

A POST-APARTHEID FRAMEWORK:  
PREPARING TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE FOR  
SOUTH AFRICA'S HISTORICALLY BLACK SECONDARY SCHOOLS

by

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

in the Faculty

of

Education

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

September 1996

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ISBN 0-612-17025-X

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**A Post-Apartheid Framework: Preparing Teachers of English as a Second Language for South Africa's Historically Black Secondary Schools**

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## Abstract

The preparation of English as a second/nth (third, fourth or greater) language (ESL) teachers at historically black colleges of education in South Africa has been characterized by inadequacy, causing teachers to lack crucial skills, especially those needed to teach a critical literacy. These problems were an educational effect of apartheid, the system of racial segregation and stratification which gripped South Africa from 1948 to 1994. The distortions of this system produced inadequately and inappropriately trained teachers, in general, and English teachers in black secondary schools, specifically.

With the end of the apartheid system, it is necessary to prepare students to take part fully in the life of the multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multicultural country. Because of the role of English as a language of power in South Africa, competent teaching of English in black secondary schools is imperative, essential and indispensable.

The apartheid framework was one of extreme hierarchical direction, which was applied to the training of teachers, pedagogical principles, and instructional strategies in the schools. Critical language competence requires decision-making by the user of the language. This thesis proposes a shift in the approach to teacher education for ESL. It builds on Freeman's model of second language teaching as decision-making. This framework of language teaching requires that a teacher-in-preparation/student teacher demonstrates knowledge, attitude, skills and critical awareness in the inquiry areas of language education. These include pedagogy, linguistics, culture, language learning and acquisition, interpersonal relations and professionalism. Competence in the identified

areas is achieved through training and development, the two educational strategies of the decision-making model.

Hundreds of thousands of teachers who were trained during the apartheid period require in-service education for effective transformation in the principles and strategies of ESL teaching. It is only through distance education that this massive number can be reached. The final chapter identifies teacher reflection on lesson plans as one means of developing the teachers' critical faculties, as well as knowledge of the principles and strategies of English as a second language teaching.



## Dedication

To the loving memory of my mother,  
Khalangani Ethel Muthwa (Neé Cele)  
who did not live to see the fruit  
of her hard labour in seeing me through school  
in spite of hardships.  
Ngiyabonga Ndosi! Siyobanana ekuseni.

## Acknowledgments

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervising committee. To Professor G. Sampson, my senior supervisor, I offer appreciation for the practical and relevant support she rendered throughout the time of writing this thesis. Professor Robin Barrow, the second member of my committee, availed himself for support and insightful comments, in spite of his most demanding position as Dean of the Faculty of Education. I also extend sincere thanks to Diane Dagenais, my external examiner, who took time to read my work and offered very useful comments.

Several individuals gave support and encouragement, academically, emotionally and spiritually. Professor Kinyanjui of the Commonwealth of Learning and Dr. Yerbury of Simon Fraser Distance Education are worth mentioning for making available their own time and the resources of their centres. My relatives, friends and spiritual family, both here and at home, were of great support. I thank them very much. Their prayers sustained me.

I thank my three beloved children, who, ever since they remember, had to live with a working and studying mother. Thank you S'hlengiwe, Duduzile and Ndumiso. In many different ways you contributed to the success of this thesis.

Special thanks go to my friend, sponsor, supporter, critic and husband, Larry. Your love, support and frank comments never went unnoticed. I do promise that the coming months will again feature South African curries and aromas in the kitchen.

## Table of Contents

<b>Approval</b> .....	ii
<b>Abstract</b> .....	iii
<b>Dedication</b> .....	v
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	vi
<b>CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY</b> .....	1
(i) Teaching English in Black Schools in South Africa.....	1
(ii) A Critical Incident in a South African Classroom.....	4
(iii) The Central Problem for ESL Teacher Education	6
(iv) Major Gaps in the Teaching of English	10
(v) English as a Language of Power	12
(vi) The Contested Terrain of English	15
(vii) Objectives of This Thesis	20
(viii) Overview of the Thesis	21
<b>CHAPTER TWO: ENGLISH DURING THE APARTHEID ERA AND THE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN BLACK SCHOOLS</b>	22
(i) Introduction	22
(ii) The Political and Social Contexts for English Teaching	23
(iii) Colleges of Education and the Preparation of English Teachers for Black Secondary Schools	32
(iv) The Educators at the Colleges of Education	34
(v) The Teachers-in-Training at the Colleges of Education	36
(vi) The Syllabus for Secondary Teacher's Diploma at Colleges of Education	38

(vii) An Analysis of Elements of the Syllabus	43
(viii) Philosophy and Practice Produce Problems with English	45
<b>CHAPTER THREE: FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING ENGLISH IN A POST-APARTHEID SOCIETY</b>	<b>47</b>
(i) Some Theoretical Issues	47
(ii) Defining Constructs	51
(iii) Knowledge	52
(iv) Skills	62
(v) Attitude	63
(vi) Awareness	67
(vii) Two Educational Strategies: Training and Development	69
(viii) Specific Practices	74
a) Rationale for text	74
b) Possible Instructional Strategies	77
c) Comprehension for Critical Literacy	81
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: THE ROLE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING</b>	<b>86</b>
(i) The Challenge of Transformation	86
(ii) History of Distance Education in South Africa	87
(iii) Quantity does not Equal Quality	88
(iv) Critical Areas for Effective Distance Education	91
(v) Teacher Reflection as Key to Change	91
(vi) Infrastructure to Support Reflection and Decision-Making	98

a) Technology	98
b) Community Learning Centres and Transformation	99
(vii) Making Infrastructure Work	100
(viii) Principles of Change	102

<b>Appendix I: South African Map with Old and New Boundaries</b> .....	107
<b>Appendix II: Chapter XIII of <i>And They Didn't Die</i> by     Lauretta Ngcobo.....</b>	108
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	116

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1.1 A Sample Table: Per capita expenditure in rands on education in segregated education departments, 1953-1988.....</b>	<b>9</b>
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## **CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

### **(i) Teaching English in Black Schools in South Africa.**

South Africa, a multi-lingual and multi-racial country, made headlines through its historic democratic elections in April 1994. At that time, the indigenous people of South Africa--blacks, or Africans--voted in an election for the first time for the government of their country. The formation of the new, democratically chosen government, the Government of National Unity (GNU), ushered in possibilities for reconstructing all the social, economic and political institutions of the country. These institutions had been formed and shaped by deeply entrenched ideologies and laws of apartheid ("apartness" in Afrikaans, the Dutch-based language of a portion of the white population).

This construct of separateness was crafted and introduced in 1948 by the Nationalist Party, the Party that represented the interests of white people, and, in particular the Afrikaner portion of the white population. Hendrik Verwoed was the minister of Native Affairs, whose statements particularly defined the limits to be placed on the black population. "Native" is a term once used to label the indigenous people of South Africa. The designation was later changed to "Bantu"--a term that was not received with favour on the part of black South Africans--for it gave a negative meaning to a term which in their Nguni languages, distinguishes the human species, with their characteristics of humaneness, from other species. Verwoed's party, the Nationalist

Party, first elected to office in 1948 by whites, (other "racial"<sup>1</sup> groups were excluded from voting), ruled South Africa until the democratic elections of 1994.

Verwoerd's construction of apartheid institutions had as a centrepiece the separate and very unequal education systems organized according to race. The existing education system for blacks when the Nationalist Party came to office was run by missionaries. The missionary schools maintained an effective system of teaching English. Verwoerd saw these schools as dangerous and forced them to close.

Verwoerd's complaint against missionary education was that it was offered by people who believed in equality and consequently raised the expectations of Africans. Verwoerd said in Parliament, when the law setting up the apartheid schools was passed in 1953, that "good racial relations are spoilt when the correct education is not given." (Samuel, 1990, p. 18) The correct education from the apartheid perspective could not give any hope to blacks for other than menial and subservient roles in life. He particularly rejected any education that is a "form of cultural training which strengthens their desire for the white collar occupations." (Samuel, *ibid*)

As a consequence of these laws, blacks were placed in a fourth-class citizen position, after whites, coloureds (mixed race) and Indians (the name assigned in South Africa to a combination

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<sup>1</sup> "racial" is not a concept from science, but rather is a socially-constructed concept historically used in South African social and legal contexts. It was used to indicate differences in culture and skin colour. The definitions had a basis in law and served to delineate rights and lack of rights.



of groups brought from Malaysia and from India to work as indentured labourers on sugar plantations). The fourth-class position for blacks meant that conditions of teaching, methods of teaching, and forms of knowledge regarding subject matter, particularly that of English in black schools, were as purposefully impoverished and controlled as had been set in the parameters of Bantu education. Walters (1996) provides a remarkable picture of what this situation meant in black schools:

Take whatever comes to mind as a 'normal' school, then by a process of mental subtraction, take away most (or all) of its constituents: take away electricity, adequate plumbing, solid and weather-proof buildings; take away libraries and resource centres, video and audio facilities; take away well-trained teachers and competent managerial staff; take away sufficient space for pupils and teachers to move around within a classroom; take away textbooks (whether appropriate or not); take away appropriate and readily available syllabuses; take away parental support (both material and moral or psychological), etc. What you are left with is probably much closer to the norm for the majority of black South African pupils. (Walters, 1996, p. 211-212)

Yet, even in the segregated and deprived system, "teachers manage to teach and learners to learn as if in unintentional testimony to the determination of human beings to persevere in a chosen endeavor despite unspeakable odds" (Walters, 1996 p.212). Despite this determination, the quality of instruction of English took a dramatic fall with the end of the missionary schools and its qualified and competent teachers.

The history and plethora of issues around black education are documented under titles by Hartshorne, 1992; de Klerk, 1996;

Adam and Moodley, 1993; Unterhalter, 1991; and Mphahlele, 1974 among others. I will now focus my attention on the disturbing circumstances surrounding the training of teachers of English for African secondary schools.

I am a product of this system of education, and, sadly, have been a part (unintentionally) of the perpetuation thereof, through my position as both a secondary school teacher of English and a school principal from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s. My experiences have left me with mind-boggling questions as South Africa is immersed in the process of transformation. Before I elaborate on the questions that have bothered me for some time, I will provide a context which caused them to surface. The incident took place in an African secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal, one of the provinces of South Africa (see Appendix 1 for old and new provincial boundaries).

**(ii) A critical incident in a South African classroom.**

The issues around the teaching of English in African secondary schools may be brought into focus by a recounting of an incident which occurred when I visited a class one morning. Nomcebo was teaching a lesson on the passive voice to her standard 9 (grade 11) class.

*"I try everything in my ability Ma'm, but they just do not get it right,"* said Nomcebo as we settled down in the office to review her lesson. *"It's just hard. Tell me how you do this with your standard 10 (grade 12), Ma'm."* She finished off and looked at me for a response.

I took a deep breath as I considered the complexity of the problem. This colleague saw the problem as solely the students' lack of capability or her own failing to tackle effectively the subject--English, which was not her own first language.

*"What I have found effective is to create a dialogue using the structures or syntactic forms that students find difficult. I use a contextualized situation that they choose or any area of interest, something they can identify with,"* I suggested.

Nomcebo responded, *"I do use dialogues in the book that I have, but as you know it's not all the students who have books."*

*"Well, I was talking about creating a contextualized dialogue with the students,"* I said, quickly throwing in some clarification.

*"Ah! Ma'm suggests I write a dialogue. I have never done it with the class,"* and she sat back in her chair. *"Even at college our lecturer used dialogues from the book. You remember those dialogues about giving direction to a tourist to a cinema, a bookstore, a restaurant or a hotel,"* (None of these existed within the students' townships, the historically designated areas where blacks live outside of white towns, and probably none of the students would have a first-hand knowledge of any of these places that were to be the subject of the dialogues). We then spent some minutes brainstorming a few ideas for a dialogue that could be relevant for a South African township or rural student of the 1990s.

As Nomcebo walked back to the staff room, my heart sank. This small incident was representative of numerous

problems that I had observed in both my teaching and my administrative experience. Nomcebo was one of the most dedicated teachers in the school. My challenge as a principal went beyond the establishment of a smoothly run institution administratively; it was to assist teachers like this colleague and many others who wanted to make a difference, yet found their attempts ineffective. They (like myself) had not been adequately prepared during teacher training. No subject-area advisers sat waiting to be called for assistance. No professional development was available, except what school principals could envisage and do for the sake of the improvement of their own schools. The problem was massive, and this teacher's "passive" problem was just a symptom.

### **(iii) The Central Problem for ESL Teacher Education.**

The problems that surround the teaching of English as a second language in South African teacher education colleges, and evidenced in Nomcebo's classroom, have left me with questions that have plagued me to graduate school. With the transformation of every system that was crafted around the ideology of apartheid, the education theories, language teaching theories and practices must also be reconstructed. My questions are even more troublesome now than they ever were, and they have since given birth to this thesis. The three leading questions are the following ones.

- 1) How do you best teach English in the social-cultural context of South Africa? In the historically black schools, which are likely to remain so, English is taught to black students

who speak two or three African languages before coming to school. English is an institutionalized official language which students must learn. Even though it is their third, fourth or nth language, it is officially regarded as their second language. The English language in this context was and still is a language of power, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Two.

2) How do you best train or educate teachers, such as those represented by Nomcebo, who, under the perpetuation of the educational ideology of apartheid, have been miseducated?

3) How can teachers who are already teaching be reached?

Can distance education be a viable means to reach them, especially because they are the ones who were particularly disenfranchised by the system in which we were all trained?

Upon reflecting on the Nomcebo incident, I see her as representative of the teaching force, shaped by a system that consciously aimed at producing a low caliber of teachers for black students. In describing the teaching force in South Africa, Guma (1990) points out that in 1990 in South Africa, more than half of the teachers were born during the Verwoerdian era, so only now is society feeling the impact of the Bantu educational system created in the 1950s.

Like the majority of teachers in all areas of the country, Nomcebo had grown up in a township, in her case Imbali, a residential "ghetto" for blacks just outside Pietermaritzburg, in

KwaZulu-Natal. The settlement, like many of its kind, was established in the sixties to provide the skilled and the unskilled workers a living place so they could work in the city during the day and be out of it when the city did not need or want them (Serote,1981).

Like myself, Nomcebo attended a school in the township where she was taught by black teachers who were non-native speakers of English, and who had themselves been taught by non-native speakers under the conditions already described in the previous paragraphs.

At home, Nomcebo's parents both worked. Her father was an untrained labourer for the South African Railway. Her mother was a maid. They were only home after dark, even under the South African sky that can boast of daylight in the summer from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. Her parents knew that in order for Nomcebo and her siblings to escape the shackles of oppression to even some small extent, they had to work hard to keep their children in school. When Nomcebo attended school, the cost to parents of keeping a black child at school was huge. Black education was neither compulsory nor free. The government expenditure on a black child, per capita, was 47.64 Rands, the unit of South African currency. In contrast, the expenditure on a white child was 428.00 Rands. Almost two decades after that, now that Nomcebo was in her fifth year of teaching, the education for children where she taught was still grossly underfunded, as shown in Table 1 below. The underfunding strategy had been instituted as a means of discouraging blacks from staying long enough at school. This

strategy ensured that the vast majority of black children would receive schooling that would introduce them to literacy and numeracy just sufficient for unskilled manual labor. Indeed, dropping out after three years or so of elementary education became the norm in the 1950s and early 1960s. Of note is the surge in statistics after this period as blacks reasserted themselves. This point will be demonstrated in the next chapter when I discuss the black attitude toward English.

**Table 1.1: Per capita expenditure in Rands on education in segregated education departments, 1953-1988**

<b>Year</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Coloured</b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>White</b>
1960	13.60	74.50	74.50	114.00
1970	47.64	87.30	121.00	428.00
1980	87.27	286.00	318.00	1021.00
1988	582.93	1325.64	1980.41	3982.82

(Unterhalter, 1991, p. 52)

These issues around the provision and availability of education for the black population of South Africa compounded themselves in theories and practices that informed the teaching of English, from elementary to tertiary education, particularly in the training of English as a second language teachers, who like Nomcebo, were not native speakers of English. Despite the inadequacies that surrounded the teaching of English, competence in it became a ticket to better employment. A similar requirement applied to the other official language, Afrikaans, a

South African version of the Dutch language that was spoken by the descendants of early Dutch settlers.

The purposeful omission in equipping African teachers with the essential knowledge, theories and strategies that would render them effective in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages, created regrettable gaps in the entire education of the nation. These gaps have cost and will cost the entire South African nation drastically in almost all the conceivable levels. What are some of these gaps?

**(iv) Major Gaps in the Teaching of English.**

The gaps that the system of omission created in shaping second language teachers of English were brought to focus during Nomcebo's implementation of the lesson on the morning of my visit. Here was a teacher who had gone to one of the long established colleges of education. Incidentally, the college she attended was one of the prestigious ones during the era of missionary-controlled education. Now its training of teachers had become the epitome of the apartheid design.

