
- f. Teachers leaving to pursue other careers
- g. Other (please specify) _____

4) What are the major strengths of your school?

5) What do you think are the most important factors in creating a strong culture of learning?
(Choose *three*)

- a. Motivation of the students 1. _____
- b. Ability of the students 2. _____
- c. Amount/type of discipline 3. _____
- d. Staff cohesion (working together)
- e. Effective leadership
- f. Adequate resources
- g. Good curriculum
- h. Motivation of teachers
- i. Ability of teachers
- j. Other (please specify) _____

6) What would be the most effective in raising the motivation of *students*? (choose *one*)

- a. Stricter discipline 1. _____
- b. More motivated teachers
- c. More parent involvement
- d. Better school conditions (facilities, etc.)
- e. Other (please specify) _____

7) What would be the most effective in raising the motivation of *teachers*? (choose *one*)

- a. Higher salary 1. _____
- b. Stricter discipline (by controlling staff/principal)
- c. Better working conditions (school facilities, etc.)
- d. In-service trainings/workshops
- e. Other (please specify) _____

8) Here is a list of current/proposed changes in the education system. Which do you think are the most important? *Please choose the three most important issues and list them in order of importance.*

- a. Racial integration of students in schools 1. _____
- b. Racial integration of teachers in schools 2. _____
- c. Equalization of resources 3. _____
- d. Unification of the racially divided departments of education
- e. Increased student effort
- f. Curriculum changes
- g. Improved quality of teaching
- h. Improved quality of teacher training
- i. Vocational training in school (woodwork, welding, mechanics, typing)
- j. Technical training in school (computers, technical drawing, etc.)
- k. Better job opportunities of matric graduates
- l. Other (please specify) _____

9) How well have you been kept informed by the National and Provincial Education Departments about policies being developed?

a) very little/ b) some/ c) very much _____

10) Are you involved in policy changes? Yes/No

10a) Would you like to be (more) involved in policy changes? Yes/No

11) Please add any additional comments about changes in education and/or the culture of learning.

Would you be interested in discussing these issues in greater depth? (30 minute interview) Yes/No

If Yes, please leave your name, phone number, and convenient times (lunch, after school, free periods, etc.)

Name _____
Phone _____
Times _____

If you have any additional questions and want to contact me directly, please call at any time:
Devah Pager 479856

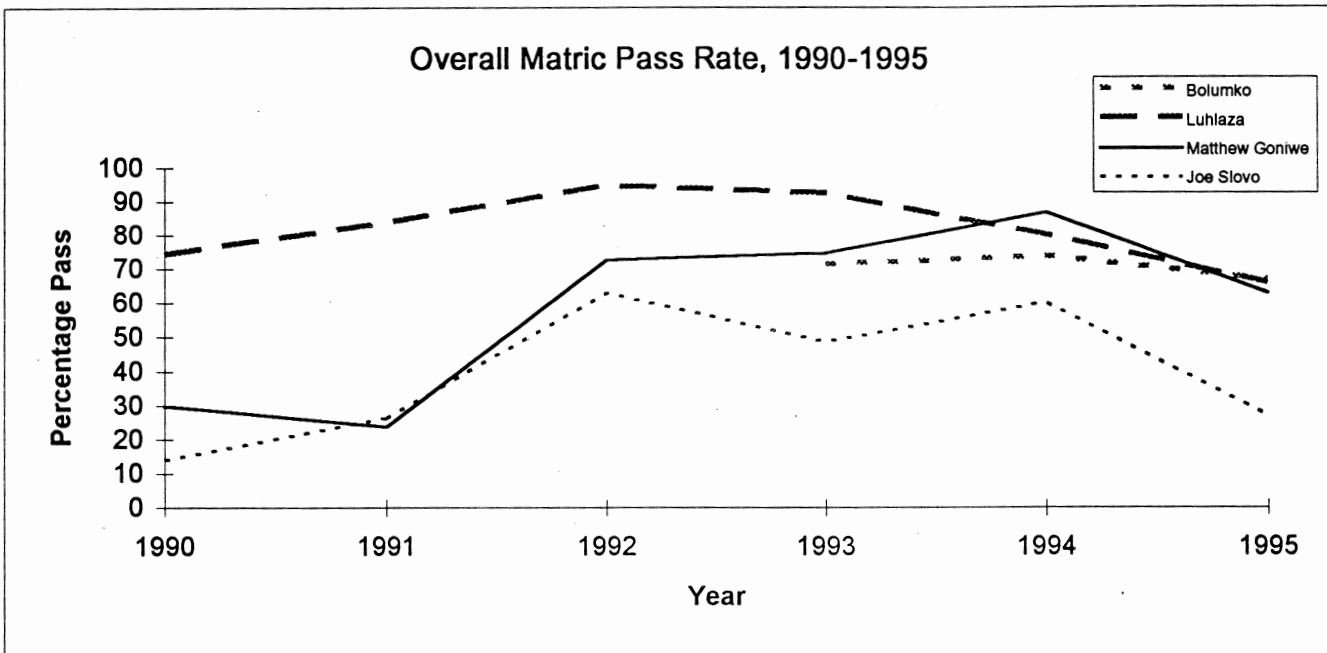
Thank you for your participation.