Nomcebo's training and experience had not shaped her to reflect critically on what would be appropriate for her reality. What she learned about theories of language, the nature of language, and processes of learning, all lacked the elements of applicability in the situation she found herself in. All that she learnt was underpinned by a set of beliefs, based on apartheid ideology, about the nature of language and language learning.

One great deficiency of the traditional apartheid approach



to teacher education was how little cognizance it took of who the student teacher trainees were *vis-a-vis* their socio-cultural and psychological backgrounds. If the apartheid approach recognized the students' background, it was in demeaning ways, such as graphics depicting blacks doing manual labour and whites standing tall as bosses (Dodds, 1995). Such lesson situations are built on a functional context of white employer and black worker and are "not designed to promote meaningful communication between humans; rather, they are designed to enable whites to make better use of their black workers" (Ndebele, 1987, p. 13).

Another gap that revealed itself glaringly during Nomcebo's lesson was that of the absence of the students' socio-cultural milieu from the texts that were used for instruction. And for the teacher who had been trained in restrictive ways of "do as I tell you," it was difficult to alter situations depicted in the texts. She, like all teachers of my time, continued to parrot the books. This did not provide the students with any basis for grasping and engaging with meaningful texts. In addition, and most importantly, the absence of contexts that depict the African students positively cripple their sense of who they are. And Nomcebo, like many others, interpreted the occurrences in her classroom as the students' failure to grapple with the syntactic structures she taught.

Although, Nomcebo made her way to the classroom, she could not manipulate English well enough to adjust her teaching strategies to fit the situation in which she found herself. The

skills she acquired in her teacher training program were superficial. They were only focused on the basic syntactic structures, spelling, verb tenses and limited signifiers of competent language use. She was not taught how to develop critical literacy skills, sense of style, let alone imagination, all elements that promote language learning and cultivate reflective critical awarenesses. Nomcebo, with her qualifications, is far from being competent in using effective instructional strategies in the language she teaches. Yet, given the picture of conditions painted in the previous paragraph, she was one of the best teachers in the school. She had an untiring determination and she wanted to know what she could do to improve the classroom situation.

Such was the education of the corps of teachers that I am part of. And its perpetuation during the last four decades is deeply entrenched and poses great challenges for transformative measures.

**(v) English as a Language of Power.**

In spite of the picture that has been painted above, knowing English is still seen as the epitome of being well-educated in many parts of South Africa by the majority of the population of the country. Many black South Africans can understand and speak five or six languages, which generally include English and Afrikaans. However, in the latter languages, the level of fluency is often limited. Less than 25% of black South Africans speak English well enough to use it effectively for educational or higher level job opportunities (Webb, 1996).

It should not be surprising that Nomcebo falls within this less than 25% category. The entrenched patterns of inadequacy in the teaching of English as a second language should be viewed in the mirror of Nomcebo's story. Accompanying this reality is the element of cost. The costs are not just financial, although the reconstruction and transformation cannot be underestimated financially. The greater costs are time; distortion of human potential; and social, emotional and psychological damage, to mention just a few.

One such cost is the self-blaming tendency of the victims. Simon (1991) views this tendency critically with regard to Matriculants, grade 12, who form the pool for teacher education programs and other tertiary careers:

It is disturbing to see pupils blaming themselves for school failure before they even take their final examinations. This leads one to wonder whether Black South African high school students suffer from an unconscionably low self-concept or are the victims of the self-fulfilling prophecy that Steyn (1970) militates strongly against. Steyn's prophecy, that teachers mask their (apartheid caused) lack of qualifications and ability by labeling their students as stupid and lazy, and hence destined to fail, may be even more insidious in these present times.

It was never Nomcebo's fault nor her students' that they could not master a language that was taught in an unmasterly way to them. It is to be remembered that the aim of the Verwoerdian apartheid ideology was to ensure that black teachers would only be qualified to teach in the first four years of primary schooling (Rose & Turner, 1975).

To gain a full understanding of the challenges for improving education in South Africa, it is imperative that the assumptions and presuppositions of the Verwoerdian aims be exposed and made explicit, including their impact on school subjects, strategies of teaching and languages of education. Teachers have been the force used to perpetuate (not by their choice) the ills of the old regime; teachers require new tools to undo the harm. They must understand what presuppositions have been embedded in the curriculum, in the style of teaching and in the very language that they use. They must also be enabled with the skills of analyzing content beyond just a literal level, to gain critical competence in pragmatic forms of the language and how to teach them imaginatively, using the socio-cultural tools for the development of intellectual skills, and teaching in ways that sharpen the thinking abilities of their students.

English is one tool that can help or hinder students. If it continues to be taught in ways that hide its codes, as these are described by Lisa Delpit (1988), from the unfranchised users, literacy and opportunities that involve the use of this language will be limited for the majority of South Africans. However, it is a competently trained teacher who can recognize both the problematic nature of teaching and the fact that it is limiting to teach a language whose presuppositions are premised on holding the learner down to a certain level. It is also a competent teacher who will recognize that teaching practices can change to eliminate such circumstances (Evans and Nation, 1989, p.10). One of the

positive characteristics about Nomcebo is that she realizes that there is a problem, no matter what she attempts. It is this kind of critical awareness, not self-blame, that can be built upon as teachers are involved practically in the scrutiny of syllabi, forms of knowledge, teaching strategies, and text, among other things.

**(vi) The Contested Terrain of English.**

The clamour for change in the teaching of English to Africans is not something born just in this decade. However, in the former education system the problem was trivialized as just one of helping African teachers upgrade their formal qualifications, or helping them with teaching materials (Smith, 1993; Hofmeyr, 1991). It must be borne in mind that the parameters of the apartheid ideology were still in place, even though shifts were experienced in black education.

An ongoing policy issue on language teaching in African schools has been the controversy over whether English (or, in some regions, Afrikaans) should be the medium of instruction, or whether the mother tongue, an African language of the region or province, should be the medium of instruction.

The Bantu Education policies called for instruction in the early years to be in the home languages of black students. While one might have expected this move to have been welcomed as a means of empowering those who spoke the stifled indigenous languages in the African communities, the reality was the opposite. This policy was intended to limit opportunities by placing more impediments in the way of students' learning the

languages that might give them access to opportunities beyond those intended for blacks in the original apartheid policies.

Because of its context as a part of apartheid education policies, the move by the education department for blacks to use indigenous languages as medium of instruction was viewed skeptically by most black communities. It was seen as another disguise clearly aimed at perpetuating differences among the black population. It was also seen as a gate-keeping strategy, aimed at ensuring that competence in English would not be developed beyond the minimum that might be required for low-level workers in industry, agriculture, and service jobs, such as domestic workers. Even the small number of blacks who made it to the university were only expected to achieve the capacity to produce clear and correct sentences, without acquiring the tools of critical literacy (Johnson, 1991).

Parents in most communities lobbied for the introduction of English (and Afrikaans in provinces where it is a dominant official language) as early as the first year of schooling. Parents had perceived the power that official languages played in securing a job, better pay, and recognition for some. For the majority of blacks, English has been considered the language that would lead to better remunerated employment. This reality can be evidenced by the number of African parents who now send their children to formerly white-only schools, where instruction is in English by native speakers of the language.

If English is such a hurdle for the speakers of other languages in South Africa, why not teach in the students' first

language? Smith (1993) poses this question strongly when he titles his book: *Whose language? What Power?* After his seven-month stay in South Africa, Smith argues that:

...emphasis on English language competence could maintain the disempowerment of the people it is supposed to assist. A focus on English in education could hold back educational and social advancement. Empowerment does not come with language; rather, language reflects power. (Smith, 1993, p. 1)

My response to Smith's assertion is that while it is true that language reflects power, it is possible to teach English in empowering ways. I use "empowering" with caution. It has become loosely used. In my use of the concept, I recognize the limiting circumstances that surround blacks in South Africa and elsewhere. Also, I recognize that it is possible to teach a student in empowering (enabling) ways. What I have problem with is the implication that the very forces or agents which limited their power, are giving back power (empowering) to the once disenfranchised groups. Giving power is not empowerment--it is a hand-out of what has been fashioned by the power holders. Tendencies of this kind of empowerment are a 'redefined gift' to fit the image of the controllers. Real empowerment, enabling, comes from within the individual and must be consciously self-induced by the particular persons. South African teachers, too, must recognize the limitations of a system that shaped them; and then they must want to transform their knowledge and teaching strategies. Collectively, teachers must remove inhibiting constraints around their work, through participatory decision-

making and other means (Taliaferro, 1991) Some of these strategies will be outlined in chapter three. The spread of this empowerment will be determined by the effectiveness of the teaching of English to speakers of other languages in competent ways.

Issues of language are central to determining who will be economically, politically, scientifically, and culturally empowered. The new Government of National Unity has scrutinized the issue and come up with a language policy that recognizes eleven languages and allows access to education in any of these:

Education should be available in any language. Similarly, access to opportunities, rights and privileges in all spheres of life should be possible through any South African language. (Department of Education, 1995)

Participation in education through any South African language is a significant breakthrough. Languages that were disenfranchised during apartheid can now unfold and develop their lexicon in health, technology, science, education, trade, government, industry, courtroom, sports, leisure and local markets (Webb, 1994). However, along with this development of indigenous languages is the complication of a cherished hope among the majority of South Africans and Africans in other states that there will be a *lingua franca* that will transcend the enforced ethnicity and racial classification of the apartheid period (Young, 1987). This possibility (Kashoki, 1993) is a topic for a thesis on its own and it will not be pursued here.



Another level of controversy regarding the teaching and learning of English as a second or nth language to speakers of other languages has been about the direction which the teaching and learning of English should take in African education (Peirce, 1989; Janks, 1990; Alexander, 1990; Gardiner, 1984; Ndebele, 1987; Mphahlele, 1974). Peirce (1989), in seeking redress in this area, argues that:

...the issues at stake are not the linguistic features of English spoken in South Africa but the central political issues of how English is to be taught in the schools; who has access to the language; how English is implicated in the power relations dominant in South Africa.

A recurring question, articulated by Peirce in the quotation above, is how English is to be taught (in teacher education colleges and universities) in ways that will overcome the limitations of the past and release learners to achieve possibilities that they were previously denied.

The limitations in teaching English to Africans emanated from a political ideology aimed at socially, psychologically, emotionally, economically, culturally and politically disempowering Africans. Overcoming this legacy will only be gradually achieved over time. The speed with which this happens--in fact, whether it happens at all--is dependent on the level of success in reaching tens of thousands of teachers, and preparing them to better teach English to their students. It is for this reason that this thesis is targeted at teachers, particularly to African teachers, who are teaching English.

To understand the importance of access to learning English, one has to be in a South African township or in a rural area to know what it means to be denied access to an opportunity that promises liberty--speaking, writing, thinking, listening, and reading critically in a language of power. This is a kind of competence that does not hinder the teacher or educator, nor the students in their dialogue of constructing meaning through their second language. Competence is used here to refer to the mastery and appropriation of the language of education. Widdowson (1994) characterizes this kind of competence as proficiency that enables the English as second language speaker to possess the language, make it one's own, bend it and assert oneself through it. It is a competence with the foregoing attributes that will enable pre-service and in-service teachers to take great strides.

This thesis is an exploration of ways of delivering on the promise, of extending access to the language of power.

**(vii) Objectives of this thesis.**

While the apartheid system was developed and carried out for close to fifty years, few will have the patience to spend the same length of time to undo its effects. The impact on the society has been great in the area of education. Language education has been a key part of both the creation and now the unraveling of the apartheid structure. This thesis will explore these relationships and directions. In it I follow the steps listed below:

1. I analyze the principles underlying the pedagogical approaches of the apartheid education system and, in particular, their shaping of the teaching of English.
2. I develop a new framework of teaching English in the particular socio-cultural context of South Africa.
3. I develop an approach for educating teachers--pre-service and in-service--to use the new framework effectively for the teaching of English.
4. I outline some strategies for in-service education for the teaching of English through the use of distance education.

**(viii) Overview of the thesis.**

To achieve the objectives set out, the thesis contains the following chapters:

Chapter 1. Background to the Study.

Chapter 2. The Teaching of English During the Apartheid Era.

Chapter 3. Principles for Teaching English in a Post-Apartheid Society

a) Theory

b) Specific Practices

Chapter 4. The Role of Distance Education in Teacher Training.

## CHAPTER TWO: ENGLISH DURING THE APARTHEID ERA AND THE PREPARATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN BLACK SCHOOLS

If no use is made of the labors of past ages,  
the world must remain always in infancy of knowledge.  
(Cicero, De Oratore II in Krothwohl, '91: 97)

### (i) Introduction.

Proposing a new direction for English as a second language teaching in South Africa requires first a clear view of the situation that exists and the conditions which created it. Understanding these conditions provides a platform for the reshaping of the system into one that would better serve both individuals and the new society.

Most of the black teachers of English in the township schools have been educated in the Colleges of Education, so it is on the teacher preparation programs in these institutions that this analysis will centre. Questions to be considered include: What is the nature of the Colleges of Education and the role they play in the South African education system? Who are the students and how are they educated before arriving at the Colleges? Who are the teacher educators working in these Colleges and what is their background and role?

However, even before looking at the preparation of teachers of English, it is important to examine the significance of English itself in the education of South Africans whose first language at home is other than English. What is the significance of English as a course and as a medium of instruction in various subjects, and how are these facts related to the place of the language in the larger society?

Furthermore, what are the presuppositions that have operated in defining how English should be taught? These questions are discussed below.

**(ii) The Political and Social Contexts for English teaching.**

Examining the social significance of English and its relationship with opportunities in South Africa is not easy, as the country is in a period of confusion, born of rapid transition. It is a time of hope and despair, achievement and tragedy, cooperation and discord (Newfield in Evans, 1992, p. 39). The many ongoing changes threaten even to overtake the process of this analysis.

In this context, accurate, reliable information on the language situation of the country could be influential in making policy decisions and could be of tremendous value in planning and carrying out the implementation of policies (Whiteley in Pride, 1979, p. 44). South Africa's situation regarding languages is unique in many ways. It is therefore not appropriate to generalize from other experiences. Rather, it is important to examine further the specific role of language in South African society.

Power in South Africa has been packaged into the historically official languages, English and Afrikaans. Opening up the baggage of languages, specifically that of English, can show much about the social assumptions that are hidden in it. This baggage contains the presuppositions carried within a society--presuppositions that reflect attitudes towards and about the dominant language. In African circles, blacks carried a hope that knowing English would ensure a respectable means of livelihood. Their attitudes towards their own

languages, which were not of power, changed to the level of neglect. Such experiences of having your own language relegated through disregard and requirements to learn and use other recognized languages, are known by the people of South Africa, whose first languages are other than English Afrikaans. The hegemony of English (and Afrikaans in regions and provinces where it dominates) has resulted in native speakers of indigenous African languages opting for one of the official languages at a high cost to the position of their own languages.

One South African educator and analyst says, regarding the issue of language:

The education policy of any country reflects 'its political options, its traditions and values, its conceptions of the future' and exists in the particular social, economic and political order. Education is seldom, if ever, neutral but is directed toward the achievement of certain purposes behind which rest fundamental issues such as philosophies of life, views of man, religious beliefs, ideas about the state and society (in particular the place of the individual), political ideologies and the working of economic forces. It is in this context, too, that language has to operate in the education system. It, too, does not exist in a vacuum. It is used by people who grew up with it at their mother's knee, who use it to express their feelings--to praise, work, make love--and to communicate with others. But it is also the repository and means of articulation of values, beliefs, prejudices, traditions, past achievements and history. It is the distinguishing characteristic of the human being. It is related to issues of identity, position and power  
(Hartshorne in Young, 1987, p. 63).

A lesser or marginal position has been the place common to all the indigenous languages of South Africa. The people whose English learning is the subject for this thesis did not and do not grow up with English as their mother tongue, but English plays so significant a role

that it cannot be ignored. These people must learn to use English, even though it contains the heart of another group's culture. Further, those speakers who did not grow up with the language, may not use English empoweringly to express their deepest feelings because of the deficient way the language has been made available to them through the schools. Whenever they use English, particularly in an academic context, their expression is seen through a lens that magnifies "technical problems from spelling, to sentence structure to paragraph structure" (Delpit, 1988). If this language is to be used in ways that will make it accessible for black South Africans, it is important that they become critically aware of the wealth of their home languages and yet be articulate in the use of their nth language, English, to express their deep experiences without being hampered by these "technical" problems.

Why is it important for black South Africans to be competently conversant in English? English is the principal language of education in all but a few provinces, such as, Western Cape, Free State and some portions of the Northern province where Afrikaans is the dominant language. English is the language of commerce. It is the medium of print--even the newspapers in black townships (ghetto areas formerly designated for blacks only, and where the majority of blacks continue to live) are written in English, although it has been indigenized in these publications, so that it can be used meaningfully and expressively of their experiences and situations. English is not just another of many languages when it comes to the context of South Africa. South Africans have appropriated the English language.

Smith, the Canadian scholar quoted in Chapter 1, questioned why this central role of English is not challenged.

There was the fundamental question, rarely asked in the university, (Witwatersrand, commonly known as Wits) why should they make English the primary language of instruction in South African schools at all? Should this movement be encouraged or even acquiesced? Why should the language be made compulsory in schools, as opposed to being made available? The universal use of English will not be achieved without cost. To make English a compulsory subject in schools would make it another subject that many black South Africans would fail. To make it the required language of instruction would increase the failure rate of black students in many subjects. These were contentious and emotional issues widely studied by committees and commissions elsewhere. The department's preference was to sanitize these issues by making them academic topics for detached treatment in courses rather than active issues requiring deliberation and divisions. (Smith, 1993, p. 16)

This view of Smith's incorporates valid insights, even though his findings have been dismissed by the majority of the participants in the program in which he worked at Wits (Young, 1994). Smith rightly observes that the teaching of English as a subject and as a medium of instruction is contested, yet these issues are given a detached treatment in courses at colleges and universities. Making English compulsory cannot be achieved without cost. Failure to master English by students affects not just their performance in English as a subject, but also their overall performance in other subjects.

The attitude that the majority of blacks share towards English has evolved with time. It is not that black South Africans have just become acquiescent with respect to the English language, as someone



unfamiliar with the reality of issues in the country might tend to think. Over time blacks have wrestled with the appropriate role for English, and the threat that English posed in eroding the dignity, role of and pride in indigenous languages. However, most blacks ended up realizing that the language used as a chain around their necks had to be their weapon in trying to come to terms with a new life and challenges. Mawasha addresses the question of why English became accepted, and even chosen, as a second language and as a medium of education in black schools:

Colonization effectively meant that those colonized had lost on the battlefield. So it was with Black South Africans. An alternative strategy had to be found to cope with the new world created by the new masters. Black South Africans adopted the language of the colonialist, along with his brand of education and training. This strategy enabled the Black South African not only to form a beach-head into the new world he found himself in, but also forged a language-and-education relationship that made it possible for him to cope in this new world (Mawasha in Young, 1987, p. 111).

A trend emerged in the early seventies where black South Africans began to use English as an instrument of groping for meaning of who they were in the land that was choking them due to discrimination and intimidation. It is characteristic of this period that English became a means of protest in prose, verse, song and theatre (Mawasha in Young, 1987). Ngcobo also describes this period of opening and challenge that was expressed in English:

A long silence lasted throughout the 1960's and the early seventies. But there was a qualitative difference in this silence to the earlier muteness of submission. People were silenced but not dispirited. It was no longer subservience that silenced

them. A new spirit of reorientation had the effect of energising people. At the beginning of the 1970's a new spirit emerged with dramatic force. The youth of South Africa discovered a less vulnerable form of protest writing--a new form of poetry (Ngcobo in Tlati, 1989, p. xiv).

An example of one such writing that broke through in both form and content is this poem by Matthews:

i wish i could write a  
 poem  
 record the beginning of  
 dawn  
 the opening of the flower  
 at the approach of a bee  
 describe a bird's first flight  
 then i look at people  
 maimed, shackled, jailed,  
 the knowing is now clear  
 i will never be able to write  
 a poem about dawn, a bird or a  
 bee

(Matthews, 1981, in Evans 1992, p. 51)

This is a use of English that South Africans are still to meet officially in school courses. Such expressions of lived experience did not make it into the curricula and text of the country. This was not just because of the ideas expressed. One charge leveled against this kind of writing was that it lacked the decorative language of the Eurocentric literature that was permitted in schools at the time. It did not rhyme, and lacked the imagery of 'the best things ever said.'

Many have conceded the need for black speakers of other languages to accept and to appropriate English in the South African context. They have called for South Africa's own variety of English. This would serve not only as a *lingua franca* that promotes unity within South Africa, but also to promote unity with the rest of the African and with the Commonwealth (de Klerk, 1996, p. 9). Ndebele, however, in one of the most widely quoted articles written on the topic, has warned of dangers in this position.

Basically I think we cannot afford to be uncritically complacent about the role and future of English in South Africa, for there are many reasons why it cannot be considered an innocent language. The problems of society are also the problems of the predominant language of that society, since it is the carrier of a range of social perceptions, attitudes and goals. Through it, the speakers absorb entrenched attitudes. In this regard, the guilt of English then must be recognized and appreciated before its continued use can be advocated (Ndebele, 1987, p. 11).

Ndebele's strong call for recognizing and appreciating the assumptions that may be carried in English as a language that is not "innocent" does present an important challenge. Some of these assumptions will be uncovered through the scrutiny of aspects of a syllabus later in this chapter.

Despite these concerns, the importance of English has grown in South Africa, particularly over the past two decades. The political and social upheavals of that period, from the 1976 student revolt against compulsory instruction in Afrikaans to the coalition politics of the United Democratic Front in the 1980s, was increasingly expressed in English. Among other factors, the population control elements of

the apartheid system broke down at an accelerating rate as apartheid hurtled toward collapse. The breakdown of the system to keep black people in rural, impoverished areas brought together into mass urban townships people from the many language groups represented in South Africa. This increased the need to have a common language that could be used among peoples from a range of first languages.

However, access to quality instruction in the English medium did not keep up with the demand for such instruction. Large numbers of those who stayed in school through enough grades to take the Matriculation exams failed to pass them. Whenever causes were analyzed, English as a barrier was identified as the top cause.

Many young blacks had no access to schooling at all. While schooling for whites was compulsory and free, for blacks it was neither compulsory nor free. Parents with no literacy themselves, no jobs and living in squatter shacks of cardboard and tin were seldom able to have their children even begin school, let alone reach the Matriculation exams.

A very few black families up to the late 1980s were able to send their children to private schools, which were the first English-medium white schools to be open to blacks. The tuition fees, however, limited this option to only a tiny percentage of black families. Nearly all black youth who had any chance to go to school did so in the black-only schools in the townships and rural areas.

Only in the first years of the 1990s did the apartheid government loosen the gatekeeping at the white-only public schools. Still not every black child would be accepted, because of lack of

transportation to these schools, because of language proficiency requirements for admission, and because of a host of other practical variables. Even though the policy paper of the post 1994 election Government of National Unity specifies that no child will be refused admission to any school on the grounds of language, it is indisputable that this is only in principle, but not in reality, as performance in language will set apart most students who have come through the black public schools.

Having argued the significance of English in a manner that sounds threatening to the indigenous and other spoken languages of the country, I wish to quickly point out that this thesis is about an area key to combating the daunting problem of the thousands of failures in schools. This thesis is aimed at suggesting ways of overcoming the limited proficiencies of students in English perceived by teachers because the teachers themselves suffered from the way English had been taught to them and the way they had been trained to teach it. The intention of this thesis is not to elevate the status of English at the expense of the other languages which have recently been nationally recognized. All these languages, such as:

Setswana;  
isiXhosa;  
TsiVenda;  
XiTsonga;  
siNdebele;  
siSwati;  
isiZulu;  
Northern Sotho;

Southern Sotho;  
 Afrikaans; and  
 English (Webb, 1994, p. 258)

have their role for the people of South Africa in expressing their experiences. All necessary measures should be taken to develop the first nine, allowing them to claim the valued social roles that the last two languages have enjoyed in the decades of apartheid. These are the languages that are the marks of identity of their speakers. In the same terms, English does say a great deal about who all South Africans are. In this new era of hope, the approach to the teaching of English must open up beyond the limits of the past so that once disenfranchised users know what proficiency means; proficiency that enables them to assert themselves through language. To borrow Delpit's assertion from another context of what teaching a dominant language entails:

...students must be *taught* the codes needed to participate fully in the mainstream of American life, not by being forced to attend to hollow, inane, decontextualized subskills, but rather within the context of meaningful communicative endeavors; that they must be allowed the resource of the teacher's expert knowledge, while being helped to acknowledge their own "expertness" as well (Delpit, 1988).

**(iii) Colleges of Education and the Preparation of English Teachers for Black Secondary Schools.**

Just as the elementary and secondary schools in South Africa have been divided according to racial categories, so too have the post-secondary training institutions. The disparity in resources

provided according to the group of students to be served has applied at the post-secondary level as well.

The South African tertiary system consists of universities, colleges of education, technical training institutions (Technikon) and distance education institutions. All of these types of institutions offer some form of teacher education.

The National Teacher Education Audit of 1995 showed that teacher education is the largest single sector of higher education, with at least 480,000 students in some form of teacher education and 26,000 new teachers produced each year (Hofmeyer and Hall, 1995, p. 50.). The bulk of the teacher education students are in 93 state colleges of education, 85 of which are "historically black colleges" (HBC), and some two-thirds of which are relatively small rural colleges located in the former Bantustans, later called homelands, (the areas set aside as designated areas for blacks). These latter are the equivalent of native reserves in Canada.

The largest segment of students in teacher education are in some form of distance education, with 129,614 students in 1995 (Hofmeyer and Hall, 1995, p. 52). Many of these students are teachers already teaching. A large number of these are teachers in the black schools who do not have even minimal teacher qualifications and who are working on gaining them. Others are teachers upgrading their qualifications. Institutions offering distance education courses include some for which that is the only mode of course offered and others that are dual-mode, with both direct contact courses and distance education courses.

The very high percentage of post-secondary education devoted to teacher training does not reflect a similar level of demand for more teachers. In fact, as resource provision to schools is being equalized among the formerly racially-separate systems, thousands of teachers are being declared redundant, particularly in the schools that were the historically "coloured" schools. The numbers enrolled in teacher education at both the colleges and universities include many who do not intend to become teachers, but who enter the programs because entrance to the faculty of education at the universities and to the colleges of education is easier than for other faculties and institutions. In addition, the failure rates from the colleges eliminate as many as 35 percent of students.

**(iv) The Educators at the Colleges of Education.**

Who have been the teachers at these colleges?

As the apartheid education policies became entrenched in the 1960s and 1970s, the faculties of the colleges of education came primarily from two groups. A significant number were black teachers (two-thirds in 1980; just over half in 1989). Some of these, when assessed for qualification purposes were graded as teachers (equivalent to those teaching in the schools), instead of the higher grade of college lecturers. Even those who had the qualification of a degree received it in a system that was in a cycle of decline in English background.

Increasingly through this period, the white teachers at the colleges were Afrikaans-speaking, rather than English-speaking. These teachers brought with them "the dogmas of fundamental



pedagogics, as taught in the Afrikaans and black state universities" (Hartshorne, 1992, p. 243). The philosophy of fundamental pedagogics advocates the ideology of separateness and that of the Afrikaners being the trustees of the blacks, whose inferior cultural background hinders them from deciding what is right for them. In short, this was an educational theory built on principles of hierarchy and authority and the reinforcement of separateness.

The effect on English teaching in the colleges was dramatic and negative. Hartshorne (1992, p. 242) cites several studies that document "the deterioration in the standards of English of the younger generation of teachers...." He contends that:

There are many reasons for the deterioration of English in black schools, but there is no doubt that one of the main contributing factors was the disappearance of mother-tongue English speakers from the staffs of the training colleges. This was the result both of resignations of white English-speaking teachers because they could not live with the new ideological directions being imposed by the department, and also the resistance of the latter to the appointment of younger English-speaking teachers (Hartshorne, 1992, pp. 242-243).

The deterioration of English among teachers in the black schools fed into the dissatisfaction that boiled over to revolt by students starting in 1976. The immediate cause of the Soweto protests on June 16, 1976, was the government's attempt to impose Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in the high schools to replace English. Inadequacies in the grasp of English by teachers, identified by students as being a result of having under-qualified teachers, added to the frustration of a politically-awakened and aware student body. Teachers who could not understand the textbooks resorted to

rote learning exercises (Hartshorne, 1992, p. 244). One study of primary teachers in training indicated that over 50% lacked the vocabulary and usage to teach 'telling the time,' a specified topic on the syllabus (Lanham, 1996).

The drop in English language competence can be seen in the following excerpt from a matriculant candidate in response to an interview that sought students' views with regard to the causes of appalling failure rates in their examination:

At home i coming at 5h30 and I do the work of home. After that I do my work at 8h30. In the morning I wake up at 4 o'clock and school start at 17h55. (Simon, 1991)

**(v) The Teachers-in-Training at the Colleges of Education.**

While black students were justifiably frustrated at the quality of education that they were receiving, their anger and defiance could not translate into a better education and improved competence in English. Schools became more and more unstable as protests and mobilization moved from school to street and back again to the schools.

The results on the matriculation exams declined to a point such that a majority of black students failed these school-ending, nationally-controlled examinations which determine future education opportunities for students. In contrast, the great majority of white students in both English and Afrikaans-medium schools passed the exams. These exams must be taken in an accepted medium of instruction--English or Afrikaans (a dictate being changed in the new

education policies announced in early 1996). Hartshorne, on characterizing the onslaught on black education through matriculation examinations, observes that:

The matriculation, intended in the first place as an assessment of the candidate's ability to profit from university level study has come to dominate the lives of all youngsters in the secondary school. Yet, ironically, particularly in the black schools, if this were its purpose it has not been very successful in carrying it out. Certainly, it has nothing but adverse effects in equipping the secondary school to meet the needs of the majority who do not go on to university.

(Hartshorne, 1992, p.60)

Often, the students are older than 18 years. In principle, students are expected to finish by age 18, but this has not been practicable in many areas in black education. Age restrictions are ignored because of understandable delays in starting school, or disruptions during school years. Candidates who obtained a university entrance pass (exemption) would be given a priority in the colleges of education. But such passes became so few that students with just a school leaving certificate became admissible candidates at Colleges of Education. These are the students who then entered a teaching career, mostly out of scarcity of choices as to what else to do.

In addition to the dearth of post-secondary choices, black students also lack information regarding other careers. Guidance as a secondary school course is still available only by chance in a very

few schools, so nursing and teaching became the rescue professions for the students barely able to pass the matriculation examination.

The preparedness of the preservice teachers to join the profession with the aim of 'teaching the black child as never before' (an adage born during the time of silent resistance after the advent of Bantu education) dwindled with time as the cohort of better-prepared teachers who had been trained during the era of missionary schools were scattered by force or chose exile.

**(vi) The Syllabus for a Secondary Teachers' Diploma at Colleges of Education.**

To provide a basis for concrete analysis of the syllabus and methodologies employed in training teachers of English, a portion of the syllabus at colleges of education is presented below. This is a syllabus prepared by the Department of Education and Training (DET), one of the eighteen departments of education that administered the separate education systems of the apartheid system. The DET was responsible for the education of most of the black students in public schools.

The syllabus indicates on it that it is the "1990 Structure, Revised 1995." This spans the period from the unbanning of opposition organizations, such as the African National Congress in 1990 to the first year of operations after the formal end of the apartheid system with the election of the Government of National Unity in 1994.

SECONDARY TEACHERS' DIPLOMA SYLLABUS FOR  
ENGLISH (ACADEMIC)

A. OBJECTIVES OF THE SYLLABUS

By the end of the 3 year course students should have mastered the academic skills in language and literature at a 1-year post Std 10 level by being able to

--demonstrate an understanding of basic concepts relating to the nature of language, its systems and its social aspects;

--demonstrate an understanding of the relevance of knowledge about language to the English teacher;

--state the characteristics of the various genres (poetry, drama, novels and short stories) and discuss them with reference to specific texts;

--identify and name literary and figurative devices and comment on their effect;

--identify symbols and comment aptly on them;

--describe and discuss aspects such as structure, plot, theme and character in drama, novels and short stories;

--respond with understanding and insight to contextual questions focused on a given extract from a literary text;

--write well-structured, coherent, correctly referenced literary essays in response to a variety of topics.

B. GENERAL REMARKS [selected items from the "General Remarks" section]

3. A list of approved literary texts will be provided by the Department to guide colleges in their choice. The selection over three years should provide students with a grounding in the range of writing in English--historically, culturally and geographically.
4. The emphasis in dealing with the prescribed texts is on the development of communicative competence through integrative skills activities relating to the texts.
6. The methodologies used by the lecturer should be transferable to the English language classroom. The assumption here is that language development is best served when learners are engaged in activities that
  - require the transfer of information across an information gap to provide a genuine reason for communicating;
  - focus on getting the message across rather than on form or correctness;
  - focus on the outcome - i.e. the effectiveness - of the communication rather than on the process of communicating;
  - involve the learner in negotiating meaning in the light of feedback.
8. A process approach should be taken to students' writing, with the emphasis on improving early drafts in discussion with peers.
9. The language study in all three years should be done at an introductory level, with the emphasis on basic concepts in language to improve student teachers'

knowledge about their subject. No attempt should be made to teach English grammar, even when the topic is syntax. It is an understanding of the nature of human language as such that is sought. Where appropriate, illustrations should be drawn from both English and an African language.