*Please return this form to the secretary's office in the enclosed envelope.
Your responses will be absolutely confidential.*

Overall Matric Pass Rate for Four Schools, 1990-1995 (as percentages)

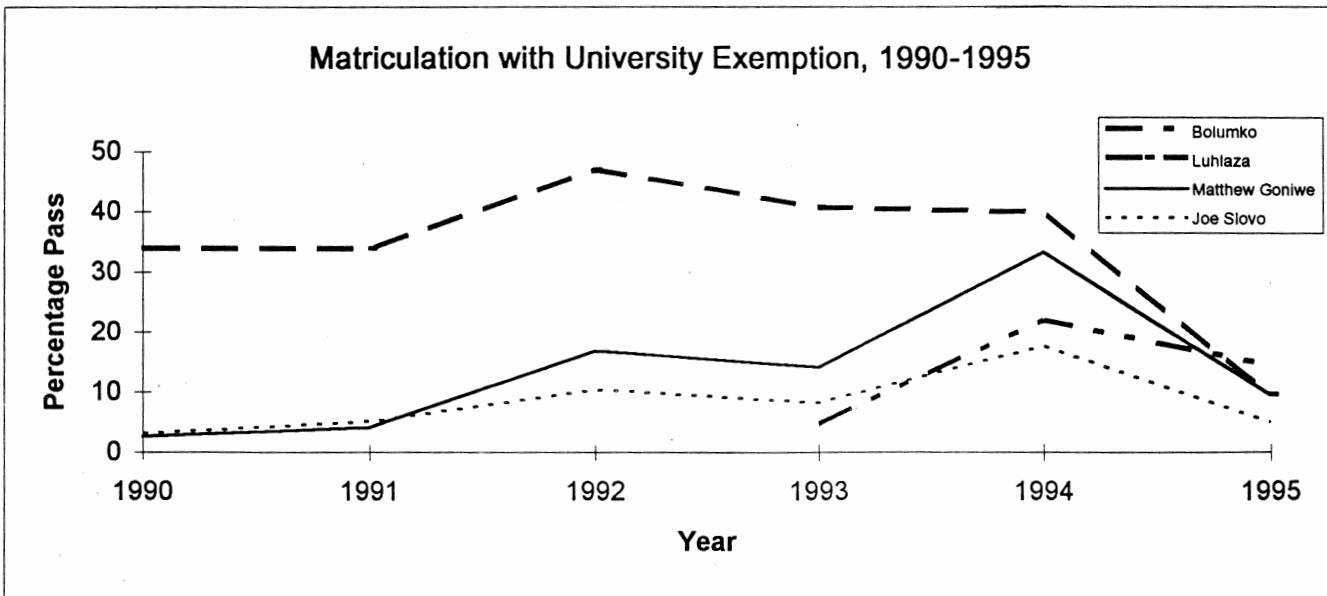
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Decline from 1994 to 95
Bolumko				71	74	67	7
Luhlaza	75	84	95	93	80	66	14
Matthew Goniwe	30	24	73	75	87	63	24
Joe Slovo	14	26	63	49	60	27	33

note: Bolumko did not accept Standard 10 students until 1993



Matric Pass with University Exemption, 1990-1995 (as percentages)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Decline from 1994 to 95
Bolumko				5	22	14	8
Luhlaza	34	34	47	41	40	10	30
Matthew Goniwe	3	4	17	14	33	9	24
Joe Slovo	3	5	10	8	18	5	13



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