C. CONTENT [Selected samples from the content section of the syllabus]

## LANGUAGE

### 1. THE NATURE OF HUMAN LANGUAGE

#### 1.1 Linguistic knowledge

##### 1.1.1 Knowledge of the sound system

##### 1.1.2 Knowledge of the meaning of words

##### 1.1.3 Awareness of language as communication

##### 1.1.4 The creativity of linguistic knowledge

### 2. LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

#### 2.1 Stages in mother tongue language acquisition

#### 2.2 Theories of child language acquisition

#### 2.3 The biological foundations of language acquisition

#### 2.4 Learning a second (or third or nth language)

##### 2.4.1 Second language teaching methods (interface with didactics course to avoid repetition)

##### 2.4.2 Acquisition and learning

##### 2.4.3 Acquisition:

\*Barriers

\*Aids

\*Processes

### 3. HUMAN LANGUAGE PROCESSING

## LITERATURE

### 4. POETRY

Any anthology which will enable the lecturer to select at least TEN British/American poems and TEN South African/African poems. The selection each year should include poems representative of different historical periods and different poets.

#### FOCUS ON --

4.1 Form

4.2 Content

4.3 Theme

4.4 Poetic devices

### 5. SHORT STORIES

### 6. DRAMA

### 7. THE LITERARY ESSAY

7.1 Terms used in topics (e.g. Discuss..., Describe..., Compare..., Evaluate..., etc.)

7.2 Structure (i.e., introduction, body, conclusion)

7.3 Paragraph structure (e.g. statement (topic sentence) plus evidence)

7.4 Cohesion - within and between paragraphs

7.5 Process: researching, drafting, editing, rewriting

7.6 Using quotations

7.7 Plagiarism

7.8 Referencing (i.e. giving page reference or act, scene and line references)

7.9 Bibliographies (The Harvard System)



(Department of Education and Training, 1995)

**(vii) An Analysis of Elements of the Syllabus.**

This syllabus very much reflects a transition in its definition of what is to be done in the courses to prepare teachers of English. In the general remarks section, it suggests approaches that are more student-centred and break from the traditional, colonial-style English education. It calls for grounding in a range of writing (item 3), not just historically, but also "culturally and geographically", presumably to provide some relevance to the student context. It uses phrases like "communicative competence" (item 4), "authentic" activities (item 5), "focus on getting the message across rather than on form or correctness" and "involve the learner in negotiating meaning" (item 6). However, these notions in the "General Remarks" section are not reflected in the remainder of the syllabus. For example, while the "General Remarks" section suggests that the course be relevant to the student context, context in the objectives section focuses on "contextual questions based on a given extract from a literary text."

The subject matter identified in the "Content" section also reflects a very traditional definition, reflecting little change from the previous decades of what would have been taught in both secondary school English courses and the teacher training programs. One area of content that may reflect a broader range of choices than the traditional is the inclusion of "South African/African" works of literature, along with the British/American choices, but even those are to be treated in the traditional approaches to studying form and

text. In addition, if the "South African/African" works chosen include poems such as "The African Beggar," analysed elsewhere in this thesis, they will perpetuate the negative views of black people, rather than reflecting positive images from the student context.

The one area in the entire syllabus that mentions methodology identifies as content "Second language teaching methods (interface with didactics course to avoid repetition)." The reference to avoiding repetition clearly implies that the second language teaching methods are consistent with those put forward in the didactics course, not in conflict with them. The didactics course is based on the pedagogical tradition, described by Hartshorne as "authoritarian, prescriptive and top-down" (Hartshorne, 1992, p. 247). Nowhere in the syllabus is there any indication that students in teacher training are asked to address the issues of using English as the medium of instruction for students for whom it is a second/nth language.

The syllabus is not grounded in who the teacher education students are, who the students are that they will be teaching in the black secondary schools, nor what those students will need for success in language development in English.

Probably the most powerful message about what is to be taught is sent through the system of evaluation. Most of the mark for these teachers in training is to be determined by examination. While 400 out of 1000 possible points is to be determined by assignments throughout the year, the remaining 600 points are to be awarded through two examinations worth 300 points each. These examinations for pre-service teachers are described below.

## "1. EXAMINATION

- 1.1 Each year's work in the subject will terminate in a written examination, internal at the end of the first and second years and external at the end of the third year.
- 1.2 Two three-hour papers will be set, each counting out of 300. Paper 1 will consist of three equally weighted sections corresponding to the first three themes studied in that particular year. A variety of questions will be set in each section to evaluate candidates' understanding of the concepts involved and of their relevance to English teaching. Paper two will consist of both contextual and essay questions on the texts selected for study in each year. The novel, short story collection and Shakespeare play for study in the third year will be prescribed by the Department. The poetry section in the external paper will provide unseen poems as the basis for its questions." (Department of Education and Training, 1995)

While the rhetoric of the revised syllabus calls for many new elements which have been introduced into language teaching internationally, such as the communicative approach, the examination system has not been transformed to reflect such changes, and implicitly sends a powerful message that things have not really changed.

**(viii) Philosophy and Practice Produce Problems with English.**

The approaches to teaching in all subject areas in black schools have been defined by a combination of intentional philosophy and lack of knowledge of alternatives. The philosophy is that of apartheid and the authoritarian and prescriptive pedagogy described by Hartshorne (1992, p.247). The architect of apartheid education, Hendrik Verwoerd, reshaped the education system to ensure that the African would not be "misled...by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze" (quote from Verwoerd in Unterhalter, 1991, p. 56).

The lack of sound education in turn pushed teachers to narrow and uncreative practices, described by Hartshorne as "survival teaching." The characteristics of this approach include "dependence on the textbook, rote learning, note taking, prescriptive methods of teaching, and avoidance of free discussion and any but the most carefully controlled questions" (Hartshorne, 1992, p. 244). All of these taken together are a recipe that ensures most Africans will not achieve communicative competence in English. The shortcomings of the apartheid framework, evidences the need for replacing it before implementing new changes in the syllabi. A recent observation by Hartshorne, is worth noting. In an audit article that he wrote a year after the Government of National Unity had been in office, Hartshorne asserts that the syllabus itself, "... remains almost unchanged in content."

In general, it has been left to teachers to interpret and implement the new rhetoric in the curriculum. Yet, the question is, how can teachers be expected to do this without being re-educated in ways that help them move outside the parameters of the framework

that shaped them, shifting and transforming their knowledge about the subject, their instructional strategies and their critical awareness of the complex task of teaching a second language.

A sound syllabus would reject teaching grammar out of context, but would encompass students' needs, which might include some direct instruction in grammar within the context of student work. To rule out specific grammar teaching, as is done with the incorporation of the new rhetoric into the syllabus, leaves the teacher without options to make sound decisions based on real choices, to best meet the needs of the particular students being taught, just as the old system has left them without options.

In the next chapter, I propose a new framework for the teaching of English as a second language to speakers of other languages, specifically blacks, in the secondary teacher education program at the historically black colleges of education. I define the constructs that will support the framework and provide a few examples of how they may be applied.

### CHAPTER THREE: FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING ENGLISH IN A POST-APARTHEID SOCIETY

#### (i) Some Theoretical Issues.

Proposing a new framework for English as a second or nth language teacher education programs is an undertaking fraught with difficulty. The process of learning and of teaching English to speakers of other languages is a debated terrain even outside the context of South Africa (Prabhu, 1987; Panchal, 1984; Kachru, 1986; Dufficy, 1993). In the disarray produced by decades of social conflict and now social change, all with important education components, the terrain is particularly complex. Nevertheless, in this chapter, I suggest a new framework to guide second/nth language teacher preparation.

The framework proposed rests on constructs which have been postulated by Freeman (1989) and Larsen-Freeman (1983). Freeman asserts that the problematic terrain of (second or nth) language teaching arises from the unarticulated assumptions on which individuals (teacher educators in one sense, curriculum and textbook writers in another) and teacher education institutions rest their work. He identifies the source of this problematic situation arising as a result of a profession--*language teaching*--being principally derived from academic disciplines--such as, *applied linguistics, second language acquisition research, methodology*--among others. This assertion that the teaching of language currently

rests too much on these disciplines does not disparage the importance of such disciplines. For that matter, he regards them as essential areas of inquiry. None of the language teaching methods or the areas of inquiry stands alone and none obviates the need for the others.

However, he sees language teaching as being a subject different from others, and he believes teacher education should acknowledge this by recognizing it as a subject area of its own. He clarifies the relationship between (second) language teaching and the areas of inquiry through the analogy of health care and the field of medicine. Research into various elements required to keep a person healthy contributes a knowledge base for medical professionals. However, getting people to actually change their behaviors--to stop smoking or get more exercise--to take advantage of research knowledge is a different thing from the research knowledge. Likewise, research into areas of language teaching and learning--applied linguistics and the other disciplines already mentioned--contribute to the knowledge base for language practitioners, educators.

To bring about change in language learning, Freeman argues, is a decision-making challenge for second language teaching. Seeing alternatives, deciding on one over the others, and understanding why the choice is made--all are elements of responsible decision-making. For learners and teachers in South Africa, this is a fundamental change from the single-option, externally directed approach to all education, not just language education. A decision-making model

seems to hold potential for language teacher education, particularly in a setting where the stifling effect of external direction is shrinking.

Two interlocking proposals for the constituents of language teaching are advanced in Freeman's model. In this thesis, the term construct, as referring to a component of a theory, (Sampson, 1992) will be used instead of Freeman's "constituent." Firstly, Freeman views language teaching as a decision-making process which requires, a demonstration of the following: *knowledge, attitude, skills, and (critical) awareness*. These four constructs must be demonstrated through the inquiry areas which include pedagogy, linguistics, culture, language learning and acquisition, interpersonal relations and professionalism. Secondly, he identifies two strategies for educating language teachers through which the content of these constructs can be taught to teachers. The two educational strategies are: 1) training, and 2) development based on the decision-making model. These two educational strategies are the core of second language pedagogy.

It is decision-making that gives the four constructs--knowledge, attitude, skills and awareness--a dynamic basis. Teaching should not be static. It should involve shifts, negotiations, dialogues, actions and responses to a myriad of variables, including, in particular, who the students are and their daily social experiences. Decision-making for a second language teacher ranges from where everyone will begin to where the teacher will stand or sit during the lesson (Freeman,1989, citing Giamatti in Larsen-Freeman (1983)) .

A model of teaching as decision-making is a direct challenge to the presuppositions about teaching in the apartheid paradigm of



education. The top-down prescription, the assumption of an immutable, hierarchical order based on race and gender, the uniformity of expectations concerning each student, regardless of background, all contributed to a style of teaching where teachers as well as students were expected to follow directions rather than make decisions based on a complex of factors and needs. While describing teaching as a decision-making process might seem mundane in another context, it reflects a change in paradigm in the teaching of second/nth language--and other subjects as well--for a new South Africa. On another level, decision-making is going to be an asset to the stakeholders in education, as the country is being inundated with numerous options with the advent of democracy. Information and knowledge that were viewed skeptically and regarded as non-permitted terrain in the apartheid era, are flowing in and are likely to inundate every education stakeholder, necessitating responsible decision-makers.

**(ii) Defining The Constructs.**

Freeman (1989) identifies four elements that need to be seen in the context of the decision-making model. I view each construct as a building block for the new framework in the teaching of the English language by a corps of teachers who, as detailed in earlier chapters, are in many ways inadequately trained. Each of Freeman's four constructs will be defined and discussed in the context of English teaching in South Africa.

### (iii) Knowledge.

For Freeman, the pivotal construct of knowledge includes what is being taught (its nature), to whom it is being taught (the student--their backgrounds, learning styles, language levels, and so on); and where it is being taught (sociocultural, institutional, and situational contexts). I would add to these subcategories of the knowledge construct the following: for what purposes, under what conditions, and at what cost (including attention taken away from other subjects that might be taught).

As seen in Chapter Two, it is imperative for South African educators to reconceptualize the knowledge framework of all the subjects/courses that are being taught. In this reconceptualization, multiple meanings of knowledge must be taken into account. Barrow and Milburn (1990, p. 166), for example, distinguish between what they term epistemological and social theses about knowledge. The epistemological (*from Greek, episteme, knowledge*) concerns itself with the nature of knowledge, whereas the sociological pertains to social forces and their effects on knowledge claims. A teacher of English as a second/nth language needs to have a knowledge of the language in both these senses.

This dual nature of the required knowledge could be explained with an example of a teacher who proposes to teach her students the language used in the register (one kind of knowledge) of a wedding ceremony. Here register means the encoding of linguistic meaning that pertains to a particular social setting. In addition to detailing the social conventions that go with marriage in a western context, the teacher would need to take into account the interpretations related

to marriage in the social setting of the students. A student from a rural area of KwaZulu-Natal would likely have a different conception of the conventions involved from that of a student in a township, and maybe different as well from a student from a rural area across the country. It would be advisable to have students identify events surrounding a marriage from their own socio-cultural context. The knowledge of various conventions surrounding marriage is a sociological form of knowledge, in contrast to the epistemological concept of the register.

Larsen-Freeman (1983) also provides useful insights regarding the construct of knowledge as *informed choice*.

The way one becomes informed is through the transformation and accumulation of knowledge...teachers should have knowledge in the areas of language (e.g., conceptual knowledge of the language to be taught), language learning (e.g., knowledge of how people acquire languages), language teaching (e.g., knowledge of language theory), culture (e.g., knowledge of the culture of the language to be taught), and interpersonal communication (e.g., knowledge of the process of communication), at the very least ( 1983:267).

What would the transformation and accumulation of knowledge as described here do for an English language teacher? As has been mapped out in the previous chapter, one of the deficiencies of the knowledge framework in the courses/subjects and teacher training was the dearth of options and lack of training with respect to learning how to make informed choices.

For example, different approaches to interpreting literature which have been absent from any experience of the teacher trained at the colleges of education, could be incorporated in the study of

both literature and language. Multiple approaches as shown in the chart below (Lather, 1991) are entirely outside the traditional training in the study of literature received by teachers. The breadth of options which could be engaged is demonstrated in Lather's catalog of the multiplicity of critical approaches:

<u>Predict</u>	<u>Understand</u>	<u>Emancipate</u>	<u>Deconstruct</u>
positivism	interpretive naturalistic constructivist phenomenological hermeneutic	critical neo-Marxist feminist praxis-oriented educative Freirian participatory action research	poststructural postmodern post-paradigmatic diaspora

(Lather, 1991, p. 7)

As an example, participatory engagement in the approaches under the "emancipate" heading above by both the teacher-in-training student and the teacher educator have had no role in African education. This type of engagement, to paraphrase Freire and Macedo, is characterized by the educator's ability to steer students to the exploration of knowledge by 'creating dialogue spaces' through the provision of intellectual tools which help the student to come to terms with the object of that knowledge (Freire and Macedo, 1995). In tackling a piece of literature, educators using a dialogic approach will go beyond seeing their students mechanically reading the text for syntactic forms and literary terms; students will be engaged in a way that will help them transcend the

limitations of mere labeling to get to the very core of knowledge and sociological schemata embodied in the text.

One of the most powerful control elements of the apartheid paradigm of language teaching was the failure to recognize as knowledge content anything other than that from the Euro-American traditions. The social and cultural fabric of African life could be used to mediate learning the English language on an experiential level, an instrumentally-oriented involvement with reality stage, (as in Falck, 1989, 58, quoted in Sampson 1993). This way of learning helps students go beyond the mere labeling and naming of objects to a stage where they can articulate reality as they sense it. This they will do through the target language as they begin to see that 'the best things ever said' can be expressed differently in all languages. This articulation, which is characterized by awarenesses at different levels of consciousness, will facilitate learning of language. For example, drawing from the students' experiential levels, to begin with, as in the case of teaching them register in the wedding ceremony example quoted above, helps them recognize language and cognitive patterns, which they may not be able to articulate yet. But through exposure to them and constant, systematic working on them, they may be able to appropriate this language and these cognitions. Not providing the students with this level of socially mediated learning and language interaction deprives the students of the critical tools to understand their world through literacy (Freire and Macedo, 1995). Texts should be offered in ways that would promote this mediation of experiential level through probings that transcend to the expressive level.

The new approaches and theories about the nature of language and language learning which inform the practices and principles of language learning, (Richards and Rogers, 1986) need to encourage a *way of seeing*, as opposed to a *way of not seeing*, on the part of pre and in-service teacher (Freeman, 1991, p. 25). As I have pointed out in earlier chapters, the tendency to ignore the reality of students' lives was not in the main the fault of black educators. The system, through limited curriculum and tight controls, avoided the educative dialogue that would enable students to express what they see in and around them and how they relate to that. Ways of knowing from the sociological frames are valuable and relevant for second language teaching and learning because they provide a bridge from the experiential, the surface involvement with the language being learnt, to the mythic level, a level where learners can articulate things they experienced yet could not articulate in the initial stage of learning the language (Sampson, 1993). A speaker of another language who is preparing to teach the target language to a speaker of another language requires this kind of competence.

The anecdote of Chapter One would serve to illustrate the case in point. When Nomcebo and I talked about the potential content for classroom dialogue, neither of us ever referred to the violent situation around us as the possible content of discussion, even though it constituted a great deal of students' experiences (experiential level) of the 90s in South Africa. The reason for this aversion was the fear of being labeled as inciting violence by mere reference to an obvious situation. The daily incidents that arose from political conflicts were *seen* and never *spoken* about. The consequences of

such denial of the students' lives, are many. Of significance for thesis is that students' English language learning was never mediated through these daily experiences, hence the students were deprived of the opportunities of transcending their experiential learning to the expressive level, in areas that had direct meaning to their social lives.

As I have stated in the previous chapter, readings on the syllabus--mainly traditional literature and comprehension texts--had little to do with anything that was of immediacy to students' lives. Recognizing these purposeful omissions of the past will broaden awareness of options and open the issues of content and knowledge for teacher and student decision-making. It will also prepare a ground of tolerance on issues that can be addressed without a charge of political incitement and without igniting blind hatred at just hearing a different point of view from what one holds. At the heart of teaching seen as responsible decision-making is an awareness that there are options and thus choices that can and must be made.

Omissions have not been about just the political life. Freeman (1991), for example, in a different context of second language teaching and learning, provides some field notes from a teacher in a French language class. As students come into the class, the teacher and students have an informal discussion about what happened the previous night to one of the students when a dog kept him awake. The discussion is largely in French, with the students pulling in some English words when they don't know the French term. The teacher provides the French words (which is positive immediate feedback). Then the teacher starts the class, and hands out a worksheet of

sentences with blanks in them and assigns the students to fill in the blanks with the correct word.

Of significance in this example is how the teacher "chooses" not to see the students' events as a legitimate context of situation to teach the proposed syntax. Teachers' views of content, methodology and seeing the act of teaching as arranging lessons, are embedded in how they themselves were educated/instructed. Sadly, certain kinds of training breed teaching methods that are not geared to a critical understanding of knowledge by the learners. Such learning can be illustrated by the vivid memories I have regarding my learning of English. I memorized stanzas and stanzas of the romantic poets and recited them in front of the student body at assembly. The fantasized image of the daffodil I had created for myself from this memorization and recitation was much more handsome than the actual daffodil I got to know not very long ago. Even though I created a romanticized image of the 'host of daffodils', I never knew the name of the dandelion in my backyard. From this background, the student who then is called upon to write a composition on her beautiful flower garden (which in some cases may not be there) certainly counts the daffodils as one of the flowers--except when a critical awareness of geography enables the learner to figure out that there are no daffodils in meadows on the escarpment, high plateau or the coastal regions of South Africa.

Sometimes criticisms of content from concerned South Africans are misinterpreted as meaning that the critics think there should be no foreign content taught at all in the South African curricula. That is an extreme that would be severely crippling and it is not an issue



even worth arguing about. An example of such an allegation is seen, for instance, in Evans (1993, p. 7). Educators who call for the use of African materials have often been criticized as just putting forward a political perspective for the sake of politicizing the students; the critics have not accepted the purported intention that students be introduced to the complexities of politics in South Africa as an integral part of learning English. Actually, issues around content were not overt in the education of the apartheid era. The system left teacher education participants believing that there were no other legitimate alternatives or forms of inquiry. The clamour had nothing to do with providing students with "a comforting ideological massage," as Wright argues in Evans (1993). At least, educators and students at this level of education do need to have open, inquiring minds and know that the politics of South Africa (as of any country) is not the only phenomenon education is about. An educator who has been exposed to choices would know that it is not only the Leavisite principles and the methods of practical criticism (Evans, 1993) that would enable the students and educator to articulate the possibilities of knowledge that a work of literature carries.

Another important area for second/nth language development is metalinguistic awareness, the relationship between the act of comprehension and the appropriation of linguistic knowledge by the language learner. This awareness, like that of content discussed above, depends on a breadth of conceptual knowledge of the language that is being taught and the inseparable awareness of its segments as the learner uses the language (Culioli in Gombert, 1992 p 9). Such awareness encompasses the form, meaning and

appropriate use of the language. It is only at this point of language appropriation that a teacher- in- training may engage text in ways that border on the level of imagination as the capacity to think of things as possibly being so (Egan, 1992). And it is a competent teacher educator who can assume the task of teaching English in such illuminating ways to his or her students.

Sampson (1993) argues strongly for the significance of metalinguistic awareness in the training of pre-service teachers of ESL. She asserts that metalinguistic awareness is a mental process which consists of having a variety of strategies--phonological, morphological, syntactic and textual to use in thinking about and processing the language. Further, a language teacher with this kind of awareness can invite language learners to engage in the aforesaid strategies, whether they are reading literature, working at comprehending simple texts, carrying out oral activities, or engaged in writing.

Another facet which extends possibilities for the language teacher is the knowledge that teaching and learning hinge on the psychological and social make-up of the participants. One source of such knowledge is Vygotsky (see Davydov, 1995) and what his perceptions on language teaching can offer. Of significance with respect to this source of knowledge is how a learner's interaction with an adult or competent peer, (although the participants in our context are both adults) on a social plane could further language growth cognitively and otherwise. The information, new for most educators in South Africa, who have been subjected to restrictive ways of seeing, could be used to help facilitate understanding of

what language teaching/learning offers in the shaping of the personality of an individual. This could be probed through Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory of psychological development, which Davydov (1995) characterizes as one of Vygotsky's principal scientific achievements. A brief summary of this theory will serve for our purposes. According to Vygotsky, the development of human personality takes place during the child's upbringing and education, and has a specifically historical character, content, and form. Therefore in different historical eras, we see different types of individual psychological development. This suggests that if we want to develop the decision-making capacity of the individual as a key component of second language learning (as well as in other elements of education), then we must focus on creating decision-making as a systemic characteristic.

It is significant that Vygotsky's contribution was itself a product of the analysis of a particular country's belief system. This point echoes Freire's insistence on the need to rewrite and analyze the socio-cultural situation of one's country before beginning to redress any anomalies (Freire and Macedo, 1987). Building an education system which draws on Vygotsky's theory would combat the limiting of personal, psychological and social development built into other systems that assume that mastering some forms of learning is impossible or inappropriate for black students. It would provide some guidance on designing and presenting educative material to the students. The sequence of learning begins with the collective--then moves to the culture--then to the ideal--sign or symbol--and finally to the individual consciousness. It is interesting

that Vygotsky also stressed the collaborative relationship between the educator and the student--important for the transformative undertaking in South Africa.

**(iv) Skills.**

Freeman (1987) defines skills (know-how) as what the language teacher has to be able to do: present material, give clear instructions, correct errors in various ways, manage classroom interaction and discipline, and promote epistemological inquiry/curiosity.

Definitions of skills are contentious. One illuminating short definition for our purposes is that by Barrow:

Now a skill is fairly clearly and unambiguously a particular kind of ability. Not all abilities are skills. A skill is an ability, usually physical, that is discrete and improved by training or practice. (Barrow, 1990, p. 88)

However, some abilities that are indispensable to teaching call for more than the mere physical practice. Such skills are not discreet and cannot be perfected by practice alone, (Barrow, p.89). For this purpose, I would like to perceive skills as a special form of knowing that Sampson (1996) calls Tact, a form of knowing that is built up over time into a set of habits that reflect a person's being at home with his or her subject matter. An educator specifically of second/nth language teaching, requires these skills for a variety of demands in pedagogic practice, and these include the physical or outward demonstration of skillfully manipulating a situation that impacts on the learning/teaching of language. If a language teacher,

for instance, is engaging students in a dialogue that promotes/develops knowledge of particular language structures, and in that moment, students attempt to participate and in so doing, commit mistakes, a teacher can skillfully and tactfully, at the opportune moment, reiterate the student's point, while providing the correct linguistic or cognitive input. It does not matter whether the teacher uses the communicative approach, direct approach, the silent way or any other method of language teaching. Skillful teachers will know when their interventions are fitting for a particular situation.

The focus on skills will be necessary for transitional and post-apartheid second language teaching because teacher educators as well as pre- and in-service teachers need skills that are in accordance with the paradigm of change. But skills in themselves and for themselves cannot offer solutions to the problems of second language teaching. Insights into second language teaching from a variety of constructs will help teacher educators recognize what a range of skills and approaches is necessary to draw from for the proposed decision-making model.

**(v) Attitude.**

The construct of attitude is defined by Freeman (1989) as the stance one adopts toward oneself, the activity of teaching, and the learners one engages with in the teaching-learning process. Attitude is made up of an interplay of externally-oriented behaviors, actions, and perceptions on the one hand, and intrapersonal dynamics, feelings, and reactions on the other.

For an English language teacher, being armed with knowledge of the subject matter is of primary significance to the notion of teaching, but not sufficient. Attitude includes the educator's manner of acting with students, as well as how he or she perceives students. These greatly impact upon the nature of the pedagogic relationship, not just between students and teacher, but between students and the process of learning.

Studies that have examined attitude indicate that it is an inherently personal construct and could best be studied introspectively by the individual concerned, in this case, the educator. Self-examination of attitude is essential in the transitional and post-apartheid South Africa. Teachers of the language which has had a hegemonic position need to reflect upon their attitude about themselves as knowing practitioners of the language, toward their students as aspiring learners of the language, toward the language itself, and toward the texts/materials they use.

The significance of attitude and (awareness) was brought home to me in one incident from my teaching experience. A few months before the dreaded national Matriculation examination, a group of secondary school teachers of English had gathered to share strategies for better equipping their students in preparation for the exam. The prescribed literature books, which were very challenging for most of the college-trained teachers, were the focus of discussion. Invited to this meeting was an acquaintance of mine. She was a native speaker of English, a remarkable educator and writer, among the many descriptors she wore behind her name. I had just finished introducing her when she began by making a statement that made

me hold my breath throughout her presentation. She introduced the challenge of second language teaching by asserting that only native speakers of this language can teach it the way it should be taught. She said it was only because of the lack of such teachers that this challenging job has been entrusted to anyone whatsoever who puts himself or herself forward to do it. I looked at her and then checked the faces of all the participants to see if the arrow had hit its mark. The only two other native speakers of English looked down until the speaker was done. The rest of the participants, speakers of other languages, yet teachers of English, shrugged their shoulders, squinted their eyes. As a facilitator, I sensed the impact that the statement might have made. Knowing this acquaintance of mine and what I knew she stood for, I wanted to believe she did not mean what we had heard.

As the participants broke into groups, I had the opportunity to go around the room. I discovered that the remark had been received with scorn toward the speaker. I handled the matter as best I could, using the communicative and administrative experiences that had shaped me. I did not, of course, go back to the presenter to point out this problem. The climate of the country had not allowed us yet to challenge or even openly reflect on such issues.

This illustration could serve to illuminate a few points about attitude. A teacher educator will just discourage pre-service or in-service teachers if she takes a position as the knower and makes assertions about the advantages of being a native speaker of the target language. Such an educator sends a message to students that they will be stuck where they are and are not likely to achieve a

high level of critical competence in the target language. It was an indisputable fact that my counterpart was a well-educated native speaker of the language. It also was obvious that 98% of the participants were not native speakers of English. And she, like all the participants knew of the history of our country that rendered some of us capable of standing only on the bottom rungs of achievement or competence in this language. Stating this fact as her punch line accentuated the disempowerment of the teachers who had chosen to teach the language--the language that had to be taught under difficult circumstances already elaborated upon in the previous chapters. The orientation of the speaker portrayed through such an utterance embodied a destructive, "puffed up" attitude about her own competence in the language as opposed to that of the teachers she was addressing and created a gulf between her and the non-native speakers of a language stranded on an island of incompetence; they are deemed as forever unable to make a home for themselves in English.

A gulf between the knowing educator and the language learner always exists in the learning/teaching process. This gulf is a result of the learner's awareness of her/his linguistic limits compared to the teacher's knowledge. Emotional forces regarding the student's self-esteem complicate the challenges of second language teaching. The educator needs to tread the ground carefully to place limits on the expression of her/his own "unlimited" knowledge to reduce the threat to the learner (Rardin, Tranel, Tirone & Green, 1988, p. 10).

The complexity of the emotional and intellectual forces that are involved in the learning process is captured by the proponents of the



"learning is persons" approach (Rardin, et al., 1988). They argue that the quality of learning that takes place is determined by the interaction of a matrix of personal relationships in a classroom. The relationships constitute that of the teacher with himself/herself; between the teacher and the student; and the relationship of the student with himself/herself and the content, as well as with the other students in class. If learning is to take place, these emotional and intellectual forces must be harmonized. When one force--attitude--snaps, the learner shuts himself/herself off, or in the terms used by Rardin, et al. (1988), "disinvests" from learning. A positive attitude by the learner helps the learner "invest" in learning. The challenges of a second language require linguistic competence by the teacher, but at the same time that competence must be non-threatening.

It seems appropriate that a new paradigm of teaching English as a second language must assist the building of constructive attitudes among both teachers and students. This leads into a final construct that glues together all the foregoing ones.

**(vi) Awareness.**

Awareness is a capacity to recognize and monitor the attention one is giving or has given to something. Thus, one acts on or responds to the aspects of a situation of which one is aware (Freeman, 1989). This is not to be confused with attention, which could relate to the degree of engagement/involvement with a particular aspect of the classroom, for instance, paying attention to the amusing nature of a story without cognizance of what the narrative proposes to

teach/analogize. Gattegno (1976, p. 4), as quoted in Freeman, says that awareness provides the dynamics that scan the field to be known and is, therefore, both a condition and a means of knowing.

In further distinguishing between awareness and attention, Freeman says awareness defines territory (more encompassing), whereas attention sets direction within it (more focused).

Looking again at the earlier illustration in the section on attitude could help clarify the construct of awareness in the training of language teachers. Was the speaker aware of how she opened/invited participants to take part in the discussion that was intended to help them? Differently put, was the speaker aware of the knowing versus "you don't know" attitude inherent in her opening statement? Was she aware of what these practising teachers of second language experienced as problematic areas in their teaching? Did she take it for granted that their not being native speakers of the target language rendered them inadequate in teaching the language? Was she aware of the presuppositions which governed her perception of language teaching?

Present day teacher educators will face similar challenges in varying degrees. Their awareness of facets involved in the teaching of English, of who the students are, what their situations/experiences are and have been will determine how the teachers deal with the constructs of knowledge, skills and attitude.

In quoting Gattegno (1976, p. 4), Freeman reiterates that awareness "is needed to bring back what is known and work on it again to change it, make it more conscious, more precise, more useful and connected with other knowledge." An education program for

language teachers which heightens this type of awareness is essential. Because of practices that were aimed at subordination rather than development, both pre-service and in-service teachers have been unable to develop their awareness of teaching and learning processes to the appropriate extent. Now, in the new political-social context, the intention is that the language is to be taught and learned as an empowering tool for all people.

What kinds of awareness are necessary for educators as language users and as models of new forms of teaching? Such awareness includes that concerning knowledge options, different ways of knowing, and multiple learning styles.

**(vii) Two Educational Strategies: Training and Development.**

Having examined the significance of the constructs; knowledge, skills, attitude and awareness in language teacher education, I will move on to the processes through which these constructs may be taught to pre-service and in-service teachers. This educational process which arms teachers with insights and knowledge to face the challenges is made up of two strands, which Freeman (1989) terms the educating strategies. These are *training* and *development*.

The mention of both these terms--training and development--particularly the former, evoke varied responses among teacher educators. In South Africa, too, the term training arouses sensitivities in educational circles because of the inadequacy of the delivery process that has been associated with the department of education designated for blacks-only education: the Department of

Education and Training. Of the some seventeen apartheid ministries of education, only the one responsible for the education of blacks had the word "training" in its official title.

Without getting into the controversy associated with the terms, I will briefly clarify the premise on which it is used here, as borrowed from Freeman (1989).

Education is perceived by Freeman as a superordinate process that incorporates both of the two functions: teacher training and teacher development. Teachers, in other words, are educated through training and development strategies. The participants in this interactive process are two key individuals: the teacher in preparation (or in-service) and the teacher educator (program supervisor, mentor colleague). The teacher educator's role is characterized as that of a collaborator (*French, compagnon de route*), as suggested by Freeman. The word "collaborator" does have a political connotation, which in this case is not desirable. Thus, the term "teacher educator" will be used throughout to describe this role. This transformation is aimed at generating change, transformation in the pre-service and in-service teacher decision-making.

Contrasted with development is the strategy of training. While the teacher educator under the strategy of development collaborates on initiatives, roles and tactful balance in generating change, the intervention is direct and specific under that of training. The premise of the strategy of training, Freeman argues, is that through mastery of discrete aspects of skills and knowledge, teachers will improve their effectiveness in the classroom; further, this mastery accrues into a whole form of teaching competence--craft.

However, the limitations of the strategy of training can be demonstrated by recalling Nomcebo's situation described in Chapter One. She acknowledged having been drilled on situational dialogues which were in contexts that had no relevance and immediacy for her; in fact, these were situations she had no experiential recognition of and hence the meaning was lost as soon as the drill had served the purpose of the examination/test. These dialogues failed to prepare her for the diverse situations that would characterize her teaching experience. What we see here are the limits of the generating capacity within the training strategy. When Nomcebo was left alone with her class over the years of her teaching, she fell short of being able to generate a dialogue that would be relevant and insightful to her and to her students.

In an attempt to counteract the limitations of a teacher preparation model that only rests on training, like the one in the historically black teacher education preparation, Freeman suggests development as a strategy that adopts a holistic and integrated approach.

Presenting a lesson, or handing out homework, Freeman avers are occurrences that any pre-service teacher can learn through the training strategies, on the one hand. Generating change and transformation through increasing or shifting awareness, on the other hand, are aspects of teaching that call for development as a strategy of educating. An example that Freeman gives is recognizing how one's self-confidence or lack thereof affects students' reactions to the content or the learning. A special monitoring system seems to be essential for a teacher in-preparation or in-service to learn to

mirror these variables which so positively or negatively affect language learning and how students react to teachers' inputs.

It is through the strategy of development as opposed to that of drilling or infantilizing that the teacher educator triggers or brings to the teacher's awareness what the teacher is engaged in or how she is doing it and what the possible implications on learning could be.

To elaborate on the term infantilization as used here, I'll draw from an example reported on by Frank Smith (1993) in his reportorial book on his recent experiences in South Africa regarding the teaching of English.

Smith had been encouraging student input into defining their needs as teachers of the English language in high schools and colleges. He had removed the active participation of lecturers--staff--with the purpose of avoiding domination by staff. The following excerpt reveals the tension-filled dialogues that developed between Smith and the staff (Smith's comments are in plain text; comments from the staff in italics).

#### Departmental Dialogues

Have you considered doing this?

*It wouldn't work here.*

It works everywhere else.

*But this is South Africa.*

You want students to learn to think, don't you?

*Of course. But you can't put doubts into their minds.*

*They can't handle it. So you have to tell them what's best.*

May I tell you how an outsider sees the situation?

*Why not wait until you've been here six months?*

In six months, I'll be thinking like a South African.

*Exactly.*

Couldn't there be more contact between the department and teachers in the field?

*The university is very dubious about diploma programmes.*

Don't give diplomas.

*Then black teachers wouldn't come.*

Go to them.

*They don't want people dropping in to tell them what they're doing wrong.*

Let's do some research. Give half the students the usual component of grammar and phonology, but let the rest do a lot of independent reading and writing instead. That way, we can find out if the grammar and phonology really make a difference.

*The students wouldn't stand for it. It wouldn't be fair to those deprived of the grammar and phonology.*

But we don't know that the deprivation will be harmful to them. There's no evidence it does them any good. This way, we'll find out.

*We don't need to find out. This is the way we have always done it.*

Are all these photocopied handouts necessary?

*Students must all have a chance to learn.*

Must they all learn the same things?

*How could we mark them if they didn't?*

Couldn't students do more free reading?

*Not if it interferes with their course work.*

What if we encourage them to read in their own time?

*They would spend less time on their assignments.*

But how will students ever come to read independently?

*They won't. They don't come from a culture of literacy.*

Couldn't students be allowed more initiative?

*Black students expect to be told what to do.*

Why do they expect that?

*They've always been told what to do.*

Suppose we refuse to tell them?

*We have to respect their traditions.*

(Smith, 1993, p. 36-38)

This dialogue is telling in revealing the attitudes and folk beliefs about who the black teachers are: *they can't think; they don't want people dropping in to tell them what they are doing wrong; and they have always been told what to do.* These attitudes problematize

the notion of development when participants are from the different levels of 'knowing'. Resistance is produced in the one being told while the teller's eyes and sensibility are blinded.

A positive stance towards transforming development would require that the teacher educator assumes a role of *compagnon de route*. It is through this role that the teacher educator is able to focus attention to what may be 'wrong' in their teaching practice, without producing resistance and rejection. The challenge here is huge if the educators suffer from finger-pointing tendencies which blind them from focusing on what could promote effective education and development.

As Freeman illustrates, a development strategy would be for the teacher educator to ask questions like: i) Tell me exactly what it is that your students do not get? (based on Nomcebo's situation of Chapter One) ii) What do you think is happening to them when you try to explain? iii) What did you do to respond to this occurrence of students not 'getting it'? iv) Or what insightful observations can you draw from your interactions with the students regarding their difficulties in learning the structures you are teaching? And what are your problems regarding the situation?

### **(viii) Specific Practices.**

#### **a) Rationale for text.**

To clarify the decision-making model being discussed, it may be of assistance to look at how it might be applied with some examples of specific practices. We will look at teacher choice of a



particular text and at approaches to helping learners make meaning of the text and of their own relationship to it.

In a system that has been very prescriptive, one cannot assume that the teacher will be prepared to make an informed choice about an appropriate text. The teacher's level of knowledge of what is available to choose from may exclude a vast array of possibilities. Teachers may even choose a text that is not appropriate for them or their students, thinking that appropriateness is based on the tradition of what was used when they were students, even though the teachers may, themselves, have a very low level of engaging with the text. The absence of a knowledge of the range of alternatives may be compounded by lack of tools and experience to engage with learners in the construction of interpretation. These factors may lead to the choice of what is comfortable, even though it might not be appropriate or effective.

Helping teachers to be comfortable in engaging with learners in constructing interpretations of material that is culturally familiar should help them to probe more deeply later into materials placed in foreign cultural settings. The challenge then is to prepare teachers to have the knowledge and skills which will make decision-making more comfortable. Not building on this base of developing skills through scaffolding from work with the familiar has a cost: lack of capacity to develop critical literacy and providing students with only a superficial and unclear understanding.

However, one cannot simply move to choice without first having a knowledge of the choices that are available. As an example, Frank Smith in the dialogue quoted earlier, is pushing the teachers in

training to make choices. They, however, resisted making choices, and even fell back on justifying past practice without evidence that it was necessary or effective; they hadn't first been led to an understanding of the many possible choices and the implications of each. In the Frank Smith example, this is interpreted by staff as being asked to put doubts in their students' minds. Therefore, they--students--have to be told what's best. That's not how making informed choices works.

A wide variety of settings will be advisable in deciding on which literature to teach and to read from. The varieties could include Shakespeare as before. There are Shakespearean texts that have been prescribed year after year, whereas, others, like *Othello* have not been that frequent. *I Heard an Owl Call My Name*, a novel set in a British Columbia Indian reserve, has been on the scene for a while at the Matriculation level. Sadly, though, its teaching has been so removed from situations that really would have points of entry for black students who would see themselves, among other things, through the mirror, of the First Nations. The potential of many Euro-American texts has also not been exploited.

In contrast, a multitude of books by South African authors whose works have been banned or previously seen as not desirable from a cross-section of the South African population would be a good pool to choose from. The choices are numerous.

To provide some samples of instructional strategies, a chapter from a novel by one of these South African authors will be the base--*And They Didn't Die*, by Laretta Ngcobo. It has been chosen because of its rare use in classrooms compared to those that have been the

order of the day. Another advantage is the familiarity of events to which the students would relate, particularly in areas like Kwa-Zulu Natal, and other provinces of South Africa. Sadly, rarely have books of this nature been written for this audience. The writer herself is a South African who left South Africa after the political upheavals of the early 1960s (the banning of the African National Congress and the trial and sentencing of Mandela and other political activists). After having lived in Britain for almost two decades, Ngcobo is back in South Africa with her family.

*And They Didn't Die* (Ngcobo, 1990) is set in South Africa of the 1950s and 1960s. It tells the story of Jezile, a dauntless young woman who works as a domestic to a white family, and is raped by the man of the household. After bearing his child, she faces ostracism by her own community. See Appendix II for the text of the chapter of the novel.

#### **b) Possible Instructional Strategies.**

##### Dialogue teaching through problem posing

One approach may be dialogue teaching through problem posing. This is drawn from the work of Friere (1970; 1978; 1991) and has been extended for EFL, teacher education and TESL by a host of educators (Crawford, 1978; Crawford-Lange, 1987; Auerbach and Burges, 1985; Auerbach & Wallerstein, 1987--all as cited in Schleppegrell and Bowman, 1995).

After topics of concern have been identified and decided on by teacher and students, a visual or linguistic input is posed in a manner that sends powerful signals to students that their participation is crucial (Shor, 1987, p.22).

An example from the text in Appendix II could be a topic of concern about fatherless teenage pregnancy. What could be problematized, for example, is both teenage pregnancy and the tendency of fathers who deny being responsible for the pregnancy, the trauma of being pregnant outside marriage, while still at school and the burden it creates for parents who are struggling with their own children, now mothers or fathers-to-be.

i. One type of visual or linguistic input could be that of Jezile leaving the hospital with the baby in the arms and being driven away from her servant quarter to an open sky with no shelter. Ironically, Jezile was acceptable to her 'master' when she was clearly pregnant, but once the evidence of the rape by her employer is visible in the form of an actual living child, she is sent away to look after herself with no assistance. (The harsh reality of the South Africa of the 1950s and 60s and its values is the background of Jezile's dilemma; this reality is known to the participants or may be discussed briefly).

Some of the difficulties in Jezile's background at this point in the story are that Jezile's husband had lost a job in Durban. Because of the pass laws of the time, he was precluded from remaining in the city to look for work. A black person would not be allowed to go about in the city without a valid stamp in the pass which showed where he or she worked. It had been under these conditions that

her husband returned home in the rural Ixopo, where Jezile was expecting their second child. After the birth of the child Siyalo, Jezile's husband could not bear to watch his child grow thin because of a lack of food. Milk just dried from Jezile's breasts and for months they went with little food. When they could still scrape up money, Siyalo had bought milk from a neighbouring farm, that was owned by an Afrikaner. When there was not a penny in the house and the child lay dying of hunger, Siyalo walked to the farm again, this time to milk the cow himself without paying. He was caught, jailed and sentenced to ten years. It had been under these circumstances that Jezile, the wife of the Majolas had left home to work as a breadwinner to support her family, her children and her mother-in-law. She was raped by her employer. Now, after the birth of the baby, she returns to her own mother. Why does she not return to her mother-in-law whose livelihood she was working for? The Mapangas, Jezile's birth family, have to report to the Majolas that their daughter-in-law was back from Bloemfontein. What do these complexities say about the choices Jezile has in relation to who she is and where she belongs?

#### Caution to educators in handling this strategy

Problems in using problem-posing as a teaching strategy have been identified by language educators. These include identifying issues of concern, the cultural appropriateness of discussing these issues, and the role of the educator in facilitating discussion. Each of these is discussed below.

Teacher educators find working through thematic units effective for this undertaking. Thematic units can be developed

during the pre-reading phase of the text. It is suggested that teacher educators work in teams among themselves to break the ice and get past their initial inhibitors in handling text in this way. Cognizance must be taken that even teacher educators may be treading on unfamiliar ground. Working together in teams should help in building confidence and expertise in the strategies of a new paradigm. Sharing examples of class sessions, hindrances and successes will build up the confidence and expertise that will make this strategy work.

Schleppegrell and Bowman (1995) identify cultural appropriateness as a very sensitive variable in raising and exploring topics of concern. There may be sensitivity about some issues; and in the context of South Africa there is also the inhibiting factor of some issues being taboo in some communities. However, as Schleppegrell and Bowman observe, students are the key determinants of what is crucial and of interest to them. A tactful teacher educator may instill epistemological curiosity among students around such topics.

One critical element of making this strategy work is the educator's facilitating role. Shor (1987, p.23) cautions that this strategy calls for the educator's art of intervention and art of restraint, so that the verbal density of a trained intellectual does not silence the verbal styles of unscholastic students. There is a catch in this role of the educator as explained by Freire and Macedo (1995). They argue that this kind of dialogue must not mean that the educator relinquishes his or her authority as a teacher, and engages with the class in a superficial form of democracy, in which all students must forcefully participate in turn-taking task of "blah-

blah-blah". This problem-posing strategy, Shor (1987) strongly argues, requires practice in group dynamics, social relations of discourse, linguistic habits of students in their communities in relation to gender, class, race, religion, age, critical awareness, tact and skillful handling of the dialogue.

### **c) Comprehension for Critical Literacy.**

The premise of critical literacy strategy, originally expounded by Freire, as cited in Shor (1987, p. 23), is for the educator to problematize all content of study by enabling the students to break into or penetrate into texts. Through this penetration in text levels, students are able to see knowledge as an historical product, as in the example of Jezile's story cited above. Students can then develop understanding that communities and societies have beliefs and values that reflect who they are. These beliefs and values constitute, in part, the historical evidence of the people. In Jezile's story, above, the readers learn that her fate was to be decided by the Majolas, since she was their daughter-in-law. Both student and educator need to understand or learn to appreciate how this relationship was and is still considered important in the black South African context. Text penetration will allow this exploration and discovery, and above all, it will afford the students the opportunity to wrestle with the language and learn to articulate things they have never been encouraged to express. This premise can be further illustrated by a quote from Vacca and Vacca that:

When texts are vehicles for learning, content (and language) teachers have a significant role to play. That role can be thought of in a metaphorical way as "bridge building." Your task is to span the gap between students' prior knowledge and experience, attitudes, interests, and reading abilities on one river bank and the ideas, concepts, and relationships of your subject area that lie on the other side.

(Vacca and Vacca, p.21, 1995).

It is this awareness of bridge building that will enable the teacher educator to provoke teachers in preparation to deeper levels of critical awareness. At this level of teaching, educators learn to observe their students' attention and to make pedagogical decisions, such as, where to intervene with a specific training strategy. The shift that resonates with decision-making in this strategy is that teachers in preparation and in-service approach language learning qualitatively, where the mastery of facts and rules, linguistic competence, is used as bridge to question what is known, examining items instead of memorizing data.

An example from the Ngcobo text in Appendix 1, would be for the educator to channel the students' on content which gives them an opportunity to seek out the socio-cultural values of the communities of the time described in the text. The last paragraph of the chapter in Appendix 1, for instance, can be discussed in the manner below adapted from (Vacca and Vacca, 1993):

i) Share analogies and draw contrasts: see which incidents in Jezile's home-coming are analogous to very well-known incidents. Which ones could be contrasted? What other incidents are reflected in the text?



ii) Monitor comprehension: verbalize a confusing point such as Jezile's going away to work for her mother-in-law and her children. At the complication of circumstances around her life, she chooses to go back to her own mother.

iii) Regulate Comprehension--Demonstrate a fix-up strategy; for instance, "I'm confused about what the writer means by Jezile's torment and divided loyalties. Say what you thought and what the writer seems to be saying.

These would lead to a variety of activities that would require student teachers to deal with many linguistic aspects of the language as follow-up work is undertaken.

#### Thematic Teaching as Situated Pedagogy

The strategy of thematic teaching, a construct of Freire as cited in Shor (1987) and that of Vacca and Vacca (1993, pp.78, 314), would require that themes tackled in class be grounded in the students' culture--their literacy, their present cognitive and affective levels, their aspirations, and their daily lives (Shor, 1987, p.24).

Vacca and Vacca view the thematic approach to teaching as a tool that includes the following components: (1) a title reflecting the thematic or topical nature of the unit, (2) the major concepts to be learned, (3) the texts and information sources to be studied by the students, (4) the unit's instructional activities, and (5) provisions for evaluating what students have learned as a result of participating in the unit. One way of doing this is for the educator, in the preparatory stage, to ask herself the question: What major concepts can the students learn from the text?

Another useful element of this strategy is reader response to literature in ways that would bring out themes from different critical perspectives as demonstrated in Vacca and Vacca. Some of these are:

- a) Efferent stance--the reader focuses on the ideas and information they interact with and carry away from reading.
- b) Aesthetic stance--here the reader's interactions and transactions with texts are driven by her feelings, personal associations, insights and attitudes.
- c) Comparative criticism--comparisons are drawn of literature across genres, cultures, or literary elements.
- d) Archetypal criticism--patterns, motifs and themes are explored and analyzed as they occur and recur in literary works.
- e) Sociohistorical criticism--the text is studied in terms of how it reflects social and historical trends concerning time period about which or and in which it is written, and
- f) Transactional criticism--The text is explored and analyzed in terms of how it impacts upon the life, attitudes, and thinking of the reader.

The suggestions offered here are not exhaustive. It is imperative though, if the framework is to work, to have a series of models that are developed to open up critical ways of knowing. Also, teacher educators, teachers in-service and all the stakeholders need to be urged to find ways of making this transformation in teaching practices not too uncomfortable.

The next chapter addresses the need for re-educating the teachers who are already in-service and provides some concrete suggestions that might help with this task.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE ROLE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING

### (i) The Challenge of Transformation.

The deep nature of the changes required to transform South Africa's education system presents a formidable challenge. The need for reform in the practices of teaching English--to students and to the teachers who teach students--has already been outlined. The teaching of English, however, is only a part of what must be transformed. Systemic reforms must reach into all elements of the school. The history curriculum must be revised and new history books written that reflect the history of all the peoples of South Africa, not just the perspective of the once dominant group. Doors must be opened at all schools to take in all students, and school climate and practices changed to make all welcome and well served. An inventory of system changes required would be a long one.

Teacher education in the colleges of education is one place to start. Transforming the colleges of education so that they turn out diploma-holders well-grounded in English and prepared to use new pedagogical approaches are tasks which themselves will take some years to accomplish. While changing teacher education is a worthwhile, even essential objective, such a change would not touch the bulk of the teaching force for many decades to come, and that is much too long to wait for a people who have already waited decades to be fully included in their society.

To really make a transformation, it will be necessary to reach the many teachers already in the schools, who will remain there for

some years. Without changing pedagogical practices at this level, the system will change little, even if factors such as reasonable class sizes and modern facilities were put in place everywhere immediately. It is teachers already in service who must be reached. While various sources provide different statistics (Hartshorne, 1995), figures provided by the National Teacher Education Audit (Hofmeyer & Hall, 1995) for 1994 give a rough idea of numbers of teachers who must be reached. The Audit indicates that there are 242,000 African teachers and 100,000 more teachers from other groups, with half of the latter group being white.

If short in-service workshops will not be enough to bring about change (and they will not), then a system will have to be designed that can reach a target audience in the hundreds of thousands, not just in hundreds. It is the scope of this challenge that leads to the conclusion that distance education is the only possible approach to reaching this size of target group. The schools cannot be shut down while the system retools, such as you might do if you were transforming a factory from producing one set of goods to another. Rather, the schools must continue to function on a daily basis, even as teachers learn about new approaches, make efforts to utilize these methods, and reflect on their changing practices.

#### **(ii) History of Distance Education in South Africa.**

Distance education is well established in South Africa, with a long history. Those who have followed the life of Nelson Mandela will know that he completed his B.A. in the 1940's at the University of South Africa (UNISA), which was even then a distance education institution (Mandela, 1994). Many of the political prisoners who now

hold significant positions in the politics and governance of South Africa received whatever formal education and degrees that they hold from courses taken from UNISA and other distance education institutions during their imprisonment.

Distance education is particularly firmly entrenched in the area of teacher education. According to the National Teacher Education Audit (Hofmeyer & Hall, 1995), the number of people taking distance education courses as part of teacher education was 129,614 students, with just over half being at the colleges of education, and just under half at the universities. Many of these are taking only a single course at a time, while they work full-time. More than a third of all teachers were enrolled in some form of distance education in 1995, and enrollments were up by 23 per cent in 1995 over 1994.

Most of the distance education offerings are provided by institutions that deal in distance education only. Some of these are the University of South Africa (UNISA), Technikon South Africa, Vista University and Umlazi Further College of Education, with the last two specifically geared for teacher upgrading in-service education. With the rapid expansion in enrollment, two distance-only institutions, the College of Education of South Africa and a new college, Success, had 7,403 students in their first year of operation.

The heavy emphasis on distance education in South Africa is to a significant degree a result of the apartheid system. While all the contact post-secondary institutions were rigidly divided according to race, the distance education courses at UNISA could be taken by anyone. Cost has also been a factor. With economic status coinciding largely with race, the option of taking a post-secondary program

away from home has been particularly severely restricted among the black population. In addition, the historically black universities are located in the former "homelands"--the impoverished rural areas--rather than in the townships around the urban centres, where a large portion of those who were seeking post-secondary education live.

**(iii) Quantity Does not Equal Quality.**

The assessment of the quality of distance education by the National Teacher Education Audit was devastating:

Most institutions in the distance sector are not providing good quality distance education. This is evident from the lack of mixed media, interactive, problem-centred approaches to learning, and face-to-face tutorial support for students.

The courses offered are of poor academic quality and show little understanding of the realities of South African schools or concern to improve teaching competence. There is little integration of theory and practice. Thus, these courses are unlikely to lead to improved classroom competence.

(Hofmeyer & Hall, 1995, p. 53)

These findings by the Teacher Audit are in agreement with those of the Commission of 1995, a group of international veterans of distance education. This group was commissioned by the new Government of National Unity to assess the quality of Distance education in the country. The Commission identified problems that contributed to 'a misconceived system of teaching and learning.' Among those were: 1) absence of student support; 2) poor quality of study materials; 3) courses presented as 'wraparounds'--limited commentary based on one or two texts; 4) texts which convey an authoritarian tone and a perception of students as subservient (Commission, 1995).

From these observations, it is apparent that the motivations for offering distance education courses by institutions and the motivation of teachers to take these courses are not directed at improving the instruction that takes place in the classroom. The fastest growing type of distance education is of the correspondence type. This is because correspondence courses do not involve any student support and are thus the lowest cost form of education. Offering these courses improves the financial position of the institution, and provides a motive for expanding the number offered.

Teacher motivation for taking distance education courses is primarily to improve qualifications and consequently rates of pay. In 1994, 63,015 of the students were unqualified or underqualified teachers working to upgrade their qualifications. Another 32,878 were qualified teachers who were furthering their qualifications (Hofmeyr & Hall, 1995, p. 53). Higher pay as a motivation for teachers should not be surprising, since those who have examined the system indicate that taking the courses does not offer any promise of learning something that will actually improve one's teaching practice. Also, in the upgrading courses, there has been no critique of the existing pedagogical approaches. Regurgitation of facts has still been the predominant learning mode. Teachers are not helped to learn how to reflect upon their own practices.

This lack of relevance is accentuated by a mismatch between the staff and students at the institutions. According to the Audit:

The background of the predominantly white staff is very different from that of the predominantly African student body in distance education. Moreover, most staff in distance



education have had no training in distance education skills. Usually staff who have secondary school qualifications are preparing students for the primary level in colleges (Hofmeyr & Hall, 1995, p. 72).

Clearly, the challenges for providing transformative teaching through distance education are great. While there is a very high acceptance, even reliance, on distance education for teacher education, the existing motivations and low quality must change dramatically if this is to be the medium through which education is to be transformed. It may seem beyond reasonable expectation to suggest that distance education could help shoulder some of the urgent needs to re-train and educate teachers, in addition to extending education to all those who in the past missed the opportunity. However, the urgency for redress is compelling and the cost and undertaking of in-servicing teachers would be too great if they were all to go back to the classroom.

In order to create new understandings regarding knowledge, attitudes, skills and critical awareness in second language teaching, it is essential that the content, delivery system and infrastructure of the existing institutions of distance education be overhauled to meet the challenge. It is not only the delivery system that has to be transformed, but the very aim of education, which according to Sampson (1994) is human development, (teacher development). The aim of such teacher development is to create efficient, effective teachers; teachers who are competent in their subject matter in ways championed in the previous chapter; teachers who respond to the teaching situation with their bodies, with their attitudes, with their belief systems (Sampson, 1994). An effective educator of

English as a second language, creates spaces for students, participatory or dialogic spaces, which help the student make connections and develop cognitive awareness of the language, its forms, its mediated meaning and its appropriate use.

**(iv) Critical Areas for Effective Distance Education.**

The National Teacher Education Audit set an implicit agenda for change in its critique of the existing system. Areas that must be addressed include:

- 1) Mixed media, interactive, problem-centred approaches;
- 2) Face-to-face tutorial support for students;
- 3) A relationship to the realities of South African schools; and
- 4) Integration of theory and practice.

The failure in these areas indicate a failure of distance education in South Africa. If new approaches do not successfully incorporate these elements into the structure of distance education, the chances of addressing the very real need for teacher development and transformation in education, particularly in English instruction, will be lost for some time. Distance education is the only hope for extending this transformative undertaking to the large numbers who must be reached, but it must be distance education which really connects and engages.

This is the challenge.

**(v) Teacher Reflection as Key to Change.**

Reflective action--as opposed to technical, superficial and routine action--is an objective to develop in teachers' orientations. Reflection leads to active, persistent and careful mediated action regarding beliefs and forms of knowledge. Open-mindedness,

responsibility and wholeheartedness are features of such orientations. In addition, skills of keen observation and reasoned analysis are also developed and sharpened (Zeichner and Liston, 1987; Coplin in Wideen, 1994, p. 111).

The quality of reflectivity introduces a concept that is fairly new in the language teacher education terrain in South Africa. It has the potential of breaking the norm of narrow, static, technical lessons that have deprived language teachers of opportunities for growth in areas of knowledge, curriculum and relationships. One way to start this off could be for a course that requires teachers to reflect on their lesson plans and the consequential dialogue between students and teacher regarding the knowledge employed in the lesson (both epistemological and sociological).

The reflecting on lesson plans is a practicum strategy that is advocated and used elsewhere, for instance by Sampson (1993 & 1994). In a paper that she presented at a distance education conference in Russia in 1994, she argues that distance education can achieve the broader humane aims of developing a teacher. In one of her courses offered by distance education, Education 470, there are three assignments that deal with classroom implementation. Teachers are required to select one of their weaker lessons in each of the three areas of teaching, English pronunciation, reading in English and English syntax. The teacher then reflects upon how the planning of the lesson and implementation could be improved in each case. Model lessons are provided in the course readings. Some of the features of the model lessons are: 1) task analysis prior to lesson planning, time management, maintaining learners' attention, keeping

learners on task and many others. Teachers reflect upon their lesson selected, and then write a "Contract for Improvement" specifying the changes they would make the next time they teach a lesson of a similar type. Of note, it is significant that no outside observer oversees these practicums. Thus, the teacher is developed into becoming a self-observer.

Another proponent of the use of lesson plans as a means of reflection is Ho (1995). She asserts that reflective lesson plans are useful because the procedure operates effectively on the cyclic theory of reflection in theory research; also the lesson arrangement automatically 'forces' the teacher to reflect systematically. As the teacher goes through the lesson series, experience and insight is reconstructed. Another strength of reflective lesson plans is its possibility of bridging the gap between micro and macro dimensions of teaching--the mechanics and the abstract thinking sides of the teaching continuum (Ho, 1995).

This reflective lesson planning approach is in line with the decision-making model of teacher development. It also draws on the reality that the South African teacher corps is adept at writing long lesson plans to fill up their preparation day books. This experience can be built on to cultivate reflective practice on their work. However, some people may argue that lesson plans are structural, rigid, restrictive and reflective of traditional teacher--student power roles. The response would be that the use of the structural lesson plans is one way that would help both the student teachers and the teacher educators to confront the rigidity that is so entrenched in

their practice. By critiquing the limitations of these plans, critical reflective practice is cultivated.

To get an idea of how this might apply to a South African English teaching context, we will look at an example of a lesson plan for a demonstration lesson which was developed by a third year student in the secondary teachers diploma program at one of the colleges of education (De Vos, 1996).

The topic is poetry and the aim of the lesson is introducing students to African poetry and having them practice writing and speaking skills. The poem that is being used is titled "African Beggar" by Raymond Tong. Students receive a handout of the poem, along with the picture of a beggar. The steps of the lesson plan developed by the pre-service teacher are as follows:

Step 1: Introduction: The teacher hands out a picture of a beggar and asks the pupils to say what the picture depicts. A class discussion follows about beggars in their home area or any beggars they have seen. Are there many? Are they young or old? Describe the appearance of a beggar. How do they feel about beggars?

Step 2: The teacher hands out the annotated poem to the class and reads the poem to the class while they follow on the handouts. The teacher explains the meaning of difficult words and expressions.

Step 3: Working in pairs, pupils make a list of fifteen words which give a negative feeling or convey unpleasant meaning. Question: What do these words convey about the poet's feelings towards this beggar?

Step 4: Each pair makes up 6 lines of dialogue. Two passers-by see the beggar and talk about him. The first person hates beggars and the second person feels pity. The pupils are told that these dialogues will be read/performed in class tomorrow.

Step 5: Conclusion: The teacher reads the poem to the class again and instructs them to answer the questions under "Understanding the poem" on the handout for homework for tomorrow in their exercise books.

A possible strategy to help the teacher reflect on these steps of the lesson plan could be to ask some questions that pull her outside the comfortable frame within which she sees the poem and how she might have experienced the poem being taught to her. Some of the issues that could be raised include the ones below:

In Step 1, the teacher says she will hand out a picture of a beggar and ask the students to say what the picture depicts. One question to ask teachers is what response the picture of the beggar is intended to elicit from the students. The visual mainly addresses the naming aspect of the lesson, that is, what a beggar is and what she or he may look like. The students will likely have seen many beggars in the reality in which they live and it is an experience they are likely to emotionally and psychologically shut off their minds, as beggars always have to be black in their social context. The visual as presented does not problematize the content or forms of knowledge embodied in the poem or language structures. Is there any other visual that might have helped the students probe beyond the surface? The visual chosen and the questions that accompany its presentation in step one, would likely not trigger much epistemological dialogue about issues such as what beggary is, what causes people to beg and what the challenges are of such a phenomenon in the society as a whole. Also, the questioning technique encourages a one word or phrase answer.

The existence of African beggars seems to be accepted as certain, a phenomenon to be taken for granted.

As another example, in Step 2 it is stated that the teacher will read the poem and explain the meaning of difficult words. Teachers might be asked if there are any other strategies that can initiate dialogic engagement or problem-posing. Why not a pre-reading activity where the students prior to the class discussion of the poem shall have explored the meaning or appropriate use and form of these difficult words in context?

For Step 3, teachers can be asked to reflect on their objectives for pairing the students. What limitations can they identify in the objective of pairing the students for the purpose of making a list of fifteen words--which were explained according to the teacher's Step 1.

Other questions to ask regarding the lesson implementation are: What forms of knowledge are conveyed in the poem? How would this approach help the teacher and students penetrate into more complicated text? Is there any role of scaffolding to take students from experiential meaning to expressive meaning? The list is endless. Teachers can be asked to look for language structures and patterns that are problematic for the class. Themes can be explored for further oral and written followup work or activities through eliciting the underlying concepts in the poem.

Another crucial element to be addressed by the new distance education mode would be to assist teachers to reflect on their mastery of language and on its enhancement. This could be addressed by posing questions that focus on the use of language and

particular structures. This procedure can be followed up by feedback from the tutor or instructor. Also, critical use of such structures could occur in face-to-face dialogues during the contact sessions to be run during school holidays. For language growth to occur, teachers must be able to recognize what their problems are, as they engage with the language.

What would this distance education in-service practicum entail? The program would be built around a series of independent yet interconnected courses or modules. Each of these would focus on a particular area of specialty of teaching of English as a second language, for instance, reading, syntax, comprehension, literature, poetry, writing, pronunciation, and inquiry areas like psycholinguistics, socio-cultural and political issues of language and language learning theories.

**(vi) Infrastructure to Support Reflection and Decision-making.**

Continuing the current model of distance education, with individuals studying alone, using the current forms of distance education delivery, offers little hope of change. Creative approaches to bring about more interactive learning and multiple models are necessary. However, the infrastructure necessary to support these interactive approaches is too costly to implement because of the duplication of many institutions that characterizes the current situation in distance education college of education programs in South Africa.



Two elements that can enrich the distance education effectiveness are technology and opportunities for some face-to-face interaction. Each of these will be examined in turn, with suggestions for how each might be used to change practice from the current one-way transmission model that characterizes both teacher education and teaching practice in the schools.

**(a) Technology.**

Many of the black teachers teach and live in situations where there is little access to the technologies that might be of assistance. Particularly in the rural areas, the schools are unlikely to have electricity, essential for use of most of the new--and not so new--communication technologies. Some teachers will have access to the equipment necessary to use videotape, but many will not.

While most black teachers and schools don't currently have access to these technologies, they are widely available in the cities of South Africa. With central policy leadership, the various institutions could create a consortium that allows for the pooling of resources and the creation of centres where the technologies would be available to students regardless of the institution at which they are registered.

**(b) Community Learning Centres and Transformation.**

Community learning centres could be equipped with the range of technological supports, open to all. These centres, though, could be much more than that. A commission of international scholars associated with the Commonwealth of Learning looked at the situation in South Africa and identified community learning centres as a possible response to the need for support to students (Commission, 1995).

The main idea of the centres is to "be any place that regularly supports and services students in pursuit of their learning goals," (Commission, 1995, p. 6) and might be in a range of physical places, from regular schools in the afternoon and evening, to workplaces, community and church places, and existing colleges and institutions of higher learning. Some of these could be in the cities, such as centres already being set up by the Natal College of Education in facilities that were historically white institutions that were shut down because of lack of demand. The greatest need, however, is in the rural areas where many teachers have very little training, even in the old forms that must now be transformed, and an emphasis should be placed on centres that can provide support for these teachers.

The activities in the centres could take a wide variety of forms, including face-to-face teaching, work with a tutor, trainer or community leader. The centres could develop support groups of students, as well. These centres would need to be formally attached to distance education institutions (to many, not to a single one) and would need to have protocols for operation as well as institutional support, such as the computers and network connections that allow both for administrative and academic support. Similar proposals were recommended for Botswana in an evaluation of distance education in that country (Yerbury, Dingalo, and Mphinyane, 1991).

The type of cross-institutional structure necessary for this approach is under development. A Distance Education Association of Southern Africa already has 20 institutions in seven countries in the region developing collaborative programs. A Southern Africa

Institute of Distance Education has also been created, and is working with the Commonwealth of Learning, the Commonwealth institution with headquarters in Vancouver (Kinyanjui, 1995, p. 120).

**(vii) Making the Infrastructure Work.**

How might the technology and the community learning centres support teacher change? One obvious way is to provide more connections and supports than have characterized distance education courses previously offered. Much more is possible as well, including providing different models of pedagogy, building confidence to overcome the traditional subservient style of education, and the relevance of English to student experience may be addressed as well. For example, discussion groups at the centre may allow for participation in first languages in thinking through ideas that are presented in English in written course materials; students and those who work at the centres may be consulted in developing and revising courses, assisting in making them more relevant and useful.

Access to technology at these community learning centres might allow for borrowing of video cameras to tape teaching, then being able to play these back in the equipment at the centre. The individual teacher could then reflect on the teaching herself, as well as in a group discussion. Models of a variety of approaches on videotape could be shown, with analysis in discussions about how the teachers might try the different approaches in their own classes. Those efforts could then be the subject of further reflection, ranging from the lesson plan analysis described earlier in this chapter, to coding of student and teacher behaviors to better understand the impact of particular pedagogical approaches.

Many new opportunities are being opened as well with projects such those being carried out as a part of the TeleLearning Network of Centers of Excellence, led by Simon Fraser University faculty members, Linda Harasim and Tom Calvert. They identify design goals for the project as "to provide a flexible framework to support advanced pedagogies based on principles of active learning, collaboration, multiplicity, and knowledge building," as well as "varied instructional formats including seminars, tutorials, group projects and labs" (Harasim, et. al., 1996). Access to this technology and its alternatives to traditional pedagogies from those generally seen in South African schools will not be available on an individual basis for most of the target group; however, the community learning centres could provide this access.

While there may be many pluses in using these technologies, there are some cautions. If use of these technologies is made mandatory, some potential users will be excluded because of fears of the technology. Egan (1990), in reviewing a course he taught via computer conferencing, argued that the participation still seemed to be teacher-directed. While students in the course were supposed to post their work, and comment on the work of others, most of the comments were, in fact, directed at the teacher, not the other students. Behaviors in a new technology may well mirror those already well established in another medium, even when it is clearly the intention to alter previous approaches.

Egan's experiences are similar to my own as a tutor-marker at Simon Fraser University. When computer interaction was made compulsory for one particular distance education course I was

working with, the number of students dwindled from the usual 50 down to about a dozen. After a review of the situation, compulsory use of computer communication was dropped and the number of students grew again.

**(viii) Principles of Change.**

The needs are great, the tools to meet the needs are available. Distance education, with the approaches and infrastructure identified here, has the potential for assisting in the transformation of teaching, and the teaching of English in South Africa, in particular. However, if these new tools are to succeed, some principles of change must be observed in the planning, implementation, support and evaluation of the programs.

Change as a process is known to be slow. Among other causes for the slowness is the conscious or sub-conscious resistance against a new way of doing things, and the doing of the new things. Prabhu (1987) characterizes this as an act of self-protection or an awareness that to adopt the new is to deny the validity of everything that has gone before. Such allegations have already featured in some institutions of distance education, for instance, the University of South Africa (UNISA). The results of the inquiry into distance education by the Commission was received with resignations and resentment from some long-time instructors at the institution (oral conversation with South African educators at the 1996 American Education Research Association conference).

Also, the departmental dialogue from Smith (1993), quoted in Chapter 3, reveals the subtle, yet bold, stances against the

transformation he was hoping to introduce. This time transformation is a must!

There are principles of in-service teacher development upon which this transformation should be based. Some of these principles proposed by Hayes (1995) are:

*\*Normative-re-educative strategies offer the best prospect of securing changes in behavior. These strategies seek to examine deep-seated beliefs, together with the principles underlying the innovation.*

*\*All teacher development activities should be classroom-centred. Teachers need to be able to see the impact of the proposed innovation [theory] on daily classroom procedures [practice].*

*\*Training/development sessions should value participants' existing knowledge.*

*\*Teacher development activities should raise awareness of the teaching-learning issues behind the innovation, and give opportunities for in-depth analysis.*

*\*Sessions should give participants an opportunity to put into practice what they have learned in a non-threatening environment.*

*\*Teacher development sessions should offer opportunities for participants to share knowledge and ideas.*

*\*Every effort should be made to provide follow-up for courses in participants' own school.*

Continuing more of what has not worked in South Africa will do nothing to assist teaching to be a part of the transformation of school and society. The wide-spread failure of students is itself a function of the failure to educate the teachers appropriately, in both their school experience and their teacher education. While much of that

failure was an intentional outgrowth of policy, we must get on with making change rather than focusing on responsibility for the past.

The imperative need in South Africa for an in-service teacher education development program has been advanced through this thesis, for the reconstruction of the teaching of English to speakers of other languages, in particular. From the chaotic nature of events around education, i.e., from writing new material to restructuring courses, there are signs that the people of South Africa have geared themselves for the transformation. There will be planning problems, challenges around new designs, and which specialists to listen to. The most significant issue, though, is whether teachers and teacher educators really want this change and advancement. It is essential that teachers at the grassroots level be helped to understand the reasons for this major change so they recognize themselves as part of the engineers of the process. Teaching institutions will be greatly challenged to make adjustments for integrating new routines. Large scale, if temporary, supports are a must in order for the initial actions to take shape (Evans & Nation, 1989, p. 108).

I conclude this thesis by saying that it is the expression of one voice from the thousands of voices in the historically black education system, whose profession has been geared to teaching a language that determines to a significant degree where our students will land. I would have liked to have incorporated an analysis from the perspective of all the historically-defined groups of South Africa, but the vastness of the subject and my lack of experience of the others precluded me from such a move. However, this thesis may assist as an eye-opener to areas which directly impact on the teaching of

English, particularly in those remote areas of the country, such as those in KwaZulu-Natal. Also, to my colleagues in South Africa who are already engaged in the transformation agenda, I offer this thesis as a source of reference.

The controversies around the teaching of English and teaching through English are not a matter to be resolved by the recent policy announcement that every learner will be allowed to learn in a language that does not impede or discriminate against their learning. While it is a good principle, it is also a Catch-22 in the sense that it sorts the students into new stratification of class and jobs. Students who opt to write their exams in their first languages close the gate for themselves to the tertiary learning institutions. The reality is that English is the door that they must walk through, for better or for worse. The re-education and re-training of teachers in teaching English in enabling ways offers some small remedy, as part of the massive job of reconstructing the learning environment, learners' attitudes and a culture of learning.



2

May

5

*Appendix II**And They Didn't Die* by Laretta Ngcobo

## Chapter XIII

MaSibiya was out in the fields weeding when she received a message that Jezile had arrived with a baby in her arms. She threw her implement aside and strode home with the little messenger at her heels. When they were some distance away and out of earshot she turned to the child, and lowering her voice she asked, "what baby are you talking about? You don't mean Ndondo, do you?"

"No, not Ndondo, Ndondo is big, I know her."

"It's a small baby, is it?"

"Yes, it's very, very small."

"We Nkulunkulu wami, my God what's going on?"

MaSibiya almost ran the rest of the way, leaving the child lagging behind.

MaSibiya collapsed on her knees right beside Jezile where she sat in the shade of the house.

Jezile, Jezile, my child, what's that you've got in your arms? Where did you get it from? What shall I say to the Majolas? What shall I say? Have you come from there or straight from Bloemfontein?" Jezile shook her head, but said nothing.

"You mean MaBiyela does not know about this baby? Have you told them? It's yours, Jezile, is it? Bring it here."

She took one look at the child and she screamed. "Jezile, what child is this? This can't be your child. And it's so small, how old is it?" She began to show concern for Jezile. She looked her up and down.

"Jezile, my child, my child. What's been happening to you? Who's the father of this child?" She asked repeatedly with tears streaming down her face. "But it's white, Jezile, it's white!"

Jezile began to sob uncontrollably. With the child forgotten on the mat mother and daughter clung to each other. By then a group of young children stood watching, confounded. Jezile wept on and on as though she would never stop and MaSibiya rocked her daughter as though she was the infant instead of the little bundle on the mat. Slowly Jezile's sobs became quieter, but more convulsive. MaSibiya put her head down gently on the mat and rushed to make some tea for her. When Jezile had recovered, MaSibiya concentrated on the baby and asked no further question of Jezile. When friends and relations and neighbours came to see her they were all subdued. None of them rushed to see the baby. Others pretended there was no baby to speak about, while some talked discreetly about the inescapable temptations that face all young women without husbands, with God being the only protection. It did not escape some that MaSibiya sat with the baby carefully covered and facing the wall throughout the time of their visit. It was one thing to tell people of Luvu that Jezile had a baby, and it was quite another to tell them that it was a white man's child, which was not only a transgression of their own customs but a crime as well.

It was three days before MaSibiya summoned up enough courage to tackle the subject with Jezile again. She dreaded another scene, but she had to know; she simply had to know for the Majolas' sake, if for no one else's. She had a responsibility to let them know that their daughter-in-law was here, or better still to take her there

herself, before the local gossips carried the news. To MaSibiya's surprise, Jezile seemed drained of all feeling and ready to talk. She sat her mother down quietly and in an even voice she told the story about how she first went to work for the men on the road, how MaBiyela had advised her to go to Bloemfontein, and about her unspeakable life there. When she had finished MaSibiya summoned all the relations that were within reach and asked Jezile to tell them the whole story over again. Calmly, Jezile did, and the whole place was thrown into utter confusion. Many believed her, but it was clear that there were those who doubted the details of the story. Nobody dared to ask too many questions. The matter stopped being MaSibiya's problem - it affected all the Mapangas. This child would be called a Mapanga, one of them; a child born in this unorthodox way, if Jezile was to be believed. Others said the child could not be a Mapanga - it was a Majola child; Jezile was no longer a Mapanga herself - if she was unmarried, yes, it would be a Mapanga. But now according to custom, the white child was a Majola. The older women treated Jezile with such tenderness as though she had only been raped the day before. MaSibiya, who was overwrought, told the gathering that she needed a few women to accompany her and Jezile to the Majolas within the next day or two for she daren't keep a Majola wife and child for too long without reporting her presence. But the general opinion was that Jezile should stay until she had fully recovered - after all, it was only a few days since she had the baby, followed by the long journey from Bloemfontein. So, the next day, two men were sent to report to MaBiyela and all the Majolas that Jezile was with the Mapangas.

Two weeks later, when Jezile was a little stronger, she and MaSibiya accompanied by a group of six women travelled to Sigageni to the Majolas. Jezile dreaded facing her mother-in-law. But to her surprise, MaBiyela looked a shadow of her former self. She sat them all down and in a quiet voice she sent the children to call the other Majola relations. The visitors were served tea in silence. When everyone had arrived, the two families sat facing each other. Jezile's eldest aunt on her father's side began to tell the whole story from the start while the others listened. Not a cough interrupted, and when she had finished the stunned silence was followed by a restless shuffle in the room. In an even voice MaBiyela asked to see the baby. When she opened the bundle and looked at its little face, she gave one deep groan. After some moments she asked one question of Jezile, a question directed more at destiny than her.

“Why didn't you just leave this child with the white man? The child does not belong here; it does not belong anywhere. This child will bring the white law on us. Who will face them when they come? This is not a Majola nor is it a Mapanga.”

It was no longer Jezile's misfortune that lay in front of them, it was a communal catastrophe. There was a long silence; the oldest man in the room told the Mapangas that the matter could not be discussed further because Siyalo was away in jail. It would have to wait until he came back. It would have to wait for seven long years. No one spoke after the old man. The Mapangas were served with a light meal and they left after that. Then the Majolas left one by one mumbling their goodbyes softly with their heads bent low.

It was hard for Jezile to relate to the community as before. They received her back as they would any other many unavoidable natural disasters. Her two friends, Gaba and Nomawa, came to see her, but even they had little to say and less to laugh about. But at least they were openly sympathetic. They carried the baby, admiring it and expressing the usual "oohs" and "ahs". Until that point everyone had treated him like a curse, a thing to be discarded, and she herself had not explored her true feelings towards the child. She had ministered to its needs mechanically, but now she knew that she cared. She wanted him to be loved, to belong. For the first time she told herself she loved him and so it did not matter that he had no second name. From that moment a new determination grew in her: she would face that community, she would live in it. She would give the child every chance to live normally. From that day she raised her head and talked normally to the people that she met along the pathways.

The baby was about two months old when the minister came to Sigageni to administer his quarterly Communion to his parishioners. As usual, the Deacon had to report to the minister about the state of the community. And Jezile was on his list. She and MaBiyela did not go to Church that Sunday to avoid the embarrassment of being discussed in the presence of the entire congregation. Later that afternoon, when the minister had left, the Deacon went to see MaBiyela. Within a few minutes of his entering MaBiyella's house, Jezile heard the sound of weeping. She was curious but she thought it better to wait. When the Deacon had gone, Jezile went down to see

MaBiyela. She was on her knees, sobbing and whimpering in a most pitiful way.

"What is it, Mother, what is it?"

"Oh, MaMapanga, this is truly a curse... The minister has censured me for keeping you here. He has banned me from attending Service. He said I had condoned everything you have done; that I should have sent you back to your people. Oh, MaMapanga, I've been excommunicated. I wasn't there; I could not have stopped what happened to you...and I cannot do anything now, without Siyalo... He is hard, MaMapanga, God's ways are hard."

Jezile was "excommunicated" as well. She had broken a strict moral code. But at that point she was more deeply concerned about MaBiyela, and less about herself. She looked on compassionately, but she was stunned. She had never once thought that she stood condemned by the Church and by God. Surely God who saw everything knew that she had not sinned; she had been sinned against. Now he was punishing not only her but MaBiyela as well; it simply made no sense. She wanted to say something to the crumpled shape on the floor, but the words would not come. The life of the Church was a lifeline for everyone in this community. When life was hard to bear, that is where they all went. Other aspects of life in the community were channelled through the Church. That was why this judgment was like a death sentence.

Some members of the community were sympathetic and others cynical. Jezile could not bear to see MaBiyela suffering. They were both cast out and it was unbearable. By the end of the week, Jezile

could bear it no longer. She picked up the baby and went with her other two children down to MaBiyela's house.

"Mother, I've decided, I'll have to go. I'll go back to my people until Siyalo comes back. I cannot bear to see you suffer for something you have so little to do with. God's ways are not easy to understand and cannot be argued with. If you let me, I'll go away tomorrow."

"It's not for me to let you go. This is a matter for the Majolas. I hear you. I'll have to call them all back again to discuss this. If they let you go, then you will go. Tomorrow I'll call them. But for tonight go and sleep with the children."



Mabiyela looked grey and thinner than when there was no food around. Jezile had not expected her to crumble in this way. Once she had seemed so strong and powerful. But all that power was gone now and seemed never to have been hers in the first place. Even Siyalo behind his prison walls had more power than MaBiyela.

At the meeting with the Majolas the following day it was agreed that Jezile should go back to her people to release MaBiyela from her remote responsibility. They allowed her to take the Majola children with her as well. But they were not unanimous on this point. Some argued that Jezile's children could not be taken away from the Majolas. But others said they were too young to be separated from their mother. MaBiyela cried bitterly to see them go. She had become attached to them in the year that Jezile was away. Besides, they were her grandchildren, Siyalo's own children, the only real link with him in his long absence and she loved them dearly.

By the beginning of the following week Jezile left Sigageni, her mind in torment and her loyalties deeply divided. The burden of shame was growing heavier with every decision and every decision was completely out of her control. She had always known she was weak; she had fought hard against this helplessness. Yet it seemed that all her efforts were in vain; she felt as if she was suspended in space, at the mercy of all nameless authorities. However, after a few days with her mother, she began to feel safe. In her house she learned to laugh again.

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